



TARGA BAMBINA SATURDAY - DAY 1.

After days of tropical type storms we feared the worse for Day 1 of Targa Bambina. Saturday dawned overcast due to low cloud but as we headed West to the Awhitu Peninsula for Stage 1 the weather, true to the forecast, was looking good.

The big news was Gordon Burr was not running his new acquisition – the ex Ian Taylor, ex Clark Proctor Escort V8. The log book was 'missing' and it was found that the roll cage was not compliant so Gordon just happened to arrive at scrutineering in his Ferrari 308 GT4 – as you do !



Others to arrive that caught the eye was firstly Garth McGregor's very desirable 1971 Holden Torana XU1. There was several BMW M3's. In the Modern Class there was Mike Sexton's 1996 M3 EVO had just had a 6 speed sequential gearbox fitted and they were have heat problems off the transmission tunnel. Pukekohe's own Gary Murphy's M3 was looking pristine after a freak accident when it finished up on it's roof last year. In the Classics there was Rex Alder in in his 1986 M3 and Barry Kirk-Burnnand in his left hand drive 1988 M3. Under the bonnet this car sports a carbon-fibre airbox that occupies as much of the free space as available – a work of art !.

Chris Lane's 1996 Audi RS2 Quattro was back and if there is the sound of a car under full noise that makes 'your spine tingle', this car is it.

Four very nice Subaru WRX STI's in the hands of Leigh Hopper, Rex Giddy, John Ludlow and Graeme Wong. Let's not forget the Modern Class Porsches of Tim James in his 200 Boxter S and Bryan Wareham's GT3.

What I want to emphasise that this is what Targa is about. I was on Neil Tolich's Service Crew on the Main Event in 2005 in his Perana Capri V8. I co-drove for him in 2006 and did the 2006 Dash with Jason Gill in his first Evo in 2007. I trust that in these reports I can bring to you something of what Targa is really all about. The event's bi-line is "The Ultimate Driving Experience". It doesn't matter whether you are in a Peugeot 206 or a Mercedes CL63 AMG. You race in your own category and most of importantly you have a good time. The comraderie is also what it is about. It's not all about men and their machines, many of the co-drivers are females and in the Main Event we usually have had several women drivers.

Special Stage 1 (**SS1**) was the first of 5 stages up the West Coast starting just below Aka Aka which is basically South West of Pukekohe. I positioned myself 5 klms in from the start on an almost 180 degree left hand corner. It carries a double caution (!! – in the route book) and the warning “Very acute – big drop on outside of corner”. Now, how many could get it wrong is beyond me, however many did.



Gordon Burr / Steve Forbes in the Ferrari 308 GT4 getting the 110 degree left very wrong.

With the new start order of Classics slow to fast and Moderns fast to slow, meant that the top 20 fastest were about in the middle. There had been slight drizzle and next on the road was Mark Parsons in Neil Tolich’s fabulous 1970 Capri Perana V8. You could hear the Windsor 302 cu.in V8 well before he arrived. 30 metres before the corner Mark induced a massive hand-brake slide until he was in line with the downhill exit and was gone – simple as that !



Mark Parsons / Cully Paterson in Neil Tolich’s 1970 Capri Perana V8. Mark is fully sideways, not for scrubbing off speed but positioning the Perana perfectly for the downhill. The Black Magic camara operator seen in the Ferrari pic said he caught the full slide on camera – it was impressive.

Parsons was the fastest Classic on the stage by 14 seconds but the fastest Modern was Jason Gill in his EVO9 GT who was 11 seconds quicker.

Most of the cars had gone through and then there was a delay and when an ambulance and the Safety (ACOC) car went past. We were told that there had been an accident 2 klms up the road. I left as I wanted to photograph Stage 3, the same stage repeated, and re-entered the stage at Holmes Road where the infamous yumps are. There was plenty of spectators about.

Photographers walking out said it was a nasty accident so with considerable Motocross accident experience behind me and a holder of a St John's Certificate, I walked into the stage to see if I could render assistance. Car #977 a 1977 Reliant Scimitar had left the road and already there was some 6 St John's personnel in attendance. Driver Richard Lane and Co-Driver Allan Hamilton were both hurt. Targa personnel were also in attendance and there are strict procedures to follow.

The Accident Procedures worked like clockwork and with both drivers stabilised they were stretchered out of the steep paddock, into the Ambulance and away. How and why it happened we will leave to the Accident Inspector. In the meantime cars had come back to the start as it was a repeat as Stage 3. In order not to delay the time-clock and all important road closures the stage was changed to a Touring Stage and no time allocated.

SS2: Classics - again Mark Parsons but only by 3 seconds from Anton Tallot in the RX7. In the Modern it was Jason Gill by 8 seconds to Rick Giddy and only 3 to Leigh Hopper.

SS3: Was cancelled as I just explained.

SS4: Was a re-run of Stage 2 and in the Classic time there was only 1 second between Parsons and Tallott. 12 seconds back was Stuart Eyre in his 1973 RX3. The Moderns were now right on the pace and six had gone faster than Parsons. Gill, Giddy and Hopper were the Top 3 but only just from Bob Boniface in the Ford Sierra with the Evo engine and Harry Dodson in his Nissan Skyline. Only a second back was Wellington's Richard Mehrten's in the Mercedes Benz CLK63 AMG. The end of the stage was on an opposing valley and you could hear Mehrten's Merc before it came into view many klms away. The 6 speed sequential gearbox was working overtime and the when it came time to climb out of the valley the some 354 kw V8 was music to a petrolhead's ears. Welcome to Targa !

SS5 was the last before lunch and further North up to Pollock. Classics - Parsons again but this time by Anthony Butler in the 1973 Holden Cheetah. Butler was the obvious one to defy his seeding and looked good all day. The Cheetah is something like a stretched soft top E-Type - actually nothing like it but you get my drift ? In the Moderns there was only one second between Gill, Hooper and Dodson. Gill had done a 4:46 and Parsons a 4:50. Gill's a four wheel drive 2005 Turbo'd 4 cylinder with almost 400bhp and Parson's (actually Neil Tolich's but ...) is a 'near new' 1970, 302 cu.in V8 of about 350bhp, rear wheel drive.

Lunch break and re-group was at Waiuku's View Road Primary School with a vast playing field that was more than adequate for service and lunch. The day was now hot and the School was delighted with the event as a fund raiser. The grounds were left as immaculate as they found them.

It was then a 46 klm drive to Papakura's stages 6 & 7 being Ardmore Quarry Road which would be run from Hunua down to Ardmore.

SS6: The stage has been used many times as the Shakedown/Prologue Stage but the mid section of the road had been resealed and there was a mandatory 50kph section in the middle. Some drivers treated it with great caution but the fast boys let loose. I was told there was a big crowd at the top of this stage. I was down in the esses near the finish.

In the Classics Parsons, Butler and Eyre were very impressive but so was Barry Kirk-Burnnand . In fact he not only looked quick, he was, by 4 seconds quicker. In the second run (**SS7**) he was 6 seconds slower. This time it was Parsons, Butler and Tallott.

In the Moderns it was Giddy, Gill and Hopper in the first run through and then Hopper and Giddy on identical time of 5:22 then Gill on 5:23. Malcolm Smith in the 1997 Evo4 was a breakthrough on 5:28. The overall times for the Moderns was going to be close.



Harry Dodson / Glen Cupit in the 1991 Nissan Skyline on Ardmore Quarry Road.



Wellington's Richard & Jenny Mehrtens in the Mercedes Benz CLK63 AMG.



Malcolm Smith/Jane Entwistle in the 1997 Mitsubishi Lancer EVO IV.



Chris Lane's 1996 Audi RS2 Quattro has a sound of it's own.



Stuart Eyre / Stuart McFarlane in high speed action in Eyre's 1973 RX3.



Barry Kirk-Burnnand with son Carl in the left hand drive 1988 M3. Not only did he look quick, he was, by 4 seconds, in the first run through.



Jason Gill / Jason Robb near the end of the Ardmore Quarry Road stage.

All photos: Alan Henderson

Then it was back to the Pitstop in Central Park, Papakura. Results for the Classic's were already provisional and displayed on the CRO's (Competitor Relations Officer) van. That has to be a first and acknowledged as a vast improvement by the competitors. The Timing Crews did a great job and their training and/or experience showed.

Modern's provisional results were up as soon as the last car arrived. It was Gill by 13 seconds from Hopper and only 3 to Giddy.

Then it was off to Parc Ferme. Maximum arrival was 8pm at the Accent Point Car Park – a building in central Papakura. See how close 4th to 9th was ?

Event Director Peter Martin was very happy how the day went. "The event ran faultlessly and the procedures in place took care of the two delays. The Competitors are happy which is most important. The timing reporting worked extremely well and already accessible on the website."

The times are 'provisional' allowing competitors to raise any issues. Those cars that stopped for the accident in Stage 1 were given aggregate times based on their performance to others over all other stages as well – you can't get fairer than that.

The overnight final results from Saturday's Day 1 were:

Classic:

- 1st Mark Parsons/Cully Patterson in the Neil Tolich 1970 Ford Capri Perana V8 with a total stage time of 34:08
- 2nd Anton and Anne Tallott in their 1979 Mazda RX7 on 34:50
- 3rd Anthony and Joanne Butler in their Holden Cheetah V8 on 35:03
- 4th Stuart Eyre/Stuart McFarlane in Eyre's 1973 RX3 on 35:41
- 5th Nicholas Cooper (aka Dr Nick)/Paul Marshall in Dr Nick's 1971 Chrysler Valiant Charger on 35.53

So far a brilliant run by Parsons who, with his 'sideways' reputation, did not disappoint.

Modern:

- 1st Jason Gill/Jason Robb in Gill's 2005 Mitsubishi EVO9 GT with 33:24
- 2nd Leigh Hopper/Michelle Bain in Hopper's 2002 Subaru Impreza WRX STI SpecC on 33:37
- 3rd Rick Giddy/Joel Giddy Subaru in a 2003 Subaru WRX STI with 33:40
- 4th Malcolm Smith/Jane Entwistle in a 1997 Mitsubishi Lancer EVO IV on 34:42 (was seeded 20th !!)
- 5th Harry Dodson/Glenn Cupit in Dodson's 1991 Nissan Skyline with a 34:44

That actually put Parsons 4th overall in the mix. Malcolm Smith was the big surprise as it was his first tarmac rally. 6th placed Gary Murphy/Terry Rouse in another BMW M3 was another 9 seconds back. 7th placed Richard and Jenny Mehtens from Wellington in their fabulous Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG, only 1 second behind. Shows how close they are as Bob Boniface /Simon Butler were only another second back in Boniface's 1987 Ford Sierra.

ENDS.

View: www.targa.co.nz

Alan Henderson / Targa Media

Email: media@targa.co.nz

Office Ph: 09 298 8322

Mob: 027 7222757