THANK YOU ATTENDEES!

Well the dust has now settled on Natmeet XV and what an event it was with members from all over the country attending. What a shame for the Messengers from Perth that their cars did not arrive til Friday night.

The Thursday track day at Morgan Park Raceway was a great start to the 5 days was well attended and those who competed or simply spectated had a great day and some even made the evening news on WINTV. The management at Morgan Park were very welcoming with a sausage sizzle on the Wednesday evening.

On the welcome drinks evening, we met new friends and caught up with our old friends. The social runs on Friday and Monday gave us all a great insight to this beautiful part of our country and the run to the Oakey Army Flying Museum a glimpse of history of flight.

And what a show at the Picnic Point Theme night. We were so pleased that so many of you made a huge effort to dress up in the Farm and Flowers theme – a flock of sheep, bumble bees, Sunflowers everywhere, a couple of Bill and Bens, farmers of all types.

Then we all danced the night away to the great Free Agents band when we could all relive the songs of the 70's and 80's.The trivia quiz got us thinking about the history of the great cars we are so proud to own – congrats to the table with Danny Irvine and Karen Burkhart who came USA to join us for all the fun, on winning the quiz.

The Sunday show 'n shine at the Cobb & Co museum (and didn't the sun shine for us as well) was a great exhibition of our models of MX5's and we had the company of some 40+ cars who made their way from other parts of south east Queensland.

Congratulations to Richard and Pat Varley for winning the Pride of Ownership award.

Then the Gala Night at the fabulous Empire Theatre where so many got into the swing of an after fives night where we were entertained by the Three Flat Whites jazz band. Awards were handed out, raffles won and a silent auction held, so the lucky ones went home with awards, fabulous prizes and memorabilia.

Of course Natmeet doesn't just happen without all you attendees, and was made so much more memorable by seeing the happy smiling faces of Natmeeters, and the comments, personal congratulations, and on the dedicated facebook page (which will stay up for a long time so everyone can enjoy).

The committee and the Queensland Club thank you all for making the effort of coming from all over the country to join us in Toowoomba.

We must also thank all the sponsors, venues, pubs and cafes and many volunteers for helping make Natmeet XV an outstanding success. We do ask that you support our sponsors whenever you need their products and services.

We are so pleased that you all made it safely to your homes and look forward to seeing you in the Hunter in 2026.

Best wishes to you all,

HENRI VAN RODEN

CHAIR NATMEET XV



NATMEET XV 2024

10-16 April, Toowoomba





Day 1: Prep for Track Day

It was a beautiful day for travelling to Warwick, so Google maps did it's best by leading me into traffic jams and two 20 minute waits at roadworks coming over from the Gold Coast.

I checked into the motel and headed out to Morgan Park (again Google again led me astray) - but once there, it was all shiney and new to me. I was amazed by the extent that MX-5 owners go to, to be more competitive.

The more serious cars were trailered into Morgan Park.

Windscreens had been cut off several, there were coilovers, turbos, superchargers, custom roll cages, bigger radiators, air ducts, new ECU's, new slicks, lumpy cams, barking exhausts, wings, sponsors logos, dry sumps, racing seats, full race harnesses, new steering wheels, custom aero, a digital dash, even a 400hp K-swap that required steering alterations.

50 large capacity motorbikes had booked the track so while waiting for our familiarisation laps, Jonno, the Morgan Park General Manager organised a BBQ and a welcome drink which wisely, Henri kept at one each.

After eating, we did three laps in single file behind the Safety Car at 80kph maximum - but already, an over-confident smile was beginning to appear.

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Day 2: From Morgan Park to Toowoomba

Happy Laps began at 8.45am. When we signed in, the lady told me I was doing “Parade Laps” which as a macho newby, I found a tad emasculating.

Yesterday's Safety Car was more spirited today. Yes it kept us to 100kph, but coming out of a corner in 3rd at 5,000rpm, I felt a deep, soul stirring urge to blast up the inside of the car in front - but I contained myself. We all did.

Was it the caffeine, repressed road rage or just MX-5 instinct? It was great fun so it’s no wonder so many brought their helmets for the Sprint Laps.

Between Henri giving driver briefings, Kayla on the PA and Jonno from MP in the Safety Car, they did a great job organising our day. The safe track, helpful staff and excellent facilities made our time there really special.

Morgan Park Track Day Results:

Happy Laps winners: **Everyone**

Sprints winners...

Novice:	**Ura Auckland**
Experienced:	**Gary Ballinger**
Ladies:	**Marilyn Campbell**
Race Ready:	**Brian Ferrabee**

Behind the curtain...
Admin assistance was provided by Jean Cook (14 time Natmeeter) and Kayla Reynolds (Morgan Park Admin Manager).
Your help was invaluable as was the assistance provided by MP in dealing with all the Motorsport Australia Administration Regulations. Thankyou!
Henri

Consistency, based on 3 consecutive laps on both the "E" and "K" circuits, overall combined for Novice, Experienced and Race Ready...

Mens:	**Gary Ballinger**
Ladies:	**Marilyn Campbell**

Motorkhana...

Mens:	**Dave Anderson**
Ladies:	**Lisa Price**

Promotional support...
Many thanks to WIN Toowoomba for coming out on track day and filming us at Morgan Park. Natmeet was shown on the WIN Regional News from as far away as Townsville and Illawarra and we appreciate your support.



How the points system was calculated:

The points system gave 32 points for the fastest on “E” and “K” circuits, then 30 for second, 29 for third etc etc. That way the fastest gets a slight advantage.

There were 21 day only competitors.

I had asked you all to nominate whether your cars were race ready (there were 6) and the remainder (15) whether you were experienced or novice.

Some of the day only competitors did not get back to me. Whilst I had a reasonable idea which category you fitted into, if I applied that, most would fit into experienced (as most if not all had competed on the track at Lake-side with BMW or ICC days) and there would be only 2 or 3 in novice.

So, based on your times on the day, I split the group to even the numbers by identifing those who attained times above and below 1:40 on the longer “K” circuit.

We finished up with 7 competitors in the fast group and 8 in the less fast (I won’t say slower) catagories:

Novice WINNER: Ura Auckland 64 points ahead of Lauchlan TJ on 60 points

Experienced WINNER: Gary Ballinger 64 points ahead of Jason Gillhome on 60 points

Race ready WINNER: Brian Ferrabee 64 points ahead of Henri van Roden on 60 points

Ladies WINNER: Marilyn Campbell

Consistency: This was calculated on each entrants times over any three consecutive laps on both circuits. It was a very tight competition and most competitors achieved better results as the day went on.

The winners were:
Mens WINNER:
Gary Ballinger whose best three consecutive laps were separated by only .093 seconds, ahead of Henri van Roden on .129 seconds.

Ladies WINNER:
Marilyn Campbell on 1.9 seconds.

Motorkhana WINNERS
Mens: Dave Anderson by 0.6 of a second from Ura Auckland.
Ladies: Lisa Price from Col Anderson.

DAY COMPETITORS
Race ready
WINNER Clive Huebler on 64 points; 2nd Mark Sperling on 59 points and 3rd John English on 56 points.

CLASS 2 – ie FAST GROUP
WINNER Darren Brent on 64 points; 2nd Cal Ballinger on 60 points and 3rd John Hammett on 58 points.

CLASS 3 – ie 1:40 and less fast!!
WINNER Rob Mills on 64 points, 2nd Keith Wade on 59 points and 3rd Jeff Rowse on 58 points.

CONSISTENCY
WINNER Jeff Rowse who completed 3 consecutive laps separated by .064 seconds; 2nd was Jeffrey Mooi at .157 seconds and 3rd was Steve Fisher at .19 seconds, so a very tight result.

MOTOKHANA Allan Baskerville with a time of 1:18.65.

Trophies for Natmeeters were handed out at the Gala Night. We will mail the day only plaques in the next few days.

We are pleased that everyone had a great day If anyone needs more info etc times of course are available on Natsoft otherwise email me.

You may also know that WINTV were at the track on the day and we were featured in the evening news that day – most promoters of race events have to pay quite a bit of cash for even a couple of minutes, so it was a coup to get them out there. They spent about three hours for us to get 1½ minutes on the news. I am trying to get a link to send to eveyone.

Cheers

HENRI VAN RODEN











After a more sedate drive to Toowoomba, I found 158 people from all over Australia emptying their car boots and collecting their Natmeet kits.

The Natmeet Committee had been very busy, giving us a comprehensive programme and a second larger book with run sheets etc, as well as a shirt, hat, badges, Natmeet sunstrip, a car number, tips on Toowoomba and even a pashmina! Thanks also goes to Central Plaza Apartments for providing us with a room for registration and storage space over the entire Natmeet.

At 6pm, we enjoyed finger food and drinks at the official welcome event with Henri and John Martin officiating at nearby The Rock Hotel.



Day 3: First of the Runs through the Brisbane and Lockyer Valleys:

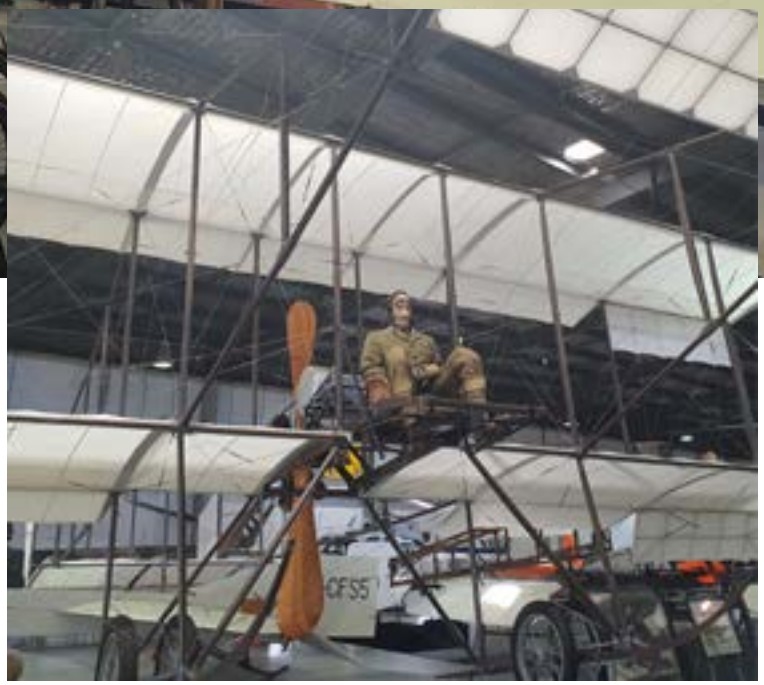
The day was perfect as we drove over to beautiful parkland at Picnic Point to be put into our 12 groups, named after flowers.

I was in the powerhouse team of Daisies and our fearless leaders were Richard and Pat Varley. Our run took us to the Esk Grand Hotel which impressed us all with good coffee and even better cakes.

Clearly, the hotel hasn't forgotten. On a dining room wall is a uniform and other military memorabelia including a large colour photo from 1915 of Australian soldiers, sitting on stone blocks of The Great Pyramid. They were to go from Egypt to Gallipoli but the photo was made even more interesting when NB owner David (a local and partner of Col) told me there's a dead soldier among them being held up by his mate.

As we headed to lunch and later back to our hotels, it was fun to see other groups of Natmeeters heading in the opposite direction. The runs were well planned by the Committee (Peter Franklin (Secretary), John Martin, Lisa Price, Chairman Henri and Treasurer Maureen van Roden) and the Darling Downs Chapter who did a great job behind the scenes with the weather and the recommended stops.







Day 4: Run to the Army Flying Museum at Oakey.

To change things up, we drove across the road to gather in the carpark. It looked like the organisers were herding 83 cats but we ended up in our groups for instructions from Henri on another perfect, Toowoomba day.

Todays larger, amalgamated group required a short catch up pause but in no time we were all out of town and zooming through the beautiful Darling Downs, heading towards a lovely morning tea and lunch. Col in one of the two maroon NBs gave us a commentary on the 2011 floods, how 4 died and buildings floated away. She also told us the Goombungee Hotel is on the market today for $250k, including the residence. Hmmm...

The Army Flying Museum was fantastic. Replicas made in house of fabric covered aeroplanes used to train WW1 pilots reminded us of the absolute faith, strength and courage these young men had.

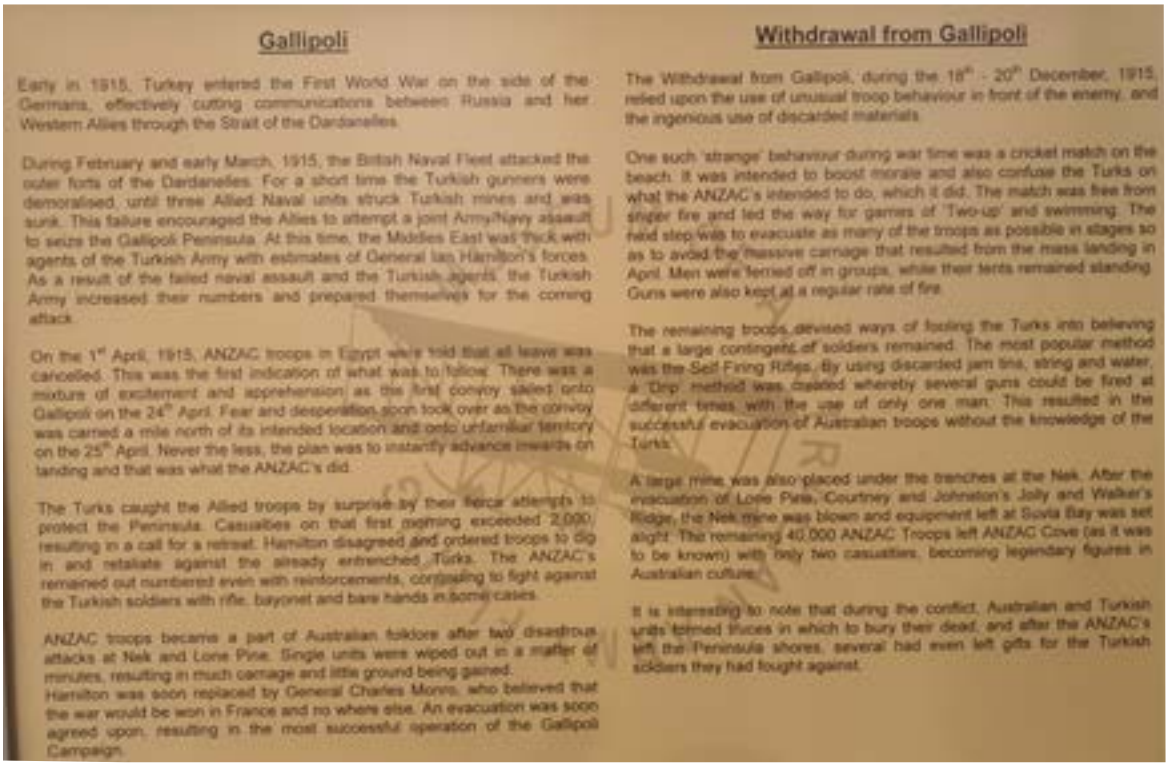






ART
Cape Helles, Gallipoli, 1915
by Victor MacClure

Gallipoli's landscape presented many difficult challenges for the Allied troops.
The Headquarters of the 29th Division, Gully Ravine, Cape Helles, Gallipoli.



Gallipoli

Early in 1915, Turkey entered the First World War on the side of the Germans, effectively cutting communications between Russia and her Western Allies through the Strait of the Dardanelles.

During February and early March, 1915, the British Naval Fleet attacked the outer forts of the Dardanelles. For a short time the Turkish gunners were demoralised, until three Allied Naval units struck Turkish mines and was sunk. This failure encouraged the Allies to attempt a joint Army/Navy assault to seize the Gallipoli Peninsula. At this time, the Middles East was thick with agents of the Turkish Army with estimates of General Ian Hamilton's forces. As a result of the failed naval assault and the Turkish agents, the Turkish Army increased their numbers and prepared themselves for the coming attack.

On the 1st April, 1915, ANZAC troops in Egypt were told that all leave was cancelled. This was the first indication of what was to follow. There was a mixture of excitement and apprehension as the first convoy sailed onto Gallipoli on the 24th April. Fear and desperation soon took over as the convoy was carried a mile north of its intended location and onto unfamiliar territory on the 25th April. Never the less, the plan was to instantly advance inwards on landing and that was what the ANZAC's did.

The Turks caught the Allied troops by surprise as their fierce attempts to protect the Peninsula. Casualties on that first morning exceeded 2,000, resulting in a call for a retreat. Hamilton disagreed and ordered troops to dig in and retaliate against the already entrenched Turks. The ANZAC's remained out numbered even with reinforcements, continuing to fight against the Turkish soldiers with rifle, bayonet and bare hands in some cases.

ANZAC troops became a part of Australian folklore after two disastrous attacks at Nek and Lone Pine. Single units were wiped out in a matter of minutes, resulting in much carnage and little ground being gained.
Hamilton was soon replaced by General Charles Monro, who believed that the war would be won in France and no where else. An evacuation was soon agreed upon, resulting in the most successful operation of the Gallipoli Campaign.

Withdrawal from Gallipoli

The Withdrawal from Gallipoli, during the 18th - 20th December, 1915, relied upon the use of unusual troop behaviour in front of the enemy, and the ingenious use of discarded materials.

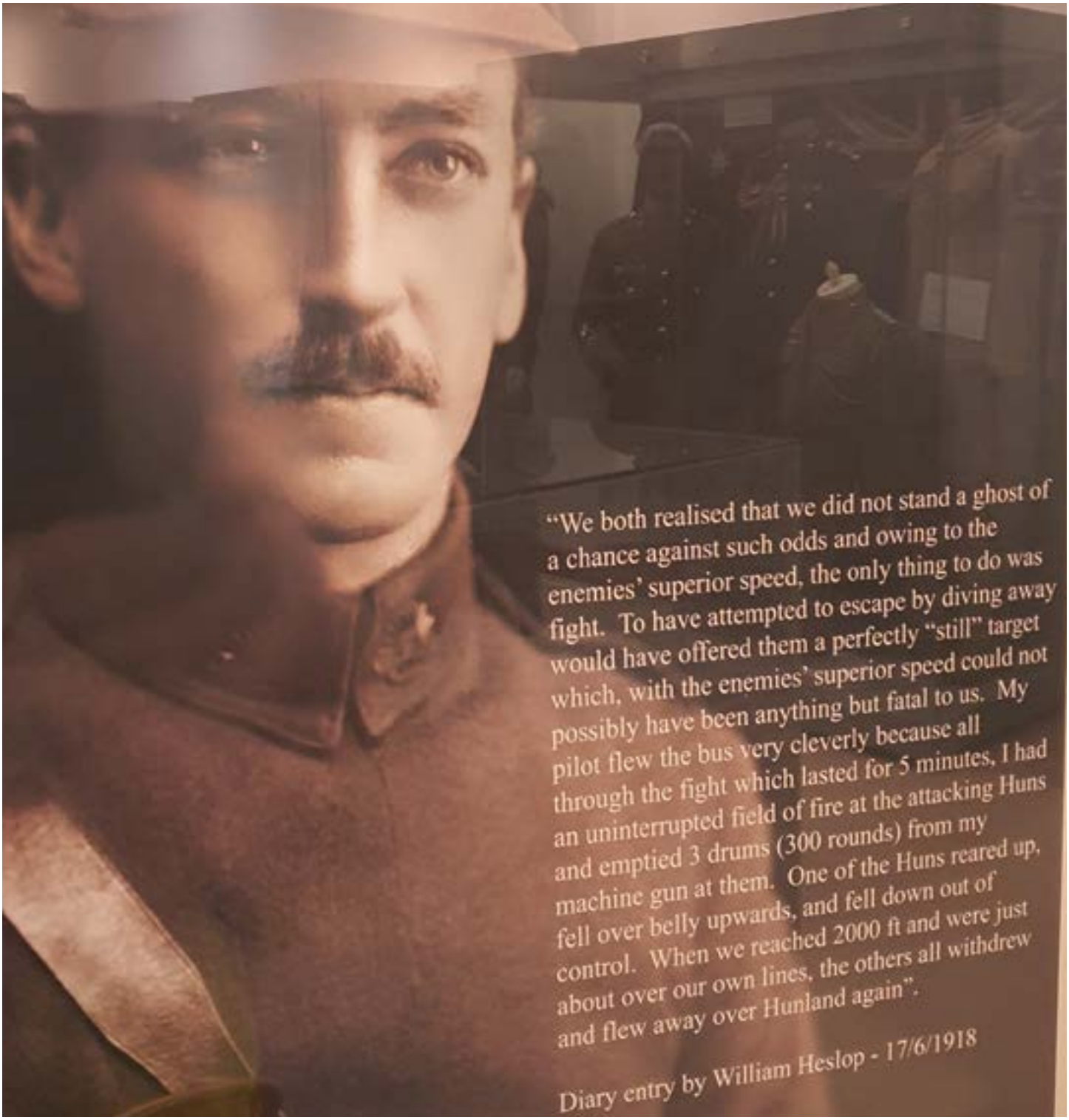
One such 'strange' behaviour during war time was a cricket match on the beach. It was intended to boost morale and also confuse the Turks on what the ANZAC's intended to do, which it did. The match was free from sniper fire and led the way for games of 'Two-up' and swimming. The next step was to evacuate as many of the troops as possible in stages so as to avoid the massive carnage that resulted from the mass landing in April. Men were ferried off in groups, while their tents remained standing. Guns were also kept at a regular rate of fire.

The remaining troops devised ways of fooling the Turks into believing that a large contingent of soldiers remained. The most popular method was the Self Firing Rifles. By using discarded jam tins, string and water, a 'Drip' method was created whereby several guns could be fired at different times with the use of only one man. This resulted in the successful evacuation of Australian troops without the knowledge of the Turks.

A large mine was also placed under the trenches at the Nek. After the evacuation of Lone Pine, Courtney and Johnston's Jolly and Walker's Ridge, the Nek mine was blown and equipment left at Suvla Bay was set alight. The remaining 40,000 ANZAC Troops left ANZAC Cove (as it was to be known) with only two casualties, becoming legendary figures in Australian culture.

It is interesting to note that during the conflict, Australian and Turkish units formed truces in which to bury their dead, and after the ANZAC's left the Peninsula shores, several had even left gifts for the Turkish soldiers they had fought against.

Heros every one...
Gallipoli has become a defining moment in the history of both Australia and New Zealand, revealing characteristics that both countries have used to define their soldiers: endurance, determination, initiative and 'mateship'. For the Ottomans, it was a brief respite in the decline of their empire. But through the emergence of Mustafa Kemal (later known as Atatürk) as one of the campaign's leading figures, it also led to the foundation of modern Turkey.



It was great to hear how Australians in Vietnam fitted Huey helicopters with gatling guns and missiles to give pilots a fighting chance.

Walking into the Chinook to hear the recording of the jets and rotor noise reminded me how lucky we are. We climbed up to sit in a Blackhawk, looked at the Australian made Nomad areoplane and exhibits including fabric from the Red Barons wing, flying suits, rifles and an AK47.

We love MX-5s too...















That evening, our "Farm or Flowers" Fancy Dress Dinner Event was held. We were taken to and from the venue at Picnic Point by coaches, it was another example of the high standards organisers have maintained.

We enjoyed photos, luscious wines from Symphony Hill Wines, great food, raffle prizes and 70s & 80s music from the The Free Agents as we danced the night away while making new friends. And yes, we all looked amazing!

Suzanne and Kevin and Col and Dave looked great and many went an extra mile to look maximus horticutural - but the Bumble Bees won best outfits.

























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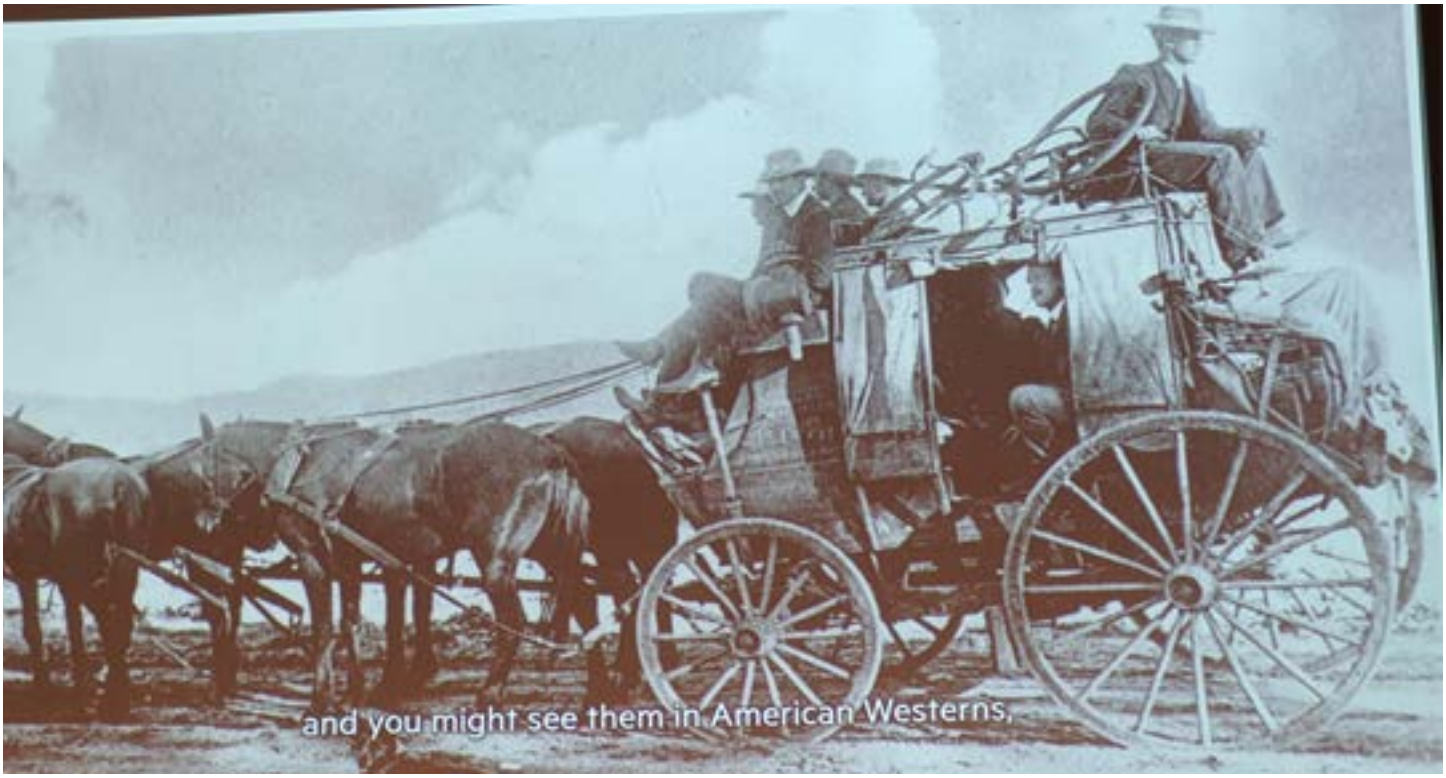
Day 5: Car Show and Shine

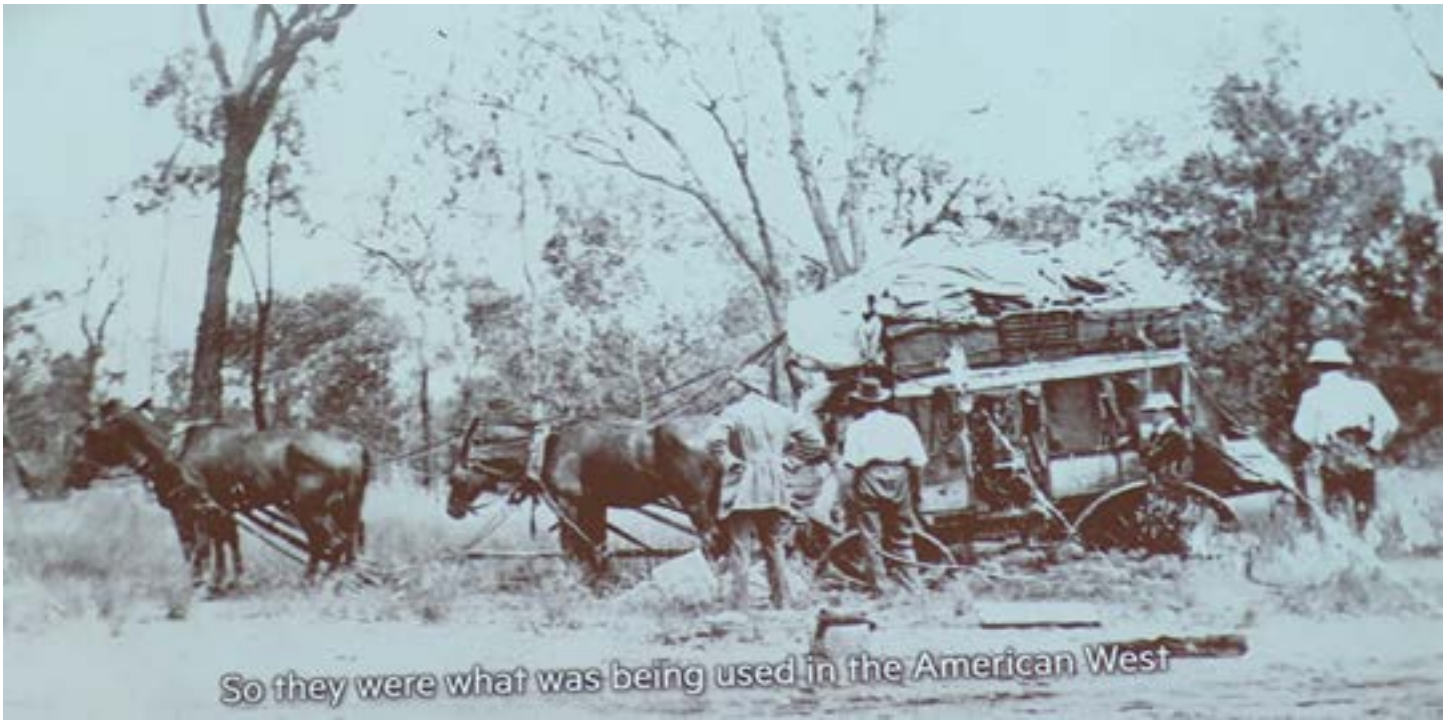
Winners were announced at the Gala Dinner, a total of 120 MX-5s attended.

We parked our oh so clean cars by the Cobb & Co Museum for judging and it was great to get a closer look at modifications and hear about outcomes. Today finds me looking for a class in engine bay cleaning and presentation.

There were real standouts, like the interior of the maroon NB and the blue supercharged NA with an extended trailer made from another NA.

Locals added to the mayhem (and my jealousy) with a red NA that had $130k spent on it in 2 years and an imported, lightning yellow NB hardtop which was beautiful and attracted many.





The rest of the day was spent looking at the excellent exhibits and photos of daily challenges in the 1800s. MX-5ers know how sad a flat tyre can be - but can you imagine your fully loaded wagon, sunk in mud to its axles?

As we're being led into a world of digital IDs and digital currency, folk in Towoomba still recall and rightly celebrate when "Old Ned" in the stable pulled the sulkie into town and kids collected firewood with their goat cart.









Zoom in for their serious faces.
The bookie is taking wagers, they'll be racing for her affections in no time.



Day 6: Our final run through Brisbane and Lockyer Valleys.

Again the weather was perfect as the 12 groups queued up around Picnic Point, waiting for the address from Henri. Once informed, we headed off through "red light camera city" for another wonderful day.

Recent rain meant the scenery of rolling hills and paddocks was perfect and for me, driving along the ridges with those distant views over lush farmland was a highlight of the week. I wish I'd had a copilot to take a pic, but you know how runs work.

I'm happy to report the Qld Transport Museum at Gatton has good coffee, cakes and a lot of trucks covering most sizes and eras. Old armoured cars in "as new" condition, complete with machine guns and rifles surprised me as did the owner of most of the exhibits being there, to answer questions.



After the run back to our hotels, we dressed up for our Gala Dinner at the fabulous Empire Theatre. Originally built in 1911, it was rebuilt after a fire in 1933, then renovated and reopened again in 1997.

Large balloons and Maureen's chocolate MX-5s decorated the tables for 8 that were set up on the stage, which was illuminated by subtle lighting.

The food and wines were excellent (loved my pork belly), the jazz band (now the Three Flat Whites) were as much fun as they'd been at the Fancy Dress. Of course the company was great and didn't we look all brilliant!

Again John and Henri officiated. Raffles were drawn and hopes dashed when Gold Coaster Ainsley won first prize, the Konig wheels from Mullins.
The tyres from Bob Jane were won by Linda from Victoria/Tasmania

The silent auction was another success for the club, raising over $1,000 with Alan from SA becoming the new owner of the signed, Jack Absalom art donated by Henri and Maureen van Roden. Lauren Messenger is now the owner of the Ferrari cap signed by Michael Schumacher donated by Brian Ferrabee. Louie Iezzi is the new owner of the Bell Piastri Mini helmet, donated by Revolution Racegear and Danny Irvine has the Craig Lowndes model V8 supercar, donated by John Martin.



Winners of the Show and Shine:

The beautiful blue NA owned by Dave (Speedy) from NSW won my heart (and the Modified NA catagory). It was great to see Gold Coasters Richard and Pat win "Pride of Ownership" for their dark crystal blue ND.

Other winners were:
Original:
NA – Rae & Ken E. from SA
NB – Annie A. & Rod B. from Qld
NC – Jill and Gary T. from SA
ND – Christopher B. from Vic/Tas

Modified:
NA – Dave (Speedy) P. & son Romeo from NSW
NB – Jason G. from Vic/Tas
NC – Lou & Jamie T. from Qld
ND – Lena and Wesley H. from NSW

Ultra Modified:
Col A. from Qld

BEST STATE WEBSITE:

NEW SOUTH WALES

Judged by John Connolly, Motoring Editor from The Australian Newspaper



Long term NatMeet attendees were recognised at the Gala:

Names from L-R:

Romeo Perin

Dave Perin

Jean Cook

Ed McCaul

Maureen van Roden

Henri van Roden

Lynne Trethewey

Roger Trethewey

Rae Edwards

Ken Edwards







Whats instore for 2026?

The evening ended with the NSW President Ian Combes giving us a glimpse of NatMeet 2026 in the Hunter Valley at Rydges Resort. Covid caused false starts in 2020 and 2022 - but we all know, 3rd time is a charm.

It looks and sounds fantastic, but the NSW President did say Toowoomba will be hard to beat.

Everyone I spoke to agreed. They thought the Planning Committee of Peter Franklin, Henri and Maureen van Roden, John Martin and Lisa Price with assistance from the Darling Downs Chapter and volunteers (run leaders, photographers, Jonno and Kayla Reynolds from Morgan Park) all shone.

Toowoomba is a marvellous city, surounded by beautiful country. The runs, meals and interesting events at fabulous locations will be tough to beat - so go hard NSW!



Day 7: Farewell Breakfast

The doors at The Oakes opened at 7.30 and most were eating when I got there at 7.45, a huge effort after a big last night.

After fueling up on coffee, panadol and saying "till next time" to the many I'd met, we were off again.

Except this time, my run included a supermarket stop.

I'd like to say WELL DONE to the drivers that took 2, 5 or 10+ days to get to Toowoomba. Your dedication to our Club is really something else, you've impressed all of us, especially those from WA that had issues getting their cars delivered. Your true grit is memorable. All the best heading home.

THANKYOU NATMEET & FAREWELL!

We would like to thank our sponsors!

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Show n shine - Bob Duguid (life member) & Leah Gough
Apex Run & Wivenhoe runs – Leah Gough
Theme & Gala nights – David Martinelli (D C Imaging)
Peter Franklin
And many Natmeeters

I apologise

if your photo is missing -
but rest assured, you're not alone.

I'm not saying bribery is the answer, but it's worth a crack.

I trust you enjoyed reading about NATMEET XV Toowoomba.



As a first timer I thought it was fantastic, the Darling Downs chapter and organisers excelled, NSW has a huge job ahead!

It was great fun to meet MX-5ers from across Australia - and even better to learn I'm not the only one with issues.

Till next time, just keep zooming.

Cheers, Eric (Scoop) McColough



Things I'll never forget...

Track Time, Reverberations, & Smoking Problems of a Nat Meet Newby

My Nat Meet XV, my first, began two weeks before the event, as I began making friends online with the many interstate attendees sharing about their journeys to Queensland. I was both grateful to be so close as a local, and was already looking forward to future Nat Meets and being part of a "Nat Meet Road Trip", like my new friends.

This said, I note that my wife PJ and I came to Nat Meet with both my 2005 NC Launch Edition with BBR225 kit, and her VW Tiguan 2.0TSI R Line, and both were loaded up. I am not sure how the two of us would go in one car, and rather suspect PJ will bring her Vee Dubb to the Hunter, at the back of the road trip convoy.

Hats off to those who squeezed the lives of two people for two weeks including road trip into their MX5. It must be tardis technology.

My Nat Meet began with the Track Day at Morgan Park in nearby Warwick, an hour south from Toowoomba. I was placed in the Novice Group for the Sprints, having done just one Sprint Day four months earlier at Lakeside.

Morgan Park, wow! What a great track! It was a phenomenal day, both on the track with wonderful learning from my fellow competitors, and in the pits getting to know some of our interstate visitors, including the West Aussies who sadly at that point were sans MX5s. I got to share the track tour with Lauren Messenger who like me has a Launch Edition MX5, and being a true enthusiast was keen to experience the BBR225.

The track driving was intense in concentration, in joy, and in challenge. By the afternoon, my multi-focal glasses and helmet visor were doing weird things to my vision, and I had to drive with one eye closed to focus with my depth perception quite compromised.

It made me glad I had fitted Project MU track pads on the car following my first track day. My down shifts to second in the afternoon also became quite challenging, with my gearstick resisting entry to second for some seconds on most down shifts, irrespective of double declutching. I have changed the gearbox oil since Nat Meet and am hoping that next sprint day that helps the gearbox deal with an intensive punishing hot day.

I am rather chuffed that it turned out I won the best time in the Novice Group. Don't worry though the last afternoon session mixed together with drivers from the experienced group assured that I didn't forget my humility.

I'm rather ashamed that 'Beastie' didn't get a bath between track day and the first Nat Meet Run. Friday morning I met with a couple of club buddies to install the windscreen banner which they had already mastered and I popped on the Jacaranda stickers that declared me a member of Group 2.

I did learn something that morning. Driving up the ramp from B2 to B1, I tromped it a little more than necessary to enjoy some exhaust reverberation - but I scared the bejeezus out of myself when I set off the car alarm on the beautiful Blue NA that on Sunday, would win the concourse (beating my 'Beastie' amongst others). I learned car alarms can be much more sensitive than I realised!

Wasn't Picnic Point a sight to behold on Friday morning, teeming with MX5s everywhere, and the locals wondering what on earth was going on! The Jacarandas gathered together with our Group Leaders, my dear friends Shane and Laurie Davis, and we made new friends from other parts of the country.

Our group's Friday run was a cracker and introduced me to one of my new favourite roads Silver Pinch Road, that wound along a beautiful ridge with great bends and magnificent views. Going through the tunnel in Helidon I got to create BBR225 ITB & 2.5 inch high flow exhaust music that rivalled a philharmonic orchestra. Around the next corner though it turned out were the offices of the local Constabulary, and I popped it in sixth gear on a steady throttle to rein in the orchestra and limit the likelihood of the percussion section offering any pops or bangs.

The ordering of Morning Tea was an interesting experience. Our hosts at the Transport Museum Café did not want to sell us extra items even on our dime, lest other group members want some too, but non MX5 visitors could buy what they wanted.

If I'd had a trench coat in the car I'd have gone outside to don a disguise. Never the less, the scones jam and cream were lovely and not the last we'd see in the days ahead.

The rest of Friday went smoothly. Lunch was at a pub on a mountain with the cars lined up on the grass. I tried to capture the scene with a drone shot, but I was too close to the airport.
My DJI firmware wasn't letting me get a foot off the ground, so I got onto a table for some elevation.


Toowoomba street art

Saturday morning I was able to find a car wash to return 'Beastie' to his normal gleaming state. I headed once again to Picnic Point, yes on Day 2, and no I hadn't properly read my book, and yes when we got there we were the only ones there. When we realised we were supposed to be in the Public Car Park across from the hotel, I had to laugh at probably being seen by attendees and friends wondering where on earth I was going.

On Saturday, my car began to intermittently throw fairly impressive clouds of smoke. Our Oakey convoy of 15 or so MX5s pulled me over by radio with those behind, warning me of this phenomena. Saturday it only did it a few times. It also threw more on Sunday during my BBR225 talk and demonstration. On Monday it was creating plumes way too often and became a serious concern so it got put on a truck back to Brisbane. Thanks to Jacaranda leader Shane for waiting for the flat bed at Wivenhoe Dam with me.

In the two weeks following Nat Meet the car spent time in two workshops, the second being a return to where the BBR225 kit was fitted. It went through loads of diagnostic tests, compression, leak down, injectors, basically all systems, and tweaks including adding a ChemiWeld-like product to the cooling system.

The only system fail that might have been a contributor was the O2 sensor on the exhaust system which seemed to be failing and triggering a too rich mixture. Since getting the car back I believe that has reduced exhaust stench significantly, so I am grateful for that diagnostic find. However when I got the car back, 40 minutes in to the drive home, back came the plumes.

Thankfully I had made a really good call while the car was in being diagnosed. I asked them to order me the replacement dipstick for the original. The original gets a lot of flaming in the forums.

The replacement is a simple flat blade, and it has a much longer reading area. The Dip Stick had arrived the last day they had the car and they popped it in. When I got the car home suddenly everything became clear.

While it was truly not apparent on the original dipstick, on the new one it was plainly obvious that the oil level was massively overfull, well above the top of the reading area on the original. It ended up being at least two litres overfull, and an oil change has nailed the issue. I watch my oil like a hawk, well aware that low oil and hard driving is one of the few failure points for the durable Duratec 2 litre. I know how to read a dipstick, but like the other critics of the original, I find it a particularly crappy dipstick to read. I a loving the new one.

My Nat Meet XV got a little more complicated than I might have hoped, but what an event it was! I met so many wonderful owners from all over the country and thoroughly enjoyed the social events, especially the fancy dress night, the great band and dancing.

I loved that my beloved PJ got to spend time in our community and enjoy NatMeet, enough to be planning 2026!



We'll see you all there,

Ura P Auckland
Brisbane Chapter Leader
MX5 Club of Queensland

Natmeet 2024 by a Natmeet Novice...

In August 2019, I was a first time Mx5 owner who has just joined the Queensland club. A fellow member (who I'd known for more than 10 years) asked "did you know there's going to be a Natmeet in NSW next year" to which I replied "Natmeet, what's that?"

From there I was told about Natmeet being held every two years on a rotational basis, in different states around Australia.

I was also given a run down on what sort of things happened at a Natmeet, including a track day, a concours event to show your car off, lots of dinners, excursions and of course, plenty of fun MX5 runs.

I thought this sounds all right, I must go!

Fast forward to March 2020 and as we know, the world came to a grinding halt, including Natmeet 2020 in NSW. I guess you could say the rest is history.

After a couple of possible (but false) starts, we come to 2022 which is when I believe the decision was made that the next Natmeet would be in Queensland in 2024 (Qld was due to hold Natmeet after NSW).

By this time, I had obviously heard a lot more about it and as things were starting to get back to normal, I thought I am definitely in this time. How could you not go to your first Natmeet in your home State and it was just over an hour from home, in the wonderful inland metropolis of Toowoomba?



So as soon as the invitation to go to Natmeet in 2024 was issued I was in!

As a Natmeet novice, I decided to "go for the whole nine yards", and am I glad I did! We started with a wonderful track day at Morgan Park Raceway in Warwick. If you ever get a chance to get on track there, I highly recommend it.

From there we moved to our base for the next five days in Toowoomba and wow, didn't Queensland put on some outstanding Spring weather!

Every day was organised to perfection with runs that had great spots to enjoy a coffee or meal. Being with over 100 like-minded people, we soaked up the comradery and celebrated our ownership and enjoyment of this wonderful car, now in its 35th year of production.

The five days had runs, exhibitions including the Army Flying Museum, a fancy dress evening with prizes, culminating with the formal gala dinner held at the wonderfully restored Empire theatre in Toowoomba, which was a short walk from the Natmeet participants hotels.

It was great night and congratulations to the winners, from the track day to the show and shine and all of the other events. The dinner included passing the batten back to NSW for the next Natmeet in 2026.

Others will have certain things about Natmeet which stand out to them - but for me, all the events were top quality and while it took nearly 5 years to get to my first Natmeet, I can't recommend it highly enough to anyone that hasn't attend one.

A big thanks to the MX5 Club Queensland committee - especially the Natmeet committee for putting on a fabulous event.

I look forward to seeing you at the Hunter, 2026 Natmeet.

Cheers

Brian Riches



Toowoomba Street art

I loved it all!!

I loved Natmeet 2024! I have no understanding of how much work goes into making it happen - but it really was fantastic. Everyone I spoke to loved it, here's my thoughts - but please forgive me if I've missed some highlights.

Putting us in the middle of a large country city was a great move, it worked well. Toowoomba was ideal as we could walk to shops and explore local venues.

Having small groups on the runs worked out well too. We went on scenic roads to some great places, again well done to the organisers! Colour lanyards and stickers for our cars meant our groups were cohesive when we were out and car ID was easy to follow.

Lunch and morning tea venues were very generous. Food and drinks at the fancy dress were a highlight, along with the band.

The run leaders were very good at gathering us all up. More history on local land marks would have been nice but the runs were fun and maybe they prefererred to drive than talk.

The places we went were interesting and informative, I loved the Army Flying Museum at Oakey & Cobb & Co at Toowoomba.

On Gala night the venue the music, food, wines and table decorations were all top quality. Congratulations to all the winners and thanks Maureen for making those yummy MX5 shaped chocolates!

See you at the next Notmeet & Natmeet!

Thanks to the organisers, kind regards

Wendy Parsonage



Last 5 pics: from Nicky Clarke

Track day was huge fun for many!

Our Natmeet Track day was held at Morgan Park, Warwick on Thursday 11th April 2024.

What could be better than a Morgan Park Track Day? Well now that you mention it, an overnight stay in Warwick BEFORE attending the Morgan Park Track Day!

It seemed a lot of us had the same idea and I found lot of familiar faces at the Coachman's Inn when I arrived on Wednesday night. After staying there, come Thursday morning the drivers were bright eyed and bushy tailed, so to speak, for the big day ahead.



Weather conditions were cool and clear (from what I remember) and the track surface was in excellent condition thanks to some remedial work in recent times.

The stars were all in alignment as 33 (yes 33) MX-5s could be found in the pit area. All models from NAs through to NDs were there, most being in road trim with a few dedicated track cars in the mix as well.

On this occasion, Henri van Roden wore his Motorsport Hat (just one of his many). Henri worked tirelessly behind the scenes and was able to put together an excellent event which the assembled field thoroughly enjoyed.



The drivers were split into 3 groups, which amongst other things, took the drivers previous experience into account as well as their car type (road going or race ready).

By doing so, Henri established 3 groups that consisted of people with broadly similar abilities and cars of similar speed, which helped to ensure a drama free day for everyone involved.

On the day we used two different track layouts, with the short 8 corner (E Track) for the early session and the longer 12 corner (K Track) for the later sessions.



All sessions were being timed. This gave us a solid base line from which we could measure ourselves - and hopefully improve our times.

Henri even got Channel 9 News to attend!

Their camera crew recorded track day action and reporter interviewed drivers. It all resulted in an excellent wrap of the event and several minutes on TV which captured the essence of our Natmeet Track Day perfectly in my opinion.

Steve Hodgson



Start vs State, mate vs mate...

Despite our friendly rivalries over rugby league, tortoise racing and other such nonsense, members of the Queensland and NSW MX5 Clubs (particularly the Hunter chapter) have shared a special bond.



This has been nurtured by our Notmeet events in the non-Natmeet years. With Natmeet being on Queensland soil this year, it was a chance for the Cockroaches to visit the Cane Toads on home soil, and what a great time was had by all.

From the track day and welcome function on the Thursday through to the magnificent gala dinner on Monday night, it was obvious that a lot of detailed planning had gone into the event.

Henri, Maureen, Peter, John, Lisa and their helpers from the Darling Downs should be thoroughly proud of a job well done.



The two main runs, although criticised by many for being too short, included some fun sections of road and some wonderful scenery.

Toowoomba's location on the top of the range was perfect homebase to cover the highlights of the area.



As good as all that was, what I like the most about Natmeet is the people. I've always said (much to the disdain of some members), that we aren't members of a car club, we are members of a people club.

Throw in the local attractions that we visied such as the Queensland Transport Museum in Gatton, the Army Flying Museum at Oakey, Toowoomba's Cobb & Co Museum and the spectacular Empire Theatre and it added up to a remarkable experience.





The cars get us together, but it is the people that keep us here. So, catching up with existing friends, making new friends, having a laugh, maybe a drink or three for some, that is what Natmeet is about.



The fact that we can do it while enjoying such great cars is truly the icing on the cake.

See you all in the Hunter in May 2026,

Stephen Carter