



15TH ANNIVERSARY TARGA - DAY ONE

Day one is finished after 8 Special Stages from Pukekohe East to Taupo. Top 5 in each Class is:

Classic Class:

1.	Barry Kirk-Burnnand/Carl Kirk-Burnnand	BMW M3	02:07:52
2.	Mark Kirk-Burnnand/Chris Kirk-Burnnand	BMW M3	02:08:21
3.	Brent Emerson/Sheryl Hanright	Commodore	02:08:59
4.	Matt Smidt/Shane Walden	Mazda RX2	02:22:34
5.	Allan Lewis/Colin Cole	Datsun 240Z	02:22:48

Modern Class:

1.	Tony Quinn/Naomi Tillett	Nissan R35GT-R	02:00:11
2.	Clark Procter/Tony Callaghan	Escort/Nissan	02:00:40
3.	Paul Manuell/Richard Scoular	VE Commodore	02:02:07
4.	Jason Gill/Jody Somervell	EVO9 GT	02:02:21
5.	Hayden Paddon/Greg Paul	EVO9	02:02:25

TARGA TALES

- You should have had this late last night or this morning but I had laptop problems.
- Forgot to say yesterday that Gavin Riches in the Florida based, Really Cool Cars 2007 Porsche GT3 RS, withdrew at the last moment due to ill health.
- Elliot Hudson had purchased the Audi RS Avant V4 twin turbo wagon off Rick Martin and did the two day Rotorua Targa. Hudson is a Barrister and in Court on a trial in which could not get a deferral so that he could do Targa. Rick stepped in and Elliot's daughter Wende Bennetti is co-driving for him.
- Anton Tallot in the RX7 was also missing ?
- I had a call from Neil Tolich in the Aston Martin V8 Vantage. His VIP guest for the Pukekohe 4 laps was going to be a no-show. Did I have anyone else ? Stupid question really – how about me ? We met at Gate 3 and Mark Ball (Mayor of Pukekohe /Franklin District) was still buzzing about his ride through Special Stage 1. There was an HIS (50kph speed restriction) to keep the speed down at the top of Burt Road. No problem to a VIP. Neil said laughing "I lit the 420bhp V8 up and went through the HIS at 140 kph !!" Mark said "It was just awesome, I could not believe how many people were watching on that stage, barbecues and all." I told him the big one on the corner of Tuhimata and Runcimen Road was a fund raiser for Pukekohe Intermediate School. "Aghh well" he said, "we sure gave them their monies worth" he said laughing.
- Bit of a wait at Pukekohe Park Raceway as the horses were still out training. They had an agreed time of clear by 9.30am for Go Green for the Targa Rally cars at 10am. No problem, we were restricted to 3 laps only. Glorious sound as we headed out. Remove fuse 22 and it opens the baffles in the exhaust so the more you feed it, the louder it gets. Brisk laps they were and similar in handling to Neil's 1970 Perana Capri V8. I was surprised how hard he pushed it but he's a skilled driver. There were chicanes on the back straight and a detour through the pits and he was on the gas the whole ime. A unique experience.
- The Japanese guests, Misao Take and Takako Ataba, in their 2005 Nissan 350Z got lost in translation at Pukekohe and left out the pit straight detour completely on all their four laps.
- Brent Emerson in the Commodore also missed the pit entry on one lap.
- SS3 was Hampton Downs and there was a big crowd watching the Targa Tour cars circulate. The Aston Martin was out there too and sounded even better outside the car. By the time the Targa cars started the crowd had doubled and I would have guessed there was at least 2000 to 3000. Problem was there was no toilet facilities at all. Okay for the blokes as plenty of big machinery about to hide behind but not good for the women.

- It's simply an awesome facility and they have a bit to go before completion. When people walked in most ended up in the compound of 20 plus 20 apartments and no way out except the way you came in. Between that and the next block of 20+20 was the place to be. You could stay there but there was two high fences so not ideal viewing unless you were on the front terrace of one of the 80 apartments. Not complaining, just an observation. You still have a high fence trackside but that's there for our safety.
- The Classic Class were out and I was at the end of the trackside fence. I was just photographing Allan Lewis in the most awesome sounding 1972 Datsun 240Z – Allan's has a supercharged V8 in it. He was just coming out of the chicane and there was a blue blur behind him. The Alpeen of Donald Webster (1972 Alpine Renault 110 Berlinetta Group 5) had spun demolishing the chicane of plastic barriers. He was facing the wrong way and there was panic braking going on from the remainder out on the circuit. Does that make him the first to have an accident at Hampton Downs ?
- Right of reply ! Donald Webster said that car 364 – the Hind/Langford BMW was busy changing lines in the front straight and baulked him. All of a sudden the chicane was there. Fortunately the barriers were not filled with sand or water so there was minimal damage to a door.
- The hole in the chicane allowed drivers straight through so there was some fast lap times as it was the sharp end of the Classics. Racing was stopped before the Moderns came out so that they could fix the chicane.
- Modern Class were now out and tyre wear did not seem to be a concern as many were trying hard.
- Tony Quinn's 2008 Nissan R35 GT-R is the silent assassin. It's just soo quiet and deceptively quick, showing rapid acceleration. At Hampton D. he had massive tyre squeal and was trying tighter lines.
- Stace Hopper's Subaru Impreza is something of a beast and the turbo pop-off valve was louder than any other – ptu, ptu, ptu !!
- Clark Proctor's Turbo 6 Mk 1 Escort has new suspension and whilst it still has that nose up attitude it sits just soo tight on the track delivering all that power to the rear wheels.
- Jason Gill also looked fast but its relatively quiet. Snappy through the gears it's another deceptive car.
- Have yet to catch up with Trevor Crowe but his mid-engined 1991 Subaru Justy twitches and squirms with it's buckets-full of power. At the end of the front straight the front right wheel gained some amazing angles.
- Same corner and Brian Green had a big sideways twitch in the Mitsubishi Lancer.
- Vet racer Reg Cook had the camera car following him and despite their new horsepower Reg did not make it for them to follow him.
- Mal Clark in the BMW320i – "I just set my fastest lap out there the !!" - get it ?
- Overall, some drivers only did 3 laps and some did 5. Add to that it was nigh impossible to record a 4 lap time as it was a flying finish so 1+1 did not equal 2 so they decided to not give times for the stage.
- Lunch in Te Awamutu – the sun was out.
- I asked Paul Manuell what he thought of Hampton Downs. Paul drives NZV8's and his Targa Commodore is a supercharged 6.3 litre fire breathing monster. He thought for a second and said "The most incredible 4 laps I have ever driven . Soo smooth and fast. The elevation changes are great. Loved the hairpin. I don't think we are going to have enough horsepower !"
- Geoff Boyden – Car 128 – Torana SS V8 said "I wonder if we are the first V8 to run in competition on Hampton Downs?"
- I then went into SS6 and just caught the fast boys. I walked into the stage as they came through a series of esses having come out of a valley. The noise bouncing off the hills. Manuell's Commodore is just soo loud and the supercharger is whining away. You could hear Allan Lewis's supercharger before you heard the V8. I have gone about it at Rotorua but the Mehrten's Mercedes just sounds so good – mechanical music.
- Frontal damage on the Boxter s ? Mmmmmmm.
- Proctor was twitchy fast - just a hint of twitch, as it accelerated under good power. This car has really been sorted suspension wise. Kind-of-wierd to see a Mk1 Escort going soo quick.
- Taupo race track and Neil Tolich had Taupo MP, Louise Upston, as guest co-driver in his Aston Martin. They were departing as I arrived but Event Director Peter Martin said she was most enthusiastic about her ride. Will catch up with Neil today.
- By the time the second run started (SS8) started it was steady rain. Wet Dunlops were on all the cars.

- The McLeod/Quinn RX7 #407 was marooned in the middle of the track. Guess what ? they ran out of gas !!!
- Hayden Paddon in the EVO9 was having a ball in the wet. End of the front straight he was a controlled slide into and out of the corner. Great to watch.
- Andy Booth was behind the wheel of Paul Halford's 2003 Maserati Trofeo. Fast and another to sound great.
- Keep up to date with the progressive results live on: <http://targa.tvd.co.nz/targa/public/results.aspx>

END.



At left Mark Ball with Neil Tolich. Photos Alan Henderson. Email for high resolution editorial use.



Allan Lewis in the 1972 Datsun 240Z. The blue blur behind him is the Alpeen of Donald Webster (1972 Alpine Renault 110 Berlinetta Group 5) had spun demolishing the chicane of plastic barriers.



Trevor Crowe in his mid-engined 1991 Subaru Justy.



Clark Procter in SS6. The Mk I Ford Escort with a Nissan Turbo 6 under the bonnet.



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For media enquiries en-route contact Alan Henderson on 0277222757

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