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ARI VATANEN & ROGER CLARK ESCORTS FOR SILVER FERN RALLY SHOW

Interest in the Silver Fern Rally show and Ceremonial Start in Christchurch has been boosted by the announcement that two very historic rally cars will be amongst the displays.

1981 Finnish world rally champion, Ari Vatanen's 1979 Rothmans liveried Ford Escort RS1800, and ex Ford UK works driver, Englishman Roger Clark's similar car, in its original Shell livery, will be amongst the 100 or so classic and historic motorsports vehicles lined in Cathedral Square on Wednesday October 15th.

Now owned by Christchurch's Brian Walker, and fully restored back to its original left hand drive format, the ex Ford works built Escort first appeared in New Zealand for the 1979 Motogard Rally, where Vatanen drove it in the Rothmans Team colours.

It then competed in the 1980 Castrol Australia Rally with Vatanen again at the wheel, but in Masport colours. Later that year back in New Zealand, the Masport Team ran another Fin, Pentti Airikkala in the 1980 Motogard Rally an event which ran from Nelson to Christchurch. Unfortunately Airikkala crashed the car heavily mid way thru the event.

When repaired it was sold with 1600 engine to Nelson's Dave Parkes, and since that time it has past through a number of owners including Brian's brother Colin, before being extensively restored to its original condition.

Christchurch brothers James (Jim) and Tony Hewlett are the proud owners of the other Escort, another ex works built car, and now restored with its original Shell livery, the car that was originally driven by 1972 and 76 British RAC winner Roger Clark, in the Morocco Rally (DNF) in 1976. Clark also used the car in the 1976 Australian Southern Cross Rally.



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In 1976, the car was imported by Ford New Zealand for Auckland Mike Marshall to drive under the Motorcraft Ford parts banner. Marshall later bought the car from Ford, and rallied it extensively before it moved to Wellington's Colin Taylor.

Silver Fern Rally show organiser Nic Jones said "it will be an impressive attraction to see these two famous cars, both of which are seldom out of their garages on public display."

Supported by the Christchurch City Councils Recreation and Sports Unit and Events Team, the rally show and ceremonial start will also feature a number of local rally cars, trade displays, the Silver Fern competitors, and members of the Lotus Car Club whose rally also passes thru Christchurch at the same time.

The 2008 NZ Silver Fern International Marathon Rally, held over 8 days 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, which starts in Christchurch's Cathedral Square, then takes 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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James and Tony Hewlett's ex works Roger Clark Shell Escort



Brian Walker's ex works Ari Vatanen Rothmans Escort RS1800

