

DUNLOP Targa NZ

15TH ANNIVERSARY TARGA – DAY THREE (WED)

TARGA TALES

- Today Targa spent the day in Taranaki before the overnight in Wanganui - fine weather all day. Only 6 Special Stages because the Whangamomona was being run both directions.
- VIP's. Here is a catch up with the photos.



- Neil Tolich in the Aston Martin Vantage, took Taupo MP, Louise Upston around the Taupo track. Louise is seen here with Event Director Peter Martin.



- On Day 2 (Tuesday) Neil Tolich in the Aston Martin Vantage had two guests from the Waikato District Council in separate rides. Seen here at the changeover is (at left) Mark Ammon, Mayor of Waitomo District Council and Chris Ryan who is CEO of the Waitomo District Council.
- A list of 31 local drivers joined the Targa for the day and there was some familiar 'race and rally' names. Grant Rivers had a very nice 1965 Fastback Mustang and took every opportunity to 'light it up' with lots of wheelspin and noise.
- Another is Neil Marshall who was in his EVO 6.5 and was fastest in the first stage by 16 seconds. That's fastest of all Targa cars !! He did the same on SS18 – 16 seconds faster.



- SS17 was the 31km Tarata. In the Classics Barry Kirk-Burnnand took 22 seconds out of his nephew Mark with a 16:22. The next 4 were within 9 seconds of each other.
- In the Moderns Hayden Paddon did a 16:02, Tony Quinn did a 16:22, Clark Procter a 16:25 and Jason Gill a 16:26.
- Talking Jason Gill, his co-driver is his sister Jody Somervell. Not 100% sure but I think this is the only brother/sister pairing. Jody had a test in Targa Rotorua and was addicted. Mother of three with the youngest only 2½ it took some organising to get the week off !
- Next was the Inglewood jumps. Logistics meant I missed them but I have seen the Groundsky photos – available soon on www.groundsky.co.nz
- Over the first of the jumps the David Langford-Smith / Alan Hind launched their 1986 BMW 325i big time and then took the same speed into the next one. The car bottomed out and shot to the left through the fence whilst rotating clockwise. The car was worse for wear but the drivers okay.
- I caught up with TV3's Shaun Summerfield and he said they caught it all on tape. Yep, it was on 3 Sport last night – spectacular.
- Fastest was Paddon by 14 seconds from Quinn. He was 11 secs quicker than Procter. Procter, Gill and Peter Millener (Porsche GT3) were separated by only 3 seconds.
- One thing to put on your 'bucket list' is to visit Whangamomona (aka Whonga). The start was 20 minutes nor/east of Stratford and is 39 klms of windy sealed road that goes over three saddles (ranges of hills). You can purchase a passport and get it stamped. It's a special place on the Targa itinerary as it's raced both ways. It's a tough stage and hard on tyres.
- I arrived at the start of the stage to see the Taranaki cars leave. Second to last was Grant Rivers in the Mustang who laid 20 metres of rubber. Next was Stuart Rose in the Toyota Hilux complete with a soft toy farm dog attached to the roll bar. No ordinary Hilux – it has a 4 litre Toyota V8. He too launched with maximum noise and wheelspin – worth the trip already !
- Media, TV3 and I were allowed to follow the #999 car in as there were several incidents. The first official 'arrows car' had beached itself on the side of the road – most embarrassing.
- No sign of the sheep on the road at 14 ks.
- I have to admit my VW Passat 4 Motion Wagon struggled to keep up with the ambulance, or was it the driver ?
- Bit disconcerting attacking blind corners on the wrong side of the road.



- At the ¾ mark we came across my favourite car. Allan Lewis in the supercharged V8 Datsun 240Z had come into a sweeping right and there was a deer standing on the road. As he braked hard he turned into the corner and the rear came around to stop right on the edge of a very big drop. The car had been stopped by several posts but luckily he did not have enough momentum to flip over them into the gully below. Tow truck arrived, fired it up and away again. You can imagine the ribbing he got at Whanga, such as "was Santa with him ?? etc etc ?" - all good fun.



- Several kms on we came across Kim Blatchley who had come into the corner too hot and went wide. They said the car simple slid off the edge to stop in the scrub without any damage. Shaun had told him of Allan Lewis and the deer. Kim was quick and said "Actually we saw Elvis standing in the middle of the road !"

- Good atmosphere at Whanga and good country lunch available. Hot mutton or pork sandwiches ? Service crews were busy and the drivers all looking very relaxed.
- I checked the times. Neil Marshall did a 20:27, Paddon a 20:40 and Quinn a 20:42.
- In the Classics Mark K-B did a 21:51 and Barry K-B did a 21:53 and the Butlers a 21:59.
- In the Paul Halford/Andy Booth Maserati Trofeo, Andy had driven in and Paul would be driving out. Paul said he was very impressed with Andy's skills. Whilst Paul prefers to drive than be driven, he appreciated that the younger Booth was quicker. He was also learning from him as well. Differing lines and slow in, fast out.



- Here's Brent Emmerson's Commodore after it's excursion into the paddock. The car was thoroughly checked by the Scrutineers and allowed to re-enter. That's the boot lid sitting on top of the roof.





- I finally caught up with Trevor Crowe's Subaru Justy although Trevor was elsewhere. The crew gave me a guided tour. In the middle is a WRX engine driving the rear wheels. This one has a bigger 2.5 litre block. Up front is a 6 speed sequential dogbox. Co-driver Peter Carmine pointed out he sits forward unlike WRC cars as the fuel cell is behind him. Originally built as a gravel car it had been converted to Targa. The reason why it was towed back into TeKuiti was the rear left strut had blown out of the top.
- Mal Clark in the Beemer had broken the throttle at the pedal end. Co-driver Andrew Smith said it was "MALpressure, or was it MALfunction?" - funny man !
- Procter's Nissan Turbo 6 cylinder is actually a V6. The turbo's engineering under the bonnet is a work of art.
- Taranaki entry Craig and Thomas Korff in the Starlet were being towed all the way back as they had shredded a cam belt and not worth the risk of driving back - even sedately.
- Long wait for the 20 Targa Tour cars to go as well as 92 competitors.
- The Dobbe brothers Commodore was running well and the crew said it was the first time they didn't have to touch it.



- Back over the hill and at the highest point the Whanga Saddle the Ambulance was stopped. Low and behold Ron Scanlon (and co-driver Victor Yuen) had gone straight ahead and through the fence into the valley below. Fortunately the 1992 EVO RS had stayed on it's wheels. They were checked in the Ambo and cleared to carry on. I was later told the Rescue boys towed it back up the hill and they drove it away.
- Because of the delays I missed the last two stages and arrived in Wanganui for service.
- Quinn was still overall leader but had lost time to Procter. Gill had moved back into 3rd after a very strong drive and helped by the fact that Manuell had had a brief 'off' and niggling problems with the car.
- The Top 5 overall was:

	Day	Overall
Marshall	1:17:48	n/a
Quinn	1:18:40	3:38:28
Procter	1:19:39	3:39:48
Gill	1:20:00	3:41:42
Millener	1:20:28	3:44:07
Paddon	1:19:47	3:44:30

- Note that Quinn was still faster than Paddon on the day but Marshall was fastest on the day. They were changing front discs on Quinn's car.
- Reg Cook who is 18th overall in the Nissan Pulsar is well ahead of many more powerful cars. He is also leading his class – Category 6. He said he had been hampered by lack of horsepower and had, had overheating problems.
- Dr Nick had broken a starter motor bracket but local Grant Rivers know somebody who was coming to help them out – now that's what Targa is all about.
- Joanne Butler quipped, "we're still Holden on !!"
- Caught up with Mike Sexton who joined at Day 2. The reprogramming of the computer was taking some getting used to. He said they certainly learnt about tyre pressure. The were supposed to be running 32 psi but had 37 in the front so by the time they got to Whanga they had melted the fronts. The molton rubber had filled the minimal tread and they were now slicks. The crew, as on most other cars, had the onerous task of digging out the rubber.
- Keep up to date with the progressive results – click here:
<http://targa.tvd.co.nz/targa/public/results.aspx>
- Results are courtesy of the TVD operations and results management solution and vehicle tracking by TVD's AVL solution Dash.

For media enquiries, or anonymous Targa Tales en-route, contact Alan Henderson on 027 7222757