

TOPDOWN

2020
Issue 4



REGIONS BACK ON THE ROADS ... AGAIN!



DRIVER TRAINING DAY 2020 HAMPTON DOWNS



GENTLE ANNIE TOUR 2020

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF
THE MX5 CLUB OF NEW ZEALAND
www.mx5carclub.co.nz

GLASS BLOWING AND HAMBURGERS

JULY 11TH, 2020

Sat 11th at 9.30am, 13 cars met at the “Upside Down Cafe” in Hawera for a coffee starter. Thanks to Neil G for organising that for us. Also lovely you were able to join in again and to catch up with new ex-member Gary who is looking at rejoining the club. Glenys and Peter travelled in their ‘other’ car as their MX-5 is out of action.

At the 10.30am depart time the weather was not promising for a tops down convoy to Whanganui. A short hop before a stop in Patea for Sir Neil and Lady Amy to get their breakfast of chicken n chips while those with small tanks went to the public rooms. Got the tops down for the leg to Whanganui where we were due at 12 noon for lunch at the Springvale Gardens cafe. All tummies satisfied, a walk around the garden centre and due to the size of the MX-5 boot, a couple of small purchases were made.

1.00pm was our time to visit the “glass works” where we hoped to see glass blowing in action. But we only witnessed glass melting. Absolutely great works on display, with equally great prices. We had booked here pre-covid to see professional blowers, but 2 days before the run we were told that group tours were off. Just bad luck. Some cars headed back to Taranaki, while others hunted down another coffee fix before leaving the river town at 3.00pm. A good run to share with each other and enjoy the time together. Pai te mahi.
– Owen John

Taranaki

AUGUST, 2020

A perfect winter day for a run with a slight difference over our amazing Taranaki coastal roads. So sunny and clear with only a hint of a nip in the air. Tops down ready to explore.

The five Northern cars, travelling from New Plymouth, were led up and down roads that radiate from the mountain, at first giving us great views of the sea and coast line, before suddenly turning and travelling toward our amazing Mount Taranaki, looking at the views of the bush, the ranges and the mountain’s beautiful peak.

Before long it was coastal sea views again, for miles out over the ocean, travelling and looping along the sandy coast. This was ongoing along the many chosen roads by our leaders, between the sea and mountain, until reaching Kahui Road, travelling down to the coastal village of Rahotu for our Hamburger+ Lunch.

At the same time the two southern cars travelled from Hawera along the photogenic coast, picking up one more member in Opunake before meeting up at the meeting place, the Rahotu Tavern and Café.

Time for a pleasant catch up with lots of chat and tasty hamburger.

Thanks to the run organisers who helped bring this run together.

– Nora Hunn



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Contributing Guidelines

Feel free to submit articles via email. Articles should be no longer than 900 words.

Include your name (and the article author's name if different), contact details and use full names in text.

If you submit an article, you agree to have it edited as the Editor sees fit.

The NZ MX5 Club does not pay for submissions.

If the article has been published before in any form, please indicate.

TopDown is read by all ages, so take this into account when considering subject material and language.

No article which the Editor or the NZ MX5 Club deems to encourage breaking the law, either directly or by inference, will be printed.

Picture Guidelines

High resolution JPEGs are preferred. (300 dpi). The preferred method for submission of images is by email. No single image should exceed 8 MB.

All photographs must be submitted with the permission of the photographer. Vehicle registration numbers will be shown unless removal is requested.

Please Note: The Editor cannot guarantee a date for publication. The above are guidelines only, and may be varied in exceptional circumstances. THE EDITOR'S DECISION IS FINAL.

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Membership subscriptions – \$70.00 per car, per year for full membership, including TopDown magazine. For membership application forms, visit our website or email the Membership Co-ordinators – Murray & Donna Lee on murray.lee@xtra.co.nz

A warm welcome to our newest members

Northern / Auckland

Gavin & Vanessa Cochius
Jonathan Mayo
Chris & Liam Mullins
Rob & Dale Greer
Adam Farmer & Scott Curtis
Steven Koch & Jenny Bower
Mike & Rachel Saint

Waikato / Hamilton

Oliver Richards & Ben Sandbrook
Bernie & Faye Shaw
Willem & Mariska Du Preez

Bay of Plenty / Tauranga

David & Sandy Fisher

Hawkes Bay / Napier / Hastings

Peter & Vicki Jones

Taranaki

Gary Waldie

Kapiti Coast / Wellington

Peter Chung
Paul Chipp
Natalie Thomson & Reimer Freitag
Clive & Christine Newman

Nelson / Tasman

Cameron & Trudi Gow

Southland

Shane & Jane Pleasance

New members should start receiving emails from their regional co-ordinator regarding details of upcoming trips.

If you are new to the club and coming along for the first time, please make yourself known to the event organiser.

From the President

Perhaps I was being a bit too optimistic in my last report about COVID-19. No sooner do we think that things are back to the new normal, than some of us are in lockdown again. Hopefully this time!!!!

One of the year's regular events, the Annual General Meeting, was again impacted on by COVID, and we had to postpone the meeting scheduled for 22nd August. It is now planned for 1st November. It's possible that by the time you receive this issue of TopDown it will have already taken place. We apologise for the short notice, but we had difficulty in finalising a venue. Mazda had hoped to host us as usual, but the launch of the new BT-50 unfortunately (for us) got in the way of that.

Another event that COVID-19 is holding up is the Nationals. The Bay of Plenty Region committee has been working hard on this, securing the venue and preparing runs. However, the hotel we have booked, Rydges, is currently being used for managed isolation, so we are waiting on notification as to whether it will be available for us in March. We will open registrations as soon as we can. This will be done through the website, but we will advise everyone by email.



Another successful Driver Training Day was held on 3rd October. This was the first time we had been to Hampton Downs and the Club circuit proved to be an excellent venue. The HD management were very efficient and once again we were blessed with the best possible weather. It was great to see such a large turnout of new members, with 35 of the 50 never having been to a training day before. We hope everyone that attended enjoyed themselves.

There may be another issue of TopDown before Xmas, depending on how many trip reports Brian receives, but if not, I wish you a very happy and safe festive season and look forward to a less eventful 2021.

– Keith Jones, President

Membership Update

If anyone has or can photograph any older stickers I would add them to the history.
– Donna and Murray, Membership Team



GENTLE ANNIE 2020

Kapiti Coast

JULY 11TH–12TH, 2020

Saturday morning started off with 17 cars meeting at the Woolshed Cafe, Sanson, for a coffee and chat. We then headed off up SH1 – did not want to run out of daylight so drove straight to Taihape.

When we arrived we were to have lunch then meet in Huia Street ready to head over the Gentle Annie. We were met in Taihape by two cars from Auckland – thanks to Grant, Lee, Glenn and Linda for joining us on our weekend.

About 12.45 we headed over the Gentle Annie. This road goes from Taihape to Napier. Our first stop was Springvale Suspension Bridge. This bridge spans over the Rangitikei River and is 61 Metres.

We continued over the Gentle Annie and near the end of Taihape Road we stopped to make

Report & Photos by Sharon Ewing

sure everyone was safely out before heading into Hastings.

We settled into our accommodation and had a few drinks outside before heading back to get ready for dinner. Everyone was picked up by taxi and taken to Clubs Hastings where we had a great Buffet dinner.

Sunday morning dawned, a little cold but the sun was out. By 9am everyone was gathered and we were ready for a small drive then Brunch. We said good bye to Grant & Lee who were heading back to Auckland. We were then joined by 2 cars from Hawkes Bay.

We headed off. It was a great start for whoever was reading the instructions – all the cars except about 4 of us went the wrong way. Never mind all the fun of it, at least we ended



up at Te Mata Peak for a photo shoot and great views. We then headed down to Off The Track for brunch.

After Brunch we said a few more good byes Glenn and Linda were heading home, and a few from our club staying in Hawkes Bay another day.

We drove back to Havelock North and headed out on Middle Road, pass the Patangata Tavern and into Waipawa, then on the other side of Waipawa turned off onto Onga

Onga Road and went through to Onga Onga.

This is where everyone departed, said our good byes and headed home.

Thanks heaps everyone who joined in on the weekend, especially 2 cars from Auckland and 2 from Hawkes Bay.

We had a great weekend, with lovely weather and the company was fantastic.

Also thanks to all for your kind words of thanks, either in person, email or phone calls.

We have got such a wonderful club. ●



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Auckland

Report & Photos by Allan (Booty)

Recently during Covid lockdown, keen Auckland members Hugh and Fiona Lemmon's daughter Rachel got married to James at home.

Attendance was limited to 10 people but that didn't stop Auckland Coordinator Allan arranging for 4 cars to also attend, albeit briefly, towing noisy cans and handing a card on behalf of the MX-5 club to Rachel, plus erecting a sign in the front yard. It was a lovely surprise to all concerned and shows you meet the nicest people driving MX-5s. And the Lemmons used their NC as a wedding car.

There's a nice back story to this. Rachel originally owned an NB and through that



association Hugh and Fiona decided to buy an NC and joined the club. Rachel is now thinking about owning another MX5 again! ●



WAIRARAPA TOUR & CASTLEPOINT



SEPTEMBER 20TH, 2020

We started off 6 of us from the Wairarapa at Wild Oats for breakfast, before heading off to Featherston to meet the Wellington area cars.

As we arrived they were all arriving, 39 cars today, such a great turn out and wonderful weather also.

We were joined by some cars from the Manawatu club also, plus Richard from Manawatu had the first MX-5 in New Zealand for Mazda's 100 years. He was testing driving in his role as a journalist.

From Featherston we went SH53 to Martinborough then out through Longbush, Gladstone then for a great drive out to Castlepoint.

Thirty nine cars pulling into Castlepoint, no wind, some stopping at the shop, toilet stop then a walk along the beach.

A few made the walk up the lighthouse. Great views up there, watching some jetskis and kayaks down below.

With about sixty people for lunch it was going to take a while for the country pub Whakataki to keep up with orders, so some went early for lunch. The last dozen of us arrived just after one and quite a few had already headed off home.

Thanks to everyone for coming out on this great Wairarapa drive, hope you all had an enjoyable day. ●

Report & Photos by Sharon Ewing



SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2020

Kaimai Café (Launch Site)

T minus 30 minutes: Coffee, cake and conversation for MX-5 pilots and passengers.

T minus 5 minutes: Call down to Scotty in engineering to fire up the engines.

T minus 0 minutes. Launch. We are on our way over the Kaimai Range. 12 MX-5s with 21 people on board.

Temporarily detained at Karapiro Dam

A black hole (red traffic light) formed over Karapiro Dam, which detained a few MX-5s, and a Holden Monaro in orbit, before breaking free. The detainees used their global positioning system (GPS) to navigate to the Space Centre. We lost no MX-5s, or the Monaro, and unified the flotilla upon landing.

Space Centre at Kihikihi (Highlights)

Interactive educational displays and memorabilia abound. Spent time landing a lunar module, trying not to crash, and still leaving enough fuel to get back to earth. Looking back at earth through the virtual reality headset. If you never get into space, this is the next best thing. A quick glimpse of the sun through a protective filter. We could not exist without the sun, so it is a worthy highlight. I could spend all day here, but we have lunch booked and a short trip to Arapuni.

Bay of Plenty / Tauranga

Report & Photos by Ross Hollman

Rhubarb Café at Arapuni

The Café was busy. Bicycle, motorbike and MX-5 owners all deciding it was a great place to stop. A few meals took a lap around the solar system before turning up, but it was worth the wait.



Helen showed great restraint in not eating her caramel slice while waiting for her chicken burger.

Homeward bound

Back over the Kaimai Range to Tauranga / Katikati / Te Puke or Mamaku Range to Whakatane.

Another successful mission completed. ●

Above left: Space Commander Theo of the Monaro 2. Above right: Space Commander Steve of the ND2. Below: Mission Control



KAPITI CLUB WEEKEND TO DRIVER TRAINING DAY

OCTOBER 1ST, 2020

We started Thursday morning by meeting at Woolshed Cafe in Sanson, 6 cars from Kapiti club and joined by Guy from Manawatu club. After a coffee and chat and deciding which way to go, we were off on our weekend to Hampton Downs.

We took the back roads through Fordell over to Wanganui and up to Ohakune.

We arrived in Ohakune about lunch time so went to the Eclair shop since some had not been there.

After lunch we headed up the mountain. The car parks were full, school holidays of course, so just turned around and drove down to where we could stop. Had a play in the snow, then headed back down. Then drove on to

Driver Training Day

Report & Photos by Sharon Ewing

Tamumaruni. Followed by a walk, happy hour or two then off to the RSA for dinner.

Friday morning we decided to go up through Aria, another great back road stopping Piopio for breakfast/morning tea.

Then out to Raglan. Went for a walk to the beach. After lunch headed up Highway 22 to Pokeno. Two great days driving, with lovely weather, with great people.

Saturday morning getting ready to go to Hampton Downs we could see the adrenaline starting to pump. ●





OCTOBER 3RD, 2020

I've done the last 4 driver training days and as soon as registrations come out for the next one I will be booking again.

Why?

The first 4 had me sharing the car with each of my 2 children and my partner (one at each event). They were very satisfying as each learnt new skills and did something outside their normal comfort zones. My children are pestering to have another go...

This time I was able to assist my good friends David and Dee Barrett and they were very willing pupils. Watching skills and confidence grow in both of them was worth the price of

Driver Training Day

Report by Allan (Booty Zoom Zoom)

Photos by Sharon Ewing

entry on its own.

I got to briefly share my modified ND with a few friends and they shared their cars – all in a safe controlled environment

But mostly the opportunity to give the car some real jandal and push it and myself to their respective limits is what drives me to come back. Flicking traction control on and off, trying different lines, braking right on the limits,





competitive rivalry amongst mates, that's what it's all about for me.

Having the opportunity to do so in a controlled environment is priceless and I really appreciate each time just what special little cars these are.

I love watching and being a part of the red mist descending as everyone puts their game face on for hot laps, tightens their helmets, then push play.

My poor tyres however may not make it through the next WOF... Oh well the price we pay for fun is worth every penny.

Driving out of Hampton Downs at a responsible speed again is ok as I have had my adrenalin fix for now. ●



WHAT A FANTASTIC DAY!

Driver Training Day

Report by Guy Brandon

Photos by Sharon Ewing

OCTOBER 3RD, 2020

The headline neatly sums up my thoughts about the MX-5 Club driver training day (DTD) held at Hampton Downs. This was my first DTD after 10 years owning MX-5s.

The organisation for the day provided all the information I required and, having followed the advice re tyres and brakes, I arrived at the track ready for whatever the day would bring.

I travelled up from the Manawatu with some members of the Kapiti group over the previous two days. What a great bunch and many thanks to them for their friendship and the laughs.

The roads travelled sure helped warm us up for the DTD events. Saturday was clear and sunny at the track and that was a good omen for a great day.

My day started with the slalom event and I felt this was a good way to start off. Not too complex and helped focus our group on what was to come. I was impressed with the range of abilities on display and how everyone was giving it their best shot right across the morning's events.

After the slalom we moved onto the gymkhana. We had been distracted during our slalom by some of the antics of the group before us. Lots of revving engines and squealing tyres. I couldn't wait to see what this was about.

For the uninitiated the gymkhana took a little to get your head around and the first two to try it out showed the rest of us how easy it was to get confused. I really enjoyed the challenge this presented and managed a reasonable improvement across my two runs.

Next was cornering. This event was one I was looking forward to and it didn't disappoint. The feel I could get from my tyres while cornering and pushing was awesome. This was a great lesson for what these cars can do when required. I felt in control almost all the time haha.

The cornering activity was a great lead in to braking and this was the other morning event I was looking forward to. Taking the



opportunity to really see the ABS in action and feel how it works was a great experience. Being encouraged to try gentle steering while under heavy braking was a highlight too. It works!

After a break for lunch we headed back to the track for the 10 minute sessions in loosely graded groups. For many this was what they'd been waiting for all day and I was certainly one of those. The track time allowed us to put our learnings from the morning into practice, particularly braking followed by cornering or just throwing it in as some were doing.

I felt the third session was my best as I followed another driver who I'd seen was a little faster than I was. Following him and watching when he braked, or not, helped me a lot, particularly through the Swampy corners.

The 10 min sessions were followed by the hot laps which needed to be split into two groups as this was a popular session. Those taking part were required to wear a helmet but could go as fast as they wanted.

With the Hampton Downs Club circuit being quite short it seems that the speeds weren't too different but it was soon clear that those out there were being more aggressive in their driving. More spins and a couple of offs occurred but no real damage done as far as I'm aware.

So, that was it! My first DTD but hopefully not my last. I'll be looking for other track day opportunities at Manfield to further improve my driving and understanding of my MX-5. I highly recommend this day especially if you haven't attended one before. Zoom zoom! ●





IMPRESSIONS FROM A “NEWBIE”

OCTOBER 3RD, 2020

My green 1990 MX-5 Eunos Roadster has been part of the family for 15 years ... but I had just joined the club as a newcomer in June 2020.

Covid-19 restrictions had resulted in deferral of the AGM meeting and cancellation of the Daffodil Day run and The Ball, so the Driver Training Day at Hampton Downs was my first encounter with the club.

What did I learn as a newbie? Firstly, the dress code ... for the cars ... is very high. The Auckland drought water restrictions were seemingly not an adequate excuse for any lapse. The cars at Hampton Downs raceway were sparkling and gorgeous. The dress code for drivers was more casual ... but in the bright, sunny, calm weather a cap or hat for going top down was essential.

Club members were friendly and helpful. The briefings and organization were conducted with respectful dignity and efficiency.

There is a strong emphasis on safety. The cows grazing nearby were completely unfazed by any driver's speed, noise or driving finesse. The Hampton Downs provided an excellent venue for the event.

Secondly, I learned to my peril that despite a new WoF and extensive servicing just days before the event, my older model was experiencing some frailty. Gearbox and clutch servicing are now being organized.

Finally, I wondered if cars have names? Mine is called “Pesto Alfresco” and loosely translated

Driver Training Day

Report by Lesley Salkeld
Photos by Sharon Ewing

as “green and spicy and to be enjoyed outdoors”.

So Pesto Alfresco and I are looking forward to future events, and perhaps some nationwide touring.

Driver Training was a great experience. Thanks and Best Wishes. Happy driving. ●





THREE LADS ON TOUR

AUGUST 10TH, 2020

Three Waikato MX-5 owners, (Graeme, Denis, & Ken) decided that a winter reconnaissance tour of Northland would be a good idea.

Bookings were made for 3 nights of accommodation and 4 days of touring.

The weather report was not looking good but as we would have lost our booking fees if we cancelled, the decision was made to proceed.

It was fine as we left Hamilton at 9.15am. Us retirees need regular stops, so this was done at Pokeno and Albany, with a coffee included at BP Albany.

Travel was fine on the Motorway, but after the Tunnel it all slowed down. Through Warkworth and the Dome Valley was also slow. However travel was better when we turned off at Wayby Valley road and headed to Mangawhai for lunch.

Then it was on to Mangawhai Heads for views of the Ocean Beach, Whangarei heads and the Hen and Chicken Islands. Amazing residential and commercial development around Mangawhai Heads.

Then it was on to Langs Beach and Waipu Cove. I have spent many summers at Langs beach and still think it is one of the best

Waikato

Report & Photos by Graeme Denton

beaches in NZ.

Stopped at Marsden Point by the Sawdust stack and the oil jetties before passing through Marsden Cove and One Tree Point. There is the waterway development there as well as other subdivisions. Lots of building going on.

Whangarei was entered via the Limeburners Creek industrial area and we crossed the Hatea on the tilt bridge before going north on Riverside Drive to the Town Basin, and north via Hatea Drive. A stop at the Whangarei Falls was worthwhile. The grounds have been made into an attractive park and a lot of water was going over the Falls.

Accommodation was at the Pacific Rendezvous, Tutukaka. This is a magnificent spot and we had a three bedroom apartment with a view up the harbour. Dinner was fish and chips from Ngunguru !

The rain started that night and pretty much continued all the next day.





We travelled via the coastal loop road via Matapouri, Woolleys Bay and Sandy Bay. Luckily we were able to drive around several places where mud and rocks had come down on to the road. At Hikurangi we joined SH 1 before turning right towards Russell.

On the Helena Bay hill there is a very nice Cafe and with top class Art and Sculpture. At Helena Bay there was so much water going out that the sea was a muddy brown. At Oakura there were minor slips but we got through and went on as far as Ohawini Bay. Back on to the Russell road at Tutaematai we came across flood waters across the road.

We waited for 30min to see if it would recede but when a truck came through with water up to its headlights we decided to back track. While we had been waiting, pigs came out of the local farm and wandered around us, obviously impressed by the cars.

Strangely, when the farmer tooted his car horn the pigs all returned to the farm and followed the farmer up the drive.



We had to go all the way back to Whakapara and then turn north for lunch at Kawakawa and on to Paihia and Waitangi for petrol and photos. It was then on to Russell via the Opua car ferry. Accommodation was at the Russell Top 10 which was of the usual Top 10 standard.

Dinner was at the beautiful old Duke of Marlborough. My pan fried Hapuka was superb. The original Duke started in 1827 but after 2 fires this is now the third Duke. The current Duke was built in Cable Bay in 1875 for telegraph workers and shipped down the coast in 1932 to its current position.

The intention on 12th August was to travel to Warkworth and stay the night there before exploring the Kaipara area. However Covid-19 put a stop to that.

After morning tea at Kaikohe (where it was still raining) we travelled down the Maungakahia road to Maungatapere where we visited the Packard Museum. This is a huge collection of Packard cars but also many other makes of cars, trucks, and machinery. Tom, our guide, spent two hours with us. The visit was well worthwhile. Lunch was had next door at "The Office", being the office of the Dairy Company many years ago.

Aiming for home we abandoned our trip out west to Dargaville and went through the Otaika Valley to SH 1. It was to be a run from there straight home. However, not to be!! A Covid road block north of Wellsford took 1 hour to get through! Then another block at Bombay which took 2 hours to negotiate. Denis was lucky, in that he was in a lane which allowed him to escape to the left and avoid the road block.

I was home at 8pm after a total trip of 980 km. Fuel average 6.5 litres per 100km.

A trip with a difference! ●



JOYRIDES AND MUSEUMS

August adventuring found the Kapiti MX-5 Club stepping back in time with a visit to the Wellington Tramway Museum located at Queen Elizabeth Park.

Thirteen cars met up at the venue and we started with morning tea and some introduction and background information from Henry, sharing his vast knowledge and enthusiasm about the work involved saving these fine examples from the scrap heap.

This of course greatly depends on dedicated volunteers and funding received from Lotteries. Then it was off to the ticket office to buy our tickets and all aboard where we eagerly awaited our departure.

Excitement equal to that of a school

Kapiti Coast

Report & Photos by Gaye Forster

excursion ... lots of smiles and chatter as we were transported back into a bygone era. Our club member Mike pointed out the Ginger ale advert, unique in the way it grabbed your attention once we were on our way, the cap making its journey rolling from side to side as the tram swayed along.

We stopped to view the U.S. Marine Corps memorial where during the Second World War a division of American Marines were based at the Paekakariki Camp near McKay's Crossing.





Each small hut about the size of an average garden shed accommodated four marines – too bad if your buddies stacked their zzz’s.

Once the joyride was over we ambled through the museum and beyond into the “nerve centre” (aka workshop) where the restorations were in progress. An original 1904 is current being reborn. This grand old lady is a combination train with a saloon and open area with bar. Wearing her original colours, transport ivory complemented with Bandarilo red and the Wellington City coat of arms she promises to be a stunner. No modern gadgetry for this dame, handbrake wheel is wound to engage magnetic braking through motors. The craftsmanship is impressive and so is the estimated value of \$1 million once complete.



Thank you Ceinwen and Godfrey for organising a very interesting excursion. ●

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Do you have a trade, job or skill that you think others may want to use? Trade Off is exclusively for Club members, and it's free to list! Simply email your BRIEF ad (up to 50 words) to topdown@mx5club.org.nz and put Trade Off in the subject line.

From the Committee

I was recently reminded during a discussion with a Regional Co-ordinator that the summary reports from National Committee meetings had not been published in TopDown for a while. I could blame this on COVID-19, which is true up to a point in that several meetings have been cancelled since the beginning of 2020, but is really due to an oversight on my part.

Since the last report in 2019, Committee meetings were held on 21 November 2019, 20 February 2020, 18 June 2020, 6 August 2020 and 17 September 2020.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Regional Co-ordinators for Manawatu (Philip and Tania Stewart) and Nelson/Tasman (Gaylene and Brian St John) both resigned from their positions over the Xmas break. All members in these two regions were emailed individually to try and find replacement co-ordinators. To date this has not been successful.

To recognise the contribution the Regional Co-ordinators make to the Club, it was proposed and agreed that with effect from the 2020/21 financial year, Regional Co-ordinators should receive free membership of the Club while in the role.

On behalf of the Club, Sharon and Keith Ewing attended the Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Motoring Clubs, which was held in Wellington in August.

MEMBERSHIP

As at the end of the 2019/20 financial year the Club had 380 members. As happens every year, somewhere between 25% and 30% did not renew their memberships for the 2020/21 for a variety of reasons. However, as at the September 2020 meeting there were 313 fully paid up members. It was noted that, despite COVID-19, this was 12 more than at the same time last year.

A new Membership card format/image was introduced this year, and as noted in the Committee report from Issue 5 of 2019, the validity date was changed to be in line with the Club's financial year end date.

An enquiry had been received from a member as to whether it would be possible to include the name of the Region on name tags. To do so would require a bigger tag, with a significantly increased cost, and as the benefit would only be for events where regions were joining together, it was decided not to pursue this.

FINANCIALS

As at the end of the 2019/20 financial year the cheque account balance was \$15,035 and savings account \$38,945.

As at 17 September meeting, cheque account \$28,977, savings account \$38,950.

NATIONAL EVENTS

The 2021 Nationals, as noted in TopDown, are planned for Rotorua in March 2021. The Bay of Plenty organising committee has prepared a budget and has been organising events for the weekend. However, it has not been possible to open registration yet as the venue (Rydges hotel) is current being used for COVID-19 managed isolation. The expectation is that this will be completed at the end of 2020 with the hotel back in normal operation by the beginning of February 2021. As soon as this can be confirmed one way or the other, all members will be notified.

This year's Driver Training Day was held at Hampton Downs on 3 October. Reports on this event are elsewhere in this Issue of TopDown.

The Annual General Meeting was not able to be held at its usual date of end June/early July due to COVID-19. It was re-scheduled for 22 August but unfortunately had to be postponed again due to the Auckland lock-down. It is now scheduled for 1 November.

TOPDOWN AND WEBSITE

TopDown continues to be well supported with regular contributions of reports and photographs from the Regions. The "For Sale" section has a small but regular turnover of vehicles and parts for sale. A photo galley section was added in early 2020.

Following several requests from members to be able to receive both digital and printed copies of TopDown, and an investigation into the cost of doing this, it was decided to offer the option of both formats from the beginning of the 2020/21 year.

MERCHANDISE

A special run of caps and polo shirts for the 30th Anniversary of the MX5 was offered in early 2020.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Glenn Harris, General Manager Marketing, resigned from Mazda in February 2020 to take up a position with the NZ Warriors. Glenn has been a fantastic supporter of the MX5 Club over the past 15 years and a small memento has been made to recognise our relationship. This was to be presented to him at the (postponed) AGM, and will now be done at the earliest opportunity.

– Keith Jones, President



OCTOBER 3RD, 2020

Huge thanks to Keith and all the helpers for making such a fun day and a chance for this new boy to meet some new and old friends.

I have only recently purchased my latest MX-5 and re-joined the club. It was great to meet new friends and an old friend whom I first met in 1981 and had not met since.

It was a day of fun and learning about cornering, braking distances, slalom, gymkhana and circuits. 100kph on the track seems so much faster than 100kph on the road, and

noticing stopping distance difference between 50kph and 100kph.

I was amazed at the knowledge of the seasoned petrol heads and how willing they are to share it. I realised how much I have to learn (especially about tyres!).

I look forward, hopefully, to the next meet and wonder if the experts could run an advanced driver training course? ●

Report by John Knappett

Photo by Sharon Ewing

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