



TEAM ENZED ABARTH

Newsletter December 2017



2017 Targa New Zealand

Index of Performance winners ...again!



Happy Team ENZED Abarth: Phil, Nigel, Dave and Mike

Pre-event

With Barty2 arriving back home, it was with great thanks to Lindsay Lyons who collected the car from the wharf and delivered it to Graham Logan of Colin Davies Panelbeaters to undertake the body repairs necessary following Targa Tasmania.



Graham has been a long-time supporter of our Team. We have only had to use his expertise a couple of times over the years, the last in 2009. Graham did a great job on the panel and paint, but the bent sub frame was not able to be straightened ...time to send in the cavalry! The boys decided it would be best to take the car back over the hill to Nigel's and attack things there. Sadly, Nigel realised he had no room in his shed, so big thanks to Alan Patterson for allowing the guys to dirty his beautiful shed floor!

Owning a works-built race car is pretty cool, except when it comes to spare parts: it seems everything is no quite the same as a standard part, so then you have to buy the bits from the factory at....ahem....slightly higher than usual rates shall we say !

Now you'd think an item like a sub frame would be the same for both a road car and the race car...but alas no. Thanks to Mal Simmonds we secured a good subframe but when the boys dropped the bent one from the car it was clear the spare would not work. Luckily with ace fabricator Dave at hand, it was quickly dealt to as he modified the spare to match the factory unit.



Making things fit....



All back together...for a few minutes

With everything back together, the boys started the car up to check for any water or exhaust leaks, but were rather dismayed when they smelt burning oil. Old Fiat engines have a dirty trick in that some (not all) of the exhaust studs go into oil galleries. Sadly, we had a couple of studs where oil was bypassing and making a bit of a mess. So the decision was to pull everything apart again, remove the turbo and the replace the studs applying some high temperature thread sealant. As Nigel said "best we do it now, where its warm and dry and we can drink Alan's beer, rather than mid-event on the side of a road"



Apart again fixing oil leak ..



... then finally ready !

Finally it was wheels on, ready for final check and decaling. The new 16" soft compound Dunlops looked good on the Fiat Coupé wheels, but we had a spare set of soft 17" Kumhos on the original rims just in case....which as you will read ,was just as well ! The only downside with the smaller wheels was very little calliper clearance, so when balancing the wheels , the weights had to be carefully loacted so not to foul the callipers. In practice this meant during the event we did suffer some stone-gouging on the inside of the rims, so we really need the larger wheels for rally work..

Thanks to Maurice Thomson who gave B2 a w.o.f and wheel alignment , and then undertook pre-event scrutineering, which meant Barty2 was ready for final prepping.

Day Minus 3

After I landed in Auckland, and finally getting to Lindsay's at Te Puke, the next step was to go to Nigel's and collect the car (and the fancy lowering trailer we had borrowed from Doug Cleverley....thanks Doug !). I wanted the car back in Te Puke so I could get some seat time to see how it drove on the smaller wheels, as well as relieving the final prep work from the boys who had been working flat out in the lead-up.

Just as important as prepping the car, is prepping Big bird, our awesome service van! Lindsay has been a great custodian, and it was freshly serviced and ready to go. After getting the Kumho's fitted, we then loaded her up

Day Minus 2

Phil flew in today from Wellington, looking forward to seeing the car. The first job planned was the fitting of replacement decals; where the car was re-painted the originals had to of course be removed. SignFX did their usual great job, but the courier didn't.....they lost them ! Eeek !! Eventually they were delivered and so with the help of Paul Lyons, we managed to get them fitted



Phil "helping" Paul fit the last-minute-arrival decals..

After Phil fitted the in-car camera and tidied up a few things, we went for a quick recce and came back smiling..the car felt good. Time for wash, vacuum and polish....

Racing for Prostate Cancer Awareness

We were proud to promote this important cause , and to be the Event Ambassador for the Prostate Cancer Foundation of NZ. Obviously I am a living example of how early detection of the disease works, and via the various media, used our profile within Targa NZ to reinforce the message for all blokes over the age of 50 to get checked : we check our cars regularly, why not ourselves ?

The PCCFNZ had some great decals made for both the car and the van, so they too went on!



"Get Checked !"

Day Zero

Time to load up Big Bird, put B2 on the trailer and head North. After collecting Dave, we spent the night at Nigel's after a superb pre-event bbq with Fiat Club friends...just like old times ..great fun.



..all loaded up....in the rain ...did I say it was raining? Urrggh...

Day One – Hampton Downs to Hamilton

22km of special stages, 52km touring

After a couple of days of miserable drizzle, we awoke to sunshine, that was to stay with us (luckily) all week as we travelled down the island.

The start this year was just outside of Auckland at Hampton Downs Raceway. This allowed the organiser to give us all some track 'test' sessions in the morning should we wish, prior to documentation and briefings and the formal start in the afternoon. As these sessions were untimed and prior to event start, we could take friends/sponsors/etc for skids.



Ready to go !

We were very pleased that the Peter Hay and Alan Diaz of ENZED managed to meet us there and were able to come for a few laps. Rallycars make horrible track cars, but judging by the bent co-drivers footrest, I think the guys had some fun! It is great to have the support from the ENZED team, and with the large amount of Team ENZED Abarth posters and caps given to us as promotional give-aways this year, we aim to keep the ENZED flag flying high!



Once more into the valley of death rode the 600.....Peter and Alan prepare!

Today's two stages were long , fast and easy to read , so a very good way to get into the groove as it were. No issue with the car at all, but our pace was defintley way behind the class leader in a BMW M3. For this year the " 2001cc to 3000cc" class was changed to " 2001cc to 3300cc" to capture these BMW's. It was going to be hard then for our little 1.4turbo (effective capacity 2380cc) with at least 100bhp less to match the big'uns but we intended on giving it a go !

Of course with only two stages, there wasn't a lot for the boys to do at service, as ably demonstrated by Nigel :



Nothing to do Nige ?? " dammit I'll have to clean the wheels"..

An excellent Italian meal was enjoyed before we split up into our digs for the night. The forecast for tomorrow was dry...time to put the foot down.

Day Two - Hamilton back to Hamilton

143km of special stages (8 stages) , 170km touring

Great day today, visiting many of the Targa stages of old, some run in reverse direction or lengthened/shortened so enough variations to make it interesting. The car performed well, with the Dunlops now working mighty fine! We were still getting wheelspin in 3rd, but more obvious was the turbo lag in 4th....often we needed to change down to 3rd to get pull out of corners as there was no one home in 4th. This was to plague us all week. Having up to a '2-Mississippi' wait before zooming off at each corner meant we were off the pace compared to the BMW's.

This year the organisers decided to run 1minute intervals between cars instead of the usual 30seconds. This meant that unless the seeding was really bad, it would be unlikely to catch someone or be caught within a stage. Even on the 45km stages this was true, so sadly no 'magpie' syndrome this year!



We finished the day without any other issue, although the wheels and callipers were taking a bit of a hit with stone-scouring. A quick service then off to a fine Indian meal before we start heading south tomorrow.

Day Three – Hamilton to New Plymouth

165km of special stages (5 stages) , 282km touring

We awoke to a clear day, which will mean a fast run through three of the events signature stages, the 45km Otewa, 48km Kawhia Harbour and 37km Awakino, one

after the other. Fast and flowing, these roads hug the coast certainly you don't want to go off as the sea is only a couple of metres away from the edge of the road!

The car was going well until 4km from the end of Otewa when 'bang', the intercooler hose from the turbo blew off! Bugger. Luckily for us it was lunch and service immediately after this stage, so as soon as we arrive the guys were onto it! After having a look, it turned out that the pipe the hose blew off from did not have any retaining nubs. No problem for gun-fabricator Dave.....out comes the tig and the stainless rods and bada-bing-bada-bang : nubs !



....ummm.....ok we can see it..

Dave in his element!

We weren't the only one to have things blow off! The outright leader, Glenn Inkster in the Evo had his intake manifold explode! (I think he may be running a tad more boost than us hahah).

You can see us on this video update from 2:20 in:

<https://www.facebook.com/TargaNZ/videos/1512218178864234/>

We did have a slightly embarrassing moment between Kahwia and Awakino stages though. Due to the fact these are consecutive long stages run on the remote west coast where there aren't too many roads, it is extremely difficult to get service crew in between stages unless you have two lots.

With small cars with small fuel tanks, it is also a problem carrying enough fuel! For old Barty we often had to borrow some fuel from whichever service crew happened to have made it in. B2 luckily has an auxiliary fuel tank, but to pump from it the engine needs to be off. No probs...we swung onto a lovely grassed area next to a service crew

dealing to one of the BMW's. After 5 minutes, the main tank was full, so of we went.....well tried to. The road was narrow and with the terrible lock on B2 I had to do a 3-point turn.... which in itself was ok, but when I reversed back I put the front wheels onto a nice soft section of wet grass and soil. Yep..you guessed it : we got bogged.

Now luckily for us, the last remaining service vehicle was still there, otherwise our rally would have stopped thenit was seriously stuck! But a quick tug with the rope saw us back onto the black stuff and away....and none too soon as the Sweep car had just arrived. Phew!

We eventually made it to Parc Ferme in New Plymouth where a fine Italian meal awaited. The car today performed well, but we were struggling to get over 180kmh on what few straight bits there were...hmmm. We were starting to cement our top 10 2wd position, albeit still off the pace we were hoping. But tomorrow is Whangamomona.....best stage in the worldbring it on!!

And no rain in sight.



.....look'n good

Day Four – New Plymouth to Palmerston North

168km of special stages (6 stages) , 386km touring

Lots of touring today as we eventually end up in Palmerston North, but in between we do Whangamomona twice: in and out. Another cracker of a day in paradise met us when we awoke, enabling us to see the mountain crystal clear...a rare sight indeed.



Not a bad day eh...

Phil and I settled in to a good groove in the morning's opening stages, but still were dogged with lack of top-end boogie. We were also still slowing too much for some corners to get into 3rd to be confident we could pull around, but on a couple of occasions we were glad we did !

The "in" run to Whangamomona bought back some great memories. The car went well, but with the slower corners we found wheelspin an issue ...we soon learnt why. Nigel and Dave were to meet us for service in Whangamomona , but that meant they had to leave early to beat the road closure. Now what does every top crew do when faced with a few hours wait in an amazingly remote part of NZ on a hot sunny day? find the pub of course. In Whangamomona , its not that hard



So where's the crew???



...found them.....

Luckily there was not a lot to do, but we did find the source of our ever-increasing wheelspin :



Time to say 'bye bye' to the Dunlops, and fit the 17" wheels with our last remaining set of super-soft Kumhos. So long as it stayed dry, they should be ok.

The rest of the afternoon had some fast stages, and try as we might, we just couldn't get to Vmax. Oh well...we were solidly in the Top10 with a day to run , so we needed to drive consistently to the finish.

Service tonight was in the Palmerston North Square , with many hundreds of people out and about. We certainly promoted ENZED well, almost running out of posters and caps!

Tomorrow sees us run to Wellington and some great stages that Phil knows well....

And still no rain!

Day Five – Palmerston North to Wellington

142km of special stages (7 stages) , 278km touring

It seemed everyone was taking it easy today, as no one crashed! It was a beautiful day with plenty of spectators about. It was also coming up to Halloween, and some of the local areas run scarecrow competitions. They are really lifting their game these days, making them soooooo lifelike.....

Coming up a hill to a sweeping right hander, I noted a farming family standing by their fence...dad had his gumboots on, one foot on the fence, mum had her 'going out' dress on, and kids were clearly going to a birthday party soon. So naturally as we roared up, I gave them a big wave and tooted the horn flamboyantly....

Phil missed the next call because he was belly laughing ... all I heard was ""...they..hahaha...were...HAHAHA...scare....BWAHHHAHAHA ...crows !!!" . Funny. Very funny. Mind you that explains why they didn't wave back!

We get to lunch in Martinborough and with only three stages to run, the boys decide it's time to try and get to 200kmh. So out goes the spare wheel, the wheel mount, the wheel brace and the tools. Then next thing the wing gets set to minimum attack mode...

It seriously reminded me of the train scene from the Marx Bros movie 'Go West ' ...



....we need more speed !! jettison everything ! Chico and Harpo at work...

The final stages included the fabulous Paekakariki Hill , where you do NOT want to look to the right....no barriers just a farm fence to stop you ending up on SH1 some 300m vertically down....but is is very picturesque !



The top of Paekock Hill.....purrrdy aint it....

After that would have come two great final stages, but sadly due to some sort of mix-up, the last stage of the whole event as cancelled as a wedding was being held at a property in the stage. This was a real bummer not only for us competitors, but also for the thousands of spectators that lined the stage...all they saw were us touring through....

So the last tour to the finish was a bit of an anti-climax, but nonetheless getting the finishers medals and the having that first beer is always special, as it has always been for the last 23years ...and hopefully 23 more!



We keep our 100% finishing record intact ...now 23 years !!!



Team ENZED Abarth: Dave , Nigel , Phil and Mike .. we made it !!

Mark and Lindsay bought the Merc home undamaged too , so we had a bang-up meal together at the Green Parrot with too much wine and headed off to Phil's for a good night's sleep to wait the prizegiving tomorrow.

Results

We knew we were just in the top 10 2WD on Friday , but the way things panned out on the last day , we managed to claw back to 8th , which we were pretty happy with. Under the old class structure, we would have been 2nd, but sadly we couldn't come close to the BMW's in the new structure.

First off at prizegiving I had to award the Team ENZED Abarth Trophy for the highest placed under-1400cc finisher. For the second year in a row it went to Rick and Michael Van Bokhoven in the 1977 Mini ...well done chaps! I challenged everyone in the audience to do the event in small car, as it's just so much more challenging ! I also threatened to win the trophy back in 2019 as we are seriously thinking about bringing Barty1 back for the 25th anniversary event !



Proud winners of the Team ENZED Abarth trophy

Next up it was great to see Mark and Lindsay win the 'Jealous Pride' award ...the Merc looked as good at the end of the final day as it did at the start.



Congrats fellow Fiat-eers, now Merc pedlars....

We were sitting at the back of the room waiting for all the winners to be announced, when out of nowhere we get called up as we won the highly coveted “ Index of Performance” Award ! I completely forgot about this prize, as even though we have won it 8 times in Barty1 , I still think of Barty2 as a ‘new’ car. It is infact a 2008 model , and with only an effective 2.3litre engine, when coupled with our result meant we won!! This was a fabulous surprise and well deserved for our team.



So in the end we were :

- Winners of Index of Performance
- 8th in GT2

- 2nd under 3-litre modern
- 5th in Class
- 30th Outright.

Now....what to do for 2018 ??,,,,,hmmmmmm.....



Thankyou's

Thanks always to our long-term team sponsor **ENZED**. To Mikie Sutherland, Peter Hay, and Alan Diaz thank you for your continued support: without ENZED we simply would not be able to compete. Finishing our 23rd year together, we remain the most recognisable tarmac rally team in NZ and I am proud we finished on a high!

Also a big thank you to our supporters Stratco (**who** also gave me the time off work to compete), Colin Davies Panelbeaters (who repaired our Tassie damage) and Sweeney Townsend Insurance Brokers. Your involvement as part of our team for so many years is greatly appreciated.

But most of all, a huge thank you to **Nigel Derbyshire** and **Dave Jowett** for not only the outstanding efforts this week, but along with Lindsay, Alan and Mal, all the work in getting the car ready. Special mention of course to the bravest man I know, co-driver extraordinaire **Phil Sutton**... we kept it on the blackstuff !!

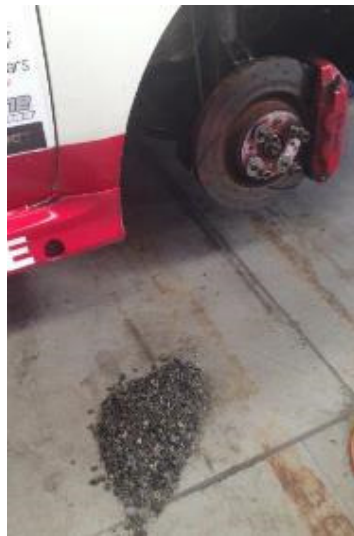
Post Event

The list of major items to be sorted is pretty small: we need to be able to fit the bigger 17" Dunlops and we need more speed!

Mark kindly loaned us a couple of his old tyres which Lindsay and I fitted up on the Monday to check for clearance. They can be made fit by some 5mm spacers and some judicious use of the beating-hammer to the trailing edge of the front inner wheel-well. Best of all, Dunlop is pretty certain we can get soft compound in these 215/50/17's which will be perfect! We also found that the soft tyres do flick up a bit of gravel about the place though ...



..its tight, but we can make them fit ! Goodbye Kumhos.....



gravel from just one side....

After contacting Andy Dawson of Abarth racing UK, he thinks the car has been running out of fuel at high speed which causes the ECU to start turning back the ignition timing and then the boost, sending the car into a sort of 'limp home' mode. As I write this he is getting a diagnostic checklist sorted and we have the car booked on the dyno on 13th December to hopefully sort both lag and power issues out. Luckily for us Andy is coming to NZ in the New Year, so maybe able to work his magic in person!

Whatever happens we will be back in 2018 with a faster car ... we need to find 0.25sec/kmand we will ! Stay tuned !

Merry Christmas everyone , and I wish you all the best for 2018 !

Cheers

Mike Lowe

Team ENZED Abarth

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