



Media Release
Immediate release

epay Silver Fern Rally - TOP TRIO TO BE REMEMBERED

One of the best aspects of marathon rallying is the camaraderie within the sport and a gesture by the organising team of November's ePay Silver Fern Rally bears this out. Three men associated with the event who have passed on will be remembered with stages named in their memory on this year's event.

Royce Watson, Andrew Grundy and Willie Rutherford were very influential in past events, Watson as a scrutineer, and Grundy and Rutherford as competitors.

Watson was a very popular Chief Scrutineer within the rally but his influence was much wider than that. Good friend Carl Rabbidge, Chairman of the rally organising committee, describes him as "everyone's friend, guide and helper much like the role of Cooch in the Footrots Flat movie." Royce passed away in 2013 after a crash in the Hanmer Rally and the final stage of the second day of this year's event - Special Stage 12 over 30.5 kilometres - will simply be known as 'Royce'. The stage is just south of Murchison, appropriate say's Rabbidge, "as the valley and hills of this stage were so much part of Royce's early life and formative years."

Andrew Grundy won the rally in 2008 in his Mazda RX7. He will be remembered on Day 5 this year in Stage 28, 'Andrew's Playground', inland from Timaru, an area where he grew up, knew well and where he learnt his craft to become a formidable competitor in the early days of New Zealand rallying in a Datsun 1200. However he put the sport aside to pursue business interests, returning to win the Silver Fern in 2008. In doing so he showed what might have been if he had given rallying his all. The stage is based in the MacKenzie Country, hot and dry in the summer months and cold and clear in winter. It is an area renowned for its fine wool from merino sheep of the high country stations and due to the nature of its environment it produces hardworking, strong, self reliant tough, dependable and loyal characters - all the virtues that Andrew displayed. Andrew passed away in January 2013 after a long and determined battle with bowel cancer.

Willie Rutherford was a successful businessman and a top rally driver in the United Kingdom before moving to New Zealand. His innovations revolutionised farming, particularly through his work with ATV's. After settling in New Zealand Willie resumed rallying after driving a chase car for Stig Blomqvist in the 2006 Silver Fern. After an accident in the Catlins Coast Rally a new car was built in Dunedin by Alistair Gilmour. While the car was being built Willie's ill health was diagnosed. However the car was completed and Willie went on to compete in the 2010 Silver Fern Rally. As he battled his health issues in the lead up to the event he would ring Carl Rabbidge frequently, telling him how much he enjoyed coming home from Christchurch along the summit road and then dropping back down to his home in Akaroa which he described as a pleasure at the end of a hard day, hence the stage 'Willie's Pleasure' which starts high on the volcanic rock spine of the Akaroa Peninsula and winds downhill to the sea through a valley once

used as a stock route by the early pioneers. 'Willie's Pleasure' is Special Stage 21 on Day 4 of the event. After twice beating cancer Willie succumbed to pancreatic cancer in Christchurch on September 2011.

Most of those involved on this year's event will be familiar with the deeds of all three and no doubt thoughts will be with absent friends as the rally tackles these three very poignant stages during the 2014 epay Silver Fern Rally.

BACKGROUND

The epay Silver Fern Rally 2014 will start from Picton on Saturday 8 November 2014. That night competitors will stay in Blenheim before crossing the island the following day to overnight in Westport on Sunday night. Competitors will then head back across the island on Monday to spend the following evening in Christchurch. Timaru, Dunedin and Invercargill are the destinations for the next three nights before the rally travels into the magnificent southern lakes area with a Friday night stopover in Wanaka. The rally ends on Saturday 15 November in Queenstown.

The epay Silver Fern Rally 2014 consists of the New Zealand Silver Fern Historic Trophy for 2-wheel-drive cars that comply with various historic criteria as listed in the event regulations and the New Zealand Silver Fern Challenge which caters for 2-wheel-drive cars that comply with the Motorsport New Zealand Schedule A safety requirements. Within each of those sections there are various classes.

The rally will cover 1250 kilometres of competitive Special Stages over eight days and organisers are promising some new stages and new locations along with some roads that have been used previously but in differing configurations. The epay Silver Fern Rally provides competitors with a fantastic rally experience amidst some awe inspiring scenery,

The rally enjoys support from epay, Malcove, Kiwimaps and Brita Safety.

For media information contact:

Lindsay Beer – epay Silver Fern Rally 2014 Media Manager

Ph +64 21 351 499

lindsay.beer@xtra.co.nz

For event information contact:

Paul Smith - Rally Secretary

Ph +64 274 852234

secretary@silverfernally.co.nz

For more information on the event visit www.silverfernally.co.nz



www.silverfernally.co.nz