



**BNT Mason  
Motorsport**

6th August 2008

Well what a season we have had so far... extreme crests and troughs. The Whangarei Rally ended with a rollover near the end of stage two (Richard's 2nd and my 1st). After some awesome work from Porirua Motor Body Repairs and our crew we were set to go for the Hawkes Bay Rally. However the rally gods were not shining on us for this weekend either...

## **RALLY WHANGAREI**

Ever since this rally has been part of the NZRC we have had unfinished business. Richard loves the roads and its just been a matter of never having a good run. This year was no different to the previous two! We struggled through stage one with a poorly handling car, however we were determined to get a good time in stage 2, Bull (36km). All was going well until.... About 1km from the end we turned into a corner and rode up a bank, resulting in us rolling 3 times. Although I'd never rolled before, it felt just like being in a rollercoaster, only we were held in tighter! It didn't feel particularly heavy and we were straight back into it the moment we were back on our wheels. We didn't loose much time, only 47sec to the stage winner. At the end of the stage, we assessed the damage and decided to park it up—with a radiator hose leaking (damaging the engine was just not worth it with a another long stage and touring back to service). This roll over was only Richards 2nd (the last one happening 5 years ago on the SAME stage!) and my first after 7 years of rallying.

Unfortunately, due to a previous repair on the roll cage, it bent so we were unable to restart day 2.... This was one of those lows I was talking about!

We stayed around for day 2 to support our young guns—Andre/Jason and Kirsty/Michele. We were very proud of the results both the pairings achieved. Kirsty set a very quick time in the first test but unfortunately rolled (like us) in the second, they showed no reduction in pace after rejoining for the next day. Andre stepped it up a notch on day two and posted some great times with no risks or moments. Unfortunately a puncture on the last stage robbed him of an even better result.

So Whangarei rally, to say the least, was a very difficult and character building weekend for us, But it was rewarding to see the juniors going well. Our attention now turned to getting our BNT machine back up to the high standard we strive to keep it to.

## **CANT SIT STILL**

To ensure we would not be left behind in development, the service crew (Nick, Stu and Spud) put in some huge hours to prepare a bug eye rally car that had been sitting in the shed over the last 2 years as a shell. They did a great job and come 28th June, Richard and engineer Dwight Scott took to the Rally Waitomo, with no notes in pursuit of some much needed development. In spite of the atrocious weather they got what they wanted - a heap of testing kilometres and a whole lot more knowledge.

I was also honoured to be nominated as 1 of 3 grand finalists for the NZ Universities Sportsperson of the year. I couldn't attend the awards dinner in Auckland due to Waitomo rally, so Chris and Kerry Grant went on my behalf and collected my NZ University Blues award for sporting and academic achievement.

Even my little old Levin came out of the garage during the break and Richard and I both drove it in local events... it was great fun and has inspired me to look at entering the Taupo 2wd rally in September.



## THE REPAIR

The repair was a huge team effort and there are many people to thank. The guys at **Porirua Motor Body Repairs** took the car off our hands the Monday after Whangarei and set about making it sparkle again. **Subaru of New Zealand** came to the party and **BNT** again showed their continued support through a difficult time. All of our supporters, one way or another contributed from Randall and Associates to Car Shine. Stu, Nick, Spud, Murray and Dwight also put their expertise to the task and come a week before rally Hawkes Bay our car was back in fighting form. We competed in a local hillclimb the weekend before Hawkes Bay and all felt good.

## RALLY HAWKES BAY

We love this rally! Its technical twists and turns make it a great fun event. Unlike rally Whangarei, we have a great track record here and we were ready to repeat the previous years' results. After recce we were happy with the roads and very happy with our notes.



Richard and the Dunlop boys deep in thought at Hawkes Bay

The Hawkes Bay hadn't had much rain but after a downpour on Friday and Saturday morning it was wet and we had bad weather forecast for the rest of the weekend!

Stage one Hereheretau was run next to a river so it was pretty mushed up. We struggled through this stage and were happy to only be 13seconds down on the winner. We made some drastic suspension changes to the car and knew in stage 2 (Waihi) the car was going to be either a handful or a real pleasure to drive. Luckily for us the latter ended up being the case and half way through the stage the car, Richard and I all began to gel again... the one problem being a lack of water in the water spray which ended up being quite a hindrance as this stage was an often full throttle, steep climb up a huge hill. This problem rectified and now having no water left in our drink bottles, we set off to have a good crack at one of Richard's favourite stages—the 'fast and furious' Cricklewood. Being only .4 of a second off the winner in here, we knew it would be all on come the last three stages of the day—we had the bit between our teeth, the roads were good, the car felt mint, the notes were spot on and we knew what we had to do.

The repeat of Hereheretau went to plan, taking a 13second chunk out of the rally leader. We were left with 14.5seconds to gain back and a whole pile of kilometres to do it in. We were on song in Waihi, not taking risks but just driving fast. However (I hate these "however's"!!) 22km in with 13km to go we heard a noise... and not a good one. With extreme disappointment we had to pull over and park up the car before more damage was done. We were left at the top of a 800m high hill, with thick fog, strong winds, heavy rain and the odd sprinkle of snow. Greg and Pauline Horne (BNT) were first to arrive on the scene, quickly followed by Tom, Alison, Dani and Jess. Mum and Dad then arrived and Richard forced me to go home with them and warm up while he sorted getting the car on the trailer.

Stu, Nick and Spud worked until 1am in the morning to ensure the car was in the best possible form again. They changed gearbox to our spare standard one. Having used it at rally NZ, we knew a top result was still possible with a standard box. Come Sunday morning, it was still raining and when we turned up at the start, we were gutted to hear the organisers were forced to cancel the day's rallying... slips, flooding and a overturned truck made the route impossible to traverse. So we went out for a nice breakfast and de-brief with the team and sponsors.

## THANKS

We would like to thank our fans for their continued support. Also our sponsors, BNT, Porirua Motor Body Repairs, Dunlop, Subaru of New Zealand, B.W O'Brien, The PC Factory, Randall and Associates, Toms Auto Services 2007 Ltd, AIW Cars, and UCD... HUGE thanks! Thanks to our hardworking on and off event crew Chris, Stu, Nick, Spud, Murray H, Murray C, Dwight and lets not forget their partners who hardly see them these days! Thanks Jemma, Mum & Dad Mason and Mum & Dad Randall for just being there and yet again lending a hand, especially with Dani and Jess. Thanks Greg & Pauline for travelling down from Auckland and constantly providing words of wisdom and encouragement. It was great to also have Lyn and Cole O'Brien along too (happy birthday Cole). Thanks to the rally organisers of both Whangarei and Hawkes Bay rallies—we thoroughly enjoyed the challenging roads your rallies had to offer. The marshals and time keepers also did a great job, especially at Hawkes Bay when they had to stand out in the cold, horizontal rain! We will see you all next year and fingers crossed it will be a bit sunnier!

## JUNIOR DRIVERS

These guys again had a good couple of rallies, with Andre now being very close to tying up the Rookie Championship. Unfortunately Andre/Jason got a puncture in stage 5 at Hawkes Bay which saw them lose about a minute but they drove with maturity and it's great to see them growing and taking a tactical approach to situations. Kirsty/Michele also went well, although on that same stage that we retired and Andre got a puncture, Kirsty clipped a bridge and bent an A-arm and so lost time. Andre/Jason finished second Subaru for the day in 9th overall. Its great to see these guys with fresh enthusiasm; Kirsty, Michele, Andre and Jason came down one weekend in between rallies and we gave them some lessons on how to write notes.



The boys bearing the brunt of the Hawkes Bay rally weather. Stu under the bonnet , Spud working on the left front wheel and Greg in the background. Photo by Euan Cameron.

## CONDOLENCES

We were very saddened to hear about the loss of one of our friends from China—XuLang died while he was competing in the recent transcontinental rally. He leaves a pregnant wife. XuLang was one of a kind, very cheeky and every time we went to China he would try to get me to co-drive for him and once rejected, would enquire about my sisters. Another loss was Scott McIsaac who was a keen motorsport enthusiast and supporter and leaves behind wife Carissa and motorsport mad daughter Alana. We are very sorry to hear about your loss.

## NEXT ON THE AGENDA...

Our next outing is the WRC Rally NZ so between now and then things wont slow down. Our championship is not looking good... we've now effectively lost three days of points and with the day's cancellation, one day of catch-up is gone. Our focus is now to win rallies (winning is fun!). Rally NZ is an awesome experience and we cant wait for the month to roll around so we can get into it. I have had my version 10 road car taken off me and it's now being turned into a rally car, we're also putting our version 7 bug eye up for sale in full tarmac spec (it would be a wicked tarmac car—see below). Our bring yellow BNT car is also going to get some more love and attention to ensure it's ready to attack come 28th August. We'd love to see you all at Rally NZ so check out [www.rallynz.org.nz](http://www.rallynz.org.nz) for event details.

## 2001 SUBARU TARMAC RALLY/RACE CAR FOR SALE

Newly built by BNT Mason Motorsport for targa/production racing series. Only used once in gravel trim (waitomo rally-4th overall with no notes) but selling in tarmac spec as originally intended. Clean white colour, blueprinted engine by ScottSpeed, Motec ECU, MCA tarmac suspension, chrome molly cage, large diameter Brembo brakes with 2 piece discs and new Endless pads etc etc. Wicked car in almost brand new condition, well under cost at \$45,000. Phone Richard 027 244 1401. Car is similar to the one in the photo.



## TV COVERAGE

Due to the Olympics and the fact there wasn't a day 2 at Rally Hawkes Bay, there will be a bit of a twist to the coverage on TV this weekend. A mid-season NZRC review will screen on Saturday (9th August) at 11am on TV's channel one.

## CONTACTS

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### New Zealand Rally Championship Dates

- Rally NZ 28-31st Aug
- Rally Nelson 20-21st Sept