

TOPDOWN

2022

Issue 3



DRIVER TRAINING DAY 2022

**PLUS!
THE WOOLSHED CAFE
HAPPY LITTLE SPORTS CARS
ROADS JUST MADE FOR MX-5S
WEST-EAST-WEST WEEKENDER
THE MOST SPECTACULAR DRIVE**

Official Magazine of THE MX-5 CLUB OF NEW ZEALAND
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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-ordinator – Ron Bol, membership@mx5carclub.co.nz

A warm welcome to our newest members

Northern / Auckland

Wendy & Nikolai Voegelin
Graeme Head & Jane (Jin) Zhou
Natalia Valentino & Gerald Delany
Kevin & Liza Laurie
Robert Mercer
Bill & Suzanne Child
Russell & Jamie Walton
Jeffrey & Isabelle Williams
Andrew & Jo Mortimer
Pam Mitchell

Waikato / Hamilton

Gary & Tracey Olivier
Graham & Catherine Main
Wayne & Robin Johnston
Wayne Haggart

Bay of Plenty / Tauranga

Judith Good

Hawkes Bay / Napier/Hastings

Stewart & Averil Ford

Taranaki

Thomas Cartier & Leisa Betts

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.

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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 MX-5 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 MX-5 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.

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MX-5 Club of NZ Life Members

Name	Region	Awarded Life Membership
Bob McCaulay (deceased)	Northern	
Howard Fox	Northern	
Larry Young	Northern	
Lawrie Copp	Kapiti Coast	
Gary Wood & Alison Harold	Waikato	2001
Willie & Anne Williamson	Northern	2007
Kevin & Glenys Everitt	Hawkes Bay	2010
Nigel Every	Waikato	2009
Bronwyn Wilkin	Central Plateau/Manawatu	2010
Peter Glover	Southland	2019
Sharon Ewing	Kapiti Coast	2019
Morrin Leyton	Northern	2019
Brenda & Martin White	Northern	2019

ANZAC WEEKEND RUN REPORT

The warm days of summer are starting to fade with autumn definitely in the air. A cool start to the day, but mostly fine in the forecast. So, tops down and off to Kaponga Primary School and a car show with craft and food stalls for their fundraising efforts.

Local population, marginally greater than the proverbial 2 men and a dog, and by our arrival on time for the start and already around 180 cars on display in the school paddock. Hot rods, vintage cars, various European and Japanese makes and models, American 'sports' cars and big tail-finned sedans all mixed in with an extensive range of Holdens and Fords. A PC Vauxhall Cresta and a Valiant Charger, both cars my Dad had when I was a kid, almost brought a nostalgic tear to my eye.

After an hour or so, 6 MX-5s made their escape and headed to Stratford. A roadside stop at Cardiff for a short bush walk to the Waingongoro River. In times past a weir in the river allowed the local dairy company to draw water from the river by way of a ram pump system, up the hill to the now derelict factory.

Back in the cars and on to King Edward Park in the town. A slightly longer bush walk included two crossings of the Patea River. The one by swing bridge provided careful management around timing of their crossing by a couple of our number who, it turns out are not too keen on that particular bridge type. Back in the cars and it's on to Inglewood.

Picnic lunch at the community funded, built and run mini putt course, which has recently been opened. Open but under cover it is proving to be

Taranaki

Report by Jock Sutherland
Photos by Lesley Sutherland



very popular. The holes all feature local landmarks and I can say without fear of contradiction that trying to sink a ball in a hole, on top of a stylised conical mountain, is just not that easy! However a lot of laughter and banter before Grant R produced the

lowest score of our day (still some way off the best score recorded at the course so far). Carol was next best, with Thommo completing the podium, with those two also sharing the voucher draw.

Thanks Nora for a lovely day's run. The holiday weekend clearly made for a smaller group than usual, but that allowed for some really good interaction which more than made up for it. ●



From the President

This edition will probably arrive just after the AGM on the 10th July. It's fitting to do a bit of a summary from my first year as President.

Firstly, a huge thanks to all the members of the club who make it feel like a big family – it's you who make the club. Smiles and hugs (when seeing new and familiar faces) – when allowed – is part of belonging to this MX-5 community

A very special thankyou to the Regional Coordinators who I know put hours of their own time making things happen. You are the glue.

As a National committee we had a number of firsts this year and I would like to outline a few of these.

We ran our monthly meetings online – initially via zoom but for the past 6 months on a platform called Discord. For those of us who remain technically challenged it was sometime chaotic at times and also occasionally hilarious as people searched furiously for that elusive mute/unmute button.

What it did mean however is greater involvement of people within the club spread throughout NZ so we felt more like a National club. It certainly helped those of us spread from Albany to Waiuku with not having to brave Auckland traffic to make meetings



and the resulting fuel costs that these entail.

We had a motto of "Better than Before" which essentially meant that in everything we do/plan to do we try to make continuous improvement.

It was and is never intended as a criticism of past efforts, and ranged from simple things as more robust and meaningful reporting, focusing on areas that would improve our members' experiences with the club, having plans in place that we could keep track of progress etc.

I have to thank all the Executive and committee members who each in their own way added value. It's great that we have different views and robust discussions on how to make the club better than before and that all of us were aligned in seeing that through. For many, you stepped outside your comfort zones – thankyou. Some made huge contributions and you know who you are.

We have introduced a number of things. Here's a sample.

Offering a new fee structure and at the time of writing its pleasing to see the 60% of members taking up the more economical digital option

Providing Regional coordinators with a quality First aid kit and extinguisher plus offering to pay for one or more members to attend a roadside First Aid course.

Bringing in the \$40 petrol voucher for every region to use at their monthly club runs in a way that works best for them.

Providing a free gift of a quality drink bottle to every financial member – the catch being you need to attend a run to collect it! Those who have theirs have provided great feedback.

For a bunch of volunteers, there's never enough time to do all the things we would love to do so whomever is involved in both the Executive and Committee after the AGM won't find a shortage of things to focus upon in making the club "Better than Before"

Meantime on a wet and cold evening it's back to online and finding more goodies to add to our various MX-5s which no matter how good they are, always seem to be looking for something better.

– Allan Boot, President

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LADIES' RUN TO HIGH TEA



A gaggle of 20 bubbly ladies met at the Dinsdale Shopping Centre one sunny and cheerful May Saturday, all set for a fun outing. Having had to postpone the run earlier this year because of Covid concerns, it was a relief and a liberating experience to now be participating in this run.

The gaggle was spread across 14 MX-5s of varying generations (both the cars and the ladies – wink-wink!). Our gaggle, full of smiles and friendly, welcoming faces greeted each other and introduced our guests while awaiting our departure for the run, which culminated with high tea at the delightful Willow Glen Café.

We couldn't have ordered a nicer day weather-wise as we departed the shopping centre's car park at 12pm, heading off on our adventure. Davina, my co-pilot on this occasion, is my long-time friend who I've known since 2003. Truth be told, we chatted up a storm as we righted the wrongs of our world as we went, giggling like 2 schoolgirls making the drive go by in what felt like a blink of an eye!

The run's route rambled through the Waikato countryside on a day that one could only describe as the most perfect topdown weather – with a maximum temperature of 21 degrees Celsius it was sunny and warm, just right.



Waikato

Report & Photos by Karin Merrifield

The route wound gently along at first, just easing you into the “comfort zone” of the drive. Just then it perked you up into some lovely bends and rises, flowing into the kind of roads our little beauties adore and thrive on.

Our journey led us through the environs of rural Waikato: Ohaupo, Mystery Creek, Matangi and all the way to the outskirts of Gordonton where the Willow Glen Café is located.

We arrived momentarily at around 2pm and feasted on rather generous high tea platters and refreshing coffees and teas. Many thanks go to Maureen for navigating the run route and organizing the spectacular high tea for us. ●



POOR WEATHER, SO PLENTY OF CLEAR ROADS!

Bay of Plenty / Tauranga

Report & Photos by
Amanda and Pete Farrell

It was a Tops Up sort of day !
First lesson when offering to organise an MX-5 run is make sure your WOF is up to date ! We realised a week ago that this was due and unexpectedly it failed. Unfortunately due to covid we were unable to get it sorted before the run! So instead of our dark blue NC MX-5 with its sparkling new wheels leading the run we had to use our SUV!

Due to the time of year and change in weather we were expecting a low turn out but were pleasantly surprised to have 24 members and 13 MX-5s.

The majority of us met at Nourish Cafe at Te Puna with grey skies and rain looming but a rainbow towards the Kaimais promised a brighter outlook.

After coffee, cake and a briefing we headed along SH2 through Katikati and Athenree Gorge. We then went across country past the Waihi golf club, winding our way through rolling countryside to rejoin SH2 at Waikino. As the weather was pretty miserable the traffic was light so emerging back onto SH2 over the one lane bridge was quite straight forward.

We followed the Ohinemuri River through the steep sided gorge to Paeroa Domain where we had a relief stop and met Ken from Te Awamutu.

After a brief stop and a chat we quickly returned to our vehicles as the rain decided to make an appearance.

We retraced our steps back to the roundabout

and took the main road (SH26) towards Te Aroha, pulling over briefly for a line up and photo shot. The run then continued through Otway and Waihou to Waharoa. Our route took us across flat farmland predominantly used for cattle farming. Many trees lining the roads and in the distance showed signs of the change of season as we move into Autumn.

We crossed the plains in dry conditions but could see the Kaimais to our left shrouded in grey cloud. There was the odd glimpse of blue sky but sadly the sun never made an appearance.

At Waharoa we had a quick pit stop and then followed long and winding roads across more undulating country via Richmond Downs to Tauwhere.

A couple of cars along the route took the opportunity to put the top down but others weren't so brave!

From Tauwhere we followed Victoria Road to St Kilda on the outskirts of Cambridge where we arrived at 1pm for lunch at St Kilda Cafe and Bistro. This is a relatively new cafe nestled in a large subdivision with plenty of parking.

The cafe was light, warm and inviting and the menu, although small, offered sufficient variety to accommodate us all.

All in all everyone seemed to enjoy the run, despite the straights, and feedback about the cafe was very positive.

Happy to get our first run under our belt but a big lesson learnt! ●



GROUPS OF HAPPY LITTLE SPORTS CARS



Kapiti branch's May run had a soggy start. Our usual meeting spot at Murrayfield cafe had kindly agreed to open early for those of us who required a coffee and maybe a cheeky treat from the cabinet. Imagine our dismay upon arriving to find a small lake where the carpark used to be! The whole thing was underwater and the cafe had to remain closed.

Sharon shepherded us down the road to a cafe in Shannon. I'm not sure if they were quite ready for 14 cars' worth of people piling in to their little space but they took it pretty well. Coffee, pie, and shiny new MX-5 drink bottle obtained (thank you!), we had our briefing and were able to set off for real.

Our route took us over the Pahiatua Track and back on Saddle Road toward our final destination in Palmerston North. Dotted throughout the ranges are hundreds of wind turbines. We came right up close to a couple – they cut an impressive figure!

The Manawatu Gorge closed in 2017 after continued slips made the road impassable, leaving Pahiatua Track and Saddle Road as the main roads connecting Palmerston North with Woodville and beyond. As such, they have seen a lot more traffic in recent years – groups of happy little sports cars included! The winding hills and empty back country roads were an absolute joy to drive: exactly what

Kapiti Coast / Wellington

Report & Photos by Leonie Etheridge



our cars were made for.

There was a mild sprinkle of rain throughout the day but not enough to justify putting the top up. Anyway, if you drive fast enough the rain flies right over you. After a lively ramble, lunch at Hokowhitu Cafe was welcome. Set amongst the golf course, the food and service was excellent. It was a superb run with wonderful company. ●



THE ROADS ARE JUST MADE FOR MX-5S

Northern / Auckland

Report and Photos by Club Members

We couldn't have asked for a better day – or a better turnout, with an incredible 40 cars assembling for the drive out of Auckland. I always love seeing the variety of cars we have in the club, from garage queens to daily drivers and everything in between, there is always something interesting to see.

The roads through Clevedon and Kawakawa were perfect for our chuckable little sports cars, with light traffic and a great reaction as we passed some roadside tree-trimmers, everyone was in good spirits and able to run at their own pace. I for one am slowly perfecting the technique of rev-matched downshifts and these roads were a perfect chance to practice – and what a noise when you get it right!

Coming onto flatter roads through Miranda and towards Te Aroha, we had a great convoy going of about 10 cars, including Leon's 30th Anniversary car and Allan's 'lightly modified' RF making good use of the frequent T-intersection and 0-100 squirts (but no more than that of course!)

This was the best convoy I've ever been in – we were all well matched for speed and it was excellent to see so many MX-5s of all generations running together, no one was too slow or too fast.

Eventually we rolled into the wonderful Old Forge Kitchen for a delicious lunch, complete with the requisite bread rolls and fresh carved meat.

Shoutouts to Allan for smoothing the way for a slight overbooking!

I tried to give him the hard word about winning a raffle prize. Don't worry everyone, the raffles are ethically watertight and not swayed by external influence!

We took the easy way home, enjoying a bit of cruise control and sightseeing before blasting back up SH1 to our home in Albany. My apologies to the insect population of the Waikato, your numbers are probably wrecked if the front of my car is anything to go by.

Many thanks to all involved organising this fantastic run, yet another example of how the MX-5 club goes above and beyond to arrange great events everyone can enjoy.

– Kingsley Hockley ●

I have to admit my thoughts on Te Aroha were limited to:

A great bakery which shall remain nameless.

A big mountain with a Radio Mast on top of it – often shrouded in clouds

A golf course where you need both crampons and an oxygen mask to get around.

It's a place you tend to see in the distance but never really go to it.

So when club members Jed and Jenny Wieland suggested a run to Te Aroha and lunch at a café they had discovered way back in pre covid days – I said bring it on.

As it turned out they put together a great route and some interesting options for afterwards.

We had to scupper it twice because of Covid



Kate Lemmon



Brenda White

restrictions but finally on a beautiful autumnal day and a Saturday at that, it was on. Regrettably Jed and Jenny couldn't attend.

Having pre-run it myself to check instructions and make final arrangements I thought the route was simply fantastic so set about "selling it to members"

I needn't have worried that we wouldn't get a reasonable turnout. On the day we had a total of 40 cars which was incredible and a logistical nightmare as the lunch venue was quite firm on 65 maximum. As it turned out with a few heading off elsewhere before lunch we ended up "only" being 12 over and the Forge Café at Te Aroha – a must stop – coped magnificently.

The roads out through Clevedon, Kawakawa Bay, Kaiaua are just made for MX-5s. I won't tire of them and the overwhelming consensus agreed.

Leaving almost dead last – unfortunately for some of us we got stuck behind trucks and boats heading out to make the most of a stunning day so part of it was at a slower than desired pace. Once free of the "traffic" which included lots of Mamils – Middle Aged Males In Lycra (on bikes riding 2 or 3 abreast on narrow roads) – we were able to get cracking.

I had decided to take my Mum out for the day as an early Mother's Day present and as she remarked later, how many 85-year-old women could say they had spent a day in a sports car with the top-down zipping about in a very spirited manner. Mum is no stranger to cars and car club events and simply loved it, revisiting both old and familiar and new and interesting areas.

Eventually we were lucky to catch up to a bunch that was travelling at a nice clip and thoroughly enjoyed the convoy of MX-5s which made for a great sight and some interesting sounds.

After the lovely winding roads, the Hauraki Plains were straight and flat and devoid of traffic. These peat plains, which are mainly dairy farms, have been drained over the years and have masses of canals and pump stations – think Amsterdam. They were dug mostly by hand in the early 1900s by farmers who had won a farm ballot. Nothing handed to you on a plate back then!

The straights are also the area where the NZ land speed record was held by Owen Evans in his Porsche back in 1996 at 348kmph. None of us got close to that number of course.

The café as mentioned was excellent and after



Kate Lemmon



a great meal with plenty of food on offer, the obligatory drawing of the 3 Mother's Day themed raffle prizes and the \$40 MX5 club supplied fuel voucher, people headed off to do different things. We had a visit booked to a local art gallery which uses a lot of metal/steampunk inspiration but the proprietor rang the day before as he had tested positive. That damned covid strikes again.

Some had a good look around town and tried to get into the local hot pools, all fully booked, others stayed the night in Te Aroha or nearby and the balance headed back via a myriad of different routes.

Another great club run done and dusted. Next.

- **Booty – Zoom Zoom** ●

- Te Aroha boasts many Hot Springs and bath houses dating back to 1904. In fact it's recorded that 39k people in 1905 used them.
- There's a really cool art gallery called the Adrian Worsley Gallery but unfortunately, after making a booking for 30 people, Adrian got Covid on the Friday.
- The bakery I used to frequent has gone.
- The Te Aroha climb is still way beyond me even using the Tui Domain track.
- The new cycle trail looks like great fun and utilises the café we lunched at.



Saturday 7th May dawned bright and clear albeit a tad chilly – in other words it was a perfect day for an MX-5 Run with the club out to Te Aroha. For Hugh and me it was a rather early start because we live at the end of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula but that didn't dampen our enthusiasm.

We rocked up to the starting point at Barry Curtis Park carpark with time to spare, which was a relief as we were a bit slow off the mark getting away. We had woken at 4:20 and couldn't get back to sleep so had a very early breakfast followed by a second byezzzz and a great reluctance to respond to the alarm at 7!

There were a total of 40 cars in the run and over 65 folks which was pretty amazing given the horrendous price for fuel these days. There were a couple of cars from the NZ Miata Club, some newbies and a couple of cars from Tauranga that joined us later in the run. I have to say it is a real buzz when you are part of such a big convoy.

The instructions were brilliant but even so I managed to stuff up the very first one and we went sailing through the first roundabout instead of turning left much to the delight of our son Matt and his fiancé Kate in the car behind us! The little toad made sure he posted his video cam footage on our family chat so our daughter Rachel (who sadly was working) could have a great laugh at our expense.

The scenery and roads were absolutely stunning and it was definitely one of the prettiest runs we have been on. We really are very privileged to live in such a beautiful country. And ... wait for it ... I DIDN'T fall asleep like I usually do!

The Old Forge Kitchen was our ultimate destination and I couldn't fault them for the spread they put on for us all. Matt and Kate visited the museum and the hot pools afterwards and said they would definitely go there again, and that this had been their favourite run to date.

So well done to the organisers of this magnificent run and congrats to the winners of the amazing Mother's Day raffles and the \$40 petrol voucher.

Here's to more great runs with great cars and great people!

- **Hugh and Fiona Lemmon MX4ME** ●

DRIVER TRAINING DAY 2022 – PRICELESS



Trish Wiseman

So after the numerous covid postponements here we are on the way down to an event I can't get enough of. I mean it's not often you get the chance to give your car everything its got and doing it on the race track is the right thing to do. It's a chance to see if those improvements work.

Keith Jones does a fabulous job and many many members have benefitted from the work he puts in. The MX-5 Club made a small presentation to Keith at the lunch break to thank him, which was well received.

This year was a similar trip for me in that I travelled down in a small convoy on the Saturday, collected my daughter Annaliese from Palmerston North Airport (she lives in Christchurch) and we shared my ND for the day – something we did 3 years ago as well.

The convoy started as 3 NDRFs, added an NA at the Bombay's and gained another ND at Waiouru. What a fun journey with tops down for all but 35kms of Desert Road sleety cold rain.

Annaliese has become a real MX-5 convert

and recently added her second NA to her growing stable. She is actively involved in the MX-5 scene in Christchurch and competes in the Christchurch car club gymkhana and autocross series. These DTDs allow her to build her knowledge and she was keen to show Dad her improvement.

I tend to sit most of the morning sessions out to ensure others get a good go at things and save myself for full laps after lunch.

There were grins and cheers all morning and at lunchtime the participants were swapping stories and also helping me out by purchasing club merchandise at a sensational rate. Thankyou.

Off we go in the afternoon and it seemed the 100km limit was consigned to the bin almost immediately. The little ND performed flawlessly as we swapped drivers regularly, sometimes with a passenger, sometimes without. The confidence and skill level from my daughter was making me very proud. Like her father, Annaliese is a little competitive and she was determined to catch and pass every other MX-5 out there.

I watched different "newbies" coming in after



Trish Wiseman

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Milan Miletic

**Reports by Club Members
Photos by Club Members**

their sessions and whatever the pace they were all grinning from ear to ear, especially the ladies.

I asked a young guy by the name of Callum Crawley who had helped in the morning with what looked like great advice to come and give me some pointers on the lines I was taking as it was suggested to me “he knows his way around here”. Turns out this local young fellow is NZ’s current Formula Ford champion and a very fast rising star in the motorsport scene.

He was awesome in imparting advice, but the fun began when I said, “here, you drive and show me”.

Now, I like to think I know how to drive quick. Yep, pretty damned good he said and he raved about the balance and handling of my car. But he took its performance to a new level. Traction control was immediately dispensed with and within a nanosecond we were diving into corners way faster than I had been and circulating incredibly rapidly. I’m not allowed to say the top speed but it was significant. He was busy but never flustered and talked calmly about what he was doing as he went.

He threw the car around beautifully. Our MX-5s are a very capable little sports car and mine has now found new limits I didn’t know existed.

That started a trend with Callum being coerced into other cars, notably Everard from Christchurch. Everard is a friend of Annaliese and has an MX-5 cup car which he trailed up to get some experience at Manfeild in.

Immediately Callum got in the data loggers showed FOUR seconds a lap improvement. That in a car that he hadn’t driven and Everard had been pushing as hard as he thought possible. That improved to just over 5.5 seconds quicker. Incredible and so very, very smooth.

To see the grin on Everards face, and later my

daughter when Callum took her out in my car for a few more quick laps. Priceless.

So all too soon we have to put our helmets away and bid our farewells. A bunch of us stayed on and enjoyed another meal at the local Irish pub before hitting the road and sensible legal speeds for the drive home.

Another weekend filled with fantastic memories. Priceless.

– Allan Boot ●

A newcomer’s experience of the MX-5 Driving Training Day at Manfeild on 22 May 2022.

On arriving at 8.40am at Manfeild, my first impression was “What a line-up (of cars and their drivers)!” and I felt a bit intimidated but as soon as I got to the registration desk to hand in the Health and Safety form, Sandra dispelled my fears (well, many of them) with a friendly smile and warm welcome. There were lots of smiles and hellos and I began to relax a bit.

It was a surprise to discover how impeccably well organised the day was. Everything started on time, with the 9am opening briefing from Keith Jones who was very good at doing the welcoming, explaining, and describing how the day would unfold, and what was required of us as participants. It set the tone for the day – enjoy, enjoy, enjoy, safely. Keith had done an excellent job with his emails ahead of the day so I arrived feeling reasonably well prepared, and his briefing consolidated that, but nothing prepared me for the actual exercises. They were something else.

First up was the slalom. It looked hard, and I appreciated volunteer Richard’s encouragement and reminder to have fun. I admittedly crawled around the first time, which must have been tedious for Callum (the racing driver who was willing to sit



Charles Thompson

Driver Training Day 2022 continued

in with anyone who wanted him) and what could he possibly say that would be helpful to such a timid driver! And then I realised it wasn't an exam, but something to be enjoyed.

Next was the gymkhana – were we really expected to memorise the layout of cones and driving sequence that was on the whiteboard? Once I made my first mistake, I was lost and although I got round each cone, it definitely wasn't in the order on the map. So I hauled in husband Dennis to be the navigator for the next rounds, and got it right.

The braking exercise was a shock – I had no idea the brakes would be so 'immediate', even at 100kph, and it was great to discover that really stomping hard on the brakes is both perfectly safe and wonderfully effective. The Amazing Mazda.

Then it was the cornering. Remembering the tip to look well ahead, and not immediately in front, was very helpful because where the eye goes, the rest tends to follow. It was also particularly helpful to have Dennis with me as he's done this sort of thing before (not in a Mazda though) and his coaching on how to approach each corner and drive through it helped a lot. Seeing the 'traction' light come on was a bit alarming but then gave me even more confidence in the car. A Mazda MX-5 may not be a Ferrari but she's pretty amazing all the same. Another tip from Keith's briefing was very helpful – holding the steering wheel at quarter to 3 rather than 10 to 2 gives a great deal more control.

A couple of times it felt a bit rushed when the hooter went and not everyone had necessarily got all their turns, but by now I was having a really good time. All the volunteers at the different exercise points were so friendly, helpful, encouraging and good humoured. And that was the same with the other drivers. By now I'd found out that many of the drivers had done this before, and I could understand why they were back.

Lunch was a welcome pause in proceedings.

And now the afternoon. Circuits. Putting things into practice, at speed and over distance. Keith again gave the tips and safety briefing, reminding us the top speed was to be 100kph and no passing on the corners. The first time round was a



Check out the grin of Kapiti member Leonie Etheridge after her first session of track time. It is simply bursting to get out.

familiarisation one for everyone, then we went into our allocated groups (3 groups) to put what we'd learned into practice during 3 x 15 minute sessions. Being in group 1 was the best as I think we were just 3 cars (all of us newcomers perhaps?) so very non-threatening. Again, having Dennis with me to share his knowledge about braking, turning into and out of the corners (especially the hairpins) and accelerating, was fantastic. Sorry Keith – a bit hard to stick to 100kph on the straights!

I appreciate how the day provides an opportunity to learn more about the car and my own capabilities, which I could never do on a public road. I'd encourage anyone who hasn't done it to see it not as a competition, but as a very enjoyable learning experience.

I loved the prize-giving as a celebration of people and I loved the day. It was as relaxing as it could be for a newcomer, and I'd do it all again. Thanks to everyone for making it such a great day, and a special thanks to all the volunteers – Allan, Keith, Richard, Callum, David, Sandra, Trish, Jock, Hutch. I hope you've enjoyed your well deserved bottles of wine.

– Kaye (and Dennis) McKinlay ●



THE LEADER CHOSE TO IGNORE HIS OWN INSTRUCTIONS

Having last enjoyed the hospitality of the Awhitu Golf Club in March 2015 it was time for another MX-5 tour of the Awhitu Peninsular.

On Sunday 19th June, after days of wind and rain, it was a pleasant surprise to meet with other MX-5ers on a fine, cool, winters day.

After the usual chat and preliminaries in the Rototuna carpark 18 cars departed north, Topdown, at 0930.

It had been explained that the Run notes published were a guide only. This soon proved to be the case as some random back roads were chosen before entering the Huntly bypass at Taupiri.

At Pokeno, the new toilet block, at the southern end of town was chosen for the Hamilton group. We then met up with the Auckland and Thames group at the Northern end. The convoy rules and a brief description of the trip were explained at a footpath meeting. We then turned left on Pokeno road heading for Tuakau. Bollard road to Tuakau was briefly missed by the leader but a quick u-turn solved that and not many would have noticed. The group bunched up and we did a slow parade down the main street of Tuakau. At least 3 residents noticed!

Not far out of Pukekohe we went west on Ray Wright road, which some missed and added to the trip. This part of the trip was through many acres of Market Garden country.

Waiuku is said to be the Gateway to the Awhitu Peninsular. The carpark behind the Kentish Pub was another meeting place and toilet stop. Several Auckland MX-5 members were met there. The Kentish Pub is said to be the oldest consecutively Licensed Pub in NZ. Nearby is the meandering Waiuku river, a tidal inlet of the Manukau Harbour. It was explained to the group that the drive north was a simple matter of following the signs to The Lighthouse. This proved to not be the case.



Waikato / Hamilton

Report and Photos by Graeme Denton (DENTO)

The Leader chose to ignore his own instructions and follow the lead of his car navigation system. This led us to some very scenic country with very little traffic. Places including Kohekohe, Te Toro, Pollock, Awhitu. At times, coming over the top of a hill, and not being able to see where the road went



was a bit exciting. Just as confidence in the leader was waning, a gate was spotted with Lighthouse written on it. Bingo !

A short drive on metal road led us to the Lighthouse parking area which was a bit of a challenge for the number of cars. There was time for several of the group to walk up to the Historic reproduction of the original Manukau Heads Lighthouse and the magnificent 360 degree views. This included Skytower, and Auckland Airport.

The Manukau Heads is the site of many shipping disasters, including the wreck of HMS Orpheus in February 1863 in which 189 lives were lost out of a complement of 259. The worst shipping disaster in NZ history.

After travelling down Boiler Gully road, Tram Gully, and others, we arrived at the Golf Club at about 1245. The Secretary, Bruce Wilson, met us as he had done in 2015 and directed us to a special parking area on the grass. For \$20 our lunch was a choice of either Fish & Chips, Thai Curry, or Pork Ribs, followed by Apple Crumble. It was amazing how quickly the meals came out and how good they were. Thanks were expressed to the Club executive and the Caterer for a great job.

Members were invited to find their own way home. In the writer's case a great trip ended after about 285 km on some great MX-5 roads. ●

LUNCH RUN TO RANGIRIRI HOTEL



Bay of Plenty / Tauranga



On a wet Bay of Plenty morning 10 cars met for morning coffee at Maude's at The Lakes, Tauranga, before we departed for an adventure run over the Kaimais to Matamata in the pouring rain.

At Matamata with fine weather and a bit of sunshine we picked up Ken, a regular who joins us, to make 11 cars.

We then took the back winding country roads to Morrinsville and the chief navigator managed to get the team of cars to the comfort stop in Morrinsville without doing a circuit twice or losing anyone.

On arrival at the comfort stop on the edge of the Countdown carpark we were greeted by a large gathering of Ferrari Cars making their way to Cambridge from Auckland. Parking was a premium but was a chatty lot. As per usual men checking cars out





Report by Dorothy Locke
Photos by Dorothy, Karen and Jo

including under bonnets. From there we headed on back twisting country roads northwards towards Te Kauwhata, taking in some less travelled roads to include up the east side of Lake Waikare. Some of this area was very familiar for the navigator as she

had spent a few years farming there. Then a short sprint south on the old Highway to the Hotel.

Enjoyable lunch, drinks and conversation was had by all. Thanks to Denis who was tour leader on homeward bound.

Down the new expressway, in and round the back of Gordonton and through Scotsman's Valley over the hill to the BOP. ●

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THE MOST SPECTACULAR DRIVE OF THE DAY

Anyone reading this familiar with Kapiti MX-5 Club drives? What do we like to do? Drive our cars on the twistiest, most remote tracks around. This drive scored 10/10 on that front. Also: we love to have a chin wag over a cuppa.

Yes, we got that in spades, so 10/10 on the social scale. And the weather which started out wet and dreary (and very cold) cleared up over the day to make top-down driving in winter a real treat!

At 9:30am, those of us who arrived for breakfast met up at the Salt and Pepper Cafe in Levin, part of the excellent gift and garden centre part of



the Benniks egg conglomerate. We had our own "room" for the 35 people who attended, served spectacularly by the staff. A memorable breakfast, highly recommended. And they have a trampoline on site for those with the correct temperament, energy and ability.

Pam & Terry, organisers of our day out, handed out many of the unclaimed MX-5 drink bottles (an excellent gift from the national club) and drew the prizes for the petrol vouchers. Winners: Peter Foote and Lorraine Trevean. Congratulations! I hope they are a welcome respite from the debilitating petrol

Kapiti Coast / Wellington

Report by Charles Thompson

Photos by Pam Sanson

prices. Today's drive was a case in point – I'm sure I'm not the only one who used up a full tank today!

But where did we go? Surely, the club has driven every back road in the Horowhenua / Manuatu / Rangitikei region before? No! Pam & Terry laid out a stunning route taking us all over the area. I can assure you, it's not all flat, despite the look. What a brilliant route to give our cars, drivers and navigators a real workout.

We started by pottering through Levin, then not far past the "outer suburbs", off we headed to Koputaroa. Not much to see there, so we continued along until that road took us back to SH1, over the first Manawatu River bridge, but turning off before the longer(?) second bridge. Whirokino Road took us inland up the flood plains to Springs Road, then around to the Foxton-Shannon Road. We've been



here before! But this time, we turned off again immediately after the fascinating Manawatu Flood Gates (I'm sure there's an interesting story there for the engineers among us). This time, we're off along Himatangi Block Rd, which is another really good drive (even if a lot of it is straight and flat), and through the sleepy settlement of Bainesse. Who even knew there was such a place?

Just before looping around to SH1 again, we diverted via Kellow Road, running parallel to the famous Himatangi Straights (favourite of NZ traffic cops in days of yore). Just as this long straight country road was starting to get boring, we turned left, then crossed over SH1 heading towards Tangimoana. The western side of SH1 on this stretch follows the floodplains of another majestic river, the Rangitikei. While this road never crosses this river, there is the old (defunct) Scott's Ferry that used to link the small town of Tangimoana with the western side of the river. No more. This day, we hiked up along the river past the back side of the Ohakea Air Force Base, with a lot of construction going on. It's fascinating to see from a distance how this base is growing. We watched a very large plane (Hercules?) land then take off again.



Enough distractions! Back to SH1, through Bulls and not far north, we turned off towards Fielding. Just across the Rangitikei River (our second crossing of the day), we turned north to find the most *spectacular* drive of the day, over some narrow back country roads to the grand Route 54. This took us through Waituna West all the way back to SH1 through what must be the most scenic road on the North Island.

Turning the corner to be confronted with these amazing clay cliffs along the Rangitikei is breathtaking. Crossing the Rangitikei again (that's #3 now) via the aptly-named Vinegar Hill, we relaxed a bit back on SH1. Not for long, though, because Hunterville was just ahead. Turning left on "High" Street (!), we headed off again towards that spectacular river, on a wonderful loop through more countryside. Back on SH1, near Rata, it was fairly smooth sailing back to Bulls (except for one of us whose instructions said to stop at Moomaa Cafe near Marton). Back through Bulls once again, and over the Rangitikei one last time, we reached Sanson. Not long to go for lunch! The Woolshed Cafe, just south of Sanson, was a welcome stop for great food and more chin wag.

Thanks to Pam and Terry for a great day out, with lashings of fun in our cars. ●



WEST-EAST-WEST WEEKENDER

Originally planned for late August 2021, something intervened and led to postponement. March became May when reminded that the Autumn colours, more common on the east coast, could well be looking good then.

So, Friday 6 May saw a select group of 5 cars meet in Stratford ready for a run over the Forgotten World Highway and Gentle Annie route to Havelock North.

Clear and a temperature up to 13 by our 8.30am departure, within 10km we were in the fog that remained a feature off and on well past our Whangamomona coffee (we're not really open yet, but come on in and we'll do you coffee) stop. Temperature stays persistently at about 8, but the fog does make for a kind of spooky atmosphere in the valleys – even if the views from the tops is only of fog and other tops.

Hardly any traffic, if you don't count mobs of cattle and 'free range' goats, and out to Taumarunui for a wee stop. Back on the road and amongst other vehicles, but now a pleasant 18 degrees. Some of the usual main road lunacy (not from any of us of course), but we safely made our Taihape lunch stop. Someone made the most of the shopping Mecca that is the Gumboot Capital before we hit the road again.

Very light traffic again as farmland gave way to forest and then the farms returned as we started to drop down into the Bay. Plenty of trees in various stages of colour change made for quite delightful viewing. Settled in the accommodation before

Taranaki

Reports by Jock Sutherland

Photos by Lesley Sutherland

heading out for deserved drinks and dinner.

Morning arrives and the fog is back! Very heavy dew aided the car "wash" needed to remove the residue of the bovine road traffic. Enjoyed a free morning before heading up Te Mata peak and then taking a run out to Waimarama Beach in the afternoon sunshine. Dinner in the evening followed



by an earlyish night.

Sunday morning was a dewy and foggy morning again, but with the prospect of a home run off the main roads as much as possible, we set off from Havelock North through Patangata and on to Waipawa for coffee and a scone. Mother's day, so eateries were quite busy. Back in the cars, we left HW2 at Waipukurau and touched Takapau (cruised in to have a look at the Oruawharo Homestead) and on to Ormondville and back to the main road at Matamau. At Dannevirke we turned towards the Ruahine Range until Woodville. Opting to avoid the Saddle Road, we headed towards the closed Manwatu Gorge and turned left over the bridge to Balance, emerging at the base of the Pahiatua Saddle. From there we went through to Ashurst for

a classy Mum's Day lunch. Pie and a milkshake.

The afternoon's drive took us through Colyton and Cheltenham up HW54. At Vinegar Hill we hung a left and headed to Hunterville where we turned right and headed to Whanganui via Rataiti and Fordell. Too late for coffee at the garden centre, but Keith and Joanne bought plants (to be delivered) before we made our last stop at Virginia Lake. Said our farewells and generally agreed it had been a pretty good trip in great weather, and for everyone, there seemed to be at least one section of road they had never travelled before. Left everyone to make their own way home, right into the setting sun. Always a delight.

For the record it was 430kms to the East from Stratford, and 441kms for the return. ●

JOANNE AND KEITH'S SCENIC RUN

Meeting the rest of the happy bunch in about 10 cars (arithmetic remains a problem for me) at the Simply Divine Café in Egmont Village for a pre-run coffee, we all prepared ourselves for a mystery day out.

After our briefing it was out onto HW3 and taking the first left being Upland Rd. Much of this road runs along a ridge affording extensive views across farmland to city and sea. Then it's a right turn onto Hursthouse Rd and heading to Inglewood on another high ridge road with extensive views back towards Mt Taranaki.

Emerging on HW3A, just outside Inglewood, we turned left and found our way to Everett Park and a pit stop at a well known local summer beauty spot alongside the Manganui River. No takers for a

quick dip, but Ray managed to pique our interest in his nocturnal activities here in the days of his youth. Sadly not much detail was forthcoming.



Back in the cars and the meandering resumed, Passing Stoney Oaks and Kaimata and on to Tarata. From there we followed the Otaroa Rd through the tunnel and down towards the sea. At Tikorangi we joined the Ngatimaru Rd and headed towards Waitara and HW3. Turning towards Bell Block we turned again at Richmond Rd which took us in to Lepperton and back to HW3A and our lunch stop at the Tawa Glen Café, where a separate room had been set aside for our very nice lunch.

Thanks for a very pleasant run, Keith and Joanne, and for making sure the rain held off until after lunch. ●

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NORTHERN NIGHTTIME RUN

Looking to try something different a bunch of us met up at a West Auckland pub with the intention to do a little run around Auckland at night.

Covid was in full swing and many of the regulars either had it or were worried about getting it so numbers were down a bit, but 13 cars headed off after a natter and for some a meal.

A loose plan was hatched to head out south via the north western causeway, Waterview tunnel and on to Manukau city before heading north, somewhere over the Panmure bridge and then catch up on Auckland's Tamaki drive, before hitting the CBD, the tunnel before the harbour bridge and of course the Harbour bridge.

Best laid plans saw cars getting split up amongst traffic, still quite busy for a 7.30pm departure but almost all managed to get together to spend the time downshifting, revving it up, tooting horns through the lengthy Waterview tunnel. All very childish but loads of laughs.

Most of us don't drive our MX-5s around at night, especially with the top down so we were very lucky that it was a clear but crisp evening. Listening to and hearing sports practices under lights, you could feel the wet dew in the air, heading down Puhinui Road with a 767 screaming its engines aloud as it comes into land and being so close you could count the tyres, was all very different.

Some cars sped past as they reached their turnoff

points to head home- a special thanks to Steve and Jenny who came from way down south to join us. Toot toot and after really splitting up we managed to regroup on Tamaki Drive, marvelling at the lights of Auckland city across the waterfront.

Then it was off and through about

Northern / Auckland

Report and Photos by Allan Boot

300000 red lights, 2 zillion traffic cones in CBD Auckland before those of us heading north could enjoy the Harbour Bridge at night with Tops Down.

Fun, different and lots of smiles. That's what it's all about.

Hope to see many more at the next one. ●



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DRIVER TRAINING DAY 2022 – PRICELESS



Kaye McKinlay – view on arrival



Kaye McKinlay – cornering session briefing



Trish Wiseman – happy day



Kaye McKinlay – reward time



Rosana Houthuesen – rainbows on a deserted Desert Road