

## Ron Fraser: Part One of “Reflections on Targa Tasmania 2013”

Ada and father John had joined the club some two years ago and had done very well in our local events. Somehow, during this time, talk had got round to discussing an event with much greater recognition in the rally world over and above the likes of our local touring assemblies. You could say that the Targa Tasmania is a world recognised event and has had drivers with world reputation taking place in the past. It seems that in general discussion it was suddenly realised that in the past, two of our members in the AHRG had taken part in the Targa; these were Geoff Thomas and Carey Fraser. In discussing this type of rally with Ada, her eyes lit up and with that big smile said “would I like to have a run in that sort of thing”. John, her father, more or less said “so would I”. It could not have been a better time for both Geoff and Carey to find someone who could take part with them and to go and become navigators. As far as I’m concerned, it would be a tremendous jump to take on this sort of event, especially for Ada to be able to accept the challenge. Obviously over the next many weeks, whilst the cars were being overhauled and checked out, the conversation took in such things as driving suits, helmets and footwear to be selected to go to Tasmania. The cars were trailered down and put on the ferry by the drivers, but the navigators took a short cut and flew down to Tasmania. In the meantime, Kay Fraser had been at work arranging accommodation for the team. She had arranged a marvellous house at a town called Evandale with accommodation to suit.

The first point of business to do for the crews were test runs to check on the accuracy of instructions. Ada found errors almost immediately on the first run. This was disconcerting because a mistake could easily occur with a wrong call, the driver being totally reliant on the navigator. On the first competition day, Ada was concerned whether she could call the directions accurately and in time. At times, at the most, the length of a straight would be approximately 500m, then it was back to twisting turns, left and right, with the driver using all the road available. It wasn’t long before she had no further concerns as to the way she was calling the instructions and they settled down to a day of fast driving. At the end of the first day she was all smiles and Geoff was full of praise at the way she handled the situation.



In the meantime, John and Carey in the Mazda RX-7 were having a good run with John handling the calls as accurately as if he’d done it many times before. Night time was spent in the house Kay had rented whereby a friendly rivalry was born between the two teams as to who was performing better on the day. Each day of competition meant different start times. This came by text at any time to suit the organisers, preferably before bedtime. Mostly Geoff and Ada started before Carey and John. Ada’s first concern had been keeping up with the pace of the car as she had to make the calls. These calls were designed to instruct the driver what the shape of the corners were on the route and the calls were sometimes only seconds apart with constant conversation between driver and navigator, one section being 60km of constant calls between Ada and Geoff.

Their competition in class came from a Jensen V8, Alfa Romeo Giulia, Porsche, Datsun 240Z, Alfa Spider, Ford Pirana, Holden Monaro, Alpine Renault, Datsun 1600sss, Ford Capri, Ford Anglia, MGB, Hillman Imp, Ford Zephyr, Austin A30, Volvo 122F, Fiat Arbat 750 and Holden 215. They were first in class and ninth in this pack of 23 monsters after the first day. Meanwhile, John and Carey in the Mazda had the heartbreak of a clutch failing. A terrible start considering the car had been worked on solidly for 12 months, and aside from new brakes, a new clutch had also been installed to be safe. It wasn't. Imagine the dismay of both Carey and John with the prospects of pulling out completely.



In the meantime, in the Fiat 124 Sport, Geoff and Ada were continuing on in fine style.

To be continued.....