

County's talented young drivers aim to shine in the Jim Clark event

By George Topp

THE Jim Clark Memorial Rally this weekend is quite simply one of the biggest events on the UK rallying calendar.

The only event counting for the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship, the British Rally Championship and the Scottish Rally Championship, it is a chance for drivers to shine.

And being able to "mix it" over the closed public roads around Duns and compete against some of

the sports top drivers has attracted two young Lanarkshire drivers.

On this event last year, 20-year-old Kevin Ross from Carfin recorded his best finish to date, finishing fourth overall in an underpowered and ageing car.

Likewise, Bothwell teenager Alick Kerr will be going all-out to emulate his stunning performance on the Clark last year, when he beat many of the Borders crews in

their own back yard in his Peugeot 205.

Kevin's ABR Roofing team have been working flat-out to get the young driver's Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 8 ready for the Borders back roads, as the Clark is the only SRC round to run entirely on tarmac.

The suspension and brakes have been changed from their usual forest settings as the service crew pull out all the stops to secure Ross and co-driver

Kirsty Riddick their best result yet.

"I am really looking forward to the weekend as I completed the recce yesterday driving the route we are to use and the stages are great," declared Kevin.

"We get the chance this weekend to compete against both the elite British Rally Championship and the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship where we can race against other similar cars and truly

measure our performance."

On two driven wheels, 18-year-old Alick Kerr has made a storming start to 2007 in the 1.9-litre Peugeot 205 GTi and finds himself in second place in the SRC's two-wheel drive championship, only three points behind series leader Calum Mackenzie.

However, with Mackenzie sitting out the Clark, Kerr has the chance to jump to the top of the

two-wheel drive standings if he nets a solid result at the weekend.

The teenager also won two of the last three Ecosse 205 Peugeot 1.9 Challenge rounds, has a formidable record on tarmac and will be absolutely desperate to hit the ground running on the first tarmac Challenge round of the year.

There will be no such antics for Crossford's Jonathan Smith, though - the young driver is still recovering from a snowboarding injury he sustained in an accident last month and isn't expected to return to action until the end of June.