

## Targa Tasmania 2014

### Leg Three: Launceston via Ulverston to Strahan

The base for the rally moved today from Launceston to Strahan on the Tasmanian west coast for the next two nights before we head south to Hobart on Sunday. In relative terms, at the close of competition today we've covered about 60% of the course. However the next two days, and especially the last day are particularly tough on the cars and include some very long and high speed stages.

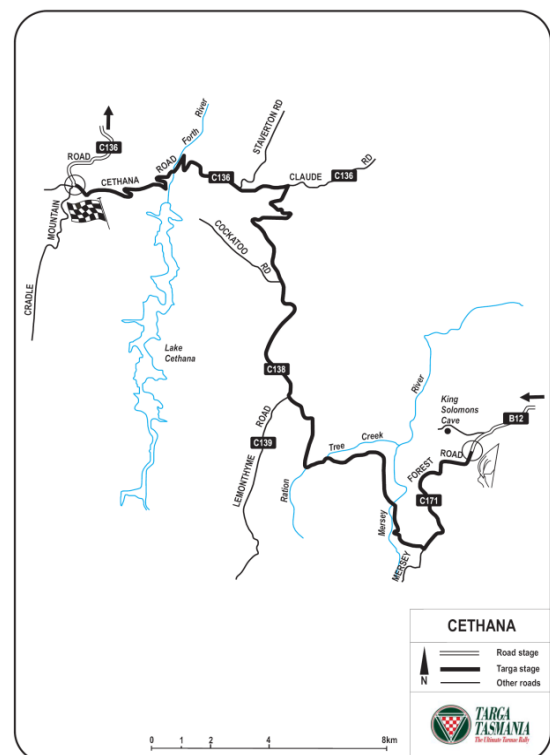
On the results sheets we closed out yesterday's Leg Two in 4<sup>th</sup> place 23 seconds down from the Freestone's Holden who were 28 seconds down on the Ulrich's Jensen. The Caudo/Copeland Datsun 1200 was still showing 1<sup>st</sup> place, however following the Technical Inspection for compliance last night they have been reclassified to MS (the most modified specification) and their handicap times will be amended accordingly. So we'll claim a 3<sup>rd</sup> place for now.



Byrne/Stoopman Alfa lining up for Mole Creek

Today's leg started out with Mole Creek, a short (5km) stage that is tight and twisty running through magnificent rainforest-type landscape – with mossy, slippery roads. Driving out to the stage from Launceston, a light misting of rain covered the windscreen which put us in a good mindset for the morning – rain doesn't worry us as the car is well balanced and other more powerful cars lose their advantage. Plus, many teams don't like the wet so the psyche factor plays as well. The stage was slightly damp, classified "Intermediate". The conditions confirmed our wet weather advantage: we came equal 1<sup>st</sup> with the Ulrich's in their Jensen CV8. The Freestones dropped five sec's, and back in equal 5<sup>th</sup> was the Perana (its steering arm having been repaired overnight), the Stuart's Anglia and the Byrne/Stoopman Alfa. In outright time (no Handicap) we placed 10<sup>th</sup> (!!)

Next up was Cethana, a classic Targa Tasmania road – almost 40 km's of very varied road across ridge tops, down into a valley and across the Mersey Forth river and back up to the ridge top. By this time however, the weather had cleared and the road was almost all dry. Although the downhill sections play to our handling and bravado, the long uphill climbs do not – nonetheless, we set off as determined as ever to play to our strengths and see how the cards fell, catching and passing a Datsun 240Z along the way. We placed 3<sup>rd</sup>, 24 seconds behind the Perana which was just eight seconds behind the Jensen. We bested the Byrne/Stoopman Alfa by 44 seconds who finished just seven seconds ahead of the Stuart's Anglia. In outright (non-Handicap) time we completed the stage in equal 17<sup>th</sup> position



with the Woodward / Gibson Monaro 350 GTS. This moved us up to 2<sup>nd</sup> overall in the Handicap competition.

After that was the Castra stage, a fast run along a ridge top, then an extremely steep run down in to the base of the valley, with a set of very fast and very steep corners following a very tricky oblique-angled and narrow intersection that we cut through at over 100km/h. We completed the stage three seconds ahead of the Byrne/Stoopman Alfa, placing equal 17<sup>th</sup> in Outright, just one second off of the Taylor/Harper Porsche 911 Carrera and six seconds quicker



Passing the Datsun 240Z on Cethana

than the Cook/Cooper 911 Carrera RS (the one in the Gulf colours similar to our car). But there were a number of casualties on that stage – the Waldron/Gregory Fiat Abarth 750 fell off and rolled down the hill (not on its wheels), and the Hoff/Hoff Ford Escort spun just ahead of us and only just managed to untangle itself from the Armco railing before we arrived, the heavy skid marks and cloud of tyre smoke being an early warning for us that something ahead was amiss.

The next stages, Isandula, Oldina and Hellyer Gorge despite being dry and progressively faster, saw us sitting never lower than 4<sup>th</sup>, with the other top five placings being shared variously by the Ulrichs and their Jensen, the Freestone's Holden, the Miedecke Perana and the Woodward/Gibson Monaro.

For the final stage, Rinadeena, we lined up behind our Gulf Oil coloured cousin Porsche Carrera RS, and a few ahead of that was the Hoff/Hoff Escort that spun on Castra, and the great little Alfa of Colin Byrne and Paul Stoopman. Having blown a head gasket on Leg One, and then also ripping out a shock absorber mounting at the end of Leg Two, they had no chance of a podium result but were setting some impressive stage times on a consistent basis. Sadly, about 25kms into the 32km long stage, they got caught out by a tightening left handed corner and spun off the road and wrapped the car around a tree. Paul suffered only a broken foot despite the car having to be cut apart to extract him. Colin's a very impressive driver and we hope to see he and his mate again soon.



Porsche cousin

We finished the day 2<sup>nd</sup> to the Jensen in the Handicap competition, and just 43 seconds ahead of the Freestone Holden. They're 3½ minutes ahead of the Woodward / Gibson Monaro – not a sufficient gap if the roads stay dry back and likely not enough even if they're wet as the last day has some particularly long

straight sections where our constrained top speed will become more of an issue. On outright times, we fluctuated around 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> place, swapping places with the Taylor/Harper Porsche all day.

Servicing at day's end comprised an oil change and fitting a set of new tyres – rain is forecast for tomorrow - and close underbody inspection and tightening, given some hard hits we encountered where the car bottomed out on the faster and bumpier stages. We've given up for now on finding a fix to our high rev' misfire, concluding its either a weak valve spring (can't fix now and somewhat unlikely anyway), a fault in BOTH of our distributors (perhaps something to do with age), or somehow somewhere an earthing problem in the car from our electrical fire last year. We've gone easier on the tyres this year; again super soft and sticky tyres that are great in the wet but melt in any sort of heat or overly hard driving. Accordingly, with an absence of wet weather, this tyre choice might become a disadvantage as, apart from wearing out incredibly quickly, they suffer from getting too hot; the outcome being the tread is literally melting off of the tyre casing. We are allowed eight tyres in total for the full event, and elected to take our full allocation, so the current set will act as backup for the end of the last day should we need something to get us through the last few stages. However, at time of writing we're tucked up nice and cosy in Strahan in the Castaway Cabins (whose proprietors also kindly let us use their garage for servicing) with the wind gusting strongly and patchy rain blowing though. Should make for an interesting day.



**Woodward / Gibson Monaro 350 GTS**

Pos	No	Crew	Vehicle	Total	Gap to Prev/First
1	383	Ullrich Ullrich	Jensen CV8	08:06	
2	215	Freestone Freestone	Holden 215	10:54	02:48 02:48
3	222	<b>White Yelds</b>	<b>Volvo 122S</b>	<b>11:15</b>	<b>00:21 03:09</b>
4	449	Woodward Gibson	Holden Monaro GTS	13:28	02:13 05:22
5	584	Caudo Copeland	Datsun 1200	13:47	00:19 05:41
6	361	Steuart Steuart	Ford Anglia 105e	13:57	00:10 05:51
7	439	Banks Douglas	Porsche 916	14:42	00:45 06:36
8	403	Dermott Dermott	Holden Torana GTR XU-1	14:46	00:04 06:40
9	440	Gainer St George	Datsun 240Z	16:12	01:26 08:06
10	255	Priddle Priddle	Ford Zephyr	16:16	00:04 08:10

