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OTAGO DRIVERS ALL SET FOR SILVER FERN RALLY

Four Otago based rally teams are amongst the 54 entries preparing for the eight day NZ Silver Fern International Marathon Rally, which gets underway with a rally show and ceremonial start in Christchurch's Cathedral Square on October 15th.

The event which features predominantly classic and two wheel drive rally cars has drawn 17 entrants from the UK, Europe and Australia including five times British Champion, Scotland's Jimmy McRae, who will drive a 1978 Ford Escort MKII.

All of the Otago based starters for the 50 high speed gravel special stages on the 1200km marathon event are what one might call "experienced" competitors. South Otago's John Metherell driving his Iconic Motorsport Hillman Avenger, first competed in the early 1970's. He and co-driver Craig McKinnell are seeded 33rd for the 1200 kms of special stages.

Peter Jackson's Citroen adds a bit of continental flavour to the event, and is the same car he used successfully on the last event in 2006. Jackson has been competing since 1975 when he started in an unlikely Morris 1300. He and co-driver Hadley MacKay will start from 39th position.

Dunedin's Allan Dippie has successfully competed off shore in marathon events like the 2003 London to Sydney, and the 2006 Carrera Sudamericana in South America. On both occasions they finished fifth overall in the same Toyota Corolla. The car has seen a complete re-built since it's "excursion" off the side of Danseys Pass during the 2006 Silver Fern event. The car needed to be completely cut in half for repairs to be made, and he is looking forward to the event and will start 42nd.



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Ian Begg and co-driver Greg Scott will drive the same VW Golf that Begg used last event. Like Dippie, Begg has also competed in a number of international marathon events, and rates the long distance events highly. Unfortunately Begg failed to finish that 2006 Silver Fern event after crashing off the road, this time he will start 51st.

The Dunedin teams will visit their home city twice during the event, on Friday October 17th at the Railway Station at around 4.30pm, then again on Monday October 20th at the Scenic Circle Southern Cross hotel at around 4.30pm.

The 2008 NZ Silver Fern International Marathon Rally, held over 8 day's in New Zealand's South Island, is the longest duration motor-sport event currently being held in NZ, and takes its roots from the Silver Fern and Heatway Rallies of the late 1960's and early 1970's.

The October 16th - 23rd 2008 event, will start in Christchurch's Cathedral Square, and take competitors south to Queenstown, Dunedin, and Invercargill, back to Dunedin, Timaru and Christchurch before finishing at the new Marlborough Convention Centre in Blenheim.

For event details and the latest info on the rally visit:- www.silverfernally.co.nz

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Cut in half - Allan Dippie's Toyota Corolla being rebuilt after its crash on the 2006 event

