

## 2018 DJ REGULARITY RALLY FOR CLASSIC MOTORCYCLES ATTRACTS GOOD ENTRY

**By Roger Houghton, 5 March 2018.**

The annual DJ regularity rally between Durban and Johannesburg for classic motorcycles made before 1937 continues to be a popular event at a time when entries are falling in many branches of South African motorsport. Fortunately participating in this famous event remains an aspirational challenge for many people.

The annual, commemorative DJ regularity rally, which celebrates the original race on public roads between Durban and Johannesburg from 1913 to 1936, has been an annual event since 1970. It is for this reason that competing motorcycles must have been manufactured before 1937.

The 2018 DJ Rally has attracted 102 entries, which is very good considering the tough economic environment affecting many current and potential competitors. This good entry is also despite the increasing value and frailty of motorcycles at least 82 years old, while many riders must deal with the effects of old age too!

Another good feature of the healthy entry for the 2018 DJ Rally is the fact that there are 15 first time entrants. However, there are only three women entered this year, one of them being Dorian Radue, of Australian who is a regular competitor.

Radue, who will ride a 1935 250cc Rudge Tourist, is one of three overseas riders in this year's event. The other overseas entries are: Les Youngman, from the United Kingdom (1935 500cc Model 18 Norton) and Maurice Bracken, from Ireland (1930 500cc BSA Sloper).

The oldest motorcycle entered in the 2018 DJ Rally is the 1909 500cc Humber with pedals to assist the engine when climbing hills. This motorcycle, which was badly damaged by fire during the 2016 DJ Rally, has been entered by Samantha Anderson.

However, following the tragic death of her father, Stuart (77), while taking his DJ bike, a 100-year-old Harley Davidson, for a test ride last week, it is not known whether Samantha will still compete. Hans Coertse, another regular DJ competitor, was seriously injured in the same accident, riding a 97-year-old Harley Davidson.

Irishman Maurice Bracken has now withdrawn from the event following Stuart Anderson's death, as his sister is married to Stuart's son, Jayson.

The oldest rider in this year's DJ is 83-year-old Neville Smith, who will be riding a 1936 350cc Ariel Red Hunter. Second oldest rider is 81-year-old Kevin Robertson, a seven-time DJ winner and ardent Velocette enthusiast. He will ride a 1936 500cc MSS model this year and will be a strong contender for another win.

The favourite for another win, following an unprecedented run of victories in the past year, is last year's DJ winner, Gavin Walton (57), who will ride a 1936 500cc AJS Model 9. He followed up his 2017 DJ win by taking first place in the Classic Natal, Fairest Cape and Magnum rallies as well as winning the 2018 pre-DJ Rally with an error of only 49 seconds.

Gavin, who runs a business selling spare parts for classic British motorcycles, will ride in his 13<sup>th</sup> DJ this year. He has ridden every year since 2005, except for 2013 when he was recovering from serious injuries after being hit by a car while sheltering from the rain under a road bridge after the Pre-DJ Rally.

His brother, Kevin, another highly competitive rallyist, will ride a 1931 500cc BSA 31S that will be taking part in its 36th consecutive DJ Rally. Kevin has ridden it 13 times and the previous owner, George Corlett, DJ winner in 1984, rode it 22 times after restoring it.

This year's event will be run over a route totalling 677km, made up of a first leg of 354km, from the start at the Oxford shopping centre in Hillcrest at 06:00 on Friday, to the overnight stop in Newcastle, and then 323km to be covered the next day to the finish at the Classic Motorcycle Club's clubhouse on the corner of Refinery and Power roads in Germiston. The first motorcycle is due at the finish from about 14:00.

The competitors travel this route at set speeds not exceeding the competitor's nominated maximum speed, with the winner being the rider who rides closest to these speeds as measured at various checkpoints en route.

The DJ is organised by a committee made up of members of several clubs on behalf of the Vintage and Veteran Club of SA. There is once again a woman filling the important position of clerk of the course, with Larina MacGregor taking over up the reins for the first time.

Larina grew up in a family where motorsport was a way of life, with her father, Ronnie Williams, competing in circuit and drag races. An experienced competitor in regularity car rallies herself, Larina has also been an organiser of rallies for several years, with the main event being the popular Maluti Meander for cars and motorcycles.

A woman has served in this position on the DJ organising committee previously. She was Betty Richmond who was clerk of the course of the DJ in 1985, 1998, 2002 and 2003 and active in vintage car and motorcycle circles for many years.



Two sets of brothers who are competing in the 2018 Durban-Johannesburg regularity rally for classic motorcycles flank the new clerk of the course for this year's event, Lavina MacGregor, at the Classic Motorcycle Club's facility in Germiston. The brothers (from left) are: Kevin and Gavin Walton and Ralph and David Pitchford. Gavin and Ralph are both previous winners of this popular annual event.