

## EVENT REPORT

04-12-16

### CLOSE, BUT EVANS AND WILLIAMS GET THEIR SILVER FERN RALLY WIN

It was close - there was less than a minute in it at the end - but Welsh pair Meirion Evans and Lestyn Williams (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) did enough on the final day today to win the 2016 New Zealand Silver Fern Rally.

Second home was the sister car (bought off Mk 2 Ford Escort rally preparation expert Evans after the 2014 Silver Fern Rally) of Australian Stewart Reid and Kiwi co-driver Dave Neill, third the Porsche 911 of first local duo home, Allan Dippie and Paul Coghill from Wanaka, ten minutes back in Dippie's Porsche 911S.

The Porsche 911s of Dippie and Coghill, and Hamilton father and son Stuart and Brad McFarlane (which finished sixth), were the exceptions that proved the rule in this year's event, dominated numerically and on the road by Mk Ford Escort RS1800s like those of Evans and Williams, and Reid and Neill.

The other eight top ten finishers were in Mk 2 Escort RS1800s while a Nissan FJ20-powered Mk 2 of Derek Ayson and Gavin McDermott from Gore dominated the Challenge category for late model or non-standard historic-era cars), crossing the finish line in Christchurch with a buffer of half an hour over runner-up, Australian rally veteran Ed Mulligan and co-driver Tony Brandon (BMW E30 325i).

The biennial, seven-day, New Zealand Silver Fern Rally is one of the few genuine marathon-style multi-day gravel events left on the world historic rallying calendar and as such attracts as many entries from the home of the sport, the UK, and Australia, as it does New Zealand.

This year's event covered over 1000kms of closed special stages and over 1700km of touring stages between Christchurch in the north and Papatowai in the south, starting on Monday November 28 at Christchurch's Addington Raceway and Events Centre at 7.30am and returning this afternoon (Sunday Dec 04) at 4.00pm.

Early leaders included Englishman Simon Tysoe (who finished second in the 2014 event) and co-driver Paul Morris, and former NZ rally champion Brian Stokes with wife Anne in the co-driver's seat, both in Escort RS 1800s. But it was the metronomic consistency of Evans and Williams that told in the end.

Runner-up Reid and co-driver Neill, were ultimately quicker. As were Challenge category winners Ayson and McDermott. But try as they might, Reid and Neill could not peg back the 4.10 they lost to a time penalty on Day 2.

Today's results were typical with Evans and Williams winning three of the six stages and others - Reid and Neill, Brian and Anne Stokes and fellow NZ rally veteran Shane Murland and co-driver John Benton one apiece.

Another driver left wondering what might have been was one of the other former National champions in the field, Bruce Herbert from Palmerston North. With co-driver Jim Hey Herbert was quickest in the Challenge class through four of the six stages today and two of the seven on Saturday.

Having collected 15 minutes worth of time penalties early in the event when the diff in his Mitsubishi Lancer EX Turbo cried enough all he could do was chip away at the combinations up front, eventually finishing a hard-won sixth in class.

That said, Derek Ayson and Gavin McDermott did give everyone else in the Challenge category a glimmer of hope this morning, with two slow stages.

Fortunately for the southern pair the problem - a broken rose-joint in the car's rear suspension - first raised its head in a transport stage and Ayson made the call to back off the pace through the next stage (44) before fixing it with parts he knew his service crew had before the next.

However a wheel stud was stripped while that job was being done so he and McDermott had to complete the next stage (45) at a similar, gentle, pace to make sure they got to the lunch time service at Methven to replace the stud.

They did and were immediately back on the front-running pace of Herbert and Hey, and Hamilton pair Brent Taylor and Chris Ramsey in Taylor's Toyota 86, in the final two stages.

With early event Challenge category pace-setter Dave Strong and co-driver Rob Scott (Honda Civic R) crashing and retiring from the event, and Charlie Evans and co-driver Sue O'Neill slowed after rolling their Honda Civic 1800, third place in the Challenge class, behind the Ayson/McDermott Escort and the BMW of Ed Mulligan and Tony Brandon, went to Dunedin builder Brodie Anderson and mate Brad Lyon in Anderson's Mk 2 Escort.

The pair only finally decided to enter the event a fortnight before, but proved fast, consistent and able to bounce back after the odd off-road excursion for one of the most popular results of the event.

Finally, after winning five Targa New Zealand tarmac rally events run by new Silver Fern Rally owner and event manager the Ultimate Rally Group, circuit-owing entrepreneur Tony Quinn made his multi-day gravel marathon debut in this year's Silver Fern Rally, finishing ninth in the Challenge category in a Toyota 86 navigated by Cassidy Solomon.

Ends

### 2016 NZ Silver Fern Rally Christchurch-Gore-Christchurch Mon-Sun Nov 28-Dec 04 2016

#### Final (provisional) classification after Day 7 of 7

##### Historic

1. Meirion Evans/Lestyn Williams (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 9:48:03.4
2. Stewart Reid/Dave Neill (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 9:48:49.2 +0:45.8
3. Allan Dippie/Paul Coghill (Porsche 911) 9:58:41.2 +10:37.8
4. Phil Squires/Nigel Hutchinson (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 10:02:01.6 +13:58.2
5. Keith & Mary-Anne Callinan (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 10:07:25.8 +19:22.4
6. Stuart & Brad McFarlane (Porsche 911) 10:09:53.1 +21:49.7
7. Brent Rawstron/Ian McKee (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 10:13:05.1 +25:01.7
8. Shane Murland/John Benton (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 10:14:36.3 +26:32.9
9. David Hills/Paul Bennett (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 10:16:59.6 +28:56.2
10. Simon Tysoe/Paul Morris (Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) 10:21:11.6 +33:08.2

##### Challenge

1. Derek Ayson/Gavin McDermott (Ford Escort) 9:44:09.7
2. Ed Mulligan/Tony Brandon (BMW E30 325i) 10:18:03.7 +33:54.0
3. Brodie Anderson/Brad Lyons (Ford Escort Mk2) 10:26:12.6 +42:02.9
4. Darryl Campbell/Phil Walker (Toyota Altezza) 10:32:13.1 +48:03.4
5. Charlie Evans/Sue O'Neill (Honda Civic 1800) 10:32:59.0 +48:49.3
6. Bruce Herbert/Jim Hey (Mitsubishi Lancer EX Turbo) 10:36:23.0 +52:13.3
7. Mike Wheatley/Tudor Davies (Ford Escort Mk2) 11:01:09.7 +1:17:00.0
8. Brent Taylor/Chris Ramsay (Toyota FT 86) 11:15:59.2 +1:31:49.5
9. Tony Quinn/Cassidy Solomon (Toyota 86) 11:39:39.6 +1:55:29.9
10. Warren Briggs/Gerry Bashford (Ford Mustang) 12:34:07.4 +2:49:57.7

##### CAPTION:

Welsh pair Meirion Evans and Lestyn Williams (#10 Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800) have won the 2016 NZ Silver Fern Rally. Winners of the Challenge class run concurrently were Derek Ayson and co-driver Gavin McDermott in Ayson's Nissan-engined #30 Ford Escort. Third in the Challenge category was the #45 Mk 2 Escort of Dunedin pair Brodie Anderson and Brad Lyons. Circuit-owing entrepreneur Tony Quinn and co-driver Cassidy Solomon making a splash in Quinn's Toyota 86. Photo credits: Fast Company/ProShotz  
Prepared by FAST COMPANY on behalf of the Ultimate Rally Group. To find out more about the 2016 NZ Silver Fern Rally go to the website at [www.silverfernrally.co.nz](http://www.silverfernrally.co.nz). To talk to Ultimate Rally Group CEO and event spokesperson Peter Martin tel 0-9-298 8322 or 0274 525 643. To get in touch with event media man Ross MacKay from Fast Company tel/txt 021 677 919 or e-mail on [ross@fastcompany.co.nz](mailto:ross@fastcompany.co.nz)

