

TOPDOWN

2023

Issue 4



KAPITI GO RUGGED



STARTING YOUNG



BOP GO HISTORICAL



HAWKE'S BAY SILT

Official Magazine of THE MX-5 CLUB OF NEW ZEALAND



WAIKATO LADIES GO SOLO



**KAIAUA
MAGIC**

National Committee

President

Allan Boot, 027 260 0667
president@mx5carclub.co.nz

Vice-President

Gary Major, 027 242 6783
vicepresident@mx5carclub.co.nz

Secretary

Leon Barton, 021 666 968
secretary@mx5carclub.co.nz

Treasurer

Sandra Jones, 027 428 4606
treasurer@mx5carclub.co.nz

Membership

Ron & Shona Bol, 021 068 7951
membership@mx5carclub.co.nz

Merchandise

David Barrett, 021 052 5460
merchandise@mx5carclub.co.nz

Committee Members

Marilyn Harp – Northern
marilynharp@gmail.com 021 617 729

Kingsley Hockley – Northern
kingsleyhockley@gmail.com
021 026 59076

Karen Struiksma – BOP
t.k.struiksma@gmail.com
027 342 7189

Jock Sutherland – Taranaki
anlas@xtra.co.nz 027 306 0595

Sharon Ewing – Kapiti Coast
ks.ewing@xtra.co.nz 027 274 4443

Regional Co-Ordinators

Twin Coasts / Whangarei

Lee Keighley
Mobile: 021 675 095
Email: lkeighley@xtra.co.nz

Northern / Auckland

Marilyn Harp
Mobile: 021 617 729
Email: marilynharp@gmail.com

Waikato / Hamilton

Gary and Maureen Major
Phone: 027 242 6783
Email: waikatomx5club@gmail.com

Bay of Plenty / Tauranga

Karen Struiksma
Mobile: 027 342 7189
Email: bayofplenty@mx5carclub.co.nz

Hawkes Bay / Napier / Hastings

Trish Wiseman
Mobile: 027 2839992
hawkesbay@mx5carclub.co.nz

Taranaki

Nora Hunn
Phone: 06 761 8864
Mobile: 027 2160 608
Email: norahunn@gmail.com

Manawatu

Guy Brandon
Mobile: 021 543 605
Email: manawatu@mx5carclub.co.nz

Kapiti Coast / Wellington

Sharon and Keith Ewing
Mobile: 027 274 4443
Email: ks.ewing@xtra.co.nz

Nelson / Tasman

To be advised.

Marlborough

Amy Chilton
Mobile: 021 0855 3453

Canterbury / Christchurch

Annaliese Boot
Mobile: 021 1777 668
Email: canterbury@mx5carclub.co.nz

Otago / Dunedin

Annaliese Boot
Mobile: 021 1777 668
Email: canterbury@mx5carclub.co.nz

Southland / Invercargill

Peter Glover
Phone: 03 217 7187
Mobile: 027 634 3900
Email: verglo@xtra.co.nz

Mazda MX5 Club of New Zealand Inc

PO Box 15551, New Lynn, Auckland
Email: admin@mx5club.org.nz
www.mx5carclub.co.nz

Membership subscriptions – \$75.00 per car, per year for full membership, including full-colour printed TopDown magazine. \$40 digital membership also available. 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

Twin Coasts / Whangarei

Brendan Shine

Northern / Auckland

Dan Cornish
Doug & Sophie Goodman
Daphne & Steve Trevurza
Alise & Craig Inger

Waikato / Hamilton

Aaron Smythe

Hawke's Bay / Napier / Hastings

Lynda & Peter Firn

Manawatu

Rob & Jane Douglas

Kapiti Coast / Wellington

Dave & Jane Foster
Ian & Karen Norman

Nelson / Tasman

Aaron & Maurice Bradley

Canterbury / Christchurch

Gregor & Vicky Klaus
Zak Lawton
Peter Morgan & Rowena Palmer-Morgan
Susanne & Len Holmes

Southland / Invercargill

Mathew McDonald

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.

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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MX-5 Club of NZ Life Members

Name	Region	Date Awarded
Bob McCaulay (deceased)	Northern	
Howard Fox	Northern	
Larry Young	Northern	
Lawrie Copp (deceased)	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 Layton	Northern	2019
Brenda & Martin White	Northern	2019
Keith Jones	Northern	2022

WE'D LOVE TO TELL YOU ABOUT IT ... BUT

Had a great drive in July. Started at Carterton for coffee then headed out Gladstone to Te Ore Ore where we picked up two more cars and carried on to Alfredton then coming in behind Pahiatua where we met Guy from Manawatu with four cars from his area and three cars from Kapiti.

Joined SH2 at Pongaroa Rd then going back roads again before Woodville on Bluff Rd through to Hopelands, Jackson Rd and Gaisford Rd.

We met Trish from Hawkes Bay at our destination. Eighteen cars in total.

We visited a collection which started as a hobby

Kapiti Coast / Wellington

**Report by Sharon Ewing
& Photos by Phil Ready**

and got out of control. This is private so sorry cannot post photos. But well worth the visit.

After an hour we drove back to Tui for lunch. Thanks for everyone joining us today. And to Guy and Trish and members joining us.

Great day had. ●



From the President

Greetings to all our 2023/24 Club Members. At last it feels like the weather is turning for the better.

The third weekend in September saw events up and down the length of NZ with our Dunedin/ Christchurch people having a track experience at Highland Park – in the rain – and each of Kapiti, Manawatu, Taranaki, Waikato and Auckland regions out and about on events. That's a lot of MX-5s enjoying what NZ has to offer.

During the depths of winter it can sometimes feel like "why do we have such a car at all", but just like one good golf shot is enough to get you back on the course again, one good drive very quickly rekindles the enthusiasm levels.

Everyone needs a little indulgence in their lives and our cars are that for many people. Sure they're not always practical but why be boring?

The new National committee for 23/24 is hard at work and have committed to a large and ambitious programme of works – all with the aim of making the club "better than before". Hopefully you will

see and feel some of the improvements over time. Some are big "rocks" others are quick wins.

Coming up we have the National Rally to be held in October at Rotorua with around 65 cars are attending. No matter what the weather brings we will have a great time thanks to the hardworking team from the BOP. We would love more people but fully understand the competing pressures on time and budget.

The annual Show n Shine takes place in Auckland in November – arguably the biggest gathering of MX-5s annually in NZ and a treasure trove of cars both standard and heavily modified. If you can come along we would love to see you.

So, the message from me remains simple. Enjoy the opportunities your local Coordinators put on, the work that the National Committee does behind the scenes, and if you wish to contact any of us don't be shy.

Make the most of every moment enjoying your MX-5 no matter what its condition, whenever you can and send in pictures or post on the club's Instagram and Facebook pages.

Allan Boot (zoom zoom)
President



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THE SUNSHINE CERTAINLY MAKES A HUGE DIFFERENCE

Waikato / Hamilton

We gathered together on a beautiful, cold mid July morning. No rain clouds in sight, what a bonus.

We set off and within a few kilometers we saw the Mormon Temple standing resplendent on the hill. The sight was breathtaking with the sun lighting it up. We continued on to Pirongia where we picked up two more cars.

Travelled through lovely countryside using less travelled roads which made things much easier trafficwise. The sunshine certainly makes a huge difference. We paraded along the main street of Otorohanga, which is known as the Kiwiana Capital.

The main street is always looking lovely, with flower baskets hanging on all the verandahs. Yes, even in the depths of winter.

Making our way back to Hamilton, we arrived at the Classic Car Museum and Jukebox Diner.

Report & Photos by Maureen Major

What a busy place this was. Already in the carpark were the BOP Mustang Club and the MG Club. So we parked MX-5s looking bright and shiny and proceeded to the Cafe. Very busy, thank goodness we had booked a big table but we did have to use an extra one too. While lunching and going through the Museum the Maserati Club arrived, a big meeting of the 'M' cars.

Lunch was excellent and I fully recommend spending some time in the Museum if you are looking for something to do in Hamilton.

A big thank you to Shane and Anne for organising this run.

Oh I forgot to say, Gary and I opted to be 'tailend charlie'. We really enjoyed that, and we didn't have a wee blue dot in our wing mirror, aye Tony. ●



THE ROADS LESS TRAVELLED ... SORT OF

Love driving our MX-5, love the companionship, love the food. Absolutely love getting off the main roads and exploring the back country roads but after 17 years in the club please find me roads that I don't know.

It's incredible to think we've driven most roads in Taranaki but not those that say NO EXIT ... so there's the challenge!

So off we go in July, trucking along the ring road closest to Taranaki Maunga, the Wiremu Road, and the mischief in me kicks in. OK turn left up towards the mountain, not once, not twice, but thrice.

I can hear all the cars behind us saying, "she's gone the wrong way!" But no I haven't, because it's fun exploring new roads, with new views up to our mountain, laughing as we make them do a tight multiple-point turn on narrow roads, and then getting awesome views back down towards the coast.

Taranaki

Report & Photos by Lesley Sutherland

Just try it – it works – have fun exploring the NO EXIT roads.

It's great welcoming new members and showing them our awesome back-country roads, but remember us old timers need stimulating too!

We met up with cars having come the opposite way round the mountain, the lunch at the Opunake Surf Inn was great, the local AGM was so popular we had to close the doors (or maybe it was the draft!), and our Nora has agreed to stay at the helm for yet another year – you're a champion Nora, we

love you for it, thank you.

It was also the opportunity for us to farewell Cliff and Helen Hunt who have been members of the club since 2002. Retirement travels and family are pulling them in new directions. We will miss them very much, but sincerely wish them exciting years ahead. ●



WAYLAID BY ART AND CRAFTS ... AND HISTORY

Our August Sunday BOP members met at The Crossing, Columbus cafe for coffee and catchup on a perfect Bay Of Plenty winters day.

With eleven cars we headed up the Kaimais to meet up with the Waikato Club at Te Aroha for a stroll round the Metal art displayed on the main street. A bonus was the seconds shops were open so some of the team got distracted by these looking at the past.

We came via the Old Te Aroha road which is a perfect MX-5 fun road to drive. Waikato was already awaiting us so it was a quick dash to find a pit stop which are at each end of the town.

Some BOP team members were lucky enough to find a little local craft shop near our stop which waylaid us a little. We then did a quick sprint round the short main street to look at the cleverly made Metal Art.

Then it was off to Forge Cafe on the edge of Te Aroha for a buffet luncheon. In total we had 25 cars. A lovely lineup at the Cafe. Thank you Forge for our lovely Buffet lunch followed by a delicious dessert. ●

Bay of Plenty / Waikato

Report by Dorothy Locke; Photos by Dorothy and Karen Struiksma



OF LADIES AND PARKING ASSISTANTS

At the end of August we had a fun-filled day with just our ladies being granted use of the precious cars. I think partners must be getting used to this request because none of us got instructions on how to drive in a run, how and when to change gears, not to speed, etc.

The day was a lovely, end of winter day. Spring blossoms were starting to show colour and the sun was quite warm. We set off and travelled a number of roads which are renowned for MX-5 driving. The ladies sure enjoyed this. We think the cars did too, much gentler pace but still great cornering. We arrived at the Cornerstone Kitchen Cafe at Cornerstone Alpaca Stud.

What a laugh we had as the 'parking overseer' gave us directions of where and how to park. There was a lot of crouching, arm waving, and verbal instructions. It was beautiful to watch, wish I had videoed it. I got the feeling he had been tipped off and was perhaps encouraged to assist in the parking, but it didn't even stop there as we were shown to a completely separate dining area which was exclusively for us. Probably just as well as lunch became a very raucous affair. No surprises really as we have some wonderfully funny people in our club. Special thanks to Kathy who kept us well entertained with her experiences as a very young ambulance officer.

These stories brought out a lot of other stories and almost everyone had something to tell. I left there feeling rejuvenated after loads of laughter. Helen [our oldest young driver] had just sold her car, the highly acclaimed Sabrina, and was suffering withdrawal so I gave her a call and she jumped at the chance to be my navigator. She also insisted on shouting my lunch, thank you, Helen. Then when it came time

Waikato / Hamilton

Report & Photos by Maureen Major

to pay for my coffee Brenda picked up my tab, thank you, Brenda. I was humbled by this kindness.

We have also been having monthly dinners which everyone seems to look forward to. We have a good turnout every month and won't ever run out of venues that have great food.

As a little extra, on 10 September two cars joined up with Northern Region at Hampton Downs to be taken through the finer details of the Targa Rally NZ. It was then into our cars and off behind a Targa vehicle to travel the amazing roads to the west of the Waikato River, from Mercer to Huntly. We all enjoyed it so much. Frank and Carole told us it was the best run ever, in fact, Frank was still grinning a week later. We have a firm rule of 'what goes on tour, stays on tour', so you are not likely to hear what speeds were reached.

These are some of the things we do in the Waikato to keep everyone actively involved. ●



THE PEOPLE YOU MEET

I work a couple of days here and there at a local mower shop. This becomes relevant later on.

The other day a delightful lady came in and apart from selling her a new mower I learnt a lot about her. She shared some interesting stories which relate to MX-5s.

Carolyn Davidson is the relatively recently widow of Peter Davidson. Those in the know re engines will recognise him as one of NZ's foremost engine builders – such cars as all the Masport Escorts, works Toyota rally cars and all of the top guys.

Also, Carolyn is Rod Millen's sister. Rod of course is folklore in NZ motorsport history and the club enjoyed his hospitality and amazing Leadfoot property in 2019. Peter built many of Rod's engines, one of the last being the restoration of the V6 for Rod's restored 1960s Sandpiper Beach buggy.

Carolyn picks up the story...

In the late 80s my husband Peter was on the service crew of Rod Millen Motorsport and the Asia Pacific Rally team which was based out of Huntington Beach California. Rod was doing rally rounds in Indonesia, Perth, NZ and even Jamaica and India.

Rod won the championship in his Mazda 323 and at the same time he had a brand new Yellow MX-5 at his workshop in the USA and was making accessory kits for it. See the very early picture of Rod and Peter below.

I decided I wanted one and Rod helped ensure I had the opportunity to purchase one of the first few that arrived. I bought one but part of the deal was it had to go on display at different Mazda dealerships, mainly the one on the corner of Wairau and Target Roads. (Carolyn believes her car was used for the

**Article by Allan Boot
and Carolyn Davidson
(photos from Carolyn)**

original photo shoots, even being helicoptered in to some sites!)

We paid \$36k for the car which at the time was a lot given our Milford house was purchased the year before for \$128k. Mazda told us at the time they would only ever make 200.

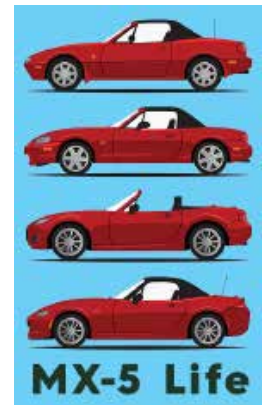
The car was never driven in the rain and was absolutely treasured and treated with kid gloves. I used to drop my nephew Rhys Millen (another motorsport icon – check the latest Pikes Peak) off to school at Rangitoto college in it (which he dined out on) and after school dropped him off at Wrights Outdoor Equipment where he assembled mountain bikes. (That's the shop where I work. – Allan)

We even imported and sold a few of Rod's MX-5 accessories such as Front air dams, spoilers, side skirts and a cool one-piece rear auto deck cover (see brochure).

Towards the end of 1990 I was offered \$42k for my MX-5 but turned it out down, thinking that one day it might become a collector's piece.

I transferred the plate LTLQT from my 1986 Ford Laser Ghia (which I still own) and later went on to sell the MX-5 to a lad from Christchurch for \$32k. In hindsight I shouldn't have sold it as it was fun and "zippy".

Picking up the story again it appears I have rekindled Carolyn's car passion and in particularly



MX-5s as she said she has started looking into pricing. She kindly dropped some photos in for us when we were having an MX-5 club dinner meeting recently and she commented on how happy everyone seemed.

It's a small world and a little conversation goes a long way. I hope we can welcome Carolyn into the MX-5 club very soon. ●



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Taranaki

Report by Jock Sutherland

On Sunday 28th May a beautiful day dawned, ideal for our late Autumn run.

13 cars met in Stratford for a coffee and pre-run chat. A new couple, Craig and Melanie Tonkin, originally from the Waikato club joined us in his and hers MX-5s. Welcome to you both to Taranaki and so glad on your first run with us, we were able to get the tops down and show you some of our amazing views.

Stu led the group out of Stratford, along the Opunake road as far as the Manaia Rd, where the road is closed for a short distance, which we followed down past Hollard Gardens, to Kaponga. Turning right onto the Eltham Rd which we followed until turning up the Auroa Rd towards the mountain. Reaching the Opunake Rd again, we turned left and followed this until we connected with the Wiremu Rd.

We followed this as far as the Ihaia Rd, where we went left to Opunake. A run down the main street to pick up Co-ordinator Nora and continued heading back up to the Wiremu Rd with views of the ocean as well as the maunga right by us. Dropping down again to Okato, we joined SH45 for a short time before heading to the Timaru beach where a few freedom campers were enjoying the day.

Arriving soon after for lunch at Butlers Reef Hotel Oakura. Amazing meals were had with lots more chatting and a few brief notes about what is happening in the MX-5 world shared.

Two of our members had been unlucky not ever receiving a petrol voucher, whereas others have won the draw more than once. Luckily today they both scooped the draw, meaning all members have now won at least one voucher.

Another awesome run around our Taranaki roads and catchup with MX-5 enthusiasts. ●

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GOING RUGGED OVER CLIFFS & ALONG THE COAST

What a miserable August week it had been! We were all concerned that the day would continue the recent mid-winter trend of wet, cold Southerlies. Of course, here we were, headed to the wild south coast as well.

One team even decided the forecast for the day was not great and dropped out of the drive and the lunch. However, that forecast was not at all accurate. As you can see in the photos, we had a cracker of a day, with quite a lot of blue sky. Bonus was that it wasn't all that cold, either.

Tops down for most of us! For some who love the excitement, tops were down even during the infrequent rain squalls.

If you've never been to Ngawi, I highly recommend the trek out near Cape Palliser along the (extremely) rugged Cook Strait coast. Ngawi is a small fishing village with direct access to Cook Strait and a small fleet of large boats. Because of the proximity to the open ocean, and the fierce

Kapiti Coast / Wellington

Report by Charles Thompson

Photos by Karen Herbert, Pauline Stenhouse, Rob Douglas

reputation of the Southerlies, there's no wharf, no boat launch and no moorage. Instead, the boats are all stored right on the rocky beach, each with its own bespoke steel trailer and a tractor or bulldozer to haul it in and out of the sea. The photos don't really give you a good idea of the scale -- these are large boats and the trailers, some with a 20-meter-long tongue connecting to a Cat D4 bulldozer. All the trailers appear to be hand-made, specifically designed for each boat, probably made locally in the Wairarapa or Wellington region.



The road to and from Ngawi (it's a "no exit" road from near Lake Farry) is a challenge and a delight in itself. MX-5s love the twists, and as a typical example of Kiwi road-building, it has its ups and downs! One stretch, though, passes The Putangirua Pinnacles, an area of unique, EPIC rock formations standing and crumbling along the cliff faces and down to the sea. You may recall seeing this other-worldly landscape featured in *The Return of the King* (LOTR #3). The proximity of this eroding landscape to the shoreline means that the narrow road clings very close to the water's edge

and is constantly in need of clearing and repairs. We had to go through especially carefully, more so for those with low-slung NAs! I had hoped to do the Pinnacles track later in the day, but it has been blocked by a major slip all winter.

Our group lunch was back in Martinborough, at the fabulous Vineyard Cafe at Margrain. What a fantastic venue, even mid-winter. I recommend a lunch there on a sunny spring day eating amongst the bright green grapevines.

Overall, a very pleasant day out and a fantastic crowd. Thank you all for taking part! ●



LOSING TOUCH ... BUT OKAY IN THE END

The run planned for August was intended as a rehash of a run I had planned a few years ago. After carrying out a check of the roads, knowing there may be some closures and other hazards we needed to know about, I settled on the route. There was good interest from our region's members as well as one car from Kapiti and three to meet us later from Hawke's Bay.

The day dawned with some sun and cloud but much promise of more sun over in the Bay. Eight cars duly arrived at the meeting point ready for the pre-run brief. Once this was complete, we set off with us in the lead. After travelling over the Pahiatua Track and through Balance the first checkpoint was to be Woodville, to pick up two more cars. Unfortunately, Barry and Cilla experienced some car issues and made the wise call to return home. A later message confirmed they had made it home safely.

Having picked up the first of the additional cars in Woodville we headed off onto the run proper – nine cars in all. The initial section took us east of SH2 for a while before coming back to the main road south of Dannevirke. A pit stop was planned here and provided a good chance to re-group and

Manawatu

Report by Guy Brandon; Photos by Rob & Jane Douglas and Guy Brandon

have a short chat before heading off again. We headed east on the road to Weber before heading north and deeper into the southern Hawke's Bay back country. As you would expect there are some great roads through this area with plenty of twists and turns and changes in altitude too. The accompanying photo of our car taken looking out across a valley was actually taken on the scouting run, but it is such a great shot and shows off the area well. It shows the sun too to remind us of what could have been. We could see blue sky ahead of us all the time but the clouds above us seemed to be keeping pace.

It was about the time we passed through the valley shown in the photo that those in the front group realised those behind had properly lost touch. I wasn't too concerned as there were a decent number of cars in that group and they



had all the directions. We continued on, enjoying the twists and turns and occasional very narrow sections with washouts and slips and even a few sheep. We reached a turn off that looked a good place to wait and see if the other group would appear. Of course, cell service is very patchy out that way, but I tried a call to the 'tail-end-Charlie' anyway but couldn't reach them. After a while we decided they must have been held up by a wrong turn and would eventually meet up with us later. We decided to push on and we hadn't gone too far when I received a message saying they were at the corner we had recently left!

Takapau was our next best spot to regroup and once we arrived the others were not far behind. It turns out we had been split up by a very large flock of sheep that took the second group quite a long time to get through.

The run was taking a little longer than anticipated and we had three more cars to meet in Waipukurau as well as make our lunch venue in reasonable time. This meant a slight detour on SH2 away from the run plan that also meant missing some great roads. A lesson to be learned in there for sure. We soon arrived in Waipukurau for our final pit stop and gathering in the last three cars from the Hawke's Bay region. This brought us to 12 cars to make the final drive through to Waipawa and down beside the river to the

Patangata Tavern, shown in the photos.

This pub is extremely well known and very popular on Sundays. When we arrived, there was very little parking and we were told the wait for food would be quite long. Unfortunately, this put a few off staying and they headed off home. However, those that stayed enjoyed some refreshments and even some food that didn't take anywhere near as long to arrive as we were initially told. I think there was a communication issue that I missed when we first got there. Another lesson to learn.

Overall, a good run and enjoyed by all as far as I'm aware. Thanks to all those that took part especially those that came from outside of the Manawatu to join us. ●



A LONG ROAD TO MAZDA MX-5 OWNERSHIP

I guess with the influences I had while growing up in Masterton, it is not surprising that I followed in my father's footsteps with a passion for motor cars!

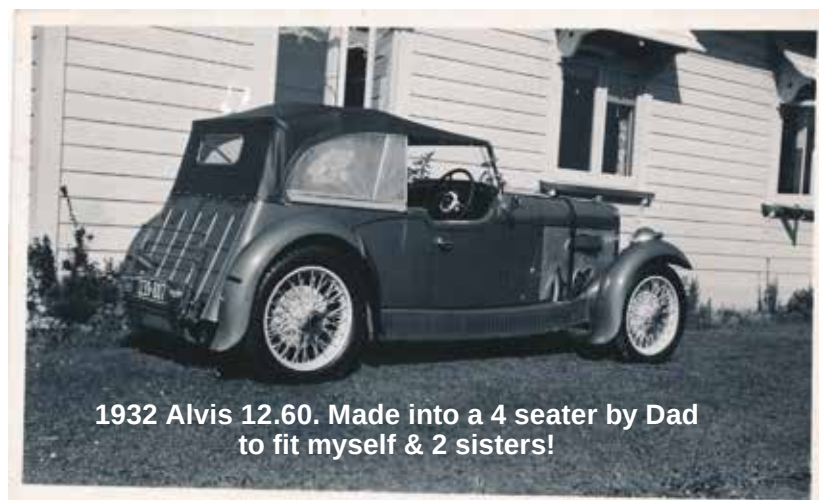
It originally started with a wooden trolley built by dad for me and my older sister. Typically for dad it was more sophisticated than most with a steering wheel mounted horizontally (like the first motor cars). This connected to a front axle beam by a steel shaft, cross member and pivoting steering rods. It also had a brake which worked on a single rear wheel with a hand operated shaft which pivoted allowing a shaped wooden block to push against the rubber tyre of one of the rear pram wheels.

I used this trolley until it was replaced when I was 12 years old by a midget car with an engine, also built by dad! It was powered by a small Briggs & Stratton engine removed from an early washing machine, but with the performance improved by replacing the simple basic original carburettor with



Midget car for my 12th Birthday.

a Villiers carburettor. The engine was mounted at the rear on a hinged platform. This was raised and lowered by a lever mounted externally on the RH side of the driver tightening a belt onto the 'V' pulley fixed to the rear axle shaft. A similar lever on the LH side of the driver tightened a section of belt with spring steel secured to the back. By pulling on the lever, the belt would tighten into a 'V' pulley to



1932 Alvis 12.60. Made into a 4 seater by Dad to fit myself & 2 sisters!

Article and Photos by Rob Douglas Part 1: Early Years

act as an effective brake. A Ford Model A steering box was used to give steering to the front wheels via rose jointed rods and kingpins with small coil springs to give independent front suspension. The body was shaped from aluminium.

There were not many days that I didn't drive my midget car around a track we made in the large paddock we had at the rear of our property. This continued until I was aged around 14 years and could no longer fit in the car!

The very first motor car which I remember was dad's 1932 Alvis TL 12/60. The Alvis was originally a two seater which dad used to compete in hill climbs and sprints organised by the Hawkes Bay Car Club. The photo shows the car, modified by dad to have a rear seat to accommodate myself and two sisters – always driven very fast with no seatbelts front or rear of course! This car had to be sold with the arrival of a brother ... and then much later a second brother.

In 1959 dad started an engine reconditioning business in Masterton, 'Wairarapa Engine Rebuilders Ltd'. Apart from long business hours, most of the rest of his time was spent restoring cars and during the next few years our everyday family transport, in chronological order, included:

Buick Roadster 6. Found abandoned on a Wairarapa farm, it had been converted into a truck for farm use. This wonderful old car was brought back to the workshop on the back of a truck where dad painstakingly rebuilt it to full running order. Much of the original body was missing so dad rebuilt it using a period Buick rear body section with a 'Dickey' seat. The car was used regularly as daily transport and for family camping holidays (using two cars!) to Taupo, Foxton and several other places.

This was the first car I ever drove and became very attached to. I can still vividly recall some of

the amazing features of this old car. The engine was 6 cylinder with huge, long stroke bores, cast in pairs. All of the valve gear was external, including 12 push rods extending to the alloy crankcase and manually lubricated.

The engine was started by turning on a starting switch on the dashboard, this turned on the electric starting motor, you then retarded the magneto advance/retard lever in the centre of the huge, thick wooden rimmed, steering wheel, opened the hand throttle lever a little and then firmly pressed down a spring-loaded foot starting plunger.



Me aged around 7 in the 1918 Buick Roadster on it's maiden trip during restoration by my father.

This engaged a ratcheted drive with the ring gear on the massive external flywheel at the rear of the motor. The motor always started very easily and when warmed up the idle could be set so low that it was possible to hear the clicking of the starting ratchet between each long cylinder stroke!

The accelerator pedal was between the clutch and footbrake which, using rods, applied the external contracting brake shoes on the rear wheels only. There were no brakes on the front wheels. The gear lever extended outside the driver's door with a 'crash' gearbox having three forward gears and reverse.

I got my driving licence in the Buick one week after I turned 15 years old. The traffic officer who took me for my driving test varied the normal route by not getting me to drive down the main street of Masterton, where several of my college mates were waiting. The Buick was sold to someone in

Upper Hutt but, sadly, I have been unsuccessful in tracking it down.

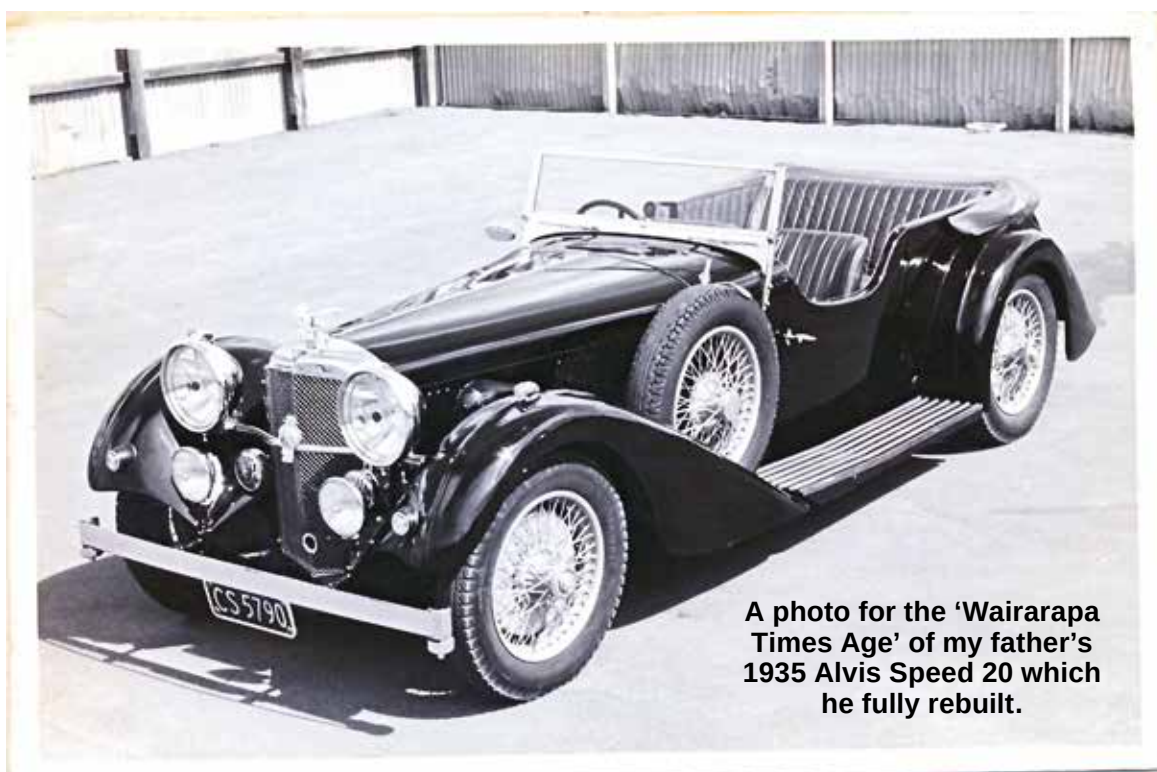
Other family cars included:-

- 1935 Alvis SC Speed 20 – fully rebuilt by dad and a truly magnificent, well engineered and fast motor car.
- 1952 Jowett Javelin – a wonderful family motor car.
- 1954 Riley 90 – originally 1.5 litres, dad repowered this car with the more powerful 2.5 litre Riley engine.
- 1946 Jaguar 1½ litre saloon – fitted with the 4 cylinder 'standard special' engine with a Jaguar developed cylinder head (Jaguar owned the Standard Motor Co. at this time).

This was mum's everyday transport, slightly under powered but a great motor car. ●



1946 Jaguar 1.5 litre saloon



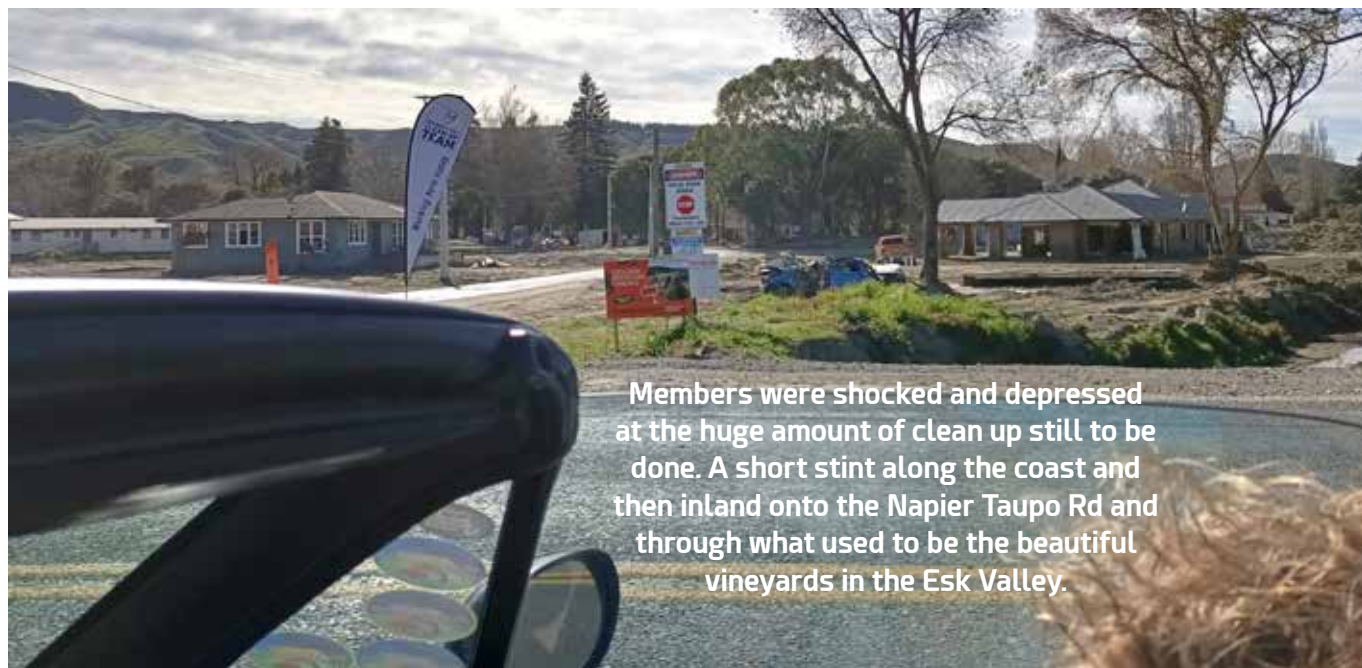
A photo for the 'Wairarapa Times Age' of my father's 1935 Alvis Speed 20 which he fully rebuilt.

SIX MONTHS ON

Hawke's Bay / Napier

Weatherman said, "rain this afternoon," so four cars gathered in Napier at 9.30 am – it was fine!
Just a short run looking at the cyclone damage.

Report & Photos by Trish Wiseman



Members were shocked and depressed at the huge amount of clean up still to be done. A short stint along the coast and then inland onto the Napier Taupo Rd and through what used to be the beautiful vineyards in the Esk Valley.



We turned off at Glengarry Rd and headed inland through the hills which had lots of slips, scarring the once beautiful landscape.



Some houses had been totally encased in silt, even where people still needed to live.



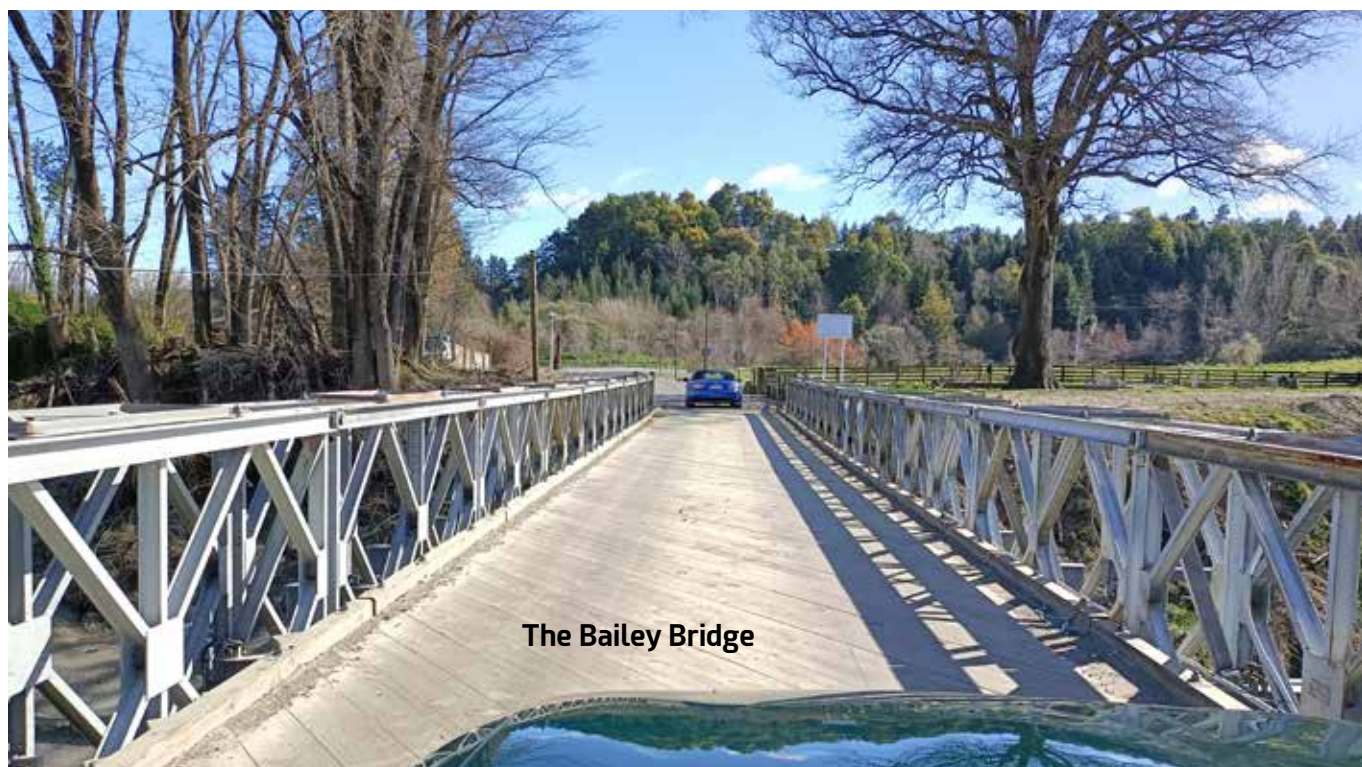
We headed to Rissington, where they have made a huge memorial from an old Redwood tree that once stood proud, well worth the visit!

Old reporter in the 'NA' car missed the next turn off – sorry Mike!

We went through the Dartmoor Valley passing hills of silt and came out at the Puketapu Pub and over the newly opened Redcliffe Bridge (the old one had been whipped out by the floods).

After meandering through the countryside, we arrived at the Filter Room in Awatoto and a very nice lunch.

Weatherman was right – rain arrived at 1pm and all cars exit left! ●



The Bailey Bridge

A FINE DAY AT LAST

Amazingly for Auckland. A fine Saturday was forecast and actually looked like happening the following day.

I had in mind a run down at the back of Huntly to a friend's dairy farm so I rang a few people that might be available and who like to travel "spiritedly" and – lo and behold – next morning at the meeting point we had 7 cars. Interestingly 3 NDRFs, 1 ND, 2 NCs and an ND.

Brief and some would say not very detailed "guidelines" of where we were going and we were off early on a Saturday morning. We managed to stay together until we crossed the Tuakau bridge and hit that fabulous SH22. After that a couple of us managed to put some gap in due to getting by some traffic relatively easily and had a most enjoyable blast with few cars out and about.

Myself and Frank got to the first major turnoff and were having so much fun we hardly slowed although Neville had us in his sights and made

the turn. Sadly after 30 minutes waiting down the road it was clear the others had carried on and with cellphone coverage almost non existent it was an hour or so before 6 of the 7 cars regrouped. The weather was stunning and we called into my friend's farm where he is doing a boutique subdivision and he gave a really interesting talk on farming and his role in the area.

We headed off to a local café and eventually the last car made it. Hugh was all grins ear to ear and had had a real blast nonetheless. None of us had passengers for the day which was both a rarity and a treat.

Heading home we all agreed we had so much fun on the backroads that we were happy enough to just stooge up SH1.

Make the most of fellow club members. Give them a call even if no official run is on, grab any fine day and use it. Saturday runs are great as you have Sunday to clear the bugs from the front of your car and from your teeth because of the grins.

Booty

Northern Region Co-ordinator



Taranaki

Taranaki Run July 2023

On an overcast Sunday, 13 brave cars and their occupants, met at the Inglewood Railway station to check out the Sunday car boot sale.

After a wander around to check the eclectic gathering of wares on offer, we headed south on SH3, tops down. The first turn off up Surrey Rd, then left onto Derby Rd, and another left onto York Rd, brought us back to SH3 near Midhurst.

A quick burst north and we turned onto Tariki Rd. Now we are into real MX-5 country with nice flowing corners and a few deceptive bends thrown in for good measure.

We took a left turn at Kaimata Rd South, followed by another left at Tarata Rd, just to confuse everyone. At Bristol Rd we turned right and then went left at Everett Rd, which took us past the Vertical Horizons school camp area.

The road ends with a T junction at Waitara Rd on top of a high ridge giving extensive 180 degree views from Mt Taranaki to the left, New Plymouth directly ahead, and the North Taranaki Bight coastline extending away to the right. If you are quick, on a good day, there are also clear views across to Mt Ruapehu behind you.

Down Waitara Rd towards the coast we go, passing through the district of Huirangi. We take a left at Te Arei Rd East, cross Richmond Rd, until we reach SH3A, which, just because I could, we cross, staying on Te Arei Rd. This leads us to Ninia

Rd which intersects with Corbett Rd, where we turn left. Following Corbett, we pass a local strawberry farm (currently closed for the season).

On to the end of the road, and two more left turns get us back onto SH3A and our lunch stop at the Tawa Glen Café. With paddock parking closed over the winter and a busy lunchtime period, we parked wherever we could.

Thanks to Tawa Glen who gave us their separate room and a very nice lunch. We were joined by a couple of former members and a possible future member. Thanks Grant and Nora for a great run, in the dry!



July Run Part 2 – The AGM

Three cars were heading to Hamilton for the AGM, so we headed north on the Saturday with first stop in Mokau to check that the plumbing at the new public loos is working properly. It is.

Lunch at the Fat Pigeon of course before heading west out through Mairoa, and then back to SH3 just north of Te Kuiti, which we headed to for a visit to Shoppington.

From there we basically backtracked the run from Sharon's recent overnigher, hoping to see some the countryside this time, emerging at Kihikihi and heading for our overnight stay in Te Awamutu.

Had a very nice meal at Fahrenheit.

Next morning a quick attempt to remove some residual farm mud from the car, before heading to Hamilton for the AGM. ●



WAIKATO ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

Waikato / Hamilton

Report & Photos by Maureen Major

The very famous run to Kaiaua for the very best fish and chips in NZ. This has been a favorite run for everyone. There is always a great turn out.

Gary and I remember that this was our very first run in 2004, in our 1990 Silver auto MX-5 which I got for my birthday. I guess this makes up for the 21st birthday gift from the loving husband of 3 months – an ironing board, and he blamed it on the cat. We remember there were 8 cars on that run and 6 are still members. Denis, well done, as we think you might have been on most of these runs.

We met at 10am to leave at 10.30am. The windy weather hadn't hit Hamilton so topdown on a cloudy but fine morning.

This time we had 14 cars leave Hamilton and we met 2 more on the way. We also enticed a member of The Waikato Roadsters to join us and he said he really enjoyed it.

We were pleased to have Bernie and Faye join us in the new-to-them MX-5 which they bought a couple of weeks before. Bernie sold their previous car as he had a yearning to do some off-roading and needed an appropriate vehicle. So off he went and bought a Suzuki Jimny which was promptly called 'Jimmy'. He realised very quickly that he needed to buy another MX-5. This car is a pristine example of a 2015 NC, the last of them.

When we arrived at the Bay View Hotel [Kaiaua Pub] the carpark was completely full. This is one of the most popular venues I have ever seen. There was a great mixture of motorhomes and regular vehicles but the most impressive had to be our MX-5s, the Triumph Motorcycle Club and the Harley Motorcycle Club. We often meet motorcycle clubs there.

In true NZ small town hospitality, nothing is too much. The meals were just as amazing as always and the service never falters.

I had organised a run home but the general feeling was most of the members wanted to repeat the morning run. Lots of very happy people arrived back in Hamilton. ●



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TIGHTEN UP FOR THE TARGA TASTER

For the club I have been working with Ultimate Rally Group, the organisers of Targa NZ and other iconic kiwi motoring events, looking for things that our members may enjoy.

Northern member Alise Inger works part-time for URG and has been assisting us.

That journey included a Sunday morning "taster" event where participants got to find out what events are available, to head out on some Targa roads with a proper route book full of detailed instructions, and come back to regroup and learn more.

Was it successful? Hell Yes!

23 cars headed out on a fine Sunday morning from Hampton Downs and enjoyed what can only be described as a nice "spirited drive" chasing the URG ute which was being driven in very fine style.

Stopping to make sure the train was still in place, understanding where a special stage starts and how it all comes together – and driving sensational roads – was just great fun.

The group was many and varied with a lot of

new faces along with the regular group of faster peddlers.











Geoff Doyle has done 4 Targas previously and recommends we need to all get on and tick this off our bucket lists asap. Who knows how long this opportunity will last

Fantastic to see Grant down from Northland, Members from the Waikato and BOP as well as a good contingent from Auckland.

Gary Major our club VP was there and celebrating his birthday by giving his immaculate red NC the jandal.

Frank arrived back in NZ from Japan at 8.30 and Shelly picked him up and they made the start meet point by 9.30 – real commitment. They even had family go to the airport to collect the bags so they could make it. Frank tucked in behind the fast and very well driven ute which was skittering around and clearly enjoyed himself. Great to be back in NZ and not in Japan.

I watched several members really getting into the swing of things and some cars were driven at a pace they might not normally have seen. Again grins all

TC 9 GLEN MURRAY RD 1		DISTANCE	LEG	PAGE
TC 10 WAIKOKOWAI RD 1		24.07 KM	SECTION	203
STAGE NAME: GLEN MURRAY RD 1		AVERAGE	TIME	
22.28 KM		57.77 KM/H	25 MINS	
DISTANCE TOTAL	DISTANCE PART	DIRECTION	DESCRIPTION	DIST. TOT. REGRESS
0.00	0.00		SS 9 AT END OF WHITE RAILS ON RHS TIGHTEN YOUR BELTS	24.07
1.46	1.46			22.61
2.31	0.85			21.76
3.47	1.16			20.60
3.69	0.22		 RETIGHTEN YOUR BELTS	20.38
6.56	2.87			17.51
	3.77			15.72





around. I lent my NA to a friend who is the current and multiple Mini 7 champion and he commented that he really enjoyed it, despite bottoming out a few times.

Most had new co-drivers or some simply had none – like racer and past President Keith Jones (also needing to check the underside of his car when he got home). A number of people who haven't been on club runs came along as passengers for members such as Mike/Grant/Sam/Richard to name a few.

I took my son Ayrton and he has already put a request in to do the full event when I enter.

Normally club member Alan Hart is always at the back of the pack but today he was right up the front. I put that down to 2 things – my sister in

law Yve Handbrake Hart being absent and Alan having local Lance in both the co-driver and driver's seat at times. Lance lives on one of the roads we travelled and was able to impart some excellent local knowledge.

Looking ahead at the Targa – a number of us are targeting the 2 day Targa Tour event next March. The prospect of driving these roads with some of them closed so we can use all the road and at pace is a great chance to let our MX-5s do what they love doing best and mix with car enthusiasts, no matter what the brand.

Yep there's a cost but not doing it is an opportunity wasted in my opinion.

Alise will have an article soon that tells you more about who to contact for more info. ●



MX-5 COBRA PROJECT ... REVEALED!

Yes, I know, I know. Why would anyone want to so drastically change a perfectly good MX-5! Well, I didn't know how good the MX-5 was when I started my project journey. Here's how it unfolded.

Being a bit of a car nut, having owned 19 cars over a span of 35 years, one of my bucket-list goals was to do a car project. My original thinking was to build a kit car. However, on looking at the kits available in New Zealand (e.g. a Lotus 7 replica, the Exocet or Rhubarb kits, etc) none of them got me that excited.

While I'm sure these sorts of kits perform really well, I still wanted a degree of creature comfort too – i.e. a reasonably well performing car, but one you can still comfortably take for a weekend away, or just to pop out (taking the long road) for lunch.

Given the Exocet kit, and some other kits, use an MX-5 as a donor car, I wondered what else could be done using the MX-5 as a base. That's when I stumbled across S2 Racing's Japanese Cobra (see link below) – now I was excited!

First step was to find an MX-5, a car I knew nothing about (I sure do now though). Looking at S2 Racing's Cobra kits, the base car needed to be either a NA or NB. I liked the NB specs better and the Cobra kit on the NB looks better I think.

After a bit of searching, in Feb 2019 I found and purchased (\$7.5k) a 2004, 146km, 160hp 1.8L NB, which had a limited slip diff, Mazdaspeed muffler (sounded great), lightweight flywheel, ILmotorsport engine mounts, 5X racing rear sway/anti-roll bar, Bilstein suspension, new Yokohama Neova AD08R tyres, new set of new DTM wheels, EBC Greenstuff rear brake pads and LED headlights – phew, great specs! And, a nice blue colour, which I thought would look great with Cobra white stripes.

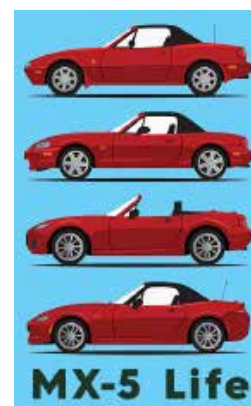
Got the base car, so I now knew which model of Cobra kit to order. Numerous attempts to contact S2 Racing in Japan via their website failed, so I ended up ordering it from Rev9 Autosport in the USA, who were happy to supply the components and have them shipped to New Zealand directly from Japan.

While waiting for the kit to arrive (which took 6 weeks and a landed cost of \$7k) I did some tidy-up work on the base car and fitted a new car radio (increasing

Article and Photos by Dougal Mair

the creature comforts).

The Cobra kit components arrived in March 2019 and then the real work began. You can see a detailed account of the project (blogspot link below), but fair to say getting that Cobra nose looking right took the most work – 6 months of working several hours each weekend! A few more weekends later (another 3 months) and the rear changes and side



skirts were completed, and the car was ready for LVV Certification.

The Cobra kit work was all completed in early 2020 and the car was ready for painting. The car was dropped off at the painters and then COVID arrived. A patient 6 months (and \$8k) later I finally got the car back, but it sure was worth the wait! What do you reckon?

Knowing what I know about M-X5s now, having had the NB and now a ND, do I regret doing the project? No, I don't. Not with such a great looking result. However, if I'd messed up the project and not completed it or didn't achieve such a nice result? Well, I'm not sure. And, was it financially worth it? Nah, car projects never are (\$27.5k total project cost), but can you put a price on the fun I had doing it and the sense of achievement in completing it? And, of course, it did get me hooked on MX-5s! ●

http://s2-racing.com/?page_id=960

<https://nzjcobra.blogspot.com>



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2023 UPDATE FOR CLUB MERCHANDISE

The Club is pleased to announce we have been adding to the range of MX-5 Car Club of New Zealand branded items.

As you can see from the image captured from the website, items have been updated with the new Club badge, in men and women versions and sizes.

The embroidered Club badge is also available separately if you'd like to add to or update your other motoring clothes and accessories.

Autumn mildness is continuing in some parts of the country, but if you're still planning your winter wardrobe, zipped hoodies may appeal.

Club caps and Name badges have also been updated, along with Beanies and Number Plate surrounds.

Details of sizes for men and women, and prices, for the new items are on the updated **Merchandise** page on the website.

Don't forget to check the page regularly as other new and updated items are in the pipeline.

As well as all Club merchandise items, you'll find detailed instructions of how to order and pay.

Once ordered you will receive both an online and an email notification.

You'll also notice a Shopping Basket icon on the header of all website pages, which enables you to check status at any time.

Happy motoring, and happy purchasing.

If you have any questions, you can also contact David Barrett, the Club's merchandising coordinator, via his Club email:

merchandise@mx5carclub.co.nz

And the webpage link is:

<https://mx5carclub.co.nz/shop/>



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MAZDA DEALERS Nationwide NZ		10% discount for club members on parts
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ROAD LEGAL... IN COSTUMES!



Osaka / Japan

Report and Photos by Frank Willett

On a recent business trip to Osaka Japan, my staff decided to give Mario Karts a go.

I had heard and seen these advertised, but the next thing I knew, we were booked!

On a nice Sunday afternoon in downtown Namba, we rocked up to a "hole in the wall" shop that had 20 of these karts. They are very similar to the ones we see here in the NZ indoor karting scene, but with a twist – they are road legal (well, in Japan). The addition of lights, indicators, horns and registration, these karts can now be driven on the

road with all other road users ... and that's exactly what we did.

Dressed up in costume (the done thing in Japan) and in 38 degrees C, off we charged round the roads on Namba. Our session was for an hour, and quite enough for my old aching bones by the time it was over.

Everywhere we went traffic moved aside, people leaned out of their car windows to wave and photograph us. Every traffic light we stopped at caused a sensation of clapping, photos, waves ... it was simply amazing.

One road we travelled down was 5 lanes wide, one way, and very smooth. I managed to crack 60kph on this section ... boy, I was happy to have some padding on my rear and a seat belt holding me in!

If you are slightly nuts like me, and you are in one of the major cities in Japan, I recommend you give it a go ... there's nothing like seeing the underside of trucks while you are driving on the road! ●

