

SILVER FERN RALLY 2022

Hi team

We'll here we (Rimu, Mabel and I) have arrived at Bob's in Christchurch - worked our way down from home.

Sat night in Taupo

Sunday after a pleasant afternoon with James and Sophia stayed in Palmerston North.

Monday. after managing to track down Maureen and John, had a BBQ with Kate, Sean and the kids also Lucy stayed with Kate and Sean.

On the ferry 1st thing Tues morn. stayed with Lorraine that night , and, as I said here we are - safe and sound !!

Gear pickup Friday night, the rally proper starts SUN morn

I'll do my proper prologue for our wider interest group shortly.

Hi all,

Here we (all) are at Christchurch mentally preparing for a week of marathon rallying. This year's Silver Fern (an event first run in 1970) starts Sunday 20th and goes until Sat 26th, nominally with a different stop each night.

'We' are providing two stage finish timing crews, David, Rimu, Mabel, Mike and myself make up one - note we actually boast three Post Chiefs amongst our numbers.

Jesy has Leiton, Paige and Sean - they make up the other.

We have gear collection staff training etc tomorrow (Friday) at 6 p.m. We try to keep away from the scrutineering, documentation and rallysafe fitting on Sat though.

The plans are pretty much 'set in concrete' so unless there is a major disaster this is what we shall do over the next week or so.

Sunday morning we expect an out the gate time of 7 AM, David will Collect Mike then we all head up to the Cheviot area for our morning SS2 and afternoon SS6 stages then back to Christchurch that night.

Monday 21st

Will be another early start SS8(first of the day) inland from Timaru then our next SS12 is at Hakataramea Pass - on to Hampden (South of Oamaru that night.

Tuesday 22nd

Only one stage today SS18 but it is on the Old Dunstan Rd in Central Otago - We stay with our old friends at Waihola Tues night,

Wed 23rd

Here we go again - SS23 Falla Burn Rd then SS27 heading for Invercargill - where we stay that night. I am hoping to get to Bluff again and also Bill Richardson's Transport museum. A catch up with our friend Steve is also a priority

Thurs 24th

Another two stages SS29 in the morning and SS33 (the last of the day) getting back to Waihola that night !!

Friday 25th

Another early start for SS 34 (first of the day) then SS38

after lunch. Although the cars 'overnight' in Timaru we actually stay at Geraldine in their Top 10 Holiday Park.

Sat 26th

An easier day(for us) today just one stage SS44 not far from where we have stayed and we don't have to be 'on site' until 9 45 AM. After that we head back to Christchurch and once more descend on Bob.

We recover on Sunday 27th then head home again at 7 AM on Monday 28th - we have a ferry booking at 1 p.m. that afternoon.

**So there you have it.
Our plans for the next week or so.**

I sincerely hope that as usual we will all arrive home safely 'tired but happy

Day 1

So, here we go.

Day one of the Marathon.

The good news is that our Fleetlink radio worked a dream - long may that continue.

Out the gate by 7 a.m. up to our first stage SS2 just inland from Cheviot, 48 cars, no problems

For this stage we also dis a board.

Thence to Amberley for fuel, pies and coffee and on to our next stage SS6 inland from there.

Another 48 cars without problem

Unfortunately though my mate Jesy and his crew had their one and only stage canceled because of the washed out road - pity that.

Because we had been imposing on my good friend Bob all

**week we took him out to dinner tonight as just a small thank
you.**

**Tomorrow is probably our biggest day of the rally - out the
gate at 6 ish, then SS8 near Geraldine then SS12 at
Hakataramea Pass !! We spend the night at Hampden just
south of Oamaru.**

Another writeup tomorrow night.

day 2

Hi again,

**We always knew this was going to be BIG day,
and thus it proved to be!**

**Out of bed sometime after 5 am, out the gate 6 am and
headed south to our first stage SS8 inland from Temuka.**

**We had 'some' difficulty in locating our Flying Finish
(eventually manned by Rimu sitting on a chair and
'babysitting the beam') and our Finish Control with David
doing road cards and Mabel all the 'in car' work.**

But all worked out in the end.

**The good news was that the Fleetlink 24w (again) worked
perfectly - with whoever we needed to contact - or vice a
versa**

**We also had a white board with a instruction patch to
draw both official's and competitor's attention to.**

**With a somewhat smaller field (not having the Mainland
rally for the rest of the week) we were hopeful of getting
away 'nice and early' YEAH RIGHT.- it wasn't too bad
really, BUT we had at least a three hour drive to our next
stage and had utmost difficulty in getting there in time!!**

After traveling first on tarmac then on gravel for what seemed an age, we eventually found our spots - but although the fleetlink worked sort of (and with no cell ph coverage on any network) the speech was unintelligible at best - moving the car into different places helped somewhat but there were some 'very short exchanges' required.

Anyway, all's well that ends well and we (once again) fulfilled all our commitments.

Once cleared we headed back to Kurow to refuel both vehicles again and are tonight staying at Hampden, just south of Oamaru (Oamaru is where the cars overnight).

We all had what can only be described as a marvellous meal, steak cooked to perfection, chips and salad. or grilled fish, at Hampden Tavern - we can ALL highly recommend.

Tomorrow we have an 'easy' day - yeah right. Only 1 stage (The Old Dunstan Rd) but it is at least a 2 hr drive to get there !!

**But wait there is more - it is actually a 54km stage !!!
We can but see how we go .**

We then head to Lake Waihola (south of Dunedin)to stay tomorrow night.

More news then .

Day 3

Hi again,

The day did not start off well.

Somehow I managed to leave what we used to call my sponge bag at Bob's. I only take one pill a day BUT, of course that packet got left! I had to keep reminding my crew not to call me an idiot. Fortunately my doctor was able to send a new prescription to a chemist in Dunedin, and Dave collected it for me.

Anyway we only had one stage to time today (albeit a 55km one) on the Old Dunstan Rd, about an hour and a half from Hampden. We set up on time but did find our Stage Commander had accidentally confused start and finish positions - oh bugger, but sorted.

A bit of a wait until cars arrived (after all it took then some 45 MINS to traverse the stage.

Our rallysafe tablet was not receiving times but hopefully they were getting to base properly.

We were, once again, troubled by rogue vehicles, but thankfully stopped by Rimu before they could do any real damage.

So here we are at Waihola, fish and chips for dinner (after all we had a great sit down meal last night!).

We have two stages tomorrow one at Hillend near Balclutha and the other one close to Gore.

Tomorrow night we should be in Invercargill, Bluff perhaps ? Richardsons Transport Museum perhaps?

More news tomorrow night.

day 4

Here we are at Ibis Invercargill.

**A very pleasant evening spent with Steve (Luscombe)
and Susan.**

**It had earlier been decided to forgo our planned visit to
Bluff.**

**Out the gate this morning from Waihola at 8.30 am,
Timed our first stage of the day up at Hillend - just out of
Balclutha. Then a very pleasant lunch at Clinton.**

**Our afternoon stage - the last of the day, was just north of
Gore - we arrived in plenty of time.**

**Once again our Fleetlink worked a dream, but we seem
to have some problem with the rallysafe beam - hopefully
Buck has fixed this now!!!**

**Our only minor irritation was that, instead of the 'normal' 1
min gap the organisers decided to start the cars at 5 min
intervals. This was eventually reduced to 2 mins but still a
bit frustrating.**

**Tomorrow we head back north and stay, once again at
Waihola**

**Day 5
Good Evening all,**

As previously advised, last night we stayed at Ibis Invercargill, quite nice but no off street parking and one of these stupid electronic key systems which require multiple uses even if you want to go downstairs or back to the car (on the street) or anything similar.

**Consider that a grumpy old man talking !!!
Anyway you could say 'it rained a lot overnight!'
It could be described as really persisting down.**

It had not improved by the time we met our 'out the gate time' of 7 am, and if anything it was worse after a 1 1/2 hr drive to our 1st stage of the day.

Setting up the beam, signs, cones etc in the pouring rain is not my idea of fun! David and Rimu braved the elements to do so then what did we find? No fleetlink (boo hoo) no Vodafail (of course) and no Spark either!

Bugger.

The organisers then provided a satellite based phone (preprogrammed) and for the first time in history it worked (almost). We no longer had to 'stand on one leg, pray to Allah and then turn round three times'.

But as long as we could obtain complete silence at our end - not easy to do - and leaning out the window Mabel was able to get a message through.

Don't get excited though this only happened once of the several times tried.

Fortunately once cleared (so did the rain marginally). and more particularly whilst on our way to the lunch break at Owaka, Fleetlink burst back into life very much to my great relief!

It has worked ever since too.

We fuelled both vehicles (again) and headed for our next stage again about an hour and a half away - the last one of the day.

Once more we had some trouble with rogue vehicles but nothing too serious.

Pretty windy, but no more rain and Rimu actually used a 'chair and umbrella' to babysit the beam which was not happy about its treatment in the rain 1st thing this morning.

It is being dried out as we speak.

We have all had a nice meal here at Waihola Tavern tonight and have an 'out the gate time of 6AM tomorrow morning - I really am getting a bit old for this. Tomorrow we do the 1st stage of the day then what looks like the 1st of the afternoon.

Tomorrow night we stay at Geraldine Top 10 holiday park - probably the 4 of us in the one room. It will be the first time this trip this has actually been necessary.

More tomorrow night.

Day 6

Nearly there !!

Friday.

A 5 a.m. alarm, out the gate 6 ish, a nearly 2 hr drive to the 1st stage of the day, over the Kilmog and the Karatane turn off!

And oh joy our block marshal was already there.

Once again fleetlink worked a dream.

We timed the cars, something we are now getting quite good at. Weather was quite good if cold.

Once cleared we headed for our next stage at Barkers Bush (I guess 'some distance away would be the best description)!

Lunch at a cafe in Waimate.

But finding the stage proved to be just a little bit of a shambles - somehow there was a mixup between the start and finish points, but with the extensive help of the team at Targa Base (did I mention how good Fleetlink is?) we actually arrived pretty much at our appointed time!

Once cleared we headed for our last rally night away at Geraldine, where we are now.

We went out for a 'final' dinner at the local pub- in point of fact pubs have been pretty good to us throughout the week.

But this was rather special not only was the food of better than average quality BUT the winelist featured Mt Difficulty Target reisling! No more needs to be said.!

Tomorrow we have one stage to do mid morning then on to Bob's in Christchurch.

A final daily update then and an Epilogue in say a week's time.

day 7

Well we did it !!

The rally is now over, and we arte back with Bob in Christchurch.

Only one stage today - not frar from where we stayed last night, i.e. just out of Geraldine.

We got here mid afternoon, returned the gear etc, etc.

So tomorrow is a 'day off', up to Picton and the ferry to Wellington on Monday.

So far we have done just under 4000 kms since leaving home on Sat 12th Nov.

You will gather that I remain a fan of the Fleetlink Radios, which pretty much never missed a beat for the whole event - Catlins excluded!

The epilogue once we get back home.

But I really do have to thank both Rimu and Mabel (not to mention David - Chief) for their unswerving work through

out the event - my heartfelt thanks.

THE EPILOGUE

Hi there everyone!

In the spirit of the event even this write up has become a marathon. Do read and enjoy - comments welcome.

The Marathon Sliver Fern Rally of 2022 is now over and I am back home again after some 4550 kms - tired but happy !!!!!!!

First off I MUST place on record the sterling service given by my 'stepson' Rimu who drove my car 'Izzy' most of this distance, and his 'wife' Mabel who did by far the majority of the paperwork and much more.

More details of their involvement will emerge later in this missive.

Also David (Chief) - same age as me, who with his V6 3 litre station wagon did most of the heavy lifting - signs, batteries, road cones, rallysafe equipment etc. There is absolutely no way this could have been handled with Izzy alone.

Mike S was a great help up until after the Sunday stages but was unable to get the rest of the week off work - pity that.

ACCOMMODATION and TRAVEL

I used 'Booking.com' for accommodation and

cookstraitcrossings,co.nz to get across Cook Strait - I can heartily recommend both of them.

FUEL

We made a point of refueling both vehicles at the same time and can report that in virtually every case Izzy used pretty much half as much petrol as Dave's.

OUT THE GATE TIMES - OTG

Over the years we have learned that setting an Out the Gate time the night before is a very good idea. One thing guaranteed to cause havoc is arriving on site late - not to mention stress levels in us old fellahs.

Out the gate time is defined as 'sitting in the car(s) with the engine running ready to leave.

I can confirm that ALL our out the gate times were met with the minor exception of one occasion when we were some 5 mins late getting under way.

ORGANISATION

With only Minor hiccups the organisation was, as always, superb. This is what you get from a professional organisation like URG. Long may this continue.

Now a brief recap (from my point of view) - for more details and better descriptions do see my daily writeups.

Sat 12th Nov

Leaving home at lunchtime I drove Izzy to Hamilton to meet up with Rimu and Mabel - we met our OTG of 4 p.m. - a very good sign. Stayed at Mountain View Motel at Taupo that night.

Sun 13th Nov

Called in to see Leiton at Turangi to discuss his major

problem, then on to Palmerston North and a catch up with James and Sophia (the birthday girl). Stayed that night at Esplanade in Palmerston North.

Monday 14th Nov

Proceeded to Wellington, where with the invaluable help of Rimu and Mabel managed to track down some old friends from some 20 years ago. We then had a BBQ at Kathryn and Sean's with my other daughter Lucy too. We all stayed with Kate and Sean. Thanks guys.

Tuesday 15th Nov

We managed our OTG time of 7 AM, made the ferry on time (even if Rimui did confuse the Passenger Checkin with our vehicle checkin !) Over to Picton, stayed with Lorraine (James grandmother), went and saw George and Christine and the twins that afternoon. Went out to Bamboo Garden restaurant that night.

Wed 16th Nov.

A cruisy trip to Bob's in Christchurch, lunch at Kaikoura (and fuel).

Thurs 17th Nov

Caught up with a few old friends from Christchurch

Friday 18th Nov

We (Mainly Dave) collected all the necessary gear from Chch base, and attended the timing crew briefing - where once again I had a rant about the importance of start orders being put on drivers cards by start crews..

Sat 19th Nov.

Jesy arrived from Ashburton and his crew (Leiton, Paige and Sean) arrived at Bob's from Turangi.

Sun 20th Nov

The first day of the rally proper. Dave collected Mike, we met our OTG of 7 a.m. - Back to Bob's that night - dinner at what I still call Shirley Lodge

Mon 21st Nov

A big day. OTG at 6 am (yes 6 am) which means out of bed at 5 am. Stayed at Hampden that night - country pubs are marvelous.

My personal disappointment was that we didn't use the Black Forest Rd stage, which is way above Benmore Dam - admittedly quite scary. 1st used for the Lakeland Rally (actually a trial which finished in Queenstown) organised by my ex-wife Pat and myself, in 1968 then again for the 1970 Shell Silver Fern where we actually had jetboats out patrolling the lake in case any rally cars ended up there!

Pat and I also used it for Lakeland in 1971.

I was also used for the Silver Fern in 2010 at which time we had the task of driving the stage ahead of the cars throwing the rocks 'over the side'.

What a pity we did not use it this year. I am sure the Innes family would have been co-operative.

Tues 22nd Nov

This is where I discovered I had left my medication at Bob's. Pauanui Medical centre to the rescue. Thanks Dave for your trip into Dunedin for me. We stayed with our good friends at Waihola Holiday Park

Wed 23rd Nov

**A pleasant evening at Ibis Invercargill, with Steve and Susan - Dave had rallysafe problems to sort out
Pizza for dinner.**

Thurs 24th Nov

**This is the day it RAINED (actually the only day to do so),
OTG at 7 a.m.**

**I deeply regretted leaving the 6 'emergency ponchos' I
had bought - back at Duckcreek.**

Back to Waihola that night - lovely restaurant meal too.

Friday 25th Nov

**An OTG of 6 am (5 am alarms), lunch at Geraldine
stayed at Top10 holiday park and dinner at the local pub.**

Sat 26th Nov

**After our only stage today we were back to Bob's.
Rimu, Mabel Dave and I were joined by Jesy, Lisa,
Graham, Leiton, Paige and Sean. (I was and still am
concerned about Bob's blood pressure with all of us
coming and going.) Anyway, Chinese takeaways
for dinner.**

**Meanwhile Dave (the heavy lifter) returned all the
gear. and Jesy removed his Fleetlink radio. for me to bring
back north for him.**

**However all week Mabel had been suffering severe
toothache and it was collectively decided that A&E was
the best place for her. I am reliably informed(but have no
real proof) that she was told that nothing could be done
until she got back home to Hamilton and sent on her way
- more of that shortly.**

Sunday 27th Nov

**A rare day off. There was a lot of sleeping in.
But burgers for tea and a relatively early night**

Monday 28th Nov

**Here we go again! an OTG of 7 am, drove (well Rimu did
again) up to Picton over on the ferry arriving in Wellington
at 6.p.m.**

We stopped at Cobb and Co in Levin for a meal and 'the

kids' i.e. Rimu and Mabel could not resist doing the kids puzzles on the back of the menus!! (See the attachment)

We had decided just to drive for as long as possible towards Hamilton then get a motel or somewhere for the remainder of the night. Yeah right.

Mabel's toothache which had been getting progressively worse all week (and which Chch A&E had not addressed) became excruciating and there was no option but to head for hospital. This is why we ended up at Taupo Hospital Emergency Dept at about 1 am that night. They managed to dull the pain sufficiently for Rimu to drive the next couple of hours to Hamilton, where I for one collapsed fully clothed on their couch. THANKS EVER SO MUCH RIMU .- MABEL i DO FEEL FOR YOU.

Tues 29th Nov.

Rimu and his brother Steve washed Izzy, and vacuumed it out to remove all the evidence of that last couple of weeks. I drove home to Duckcreek that afternoon.

But things are never that simple are they?

Several times on the way home I had a police vehicle (with flashing lights etc) pull up behind me - what have I done now?

But as I pulled over they shot past me at warp speed!

There were, indeed, all manner of Police vehicles blocking the road ahead, standard cars, unmarked cars, police vans etc etc. necessitating a somewhat long detour home.

Wed 30th Nov.

A recovery day

Thurs 1 Dec

Wait there's more.

I had agreed to take good friends Dennis and Pat from Tairua to Auckland Airport OTG for me at 1 p.m. home again before dark.

I have said before TIRED BUT HAPPY.

Once more we fulfilled ALL our commitments - but I am glad we took our inverter to enable charging of the Rallysafe tablet.

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