

Shearing

Promoting our industry, sport and people

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We acknowledge the feat of Ricci Stevens, first new name on the Golden Shears Woolpressing Honours Board since 2005. Jeremy Goodger had won the title for 13 of those years and his brother Vinnie the other five. Appropriately, Ricci defeated Jeremy by a clear margin to end the Goodger sequence.



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Shearing

Promoting our industry, sport and people

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UNDER COVER STORY

Greetings readers and Facebook followers and welcome to this 117th edition of *Shearing* magazine, No 1 of Vol. 41.

We have a little item at page 20 about the 60 years of Golden Shears statistics compiled by Scotty Stewart and Stephen Siemonek. If they cared to carry on their good work they might find that, of the 140 novice and junior shearers at Goldies this year, at least 20% (28) were women. That's allowing for the odd error or two in my 'mis-gendering' these modern day christian names. But what would those pioneers of the 1960s like Pam Warren and Barbara Marsh be thinking? Wow? Now let Laura Bradley lead the New Zealand women's charge into open class ranks!

As usual we have what we hope is an interesting variety of stories – including one, just a small item with maybe big impact from Johannes Kloosterman in the Netherlands – he and his mate are doing a charity shear to raise money for cancer research. We've been doing charity shears here for a while now but signs of it becoming an international movement? Let's hope so. What other industry but ours can do that? Go hard boys.

One magazine reader enjoyed our lengthy piece last edition about Peter Black and his admission to the Aussie Hall of Fame and immediately suggested we needed to have a similar catch up with Allen White. No sooner said than done, once we found out Allen lives about 15 minutes drive away from the editor. Some fascinating recollections in there from his '40-year holiday' in Australia!

We've got the usual comprehensive roundups on the major championships and a photo or two from 'smaller venues'. Toa Henderson has become the talk of the town and been transformed (by some clever commentators) into the 'Toa-nado'. Golden Shears and New Zealand Championships double in the same year – it's been done before but not by many. Can our top performers – shearers and woolhandlers – keep the momentum going for New Zealand to claim back some of those world titles next March? Speaking of – we've added Martin Ngataki and Nathan Stratford to our Hall of Fame. (World teams titles and major championship winners.)

Now winter beckons, but will soon be August and we will do this all again. Keep well meantime.

*Ka kite ano
Nga mihi, Des Williams*

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CONTENTS

- 3 Heiniger advertisement (also 29)
- 4 NZ Woolclassers Association news
- 6 Yarning with Allen White
- 13 Gary Lyons and Heiniger's Journey
- 15 Golden Shears Review
- 20 Go figure with Scotty and Stephen
- 22 Campaign for Wool (Stop Press!)
- 23 Anzac Day tribute
- 24 Dallas Mihaere profile
- 26 Mark Baldwin retires
- 27 Shaun Burgess Chile connection
- 30 Aidan Grant cuts wood and wool
- 32 Michael Birch ain't hungry
- 34 Golden Shears and Share Mongolia
- 40 Lister advertisement
- 41 John Hodder, Woolpressing Minister
- 42 Phil Oldfield South Africa 1996
- 44 Groundswell newsletter
- 46 Effects of Net Zero by 2050
- 47 The Return (short story)
- 50 Murray Tomlin sheep supplier
- 51 Tom Kelly Australian judge
- 54 A feedlot of lambs – Hilary Gietzen
- 56 Waitomo Sports photo essay
- 58 Poem 'Rain From Nowhere'
- 59 The (amazing) handpiece
- 60 DM Shearing moves on
- 63 'Pretty Boy' Meikle returns
- 63 Dr 'Daddy' Dry
- 66 Hec Oliver Trophy
- 67 Tributes Robt McLaren/Blue Stephens
- 69 Burton-Mack Shearing photo essay
- 71 Shane Ratima profile
- 74 New Zealand Championships Review
- 80 Shearing magazine's Hall of Fame

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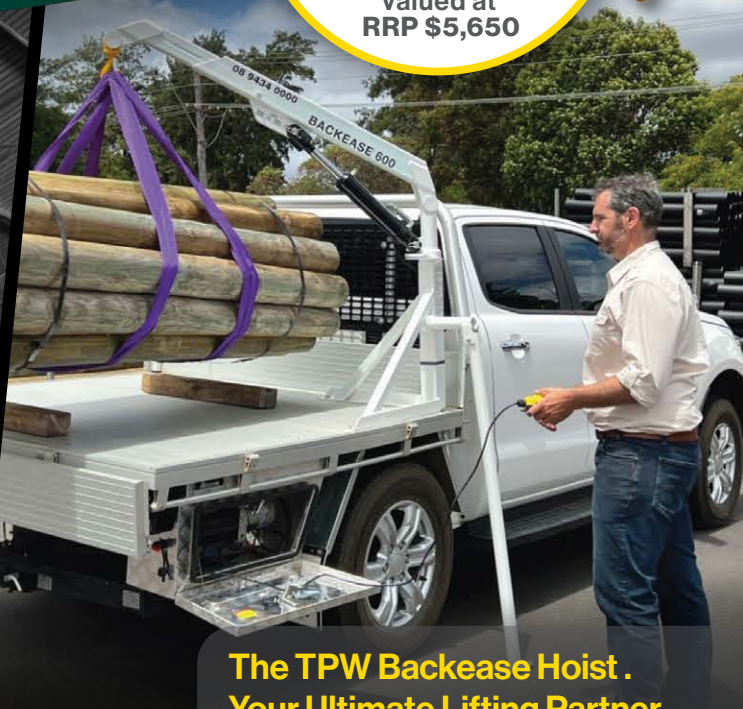
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NZ WOOL CLASSERS ASSOCIATION



NZ Wool Classers Association is a small, prudent organisation which sits firmly independent of any commercial interest in the wool industry. Administering the NZ Wool Classers Registration system and advocacy for wool education and quality in wool preparation and presentation are the core roles of the association.

The organisation has been in existence since 2006, formed after the disestablishment of the NZ Wool Board which previously administered classer registration. NZWCA funding comes from membership and some industry support.

Registration now open for NZWCA Industry Professional Development Day/AGM at Lincoln University on May 9 2025

Wide range of speakers including the “Minister of Wool” – Mark Patterson MP; Ag Science Professor Jon Hickford, wool aficionado; Ministry for Primary Industries representatives on ‘The law and your role in animal welfare’ and Marcus Fowler <https://www.opsec.co.nz/on-keeping-safe-in-the-workplace,de-escalating-managing-and-resolving-conflict>.

All are welcome to attend the Industry PD Day/AGM but pre-registration by May 4 is requested. **All those who pre-register will go in the draw on the day for a \$1499 (rrp) woollen rug generously donated by Bremworth.**

The programmes for such NZWCA days are designed for NZWCA members but are always a time of upskilling and connecting for all involved in the wool and wool harvesting industry. Attendance, which will include smokos and lunch, is free for NZWCA members, \$30 for non members, \$25 for students and there’s a special rate for shearing contractors sending five or more people of \$25 per person.

The day on May 9 will begin at 8.15am with wool exercises at the venue, ground floor of the NRE Building at Lincoln University, and end with a wool measurement workshop and a visit to Lincoln Agritech for wool research insight. There will also be a wool brokers panel with key messages for the coming season. The NZWCA AGM, including announcement and presentation of the annual NZWCA Classer Awards will be immediately after the lunch break. Link to register and for the full timetable is here: <https://woolclassers.org.nz/members-area/news/agm-industry-professional-development-day-2025/>



Work of wool classers on show at the Wanaka A&P Show

The NZWCA stand at the Wanaka A&P Show in March 2025 was once again situated right beside the door to the NZ Fine Wool Supreme Fleece competition building, which this year housed just under 200 fleece entries.

Chairman Tracy Paterson M2133, Board member Terence Mulcahy D1473 and Registrar Marg Forde A1260 talked wool and wool classing with a wide range of people over the course of the two-day show.

The hand of NZWCA classers featured strongly in the NZ Fine Wool Supreme Fleece competition results. The Supreme champion fleece was a fine merino ewe from Armidale Stud, entered by Simon Paterson whose father, owner classer Allan FD713, selected and prepared the fleece. This beauty had a total score of 99.8 points!

A woolly hogget 1/4BD fleece which scored 99.5 points won the champion flock ewe (excluding merino) honours for growers JN Matakanui/R&G Naylor and the Martin Paterson Classer Award (for the top scoring fleece entry chosen by a NZWCA member classer) for Tina Elers A2129.

The Gibson Sanders Trophy for most points in wool (and several category wins) went to Matakanui Station, classed by NZWCA chair Tracy Paterson M2133 with support from husband Andrew FD2063.

A 1/4BD hogget fleece which scored 98 points won the champion flock hogget (excluding merino) for Hays Station (Bowmar family). This was selected and prepared by their classer Terence Mulcahy D1473.



Above: The NZ Fine Wool Supreme Champion Fleece at the 2025 Wanaka Show, a merino ewe from Armidale Stud, which scored 99.8 points. Selected and prepared by owner classer Allan Paterson FD713



Above: The 1/4BD ewe hogget fleece which won Tina Elers A2129 the Martin Paterson Classer Award at the 2025 Wanaka Show. This fleece, entered by R & G Naylor, scored 99.5 points and won the Champion Flock Ewe Fleece (not merino)

A new feature this year was an award category with a calculation of the value of each entered fleece; this figure was included on each score card. This was done using pricing based on the main NZ fine wool auction sale for the season, in Christchurch in September. Head wool steward Ian Bagley pointed out this may not have been what similar fleeces actually achieved for a wool grower whose contracted wool had a higher value than those at the selected wool auction, and happily conceded it "could be the topic of conversation" in the competition wool room.

The inaugural winner of this category was a 14 micron fleece from The Bend entered by Sam McAtamney and selected by Kevin Waldron D984, PGG Wrightson Wool rep and broker rep on the NZWCA Board. The fleece was given a value of \$126.50. For comparison, the overall Supreme champion fleece value (based on the prices of the selected auction) was \$73.50 and the Grand Champion flock ewe fleece (excluding merino) was given a value of \$34.20.

NZWCA 2025 Invoicing Completed with Classer Code of Conduct Reminder Included

Invoicing for the 2025/26 year for NZWCA has just been completed. Classer/Grader invoicing was done in February and Associate membership in March. If you have not received your invoice yet, please contact our secretary Annette Gamble by email: secretary@woolclassers.org.nz. This year the Classer/Grader invoices included a link drawing attention to the NZWCA Code of Conduct and Ethics which can be found at <https://woolclassers.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/NZWCA-CODE-OF-CONDUCT-AND-ETHICS.pdf>

Have your contact details changed? Please notify our secretary Annette (email address above).



Above: Where the "hardcore" wool people hung out at the 2025 Wanaka A&P Show.

Anyone can make a Classer validity check on the NZWCA website

The use of invalid NZ classing or grading stencils on bales and in wool specifications reflects poorly on the offending classer/grader, the farmer's wool clip and our NZ wool industry, points out NZWCA Registrar Marg Forde.

With the evolution of quality assurance programmes (such as ZQ and NZFAP) there are clear values and expectations around such things as Content Claim Standard, Chain of Custody, Credibility, Purchase Assurance, Traceability and Origin.

Putting invalid classer/grader stencils on bales and in bale specifications undermines the integrity of the NZ registration system and, NZWCA believes, the quality assurance programmes.

"Your association is working hard to raise this issue but as always a collective response is strongest. If you see it call it!" says NZWCA Registrar Marg Forde.

She points out, "anyone can check if a stencil is valid by using the search facility we now have the NZWCA website home page". <https://woolclassers.org.nz/>

Keeping your NZWCA membership current is considered a professional obligation for NZ classers and graders. The letter prefix and number which together make the one-off combination that is a registered "Kiwi stencil" is unique and may be used only by the person it was issued to.

Sheepo's Lament

They've bred them for wool and they've bred them for meat, they've shortened their legs to make them look neat. To improve the lambing percentage they've gone to great pains, but when oh when will they breed them with brains?

(Written with raddle on the back of a wool bin.)

Shearer's Lament

Show us the sheep that can't be shorn
And we'll show you sheep we can shear
Run in some sheep that can't be shorn
And if you can, we'll buy the beer
– Half a mo, don't bother to go
– The bastards are already here!

(Written with raddle on a wall in a shed noted for its particularly tough sheep.) (From Tony Mathews.)

Yarning in the sun with Allen White

Shearing magazine caught up with Allen White a few weeks ago with the intention of writing a conventional story about his long and distinguished career in the shearing and wool industry, on both sides of the Tasman Sea. In a wide-ranging two-hour discussion covering some 60 years, a variety of subject matters came and went, touching on the many roles Allen has played in his life. So we've decided to just let the man reminisce, uninterrupted, about some of his favoured memories and career highlights!

* * * * *

First, a history lesson

"Essentially, our trans-Tasman working relationships started back in 1797. A lot of our Maori people would never understand or know this but in 1797 the first registered, domiciled Maori was living in Sydney. Maori had been travelling backwards and forwards for quite some time, they were traders and they were not afraid of the sea.

"The whalers were going backwards and forwards and all of a sudden they started trading. Kawhia and Raglan are classic examples of harbours from where this trading began. All the land around [the Waikato and further afield] used to be sown in wheat crops owned by Maori and it was traded between here and Australia. People living in Sydney needed their food so they took potatoes, wheat and pigs for trade. For instance, a gun at that time would cost 250 pigs. When Northland Maori bought 1000 rifles you're talking about 250,000 pigs and they didn't come out of the New Zealand bush. So there is a long, long connection between the two countries.

"Maori then leased land out to the white settlers. Our people did the fencing, scrub cutting, ploughing, they shored the sheep. They did all these things and then the work started to contract on the farms. So Maori, being Maori, they travelled and found work elsewhere, including in Australia. From memory, in 1863 a really interesting piece of legislation called the *New Zealand Settlement Act* was introduced. This allowed the British Crown to take land from Maori tribes that were considered to be rebelling.

"Then, in 1901 Australia had passed its Immigration Restriction Act, which also became known as the "White Australia" policy, which affected migrants who came to Australia between 1901 and 1958.

"In terms of that policy, in 1905 a couple of Maori shearers were going to be refused admission to Australia because they wouldn't undergo a simple test of their English language speaking ability. The story goes that these two guys could quote large passages from the Bible in two languages. They could quote at length from the *Iliad* (an ancient Greek poem by Homer, set during the Trojan War c1330BC). So these were not just ordinary people, they had a little bit of substance about them.

"Eventually they were exempted from the Australia "whites only" policy. The proposed deportation started such a furore that the governments of the day started going backwards and forwards and all sorts of threats were being made. Australia wanted New Zealand to join them and become part of a federation. New Zealand said they preferred to stay with their Pacific Island people, which they did.



Above: Allen White – home after a 40-year holiday in Australia

"But everyone else who came into Australia at that time had to meet that "Whites Only" policy except for Maori. And here's the clincher – Maori domiciled in Australia were actually given the right to vote before aboriginal Australians got it. So our people have been influencers in Australia for a very long time. I think it's a wonderful story and that's the background to it and some really interesting things have happened as a result of it."

"White Australia" Policy: Exclusion of Maoris

In reference to the recent action of the Australian Government in refusing to allow two Maoris to land in Sydney, the Premier [New Zealand] has sent the following cable message to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth [Australia]:- "In face of your telegram that a test was applied to the two Maoris, the allegation that this was not done is withdrawn, the explanation being probably that the Maoris did not understand what was demanded of them. Your decision to refrain from putting the test in future to Maoris is a happy ending to a perplexing situation, and on behalf of both races of this colony we tender you and the Government of the Commonwealth for this act of justice to a noble race, our warmest thanks, and assure you that whilst the Maoris are deeply grateful at being placed on a level with their pakeha brethren they will not trench on your policy of a "White Australia" or violate the labour conditions, which they much appreciate."

Lyttelton Times, 6 March 1905

Our shearing seasons

"Our normal shearing year used to look like this: we would start shearing our hoggets in September-October and would share the ewes in October-November, and go back for the lambs in December. Then we would all hop in our cars and head off down South and stay there until the oysters came in – as you do – and then we would head home again in March. Some of the boys would go to Golden Shears and the rest of us would head home and start shearing the two-tooths. After that we would have to fly-crutch the ewes again.

"And then we would be into fencing or scrub cutting or whatever else was going, and later on we might do a lambing beat. Then we would come back for the main crutching just

before lambing. All the while we were playing rugby and living the good life. It was a great life.

"And then things started to go a little pear-shaped. The New Zealand Wool Board got into its training programme big time and there was a build up of shearers and then not enough work to go round for everybody. And so we started travelling again, mainly to Australia because the money was there and they wouldn't have gone otherwise. The Australian sheep numbers started to explode in the late 1960s. Western Australia ended up with 40% of the country's sheep flock. Queensland was inundated with major companies run by growers such as GRAZCOS etcetera.

"The people who suffered the most were the smaller contractors, they couldn't get enough labour for their gangs because everyone wanted to work for the big companies. So they started travelling to New Zealand looking for shearers.

"A man named Frank Godier came to Hawkes Bay and came to my uncle's gang and offered us a job in New South Wales, saying he would pay all our fares there and back at the end of our stay. That sounded like a pretty good deal to us so we took it. And it was an eye opener. I remember my first day on the board I couldn't shear 100, I only got to 99 and I would have killed for that one extra sheep. So that night we all sat around and talked about what the problem was.

"I wasn't the best shearer in the world but I could hold my own, I enjoyed what I was doing and as long as you were shearing a consistent tally everyday it didn't really matter to the contractor. We were making enough to feed our families and give them all the bits and pieces they needed.

"It was five days a week in Australia when we first went there. Here in New Zealand it was shearing whenever the sheep were dry, including weekends. If you worked late in the evening to cut out a shed somewhere you would then travel to be ready for a 5am start somewhere else. In Australia, if there were two or three hundred left in the shed on Friday night we would come back on Monday, even if it meant travelling 300 kilometres.

"So I guess that's what the small Australian contractors liked about us. They didn't have the industrial disputes to try and settle all the time."

Australian Wool Corporation: Robotic Shearing

"Eventually I left New South Wales and ended up at a place called Geraldton in Western Australia, a coastal town 400km north of Perth. Geraldton was a shearer's dream. We would start at 7:30am and finish at 5:30pm. The sun was always shining and we lived right on the beach so I could go down and drop a crayfish pot in the evening, clear the pot in the morning and have a cray cooked and ready for smoko at the shearing shed.

"Geraldton was a great place to be – good schools, good people, all you had to do was go to work, do the job, get the money, go home – you couldn't wish for anything more.

"The wide comb dispute was still going on at the time but that all died down eventually and things were moving along nicely. It was interesting that within six months of the dispute being settled 80% of the shearers in Australia had switched to wide gear, and that created all sorts of problems, but it wasn't my problem.

"And all of a sudden I was getting visits at the shearing sheds from guys from the Australian Wool Corporation (AWC) wanting to know what I did and how I did it and why I did it – all those sorts of things. I would just tell them

and show them and then I'd get back on with my work. Then people from the University of Western Australia (UWA) came up to see me and asked the same questions. I gave them the same answers and then they offered me a job as a consultant with the robotic (automated mechanical shearing) shearing programme which was being funded by the Australian Wool Corporation.

"I think what locked it in for me was the fact that I could articulate what it was they were seeing in simple terms that they could understand. They had been using a lot of the academics around Australia that had been involved with shearing and lots of weird and wonderful ideas came out, many of them flawed.

"The University was being funded by the AWC to the extent of about \$14 million. And that was interesting because when they started out they had old Commodore computers that held 256 gigabytes of memory, which is minuscule, nothing compared to today's technology. But some of the technology developed in the programme was amazing. They brought in a robotic arm used for spot welding in a car manufacturing company which had a wrist that could turn 180° max. They fiddled around with it and made it so it could turn 360° and when you saw the wrist working you would say, 'Oh look at that' – it would take your breath away.

"The robot used to come down out of the roof and they would have a balloon there and the machine would stop mere millimetres from the balloon and then shear around and over the balloon – it was an eye opener. So the time I spent with UWA in the early-mid 1980s was really the beginning of my education, if you like.

"The project manager was a fellow by the name of James Trevelyan, one of many people that helped me who need to be recognised. James was amazing. He developed a rocket that was used in the Argentinian Falklands War.



Above: The cover of Shearing magazine Spring/Summer 1988 with the shearing robot being developed by the University of Western Australia in conjunction with the Australian Wool Corporation.

They could drop the rocket at sea level and it would ride the contours of the sea – skim over the waves and between the waves and the enemy could never see it coming. This was technology being adapted for the robotic handpiece to follow the contours of a sheep. The engineers on the programme were amazing and what I found was, when you said something to them, they needed to know what the metrics were and the metrics we had at the time were a long bevel, a medium bevel and a short bevel, and those measurements varied from manufacturer to manufacturer. That's all we've got! And they said, 'Well okay, for this type of sheep you give me a comb like that and we will measure it. And out of that little exercise came the change we now have in our industry.'

"All the combs are now defined by the radius of the bevel. So it's either from 7.3 mils down to about four mils. And to get that into the industry we had to have the Chinese in there and they saw it straight away. The other manufacturers were pretty reluctant to adopt this way of measuring things. But you talk to a shearer now and he will tell you exactly what the bevel is or what the radius should be on the tips of the combs for any particular type of sheep. So that development came out of the UWA research and that needs to be recognised.

"We did all sorts of other wonderful things too and apart from giving advice, my main role was to act as conduit between the grower and the academics. [My colleague] Darryl Cole was very cunning with it. He would get a lot of growers coming in and they would be looking at something but they would never know quite what they were looking at. They would also bring a little bit of animosity with them – "here we are spending all this money and what have we got to show for it, and why haven't we got it yesterday!"

"So Darryl had a fleece, it was 12-micron, fine as fine, he would pick up a bit of it, give it to them and say, 'have a look at that, have a feel of that.' And they would walk around all day with this piece of wool in their hands and Darryl could talk to them about anything he wanted to.

"Then shearers would come in and we would talk about the radius on the bevels. Darryl would give them a comb and they would fiddle with that and all of a sudden they would be convinced the robotic shearing programme was a really good programme!

"Now that technology is still there and they revisit it every now and then and I guess when the price of machinery comes down they may introduce it. A lot of stuff that came out of the programme is in the industry now, especially related to handling the big sheep that they've got now. That is always going to be a problem, the sheep are just getting bigger and bigger. In the meantime it is parked up there ready for when the time is right. They will do another 'desk top' (economic assessment) soon, I'm sure."

New job with fancy title

"Some time during 1987 I got a call in the middle of the night (because of the time difference between Victoria and West Australia) inviting me to apply for a job described as "Comptroller of shearer training" and to attend an interview.

The caller was a man named **Dave Asimus (pictured)**, the chair of Australian Wool Corporation and while I didn't like the name of the job, I said I would come for interview. Dave was a huge man, 6 foot 10. I'd never seen anyone as big. [According to a *Sydney Morning Herald* article, Asimus (1933-2008) also had "the biggest hand ever to have pushed an executive pen."]



"We were at an AGM meeting in Queensland where I had to explain what the shearer training programme was all about and how we were doing it. I gave my report and then asked if there were any questions. This guy down the back stood up and said, "tell me, how come a New Zealander is teaching us Australians how to shear sheep."

"Dave immediately jumped up to intervene but I told him it was okay. Then I said to the bloke at the back, "What was the question again?" and he repeated it. "Maybe it's because my ancestors missed the last free boat out of England," I replied.

"So I ended up in Victoria as leader of the Corporation's shearer training programme. They paid for everything involved in the move to Victoria, even got the packers in to pack up the house in Geraldton so we could sell it – they were absolutely marvellous.

"I got started in the new job and had to look at what we had. I already knew all the background stuff but what I didn't realise – though should have – was that, dotted around the country were all these little Maori gangs. From Muttaborra in Queensland right through to Esperance in WA they were there, and they also had a big influence on the shearing industry in their own areas. So I spoke to them all and explained the problems we had. People didn't know how to grind gear properly to get it sharp. The gear was not being specified so they didn't know what gear to buy.

"They still had experts in the sheds who used to grind the gear for them and it depended which side of the ledger you were on with them as to how well your gear got sharpened.

"I got the mandate to introduce wide combs, or to see that the wide combs were accepted universally, right across the country and were producing as good a job, if not better, than what they had before.

"Just on that, with the narrow gear, because they were poking and shoving blows in all the time, the amount of second cuts was quite huge. The average over a ten-year

They're coming in for shearing NOT sheep measles.

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period was about 7% of the clip. When I got there and when the wide comb came in I looked at the numbers and it was up to 9% and moving very quickly towards 10%, so I knew straight away what we had to do. So I had to sell that to the chair and I said if we could do it really well, within four years we could have it down to 3 or 4 percent and that would equate to about 20 million dollars going back into the growers pocket.

"Now the numbers were a wee bit rubbery, but rubbery because of different facets within the industry. Wool buyers didn't mind locks because they could mix them up with other wools. Our woolhandlers spent all their time separating them and keeping them separate. The woolbuyers would then blend them and mix them all up again.

"A wool jumper that looks expensive but prills all the time has got a high content of second cuts and locks in the wool. But the buyers didn't want to know those numbers because they were making money out of it, and that was the kind of thing we were up against all the time. But you couldn't go into a meeting and argue that with them, they didn't want to know. Otherwise I'd have had a war on my hands and I didn't have time for a war!

"So, we had all these Maori gangs around the countryside. The Muttaborra example is a great story, they were all from Porangahau. The kaumatua there was Peter 'Pumpkin' McDonald. They cranked up the school again, got the shop going, brought some life back into the industry, did a wonderful job.

"And that was happening all around the country in these little towns. Not just at Muttaborra. It happened at Mortlake, with Gundy Tahau, and with the Poka boys in the Riverina. They also had some amazing shearers there – Colin Boshier and Mark Boot, they were all around Broken Hill. You ask yourself, did they become influencers? Of course they did. People wanted to be a [gun shearer like] Colin Boshier or Mark Boot. Teddy Lewis, Jack Dowd – all these good people knew exactly what we had to do, the same as I did – we had to concentrate on getting the gear right.

"What we were doing was not without opposition from some quarters so we decided we needed to have a beach head somewhere, out of the road and with an influencer who could articulate everything we were talking about and who knew it inside out and back to front. So that place was Esperance, an area where sheep numbers had exploded more than anywhere else in WA and people were coming from Queensland and other states to Esperance to shear because they knew they could make money there. It was what you might call a gathering melting pot.

"I knew Pete [Peter Black] was there in Esperance but I



Above: "Australians" at Golden Shears 1996. From left: Ian Wratten, Jim Robinson, Peter Black, Peter Artridge and Allen White. Allen was also elected first president of Sport Shear Australia when it was established in 1995.

knew I couldn't employ him directly because that would have upset the whole thing. The AWC had managers in five states, so we just consulted with them. They asked for my other suggestions and I said I thought there were three other blokes that could do the job we wanted done. I suggested they have a talk to all three and I would do likewise after they had decided.

In the end Peter Black got the job and the rest is really history. Without him, I don't think we would have been able to get to where we did so quickly.

"So that how all that came about. And then it was a matter of going to the influencers, and then trying to marry the influencers with the wannabes, and that was the easiest part of the lot. At the end of the day the second cuts and locks came down to 3.5 percent, the growers got the 20 million dollars back in their pockets (they most probably never even recognised it!), the gear got shifted from long, medium and short bevel to being actually specified. And we also specified the width of the comb according to the bevel. All the manufacturers were all on side with the changes."

Royal Commission Permission Averted

"But at that particular time, during the wide comb dispute, there was a change of government in Australia. The Bob Hawke-led Labour government had just come in [elected March 1983] and it appeared, watching from the sidelines, that Bob Hawke, who had a trade union background, was governing by consensus. He would get a feeling from his people and away he would go and act on that feeling.

"After the wide comb dispute was settled, Hawke proposed setting up a Royal Commission to investigate whether New Zealanders should be allowed to come to Australia to shear. I saw this as being contrary to the exemption New Zealanders had received back in 1905, and that legislation had never changed. I thought if he rolls with this we're in big trouble. The New Zealand championships at Te Kuiti were coming up at the time (1990) so I rang John Fagan to see if he could arrange for me to have a quiet talk with Jim Bolger. I said I had a couple of questions for him, told John what the questions were and so he arranged it for me.

During a quiet moment at the championships I was able to speak with Mr Bolger and told him of my concerns for all the Maori families around Australia and if the Royal Commission went ahead as intended they would all be gone.



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Mr Bolger's response was to say not to worry about it and I assumed from that he had already had discussions with Australia but he said they didn't want to upset the closer economic ties arrangement with New Zealand already in place.

So from there I went back and accused the AWU of employing McCarthism tactics and persecuting people and that got the Commission really upset. But anyway, it was said, out in the open and we went on from there. You might say that was a really interesting time in my life!"

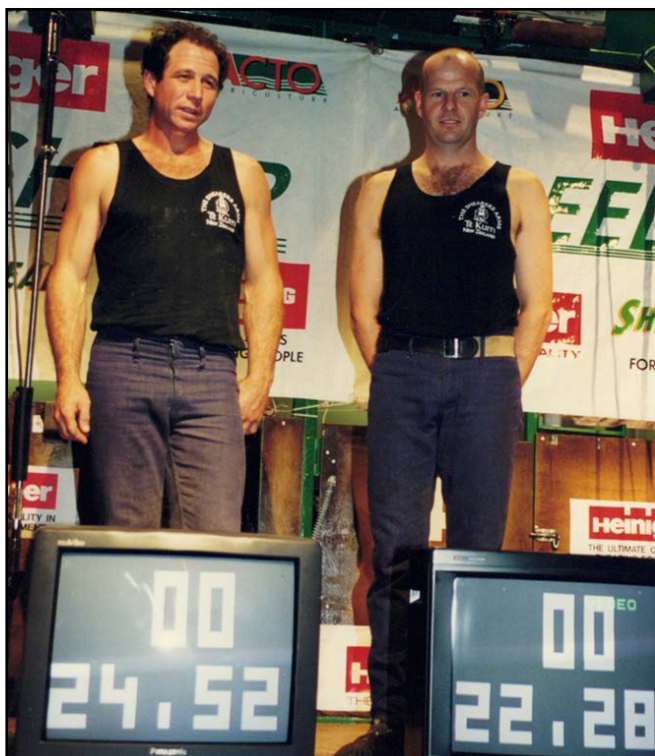
Introducing Speed Shears

"It may not be realised that Jim Robinson from Warrnambool and I developed the idea of quick shears. I was sitting at home one day, watching a game of limited overs cricket and it was fantastic. I started thinking about how boring our shearing competitions were by comparison. They get up and shear 20 sheep in 15 minutes. And what's the first thing they do when finished? They unhook their handpieces and turn their back on the crowd.

"So we wondered how to change that. I went and saw an old mate of mine, Stan Artridge, and we talked about the problem. Between the two of us we worked out, why don't we get a clock, and three green/red lights, and say 'Go'. If you get two green lights you pass, if you get two red lights, you're out. Simple!

"And bingo, the speed shear was born. The first one was held at the Warrnambool Shears, by invitation. There was Colin King, Alan MacDonald and several others. We went with invitation only because we weren't sure how it would go.

"The crowd went wild – the back yard of a pub in the middle of the night and the crowd was yelling. We thought, "Yes, we've got something here!" And the concept developed from there, speed shears have become very popular all over the place and so I think that was a good thing we did.



Above: Alan MacDonald and David Fagan had good reason to thank Allen White for 'inventing' speed shears. They featured in quite a few, including this one at Te Kuiti in 1998.

The Warrnambool Speedshears

That frequent and long-time Australian visitor to Te Kuiti and the New Zealand Shearing Championships, Roger Mifsud of Victoria, recalls the first Warrnambool Speedshear was held in 1989, at a Mortlake Woolstore, and has been held annually since then, apart from two Covid interruptions. And Roger has taken part in most, if not all of them. He doesn't have his name on the Honours Board, but there are some familiar names! (And perhaps no surprise that you haven't won it, Roger!)

MAC'S MORTLAKE HOTEL QUICK SHEAR OPEN					
YEAR	WINNER	YEAR	WINNER	YEAR	WINNER
1989	D. FAGAN	2004	D. BALME	2019	J. SAMUELS
1990	A. McDONALD	2005	T. COOK	2020	DICKHEAD DAN
1991	E. FORDE	2006	A. HAURAKI	2021	DICKHEAD DAN
1992	A. McDONALD	2007	S. WELSH	2022	W. WHARE
1993	D. FAGAN	2008	D. FAGAN	2023	
1994	D. FAGAN	2009	J. WARDLAW	2024	
1995	A. McDONALD	2010	C. FERGUSON	2025	
1996	A. McDONALD	2011	C. FERGUSON	2026	
1997	A. McDONALD	2012	D. KING	2027	
1998	N. OSBOURNE	2013	J. TUMOHE	2028	
1999	D. FAGAN	2014	D. KING	2029	
2000	D. FORDE	2015	R. MILLER	2030	
2001	J. CLARKE	2016	L. SAMUELS	2031	
2002	D. FAGAN	2017	J. SAMUELS	2032	
2003	T. COOK	2018	K. BLACK	2033	

"There is some criticism that speed shears have gone too far, with lambs being shorn in 15 seconds with only 60% of the wool left on to start with. But that comes back down to the notion that it takes 30 percent of the time to shear off five percent of the wool that's got 2.5 percent of the value – belly, crutch, hocks, wigs etc. So that was the initial rationale behind the sheep preparation.

"We had another idea and we tried it and it worked a treat. You have six stands and six shearers shearing one hundred sheep between them. And there's always going to be one or two sheep and one or two shearers shearing an extra. If that's happening, the others would get in and cheer them on.

"So, if the wool weights were x amount, and a template used on the preparation, there would be no need to travel the world. You could have a world championship all on line, and I think it would make good TV as well. Mainly because it would all be pre-recorded and replayed in the sequence that would give you a winner. I reckon somebody smart could sell that idea to a brewery. But that last person shearing that last sheep, you'd want to see the other five shearers right on his ear, and the crowd right behind him – so there's another possibility in there. You could do it world wide and shearers wouldn't have to travel to a venue.

"The Warrnambool Shears was an interesting story which also needs to be told as it formed a bridge with Te Kuiti, and acted as a buffer for me on the Eastern Seaboard."

A lifetime in the industry

"Shearing was always my passion. My iwi associations are with Tainui, Taranaki, Ngati Toa, Chatham Island and with Ngati Tama, on the north of the South Island. I grew up in Hastings and I'm a fifth generation shearer. My great grandfather was a tuakana [older sibling] of Sir Maui Pomare, he was based on the Chatham Islands and helped with Maui's education through shearing and fishing. Tiwai and my great

grandfather taught his son to shear, and his son taught his son to shear.

"When I started shearing there were only two contractors in the Hawkes Bay area, Bill Meech and my uncle, used to be a ganger for Stinky. And so every year he would pack up a truck load of gear and workers and head over to Hastings and work for Stinky. Then he decided he could make a better deal for himself by going out on his own and as a consequence of that, we all went with him.

"That's how the industry used work in those days. People would hop on the back of a truck and end up in Rotorua, Whanganui, the Hawkes Bay or wherever. It was a real gypsy way of life. So that's the background.

"I also worked for Heiniger in Melbourne for a period. That was pretty interesting, sometimes political. My role was educating the industry about what the gear was doing, why it was doing it, how it was doing it, that sort of thing, in order to encourage sales. I didn't enjoy that quite so much, it sort of took me too far away from the grass roots people of the industry.

"But I was sitting at home one day and I got a phone call from someone from the equivalent of ACC in Britain and they asked whether we could make clippers suitable for a cattle beast. It was during the foot and mouth disease outbreak in Britain in 2001.

"All the cattle were being kept indoors and the edict was that they couldn't be sent to the works in winter time if they had shit on them, and that meant shearing the whole animal. People were getting kicked and injured while trying to shear the mud and shit off them.

(To next page)



Above: Darryl Cole with Allen White's 'handpiece on a pole'.



Above: Allen White with colleagues at the world shearing championships, Toowoomba, in 2005. Second left: Kelvin Whall (Meat and Wool New Zealand); Ross Pollock and Joe Sullivan, Australian Wool Innovation.

Allen White – tribute from long time colleague, Darryl Cole (Geraldton):

"Alan just did his job as he saw it needed doing, completely ignoring his supposed job description! He was a boundary rider, always looking for a better way forward. He would watch and listen, identify the problem, then go to work on the solution.

"He always endeavoured put the right people in the problem's way, made sure they had the resources and tools available, then he would get out of the way and let them get on with solving it.

"In an ego-driven industry this was to Allen's detriment at times, but he would just shrug it off and move on. His criteria was always to try and improve and empower the man on the ground.

"He was about building relationships and improving the labour flow between our countries so his people could grow and expand their own horizons.

"He could move from a board room with his briefcase, associating with the country's leading graziers, out onto the shearing board with his toolbox, swap his tie for a towel which he threw over his shoulder and become one of the boys (not an easy task!).

"He knew how to work men and what questions to ask and what ears to talk to. He never stole credit as he always fed it back to the rightful ownership. He collated a lot of good ideas from the field then instrumented them or empowered his trainers with the appropriate tools to get the job

done. Allen spent many, many hours developing tools for his instructors to use. He was probably was one of the first to break down the shearing process into sections, and then document it all whilst liaising with his trainers (not all agreed with his process). He then stood back and moved on with the next task, of which there were many. There are still many sheds around the country today with posters on the wall showing his hand on a handpiece, instructing how to shear."

"A few things he probably won't mention unless asked:

- He shored sheep on the steps of the Sydney Opera House during the Australian bi-centennial in 1988, with Prince Charles and Princess Diana in the audience;
- He shored in the main ballroom of the New York Waldorf Astoria, overlooking Central Park, for guests who paid \$500 a seat, quite a sum in those days
- He organized a new suit for our current King on the 200th anniversary of the first shipment of wool from Australia.

"Allen was always looking for a way forward and he loved the Australian experience. He wanted more young New Zealand shearers to experience it so they could broaden their own horizons and become assets to their local community on their return to New Zealand (if they did so).

"And that's about it – well, except for his ability and desire to talk bloody rugby at any given opportunity...!"

"One fellow had the handpiece kicked out of his hand and into his cheek and was badly injured. So I got over there and put a handpiece on the end of a pole, then put a drill and gut in there and they were able to stand back and shear the animal from three or four feet away, without having to get any closer."

"Then they had a series of modules or displays set up at the Bath Showgrounds (not during Royal Bath & West Show), demonstrating various things and I was set up with a crush to demonstrate to farmers who were invited to come and see how they could shear the shit and mud off their animals without getting themselves hurt. They were told if any farmer didn't respond to the invitation, ACC inspectors would go to that farm and do a whole of farm inspection. So that word got around pretty quickly and the farmers all came to the demonstrations. We'd do a demo in the morning and then another one in the afternoon. So that was pretty interesting, I got to see all of England!

"Then I got back to Australia, hopped off the plane and after a little nap I woke up to find the '9/11' attack on New York's twin towers going on. That was a sad day.

"But all in all I have to say life's been good to me. I've been back in New Zealand since 2015, having gone for a season of shearing and a holiday that lasted for 40 years. But how can we give recognition and thanks to all those families that came from the back blocks of New Zealand, Porangahau and those places, and who chose to live in Australia, Muttaborra, Mortlake and other places.

"Because without them and all the help they gave to me, and the contribution they've made the Australian wool industry, I couldn't have done what I did. We should be very proud of what those people have done."

"I greatly enjoyed my association with many more people who contributed greatly to the industry and what we were trying to achieve during those years. I think of Bernie Walker (Euroa Golden Shears) Stan Artridge, John and Mark Conlan, Daffy Ryan. Jim Robinson (Warrnambool Shears), Dion Morrell, Mike Henderson, Ross McKenzie, and the New Zealand connect, John and David Fagan, Colin King, Mickey MacDonald, Robin Kidd ... and the list goes on."

* * * * *



Timely holiday for Aussie Visitors

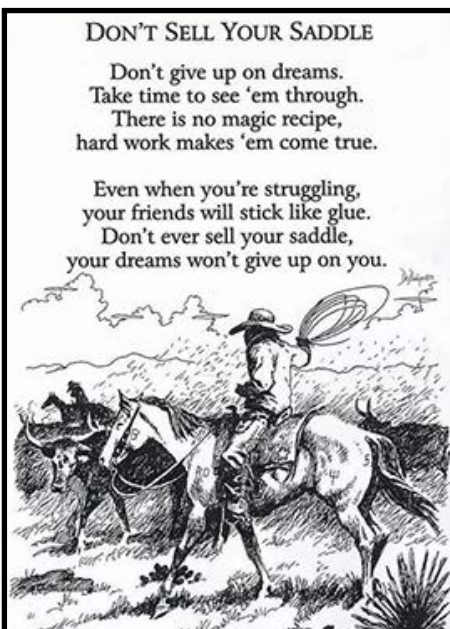
Western Australians Tony and Kim Sandwell (pictured) timed their recent two-week holiday in New Zealand to perfection. Travelling up through the King Country, the couple 'came across' a sawmill and because Kim works at a sawmill 'back home', they stopped for a look around.

There they learned the New Zealand Shearing championships were taking place just up the road at Te Kuiti. And that got fencer/shearer Tony interested. Arriving at Te Kuiti, they proceeded to park their van behind the 'just arrived' car of *Shearing* magazine's editor and that led to a brief chat!

Tony grew up on a farm in WA and started shearing during school holidays as a 15-year-old. Upon leaving school he became a full-time shearer and in 2003 embarked on his first overseas trip, to Ireland and England. His initial contact was Tipperary contractor John Quigley, who was looking for a shearer. The flocks were quite small, Tony says. "One day, I was on my way to our third shed after shearing 12 sheep." His work in England was mainly around Tavistock, in Devon County.

"The following year I went to Spain and there the flocks were quite large. I think our biggest day was when four of us shored 1720 sheep. That was a great experience, we lived and slept in the back of a truck."

These days Tony is a full-time fencer and just "shears for fun at weekends." (As you do, if you can!)



Above: You can bet Axle Reid never sold his saddle or gave up on the dream of winning an open championship. Here he is, biggest grin (but only just!) at Mayfield on 8 March 2025, with James McCormick (organiser), Brett Roberts, Justin Meikle and Ant Frew. "We were all really stoked for Axle, so deserving," Ant Frew said.

Heiniger's journey – Gary Lyons reflects

As Heiniger Australia & New Zealand's Managing Director, Gary Lyons recently stepped down after decades of leadership, we spoke with him about the company's journey, its evolution, and its recent new major sponsorship with the Golden Shears. While retiring as Managing Director, Gary continues to play a pivotal role as Chairman of the Australasian Board of Directors.

Question: Gary, together with Werner Heiniger, you founded Heiniger Shearing West Australia Pty Ltd on 1st March 1989, which later became Heiniger Australia Pty Ltd. Heiniger New Zealand then joined the portfolio a few years later. What inspired you to take that initial leap?

Answer: I saw an opportunity to bring innovation and quality to the shearing industry, which is so vital to Australia and New Zealand. This region is at the heart of the global wool trade, and I wanted to provide shearers and farmers with equipment that would enhance productivity and precision. What began as a small operation has grown into a trusted, market-leading business, and it's been an incredible journey to be part of that transformation.

Question: Heiniger has expanded its product range significantly over the years. How has this impacted the industry?

Answer: Our growth has always been driven by the needs of the people who use our tools. Starting with shearing combs, cutters, handpieces, accessories and shearing plants, we've expanded to offer a complete range of wool harvesting and animal fibre products, alongside agricultural equipment. In recent years, we've entered the small animal grooming and barber beauty sectors, but shearing remains at the core of what we do.

I'm proud that Heiniger has contributed to making the industry more efficient and provides solutions for a substantially safer workplace.



Above: Gary Lyons, Managing Director Heiniger (Retired.)

Question: Heiniger is now recognised as a market leader. What's been the key to that success?

Answer: It comes down to quality, strong relationships, and unwavering commitment. We've always focused on producing reliable, high-performance tools. Our strategically located offices and staff across Australasia allow us to stay close to customers, understand their needs, and provide exceptional service.



Above: Dr Roy Kunz, Werner Heiniger and Gary Lyons.



Above: The Heiniger team at Golden Shears 2025 – Dale Harris, Johnny Fraser, Kevin Thirkell and Daniel Strasser-Kirchweiger. Johnny and Kevin are New Zealand based while Dale and Daniel are in Perth, Western Australia.





Above: Gary Lyons (right) with members of the Heiniger Australia team in the early 1990s. **Middle:** John Righetti (Allflex Australia), Noel Coxhead (Heiniger Australia sales manager), Angelo Luppi (Head of Operations Heiniger Ltd) and Gary Lyons. **Below:** Gary Lyons as he appeared in *Shearing No 49*, August 2002, the first edition produced by Last Side Publishing.

Question: Heiniger recently became a major sponsor of the Golden Shears. What does this partnership mean to you?

Answer: The Golden Shears represents the pinnacle of shearing and wool handling in New Zealand – a celebration of skill, precision, and dedication. Like Heiniger, the ‘Golden Shears’ brand is recognised globally. Aligning Heiniger with such an iconic event is a natural fit. It attracts competitors from around the world, highlighting the craft’s artistry and professionalism. This sponsorship reflects our commitment to supporting the industry and connecting with the global shearing community.

Question: What’s next for you and Heiniger?

Answer: While retiring as Managing Director, I’m excited to remain involved as Chairman of Heiniger’s Australasian Board of Directors. Heiniger is in excellent hands, and I’m confident the company will continue to innovate and lead. Sponsoring the Golden Shears underscores our dedication to this incredible industry.

I would specifically like to thank all those who assisted me throughout my journey. I have made many, many friends and literally thousands of acquaintances. I have many fond memories of the road to success. At times it was tough, but I enjoyed every minute of the past four decades!

Summary: Gary’s legacy is one of innovation, leadership, and dedication. As he steps into his new role, Heiniger’s future remains bright, with a continued focus on supporting excellence in shearing.

* * * * *



Southern base for Heiniger

By Brendan Guerin

While Heiniger is best known as the world’s leading manufacturer of shearing gear, the Swiss-based company has recently taken steps to broaden its rural product portfolio.

Managing Director of Heiniger New Zealand, Gary Lyons, says it’s all part of a new growth strategy for the region which will see the company double sales within five years.

“Now that livestock industries are surging, our performance is stronger than ever, enabling further expansion of the business,” he said.

“As major wool producers, Australia and New Zealand are the two biggest markets for Heiniger’s shearing business.”

Mr Lyons said Heiniger New Zealand had recently announced a restructure of its distribution arrangements, which included the relocation of its New Zealand office from Wellington to Christchurch, effective from 2 September 2002. Distribution facilities had also been relocated from Auckland to Christchurch.

“These moves bring Heiniger closer to its New Zealand customer base, which will ultimately deliver a superior level of service to shearers, wool growers and rural resellers.

“This is a people business and we believe it’s all about servicing those people from a strong local base with a high level of technical know-how and back-up support.”

Mr Lyons said Heiniger Australia was poised to launch several new shearing products shortly, including a new cutter called the Xtreme™, which would deliver a welcome safety bonus for shearers.

“The Xtreme™ incorporates several new features designed to eliminate what shearers often refer to as a



Heiniger NZ managing director, Gary Lyons, based in Perth.

“With a major commitment to research and development, Heiniger is at the vanguard of rural product innovation, with a quality range of products endorsed by leading shearers world-wide,” he said.

Casey Christe Zealand produ Heinig Mr ing be expans “W rily du with reselle ness ex force t “W ibility must h pabilit service

New Champ Toa: "Dream it, believe it, achieve it!"

By Doug Laing (Shearing Sports NZ)

The miles have paid off for most-driven Northland shearer Toa Henderson who, on Masterton's most famous Saturday night, became the first first-time Golden Shears Open finalist in 15 years to win shearing's glamour prize.

Notorious for his trips from tiny Kaiwaka [20km north of Wellsford] to shearing competitions around the country, including one-day lower North Island excursions of six to seven hours each way, often sharing the wheel with father Mike, the 34-year-old Henderson won with remarkable comfort in a final that started wide-open after the elimination of defending champion Leon Samuels, eight-times winner Rowland Smith, four-times winner John Kirkpatrick and 2015 victor Gavin Mutch in the quarterfinals and semi-finals.

Henderson was the fastest on the night, shearing his 20 sheep in 16min 15.7sec on Stand 1, eight seconds quicker than eight-time finalist and local Wairarapa hope David Buick at the other end of the board, ultimately the runner-up as Henderson won by 2.13pts.

Third was Riverton shearer Casey Bailey, runner-up in his first Golden Shears Open final last year, and on Saturday scoring the best quality points in finishing the best of the four southern hopes who filled the remaining stands.

Marlborough shearer Angus Moore, the 2007 senior champion and since three times winner of the National Shearing Circuit, was fourth in what was his second Golden Shears open final. Southland veteran Nathan Stratford, in his 12th open final, was fifth in the final and Maitua shearer Brett Roberts, another first-time finalist was sixth. Roberts won the Golden Shears senior title in 2014, after which he graduated to open class.

While those awaiting the final result were still conjecturing on any of the finalists claiming the title after the sheep were away on the truck, Henderson was sure of enjoying such a triumph some day.

"I've been dreaming of this since I was this high," he said, hovering his hand at about toddler height, and he had had visions of "holding this trophy" and of the moment the whanau and other supporters from north belted into Ngati Whatua haka Ko te Puru. "I used to dream of this moment."



Above: Mike Henderson and whanau display unbounded pleasure at Toa's moment of Golden Shears triumph. **Opposite:** Toa Henderson shares their excitement.

"To come off first and hold the trophy means more to me than anything," he said. "My wife, Phoebe, and my family, and everyone back in Kaiwaka knows what it means."

Henderson had gone close to winning a Golden Shears title before, in the Senior grade in 2008, when beaten only by older brother Tane Henderson.

He spent several years in Australia before coming back to start his long campaign with a win at the Warkworth A&P Show in March 2019.

He had three wins the following season, including venturing south to win at Apiti seven days before the 2020 Golden Shears, before continuing his quest further afield with three wins in 11 finals in the 2020-2021 season.

He was the No 1-ranked Open shearer last season, with 11 wins in 16 finals. He also won both the Otago Shears and Southern Shears finals in February this year, bringing his tally to 37 open final wins in New Zealand.

Meanwhile, two-times world individual woolhandling champion Joel Henare claimed his 11th consecutive Golden Shears open woolhandling title, beating 2023-2024 New Zealand representative Tia Potae, 2019 world championships representative Pagan Rimene and 2024 senior winner and now first-year open woolhandler, Vinniye Phillips.

Masterton figured among the major titles, with Paerata Abraham winning the PGG Wrightson Vetmed National



Shearing Circuit final for a second time, claiming a place in the 2025-2026 New Zealand team with Henderson, and Eketahuna's Ngaio Hanson, who retained her place by finishing second in the North Island Woolhandling Circuit Open final on Saturday afternoon. Circuit winner Keryn Hebert is ineligible, now representing Cook Islands on the international scene.

International: The Australian shearing team of Daniel McIntyre, Nathan Meaney and Jamie Boothman beat the New Zealand team of Leon Samuels, Jack Fagan and Chris Vickers in the trans-Tasman shearing test, having also won by a big margin at Katanning, West Australia, last October. A New Zealand team of Rimene and Hanson won the woolhandling test on Friday night.

Senior and Intermediate shearing: Young Wairoa shearers Bruce Grace and Ryka Swann saved some face for Hawke's Bay after the region's rare absence from the Open final by winning the Senior and Intermediate shearing finals respectively. Grace, 21, works for four-times open champion John Kirkpatrick and had all season challenged for senior honours with Laura Bradley, from Papatawa, between Dannevirke and Woodville, and Oamaru shearer John Cherrington, the trio having collectively won 21 of the finals throughout the country.

Bradley had won 10, Cherrington 6, and Grace 5, but in the 12-sheep final Grace finished first, in 12m 36.5s, carded the best quality points, and beat runner-up Cherrington by more than four points overall, while Bradley was fourth.

Ryka Swann's win in the intermediate shearing final secured him his second Golden Shears championship, at the age of just 19. He won the Novice title at the age of 14 in 2020, and sister Ashlin won last year, aged 15.

Despite being more than two years into a building career, Swann continues to do the shearing shows with Ashlin, her twin sister, Shawna, and dad Paul, all travelling from the family farm west of Wairoa. Swann shored the eight sheep in 9m 58s, the only finalist to cut under 10 minutes, but it was close in the final count with victory coming by just 0.458pts from runner-up and 2024 Junior winner Kaivah Cooper, a Napier workmate of senior winner Bruce Grace.

Junior shearing: The Junior shearing final came down to a two-man South Island head-to-head, between 16-year-old Oamaru shearer Tye Meikle, whose 12 wins throughout the season is the most by any shearer or woolhandler in any grade in 2024-2025, and Paddy Hudson, of Hokonui, who had to be talked into entering a competition for the first time seven weeks ago. After beating Meikle in his two outings Hudson still had to be talked into going to Masterton for the Shears.

Both were beaten to the finish by Irish shearer Joseph Scahill, of County Mayo, who shored the five sheep in 7m 4.9s, but who had to settle for third place as the young southern guns came through with the quality.

Hudson claimed the vaunted red ribbon by just 0.435pts in thwarting Meikle's bid to win the event his father had won in 1993.

The 19-year-old Hudson, who works for Gore contractor Jamie McConachie, has the distinction of already having won on three different classes of wool in national title events – full wool at Lumsden on 19 January, lambs 24 hours later at the Winton A&P show's national crossbred lambshearing championships, and the second-shear ewes of the Golden Shears. He also won on second shear ewes at Apiti, near Feilding, seven days before the Golden Shears.

Southland's woolhandling honour: The senior and junior woolhandling titles both went to Southland-based competitors, headed by the senior win to Maitua teenager Lucy Elers, 12 months after she won the Junior title. She won from three North Island opponents to record her second senior win, having won at Lumsden in January, but it was a close call with victory coming by less than two points from Tatjana Keefe, from Raupunga.

The Junior final provided the first career win for Gore-based Jasmine Emery, from Oamaru, with a comfortable margin from runner-up Grace Croasdale, of Eketahuna.

RESULTS: 23rd Golden Shears International Shearing and Woolhandling Championships, 27 Feb - 1 Mar 1 2025:

International trans-Tasman Shearing test (12 sheep - 6 merino, 3 long wool, 3 second-shear): Australia (Daniel McIntyre 16m 36.191s, 67.98pts; Jamie Boothman 16m 57.688s, 70.464pts; Nathan Meaney 15m 55.936s, 72.547pts) 210.991pts beat New Zealand (Leon Samuels 15m 29.921s, 70.246pts; Jack Fagan 16m 57.368s, 79.668pts; Chris Vickers 19m 0.76s, 83.288pts) 233.402pts.

Trans-Tasman Woolhandling Test (8 fleeces – 4 long wool, 4 merino): New Zealand (Pagan Rimene/Ngaio Hanson) 348.24pts beat Australia (Tiffany Collins/Alexander Schoff) 352.72pts.

Shearing:

Golden Shears Open final (20 sheep): Toa Henderson (Kaiwaka) 16m 15.779s, 55.389pts, 1; David Buick (Pongaroa) 16m 23.437s, 57.522pts, 2; Casey Bailey (Riverton) 17m 55.916s, 58.896pts, 3; Angus Moore (Ward) 16m 55.644s, 58.982pts, 4; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 17m 56.574s, 60.929pts, 5; Brett Roberts (Maitua) 17m 49.587s, 61.529pts, 6.

PGG Wrightson Vetmed National Shearing Circuit final (15 sheep – 3 merino, 3 long strongwool, 3 Corriedale, 3 lambs, 3 second-shear): Paerata Abraham (Masterton) 17m 7.809s, 64.46pts, 1; Angus Moore (Ward) 17m 51.273s, 67.764pts, 2; Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Dannevirke) 17m 36.893s, 70.645pts, 3; Justin Meikle (Oamaru) 18m 18.946s, 70.677pts, 4; Axle Reid (Taihape/Waipawa) 18m 21.249s, 70.722pts, 5; Casey Bailey (Riverton) 19m 45.122s, 72.186pts, 6.

Golden Shears Senior final (12 sheep): Bruce Grace (Wairoa/Napier) 12m 36.551pts, 45.078pts, 1; John Cherrington (Oamaru) 12m 48.356s, 49.168pts, 3; Tommy Stevenson (Ruawai) 13m 6.949s, 49.677pts, 3; Laura Bradley (Papatawa)

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Above: Wahine toa doing the hard mahi in the back judging pens at Golden Shears. From left: Kerianne Prince, Ruby Palmer, Elyse O'Connor and Milli Garrity.



Above: Kevin Buckman from Apiti shearing in the open heats at Golden Shears. Not his first time up on the boards – he won the Senior title in 1977 in a final that also included Graham Hughes (Pahiatua), Ben Bishop (Eltham), John Muir (Feilding), John Magee (Te Puke) and Ernie Morey (Mercer). Muir would subsequently make the senior finals in 1978 and 1979, finishing fourth and second, respectively.



Above: Professor and pupil – John Kirkpatrick imparting knowledge of combs needed to succeed at Golden Shears. The future senior champion, Bruce Grace (below), made good use of the advice.



Above: Every wondered how those presentation ceremonies at Golden Shears progress like clockwork over three days and nights? It's because of Cath Thompson (pictured) and her 'mate' Mary-Leigh Ryan working tirelessly in the background, matching up names and points and placings with trophies and ribbons. Purple and red ribbons are most popular, apparently.

"Some of our judges are looking a bit wrinkly. Maybe it's time we installed a make-up room." (Scotty Stewart).

14m 1.22s, 50.891pts, 4; Aiden Tarrant (Mapiu) 13m 10.968s, 52.718pts, 5; Cody Waihapa (Gore) 14m 49.638s, 56.732pts, 6.
Golden Shears Intermediate final (8 sheep): Ryka Swan (Wairoa) 9m 58.67s, 38.428pts, 1; Kaivah Cooper (Napier) 10m 42.722s, 38.886pts, 2; Lachie Cameron (Pohangina) 11m 40.881s, 41.914pts, 3; Sarah Bryant (Arohena) 12m 10.051s, 44.253pts, 4; Hamuera Henderson (Kaiwaka) 10m 19.061s, 50.333pts, 5; Tomos Jones (Dolwyddelan, Wales) 13m 10.461pts, 51.903pts, 6.

Golden Shears Junior final (5 sheep): Paddy Hudson (Hokonui) 7m 20.526s, 28.426pts, 1; Tye Meikle (Oamaru) 7m 29.213s, 28.861pts, 2; Joseph Scahill (Mayo, Ireland) 7m 4.961s, 37.048pts, 3; Tamati Dennison (Kurow) 8m 55.466s, 37.173pts, 4; Tom Clarkson (Martinborough) 8m 3.643s, 37.782pts, 5; Trent Alabaster (Taihape) 8m 22.34s, 38.517pts, 6.

Golden Shears Novice final (2 sheep): Hunter Wigglesworth (Marton) 5m 28.593s, 23.43pts, 1; Ben Solomann (Taupo) 6m 8.43s, 25.422pts, 2; Angus Monk (Masterton) 4m 48.388s, 26.419pts, 3; Jess Gooding (Featherston) 7m 25.279s, 27.264pts, 5; Charlie Kjestrup (Weber) 5m 54.984s, 27.749pts, 5; Cody Hall (Hawera) 6m 59.451s, 30.473pts, 6.

Women's Invitation (6 sheep): Laura Bradley (Paparawa) 8m 8.402s, 31.92pts, 1; Lydia Thomson (Rangiora) 10m 10.193s, 37.01pts, 2; Kate Donald (Scotland) 8m 48.319s, 38.416pts, 3; Pagan Rimene (Alexandra) 8m 57.365s, 40.868pts, 4; Emma Kendrick (Feilding) 10m 50.298s, 48.685pts, 5; Cushla Abraham (Masterton) 10m 52.844s, 57.982pts, 6.

Regional Challenge (7 sheep – 3 long wool, 4 second-shear): North Island West (Jack Fagan/Taelor Tarrant) 8m 3.11s, 30.726pts, 1; South Island Region 3 (Justin Meikle/John Cherrington) 8m 28.577s, 33.149pts, 2; Central Region 1 (Angus Moore/Timo Hicks) 8m 14.118s, 33.276pts, 3; North Island East (Bruce Grace/Josef Winders) 8m 31.641s, 34.302pts, 4; North Island North (Toa Henderson/Tommy Stevenson) 8m 4.823s, 35.241pts, 5; South Island Region 4 (Brett Roberts/Dre Roberts) 8m 18.193s, 35.765pts, 6.

Maori Pakeha Teams Event (12 sheep): Hemi Braddick/Justin Meikle 10m 43.005s, 42.99pts, 1; Chris Dickson/Digger Balme 11m 11.139s, 43.477pts, 2; David Gordon/Ant Frew 12m 14.221s, 44.461pts, 3; Simon Goss/Clay Harris 11m 11.481s, 44.654pts, 4; Lionel Taumata/Aaron Haynes 11m 59.881s, 45.324pts, 5; Shane Ratima/Peter Clendon 14m 5.866s, 54.293pts, 6.



Above: Paerata Abraham won the national multi-breeds circuit for the second time, having previously done so in 2019.

Student Shearing Challenge (2 sheep relay): Smedley Station (Bradley Anderson/Jordan Miles) 5m 14.011s, 22.201pts, 1; FAHS Feilding High School (Hunter Wigglesworth/Cody Hall) 6m 2.299s, 25.115pts, 2; Pukemiro Station (Holly Bird/Ben Solomann) 7m 59.632s, 31.468pts, 3; Pukemiro Station (Oliver Selby/Sam Short) 8m 21.152s, 31.558pts, 4; Elite Wool Industry Training (Charlie Bennett/Charlie Kjestrup) 7m 50.009s, 34.5pts, 5; Otiwhiti farming school (Ngahua Salmond/Jared Topless) 6m 42.962s, 36.648pts, 6.

Speedshears:

Open final: Chris Dickson (Masterton) 14.726s, 1; Llyr Jones (Wales) 14.91s, 2; Brett Roberts (Mataura) 16.804s, 3.
 Senior final: Brodie Horrell (Gore) 20.079s, 1; Jack Hutchinson (England) 20.611s, 2; Callum Bosley (England) 20.635s, 3.

Woolhandling:

Golden Shears Open final (10 fleeces – 6 longwool, 4 second-shear): Joel Henare (Gisborne/Motueka) 187.514pts, 1; Tia Potae (Harataunga) 198.89pts, 2; Pagan Rimene (Alexandra) 200.372pts, 3; Vinniye Phillips (Taumarunui) 294.35pts, 4.
 North Island Woolhandling Circuit final (6 fleeces -3 long wool, 3 second-shear): Keryn Herbert (Te Kuiti) 87.286pts, 1; Ngaio Hanson (Eketahuna) 126.678pts, 2; Marika Braddick (Eketahuna) 138.34pts, 3; Jasmin Tipoke (Martinborough/Napier) 146.792pts, 4.

Golden Shears Senior final (5 longwool fleeces): Lucy Elers (Mataura) 145.41pts, 1; Tatijana Keefe (Raupunga) 147.294pts, 2; Chloe Henderson (Hunterville) 172.41pts, 3; Tre Ratana Sciascia (Taihape) 180.88pts, 4.

Golden Shears Junior final (4 long wool fleeces): Jasmine Emery (Oamaru) 133.016pts, 1; Grace Croasdale (Eketahuna) 148.634pts, 2; Capree Wallace (Taihape) 168.314pts, 3; Marilyn Harris (Ohai) 151.948pts, 4.

Golden Shears Novice final (2 fleeces): Char Taylor (Masterton/Cheviot) 101.858pts, 1; Riria Moanaroa (Eketahuna) 114.362pts, 2; Autumn Amoroa (Whakatane) 131.258pts, 3; Piata Eruera (Eketahuna) 148.67pts, 4.

Woolpressing:

Men's final: Ricci Stevens (Napier) 67.6pts, 1; Jeremy Goodger (Masterton) 129.35pts, 2.

Women's final: Savannah King (Masterton) 108.8pts, 1; Mollie Moffett (Hastings) 108.85pts, 2.

Pairs final: Jeremy Goodger/James Goodger (Masterton) 32.45pts, 1; Shyla Gordon/Joseph Gordon (Masterton) 40.85pts, 2.

Triathlon (shearing, woolhandling, woolpressing): Jeremy Goodger (Masterton) 160.556pts, 1; Ricci Stevens (Napier) 162.868pts, 2; Joseph Gordon (Masterton) 199.224pts, 3; Cushla Graham (Masterton) 207.802pts, 4.

Quality Awards:

FMG Best Quality in shearing heats: Junior – Tom Clarkson (Martinborough) 3pts; Intermediate – Owen Martin Jones (Llangollen, Wales) 3.34pts; Senior – John Cherrington (Oamaru) 3.5pts; Open – Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 2.8pts.
 Local: Junior Tom Clarkson (Martinborough) 3pts; Intermediate – Cushla Abraham (Masterton) 7.66pts; Senior – Daniel Seed (Pahiatua) 5.25pts; Open – Hemi Braddick (Eketahuna) 4.2pts.
Best quality points in shearing finals: Junior – Paddy Hudson (Hokonui) 6.4pts; Intermediate – Kaivah Cooper (Napier) 6.75pts; Senior – Bruce Grace (Wairoa/Napier) 7.24pts; Open – Casey Bailey (Riverton) 5.1pts.

R.E.O'Hara Memorial Trophy (best quality points all shearing finals): Casey Bailey.

Les Field Memorial Trophy Best Quality points in wool-handling heats: Junior – Ashley McConnon (Tasmania) 39pts, 1; Senior – Kelly Barrett (Kawhia) 72pts; Open – Monica Potae (Kennedy Bay) 52pts, 3.



Opposite: Feilding's Ross Muir competing in the woolpressing event at Golden Shears. It was a first time for the 65-year-old who has spent his life in the industry. Admiring his efforts from the sideline were (Above) wife Christine and daughters Heidi and Janine.



Above: It was also first time at Goldies for this pair – Chris and Gwenda Jones from Marlborough – at least as shearing judges, although Chris has competed many times in past years as a shearer. **Below:** Akiria Ioane (Blues No. 8) hard out at Golden Shears. "Yes, we believe it was him!"

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Go figure, if you're smart enough ...

By Des Williams

According to that fine writer Mark Twain (of *Huckleberry Finn* fame and other classics) there are lies, damned lies and statistics. Without doubt, figures can impress, figures can grab headlines and make you read something that you might otherwise ignore. Consider – “Five thousand people went for a mid-winter swim at Dunedin’s St Clair beach today.” (Wow, far out, that many! Where did they all come from?) As against “One person went for a mid-winter swim at Dunedin’s St Clair beach today.” (“Mad bugger, lunatic, lock him up!”)

So when we writers want to impress our readers we often look for a strong statistic, or the indication of size – “Size doesn’t matter as long as it’s huge.” “The biggest crowd ever seen at a tiddly-winks match ...” “The longest eel ever caught in the Clutha River ...” “The smallest baby born in New Zealand weighed a mere ...”

You get the picture. And even in the shearing industry, we can sometimes be guilty of these little deceptions. But we safeguard ourselves with some good old fudging: “What is believed to be the biggest mob of sheep ever shorn in one shed went through the portholes at Strugglers Ridge Farm last month ...” What is believed? Who believes it? The writer who did some quick research (asked his neighbour) not extending beyond his own memory of events.

But, thanks to Golden Shears stalwarts Stephen Siemonek and Scotty Stewart, never again will we be able to say, “The Golden Shears drew *what is believed* to be a record number of entries this year, with (a big number) of competitors strutting their stuff at the War Memorial Stadium.”

Because Stephen and Scotty have done the research and produced the figures. An amazing body of work that could keep any self-respecting statistician drooling for hours. Their labours include competitor numbers annually for each grade of shearing, woolhandling and pressing; numbers of sheep required for each event and where (what properties) they came from, and much more.



Above: Stephen Siemonek and Scotty Stewart, master mathematicians and Golden Shears tally men.

So, in order to keep you in suspense no longer, we can now reveal the exact year that drew the most entries: 1980. Five hundred seems to be the yardstick: 1968 – 517 entries. 1970 – 525 entries. 1971 – 516 entries. 1980 – 603 entries. 1982 – 554 entries. 1988 – 551 entries. 2012 – 500 entries. 2020 – 502 entries. 2025 – 534 entries (from programme count).

So there you have it – 1980, which was a world championships year with 603 entries, made up of 179 open shearers, 184 senior shearers, 138 intermediate shearers and 102 juniors. Note, woolhandling and woolpressing singles were introduced in 1986; novice shearing was introduced in 1998.

The smallest number of entries turned up in 1961 (216), 2004 (298) and 1997 (326). By decades, the numbers are 1960s – 4195; 1970s – 4588; 1980s – 4831; 1990s – 3645; 2000s – 3872; 2010s – 4191; 2020s – 1454 (Shears not held 2021, 2022).

Will we ever see 179 open shearers come to try their luck again, as they did in 1980? Not likely. Will numbers again fall to 65, as they did in 2023 (the year of recovering from the Covid pandemic)? We hope not.

With all else considered, the Golden Shears open championship remains THE big prize in world competition shearing. “If you don’t win the Golden Shears you won’t be remembered,” said a former 16-times champion who shall remain nameless.

And there remains in the distant memory a little talk delivered by the late, great Ivan Bowen, many long years ago. Ivan had heard tell of a shearer who was doing a bit of skiting because he had won the Golden Shears. Forever remembered as the inaugural open champion in 1961, Ivan had to do some investigating about the young man’s claims.

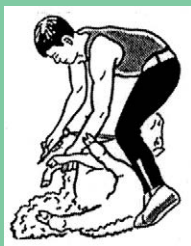
“He won the JUNIOR Golden Shears,” Ivan said, not quite derisively, but as if to make the point (valid) that many had won Golden Shears titles in lower grades but the Open championship – well, that is something else altogether.

As if to emphasise Ivan’s point, Toa Henderson became just the 26th shearer to win the Open championship, in 2025.

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COMPETITOR NUMBERS	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
OPEN SHEARING	86	85	83	74	81	112	83	82	78	81
SENIOR SHEARING	79	75	64	69	72	90	57	52	43	49
INTERMEDIATE SHEARING	75	66	65	56	43	56	46	51	44	42
JUNIOR SHEARING	57	39	37	44	37	51	39	38	32	35
NOVICE SHEARING	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	12	15	21
TOTAL SHEARERS	297	265	249	243	233	309	225	235	212	228
OPEN WOOLHANDLING	20	26	32	22	21	17	23	36	39	40
SENIOR WOOLHANDLING	42	46	30	28	23	26	20	29	18	27
JUNIOR WOOLHANDLING	12	38	27	32	52	45	34	33	40	36
NOVICE WOOLHANDLING	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
TOTAL WOOLHANDLERS	74	110	89	82	96	88	77	98	97	103
WOOLPRESSING SINGLES	7	8	11	9	18	16	10	11	13	10
WOOLPRESSING WOMENS	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	8
WOOLPRESSING PAIRS	8	13	10	7	15	13	14	14	12	8
NOVICE WOOLPRESSING	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
TOTAL WOOLPRESSES	15	21	21	16	33	29	24	25	25	26
TOTAL COMPETITORS	386	396	359	341	362	426	326	358	334	357

Above: A sample of the statistical summary of all things Golden Shears, compiled by Stephen Siemonek and Scotty Stewart.



*Above: Golden Shears intermediate finalists: Sponsor (Trust House Ltd), Ryka Swann, Kaivah Cooper, Lachie Cameron, Sarah Bryant, Hamuera Henderson, Tomos Jones. **Opposite:** Bob Francis, former Masterton mayor and long-term supporter of Golden Shears. **Below left:** Golden Shears 50-year medalists: Philip Morrison, Willie Buick, Sam Saunders, Graham McNae and Bruce Wallace. **Right:** Golden Shears Patron Laurie Keats and Mrs (Judy) Keats.*





THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL

(News Release Supplied 9 April 2025)

Today's announcement that around 130 Government agencies will be required to use woollen fibre products when building or renovating is a big deal for Kiwis and "a massive relief," says Campaign for Wool NZ (CFWNZ) General Manager Kara Biggs (pictured opposite).

"We are ecstatic about this government policy. It's this type of work that could really shift the dial for the entire New Zealand wool industry."

CFWNZ was at the Beehive when Deputy Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Winston Peters, and Ministers Nicola Willis and Mark Patterson shared the news that from July 1, 2025, new procurement requirements will see construction of Government-owned buildings that cost \$9 million and more, and refurbishments of \$100,000 and more, using woollen fibre.

"It was a wonderful atmosphere," says Kara. "Everyone in attendance today recognises that this is incredibly encouraging news for wool growers, manufacturers, innovators and consumers. These are big projects, big budgets, and lots of homegrown New Zealand wool being used instead of harmful, toxic, micro-plastic emitting synthetics."

The strong wool advocacy not-for-profit has been vocal about – and instrumental in overturning – Government agency decisions that had previously excluded wool carpets from being considered for public buildings such as Kāinga Ora housing.

Today's news is "just what we were hoping for," says Kara. "For many years now, our strong wool growers have been pleading for the Government to choose quality woollen products when building and renovating state buildings. They know as well as we do that the benefits of wool are far-reaching and long-lasting – it's natural, durable, moisture-wicking, flame-resistant, hypoallergenic and temperature-regulating."

"And these are attributes that will outlast the people living and working in these buildings today and tomorrow – we know that today's policy decision will positively impact the next generation and beyond."

Kara recognises that mandating wool for use in Government buildings, where appropriate, also gives New Zealand strong wool growers confidence that their industry is supported at the highest level. "Our farmers are reassured and relieved, and excited to see the beginnings of a shift taking place – one where wool is no longer a struggling by-product but positioned to take its place as a pillar of our economy."

She's also heartened that many of New Zealand's commercial businesses are already installing New Zealand wool products in their office spaces. "I think this high-level decision today provides an important opportunity for more Kiwi organisations to pick up the baton and create their own internal policies to ensure consideration of wool products when building and renovating their own public or commercial spaces."

And today's decision benefits the planet, too, as wool – "the most exciting natural fibre in the world" according to Kara – biodegrades at the end of its long life. "I don't know anyone



who doesn't want fewer microplastics in our oceans or synthetic products clogging our landfill."

One of CFWNZ's New Zealand ambassadors, architect Stephen McDougall, was also in attendance at Parliament today, and Kara says the not-for-profit will look forward to sharing the announcement with its global patron, lifelong environmentalist His Majesty King Charles III.

"This decision has the potential to positively influence other countries, and other governments, to listen, learn and follow. It's fantastic to see we have a Government willing to stand behind such a solid policy and support an important industry."

* * * * *

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Our aim is to:

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- build a stronger, more skilled workforce

- make shearing more attractive to new entrants.

Tahi Ngātahi's part of wider efforts to revitalise the wool industry and will be integrated into the government's new \$1.86m on-job training initiative Kaiaka Wool Industry Training NZ.

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For business support to make the best use of the programme, please contact Bronwyn Campbell at support@tahingatahi.co.nz or 0272436979



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***Above:** Several 'graduates of post middle-age' gathered at Waimate's Waihao Forks Hotel to help former Golden Shears woolpressing champion (pairs) Lachie Nixon (second left) celebrate his 70th birthday. Colin Smith (left), Brian Quinn, Colin Gibson and John Tangney (publican and ex-President NZ Spring Shears Waimate). The group sits with the sculpture of a local man, Ted d'Auvergne, who was killed in the Battle of Crete during World War II. The sculpture was unveiled in November 2020 but Ted's story was captured in verse many years prior by Naseby's Ross McMillan. Let this page be our ANZAC tribute to all those who served and never came home.*

The Soldier Who Never Came Home

**There's a bottle of beer in the Waihao Forks bar
From the rest of the shelves it stands out like a star
For its shape is old fashioned and just might perplex
And the label proclaims that it's Ballins Four X.**

**It was bought long ago by a young soldier brave,
On his final leave there these instructions he gave,
'Don't sell it or break it, just keep it in store,
And we'll drink it when I come back from the war.'**

**He was killed overseas on the island of Crete,
When they battled it out with the German elite;
There's a headstone but nobody knows where he lies,
If he sleeps his last sleep 'neath the seas or the skies.**

**But the bottle still stands in the country hotel,
A memorial strange for the soldier who fell;
And travellers and locals take time out to think
Of the soldier who never came back for his drink.**

**For somehow a glow by the bottle is shed,
As poppies surround it and edge it with red,
And each Anzac morning a new one is there,
And they lie like a wreath round that bottle of beer.**

**There are many stone cairns scattered over the land,
But I wonder how many are polished by hand;
Though the cap is all rusted it outshines the chrome,
As it honours the soldier who never came home.**

© Ross 'Blue Jeans' McMillan (1929-2019)



***Above:** He died before the legend of the ANZACS, but Sergeant Jimmy Power is perhaps the first known shearer to have lost his life in battle. A New Zealander, he died in the uniform of the 5th Imperial Queensland Bushmen in the Boer War Battle of Onverwacht on 4 January 1902. Famous for 'inventing' the shearing long-blow, Jimmy's name is recorded on several memorials in Australia and New Zealand, including at Oamaru (top photo). We remember also at this time Private Arthur Sykes (26 Battalion 2NZE), a West Coast blade shearer killed at Sidi Rezegh (North African Campaign) on 23 November 1941.*

Dallas – the contractor's dream!

By Des Williams

Dallas Mihaere was barely into her teens when she had her first look at the inner workings of a shearing shed. So, just a couple of years later and needing some money to help pay her way through boarding school at Taradale's St Joseph's Maori Girls' College, she had just the plan.

"I'm an East Coast Ngati Porou wahine originally but I moved to Dannevirke where my uncle Kuni Gray owned a run. At first I just wanted to go out and have a look at what the gang was doing in the sheds. They didn't work on Sundays because Kuni was a church man, but that's where I started my life in the sheds, with Gray Shearing.

"While I was at St Joseph's Maori Girls boarding school at Taradale I would go back to work for Gray Shearing during the school holidays, and I also did some work for Hape Shearing during those years. That helped me to pay for my school uniforms and other little things that I needed at boarding school.

"Then I went to Tolaga Bay for a holiday and ended up getting pregnant and I was a little too young to qualify for a benefit so I went back to Dannevirke. I ended up going out to work for Paewai Mullins – Koro and Mavis – though Tuma and Aria were running the gangs at that time. I would eventually spend 15 years working for them. I also got to do some stay-out sheds around Martinborough while working for Hape Shearing."

Inevitably, Dallas started 'doing the shows'. She won a novice event at Dannevirke when the competition was held in the Dannevirke Town Hall (c1998). The following year she went with some friends to the Poverty Bay Shears at Gisborne.

"I just went along for the ride because I wanted to see my whanau. But they entered me in the junior woolhandling and next thing they're calling out my name because I made the final and ended up coming second to Megan Fleming. So I started competing regularly after that.

"I had a good season in the senior woolhandling 2003-2004, making six finals for two wins, at Hawkes Bay and Dannevirke and I was listed number seven in the Shearing Sports national rankings that season. After that I moved up to the open and won the A grade show at Waimate (2010) and maybe a couple of others.

"Perhaps my career highlight from the competitions came from representing the North Island in the inter-island challenges at the Southern Shears and New Zealand championships 2012. At Gore we had to deal with 18 full wool fleeces and we got beaten, but we smashed the South at Te Kuiti. Being in the same team as Johnny Kirkpatrick, David Fagan, Rowland Smith, Ronnie Goss and Sheree Alabaster was a real honour. I wondered if we were going to have a team meeting to sort out some tactics but no, our instructions were just to go hard and fast.

"Although I really hate flying, I have had several trips to Australia. First I went to work for my uncle Hemi at Ararat but I ended up getting injured and I lived there for the next two years. When I came back to New Zealand I worked again for Hape Shearing before going back to Australia in 2007 and this time I took Joel Henare and Rocky Hape-Tate with me and we worked for Barry and Moera Hammonds in Queensland (The Troubleshooters).



Top: Dallas Mihaere (right) with Amy Ferguson at Golden Shears 2025. **Above:** Dallas in action during the open woolhandling heats.

(Joel Henare remembers that trip – "We worked at a property named Mount Margaret. We nick-named it Mount Misery!")

"When I came back to New Zealand that time I went down to Alexandra and started working for Peter and Elsie Lyon and I've been with them ever since. I'm what you call full-time permanent staff there now and they are just the greatest.

"I just love Alexandra and the Central Otago climate. I love the merino wool and I love winter. You can always warm yourself up with hard mahi in the winter but it's not so easy to cool down in the heat of summer.

"When we don't have any work in the sheds I can go down to the camping ground and do cooking or cleaning and other work like building. With my range of skills I'm a contractor's dream (prolonged laughter!) I can shear, or press wool or rousie – there's really nothing I can't do!"

(To next page.)

Dallas is very strongly whanau oriented – she links to Ngati Porou Iwi from her mother’s side. She has an older sister, Marlene, who lives in Australia and is a champion at outdoor bowls. Her younger sister lives at Tolaga Bay and helps care for disabled children. She also had a brother who passed away in a car accident some years ago.

“I also have four children of my own – the oldest is Shaquille [from that teenage pregnancy at Tolaga Bay] who works for her Iwi Kahungunu, and has given me three beautiful grandchildren. I also have a set of twins, Karnia and Jarna. Jarna is among New Zealand’s strongest men, having placed seventh out of 13 competitors in the 2023 New Zealand championship and third at the New Zealand Rural Games in 2024. Karnia teaches at the Kura Kaupapa in Dannevirke and my youngest, William Cribb, lives at Tolaga Bay. I’m really proud of my kids – you wouldn’t believe that they really belong to me!”

Yep Dallas, coming from a contractor’s dream [employee], we would believe anything you say!

* * * * *



Above: Fleecy McFleeceface lands a good one in the Golden Shears open woolhandling. Didn't make the final, unfortunately. **Top right:** Golden Shears Novice finalists from left: Hunter Wigglesworth, Ben Solomann, Angus Monk, Jess Gooding, Charlie Kjestrup, Cody Hall. **Middle:** Golden Shears junior finalists from left: Paddy Hudson, Tye Meikle, Joseph Scahill, Tamati Dennison, Tom Clarkson, Trent Alabaster.



Above: The shearers take the wool off but it's up to the press gang to get it all baled up and taken away. Many hands make the wool light ...

Life Membership for Mark Baldwin

The World Sheep Shearing Records Society AGM took place in Melbourne, Australia on 22 May 2024. A full complement of Australian and New Zealand members attended the AGM along with the four U.K. members.

A Life Membership of the Society was bestowed upon Mark Baldwin, Tocumwal, NSW, Australia at this meeting. Mark started his association as a referee with the Society in 1999. He was elected vice-chairman of the Society at the AGM in Christchurch 2004 after the Society had just become autonomous as the World Sheep Shearing Records Society Inc. At the 2005 annual meeting held in Toowoomba, Australia during the Golden Shears World Championships Mark was elected chairman, succeeding retiring Tony Brennan's ten year term as an independent Chairman. Mark retired as Chairman at the 2014 AGM, being succeeded by John Fagan, John being the Society's first Life Member. He was the 'referee roster' liaison person in Australia with the Secretary from 2006 until his retirement in 2022.

Mark retired after officiating at twenty three world record attempts, five in Australia, ten in New Zealand, one in South Africa and four in the United Kingdom.

And *Shearing* magazine records its apologies for overlooking this item at the time it was first received from Society secretary Hugh McCarroll, in July 2024.

More Damned Statistics

Many people might agree, Facebook has its good side and bad. But the way it provides 'statistics' about *Shearing* magazine has to be helpful, at least. It might even help shape the content of each magazine in future.

As of this morning (9 April 2025) FB tells us the magazine has 5303 'followers' – 3054 in New Zealand, 1370 in Australia, 470 in the United Kingdom, 78 in the USA and 55 in Ireland. Between them, South Africa, France, Canada, Spain and the Falkland Islands garner up another 115. Which means there's still 160 or so scattered around other parts of the planet.

Of New Zealand's followers, 113 are from Gisborne, 112 from Christchurch, 108 from Invercargill, 98 from Masterton and 96 from Gore. From overseas, Perth WA leads with 93. Nearly fifty-six percent of followers are male and 44% female. Forty-five percent are in the 25-44 years age range; 35% are older than that.

How does all that transfer into 'readers'? Of recent posts on the *Shearing* magazine page, Waitomo Sports had 33,700 'views' with a 'reach' of 16,062. The Wairaki six-stand record from 20 years ago had 75,700 views and 45,440 reach. The Wilson-MacDonald shearathon from 1988 had 66,900 and 40,700. Where are they now, 44,500 and 19,000. The November 2024 magazine was viewed by 34,658 and reached 11,807.

(According to Google, 'Views' are the number of times a Page's profile has been viewed by people, including people who are logged into Facebook and those who aren't. Reach is the number of [individual] people who saw any content from or about your Page. This metric is estimated.)

Looking back, our November 2023 edition reached 20,449 people and August 2023 reached 15,512.

So hey, let's set some records with April 2025! (Ed.)



Above: Mark Baldwin receiving his certificate from Society chairman, Paul Harris.



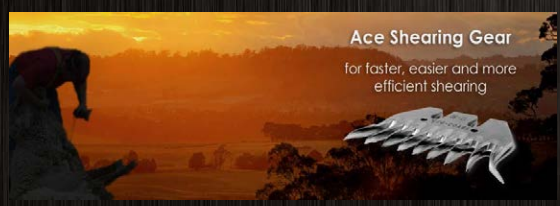
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Shaun Burgess – the Chilean connection

By Des Williams

A simple matter of being in the right place at the right time led Ashburton shearer Shaun Burgess into the role of Chilean team manager for the past three world championships – and for the 2026 event at Masterton's Golden Shears.

"I originally met the Chilean shearer Jose Catalan (c2016) when he was working for Bruce Rogers at Geraldine. He wasn't a very fast shearer but Bruce would lend him to me sometimes if I was short-staffed. Then another young Chilean named Luis Pincol came over to work for Bruce and Luis also helped me out quite regularly in my contract sheds around Ashburton.

"Neither Jose nor Luis were very fast but they were very clean shearers and all my farmers were quite happy to have them on board, working in their sheds."

"And when the announcement came that the 2017 world championships would be held at Invercargill, Jose and Luis asked me to be their team manager. So that's how I got the first 'gig'. And while we were there we found out the next worlds would be in France 2019 so they asked me if I would remain as manager. I had been to Italy shearing so I was familiar with that part of the world. And of course, Scotland won the right to host the next world championship and my managerial contract was, extended for another term, you might say.

"That year I took Luis with me to Italy and we shored there before going on to the worlds at Royal Highland, Edinburgh. And of course it was announced there that the next venue country would be New Zealand. So, you might say I was just lucky to be in the right place at the right time.



Above: Shaun Burgess, Chief Executive, International Shearing Teams' Management Propriety Ltd.

Jose Catalan had previously been to New Zealand for the 2012 world championships (together with Cesar Rodrigo Gallardo). Luis Pincol was the only Chilean shearer at Le Dorat, together with two woolhandlers, Carolina Bahamonde and Archie Sepulveda.

"Looking ahead to next year, Kenny McLeod who was our team member with Luis at Scotland will be available again and Luis has just started shearing again after some time off, so he should also be available. Plus we've got two woolhandlers who have been winning competitions in Chile so hopefully we will have a full team.

"They have not long been holding woolhandling competitions in Chile so now we are trying to train judges and I will be going back in September to help some fine tuning with that after I've done my annual stints in Italy and on the Isle of Man.

"The Chilean farmers and government are right into it over there to try and improve the quality of shearing because it's such a big thing in South America. Not just Chile but also Argentina where there are a lot of sheep.

Originally from Mosgiel, Shaun moved up country when his mother, a Presbyterian minister, was appointed to the Southbridge church. Shaun had spent some time in the Navy but then, when his father got sick, he returned home. While looking around for some gainful employment his brother told him about a local shearing gang that was looking for workers.

"So I lied to the boss that I had worked in the sheds before and that was my introduction, what you might call a baptism of fire. The shearers working that day were Grant Smith,

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Johnny Phillips and Mark Bode. They were all shearing over 300 corriedales a day, which meant about 30 fleeces to the bale so it was pretty full-on.

After a couple of years of doing that we were getting paid by the boss one day and I saw how much one of the shearers received. I asked how much he had there and he said that's just a week's wages so I said, "teach me to shear!" So from about 1992 onwards I became a shearer.

And as a shearer Shaun began showing up at competitions around the Canterbury regions, securing the odd win and top placing here and there. By the 1996/97 season he was competing as a senior, with winning the Canterbury Shears and the All-Breeds circuit as notable achievements, and then it was up into the open class where, again, he added to his ribbon collection at the rate of two or three per season.

Most notable?

And here we are again at Golden Shears! I've just come up a bit earlier than usual to try and get a few things sorted for next year. We are going to come up early next year to try and get the Chilean boys some shearing prior to the start of the worlds. Kenny is shearing down south at the moment and they are on good sheep but they are different to what they'll be shearing at the world champs. Kenny has family in Scotland so when we've finished on the Isle of Man he goes to Scotland and works there.

Shearing has taken me all over the world and the industry is such that with the skill and a willingness to work, and people knowing you are prepared to travel, you keep getting offered these jobs, and there are so many opportunities. Especially for younger guys, they can travel the world and experience different things without being stuck in New Zealand, or in one place all the time.



Above: Shaun Burgess with Chilean team members Camila Quinteros, Archie Sepulveda and Luis Pincol at the world championships Scotland 2023.

Top and middle: Big sheds in Chile, familiar surroundings for Shaun Burgess. **Above:** Mr Burgess shepherding his red-coated flock. But is there a stray among them?

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your presence

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When results matter

Aidan Grant – cutting wool and wood

By Des Williams

I have written somewhere before that one of my favourite shearing competitions is that held each year at Rotorua's Agrodome. Apart from the 'Dome's close connection with the fabled Bowen brothers, the shearing coincides with a woodchopping (timbersports) carnival held right next door. Standing or leaning against the fence in the right place, you can watch the shearing and chopping at the same time. One of the reasons we were born with two eyes, maybe.

This writer's love of woodchopping goes right back to growing up in 1960's western Southland, a stronghold of the sport which was a feature of the one-day sports meetings held at half a dozen different towns over the Christmas-New Year period. Taking pride of place among them was the New Year's Day sports at Tuatapere, where the likes of the Carran brothers (from round the coast at Riverton) competed against the best from around the country, as well as visiting world champions from Australia.

But what you don't see every day is a competitor taking part in both activities. In fact, it may not have happened in New Zealand before until late last year, when a bloke named Aidan Grant hopped across the fence from the timbersports side, wearing the standard white woodchopping trousers attire and handpiece, to line up in the senior shearing heats.

It didn't take more than a first glance to realise Aidan had obviously spent some time in shearing sheds – he was good enough this day to make the senior semifinals, just missing a place in the final. So of course, we (some weeks later) caught up with Aidan to find out a bit more about his shearing history.

These days a 'civilian firefighter' by profession – New Zealand champion and tenth in the world to be exact – 29-year-old Aidan was raised on the family sheep and beef farm at Turakina (Whanganui region). He did a couple of Tectra shearing courses as a young lad (at Fordell and Taumarunui) with Dean Te Huia as his instructor (another

woodchopping connection) and managed to shear some sheep at home and other places as the opportunity arose, without becoming a regular in the sheds.

Instead, Aidan joined the New Zealand Army as a fireman when he was 20, where he spent the next four years, mainly at Linton. With that time served he then took some leave from the army and (with handpiece among the luggage) went to the United Kingdom for a season, working with Martin Howlett and Johnny Roberts.

On his return Aidan went back to the Army for two years, but more recently has concentrated on shearing. As well as working in the King Country for Delwyn Jones (and previously, Neil Fagan,) Aidan has returned to the UK and Norway for further northern hemisphere experience.

"I worked the 2019/2020 mainshear for Hourigan Shearing at Turakina. I also competed at the Royal Welsh Show for three years while I was in the UK. They also have woodchopping and shearing on the programme and I spent a fair bit of time running between the woodchopping arena and the shearing pavilion. I also took part in a woodchoppers vs shearers relay race."

And how does one become a champion firefighter? As shearing competitions are to career shearers, so are firefighting challenges to firefighters. Aidan first became involved in 2018 after being talked into it by some Army mates at Linton.

After winning the New Zealand challenge title in May last year, Aidan explained the action in a New Zealand Defence Force publication: "You're all kitted up in your firefighting



Above: Aidan Grant shearing in the senior semifinals at Rotorua's Agrodome Shears in December 2024, with judge Edwin Perry poised ready to record any false blows.

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Above: Aidan Grant and Lionel Taumata at the Agrodome Shears in December 2024. **Opposite:** Aidan Grant all strength and determination in competitive fire-fighting mode. (Gisborne Herald photo.)

equipment, including breathing apparatus. Individuals wear masks and breath in air from a cylinder. The extra gear adds about 20kg for competitors.

“Each competitor has to scale a three-storey tower with six flights of ten stairs while carrying a 19kg hose. You throw that down when you get to the top and then you haul up another 19kg hose. Then you run down all the stairs, needing to touch each step on the way. Next you run to a forced entry machine and hit that with a mallet.

After that you have to run through some cones, grab a charged hose, extend it through some doors and hit a target. Once the target is knocked down you run to the dummy and drag it 100 feet, and then you are finished.”

Aidan’s record-winning time in May was 1 minute 25 seconds and in October 2024 he represented New Zealand at the World firefighter challenge in Nashville, Tennessee. There he finished tenth (under 40-years category) in a time a couple of seconds quicker than his New Zealand record. There were more than 400 entrants in the challenge, including 20 from New Zealand.

And the woodchopping? Aidan started learning that skill back on the farm as well, some 10-11 years ago, initially under the tutelage of his father, Ian Grant, also an accomplished axeman.

And the family talent doesn't end there! Aidan's sister Abbey Grant (**pictured opposite**) won the New Zealand novice shearing championship at Te Kuiti last year (2024).



Shearing in Egypt 1982

I went with McGowan Associate Tony Pickett to Egypt, to do demonstrations on shearing, as part of a promotion to use Australian farming methods in dry areas. McGowans had a contract up in the Western Desert along the Mediterranean coast, which included Alexandria, El Duba, El Alamain, Mersa Matruh and Sidi Barani, all places well known to Australians in the Second World War.

We carried a portable shearing plant in a Land Rover, with a group of Egyptian farmers, doing demonstrations right along the coast. Most farmers had only thirty or forty sheep and goats and belonged to cooperatives.

I stayed in a flat at Mersa Matruh with the McGowan people who lived there and travelled out each day. It was near Mersa Matruh that [German WWII] General

Rommel had his headquarters in a deep cave, which is now a museum. A lot of his maps are on show but they are not in very good order now.

One day the sheiks gave us a feast in a big Bedoin tent in the desert. We each had a leg of lamb, a chicken, goat and every other sort of meat and goodies. Of course, we hardly made a dent in each of our massive meals, and when we were finished we were taken to the Harem. The Governor of the Western Province also gave us a dinner. We certainly didn't go hungry during our visit to Egypt!

From A Thumbnail Dipped in Tar by Keith Huty, Zeus Publications, Australia, 2005. © Keith Huty.

(We thought you might have skipped a bit quickly over that visit to the Harem there, Keith!

Michael Birch won't go hungry

By Des Williams

Michael Birch was on 'roving duty' (as a presser, supporting 'Hash' Brown, Jeremy Goodger and his own son Benjamin) at the 2025 Pre-Shears woolhandling competition at Riverside Farm, Mikimiki, and then he showed up the following day at Golden Shears. By chance, he fell into a random conversation with *Shearing* magazine's editor. Did Michael have a story to tell? Well, yes, he did, actually.

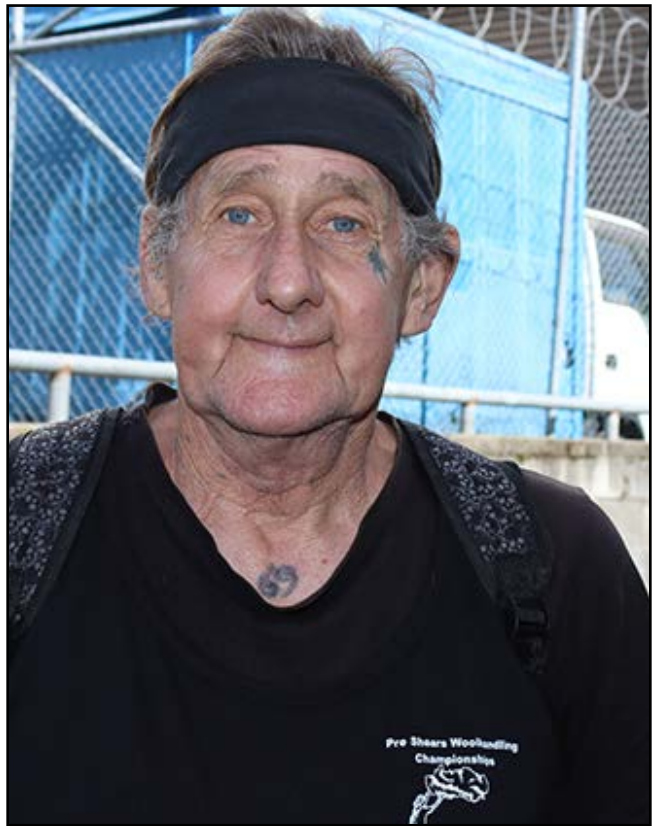
Michael (pictured right) started his life in the wool industry back in 1982 when he got a job as a presser with Masterton contractor, Graeme Clegg. That lasted for a couple of years until the price of wool started falling [So that's when that happened!] Then he moved across to Taranaki and started working for Reg Benjamin at Hawera and Taranaki Wool Care, an organisation of farmers who produced beautiful wool – no dags, no urine stain, just beautiful wool, scrupulously free of any contamination.

"You weren't allowed to take a dog into the shed unless you carried it in and put it in the pens and you weren't allowed to have any wool threads hanging off your clothes.

"For every bale pressed they had a little badge that went on to the bale. The only thing was, the labels kept falling off and I wasn't happy with them so I said I wasn't going to bother with them anymore. So then they gave me a stencil. At the end of the day if I had 50 bales filled I could just run along the line and stamp them all with my stencil.

After I'd been with Reg for a couple of seasons they started doing winter shears in the Wairarapa so I went back to Masterton and started working for Collins Brown at Shear Xpertise. By then, after many years I could press wool blindfolded. I would go to shows and help clean up all the wool and I started teaching other young people to press and pushing them towards Golden Shears, trying to get someone up against Jeremy Goodger for the past couple of years, just to get him challenged.

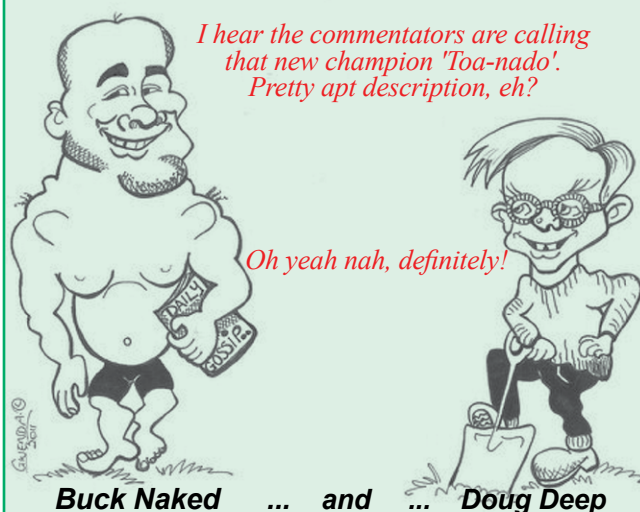
"I've put a few people up against him, including my son Benjamin in 2011 but he made a few stuff ups in the competition and finished third. Then he got hit on the head



Michael Birch – we managed to capture just a few of the stories he has to tell!

Half-combing it with ...

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with an axe at a New Year party in 2015 and spent some time in intensive care and hasn't been able to do that sort of work any more.

Jeremy got beaten in the final this year by someone from out of town [Ricci Stevens, Hawkes Bay] but that's like a slap in the face having an outsider win the pressing! In Masterton we are meant to be the best of the best! But the soldiers I have trained up, some of them are still there and they can just about do it blindfolded too."

After working for Shear Xpertise Michael spent time with some of the other local contractors, including Kena Te Whata "who has the biggest sheep in the area and I thought that might be a reasonable challenge for myself, being then a young fella in my 40s going on 50! We went onto working with Coopworths and Polled Dorsets. I also spent about 15 years with Wairarapa Shearing (David Reiri and Chick Reiri)."

Michael's career came to an abrupt (although temporary) halt some 35 years ago when he suffered a massive stroke, resulting in twisted hands and complete loss of memory. They told me I was one of the best woolpressers in the world and I said, "I don't know what that is." I was working at a funeral home at the time and lost all movement in my hands. But I kept working on things like chopping firewood and eventually I got my memory back and use of my hands again.

In 45 to 47 years in the sheds I failed only about four times to go to work because of injuries or broken bones. I would just sew myself up and carry on working. I still love the challenge and will keep chipping away. I do a lot of work directly for the farmers now rather than work with the shearing gangs. And I have a good friend who tells me I am famous in my own lunchbox, so at that rate I figure I should never go hungry.

Reg Benjamin remembers: "I liked Mike working for me. He has a lovely temperament and was totally trustworthy. Some of the cockies would come to me and point out, 'He's not done anything so far.' Then there'd be a big flurry of activity and all the wool would be pressed and sheep in the pens and Koro sat back in the corner sketching taniwhas on the tally book!"

* * * * *



Above: Bodene Hauraki hard at work for Paewai Mullins. Putting to good use all the wisdom acquired at a Tectra training course a few years ago!



Above: Ryka Swann from Wairoa won the Golden Shears intermediate title to go with the novice champion's ribbon secured in 2020 when he was just 14 years old. (His sister Ashlin won the novice final last year.) And Gwenda Jones is judging the shearer on the next stand - but you figured that out for yourself!



Above: The photo is date stamped 04.04.04 so we suspect this is Dig Balme (we know it IS Dig Balme) holding the Hec Oliver Cup for best quality at the New Zealand championships in 2004. He had previously won it in 1992 and 1999, and would do so again in 2006, a four-time winner with Nathan Stratford. Now the Cup has been won by an overseas shearer for just the second time in 35 years. See follow-up story on page 66.

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GIVE YOU JOY

KEEP
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SEE OPPORTUNITIES,
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Golden Shears and Share Mongolia

(From Golden Shears souvenir programme 2025)

Mongolia has more than 30 million sheep but 10 million remain unshorn each year, resulting in poor animal health and the waste of 9000 tonnes of wool. This is partly because an average herder can only share up to 30 sheep a day using their traditional method of sharing with non-electric scissors.

The 'Share Mongolia' programme, founded by Rabobank finance manager Paul Brough and supported by the UN and other organisations, including Golden Shears, was established in 2020. The New Zealand-led international collaboration is committed to supporting Mongolian herders and farmers to farm more efficiently, profitably and sustainably.

Since 2020, teams of shearers have visited Mongolia each year to train the herders in how to shear with a machine. The Chief Referee at Golden Shears, Ronnie King, got behind the initiative last year, spending June 2024 in Mongolia together with his wife Buzz, their daughter Bridie, and a team of instructors.

"Together, we taught close to 150 herders living a nomadic existence how to use modern shearing gear rather than hand held scissors. The shearing gear was bought by the local councils for the herders to hire," Ronnie says.

After a week's training, herders can shear over 200 sheep a day with a machine. The herder is paid 50 cents per sheep shorn so shearing 30 sheep a day with scissors the herder

earns only \$15 a day. Shearing 200 sheep a day with machines increases the income to \$100 a day - a good income, including for unemployed youth. Furthermore, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation has calculated that mechanical shearing has the potential to create 4000 seasonal jobs in Mongolia, many of which could be filled by women.

With their new skills, Mongolian shearers are visiting New Zealand to join shearing gangs. Earning up to \$100 per day using electric shears back in Mongolia, the herders are able to earn about \$600.00 per day in New Zealand.

And the teams are fully committed to competing in Golden Shears. In 2024 Rabobank sponsored a team of 10 Mongolian shearers. They travelled more than 12,000km from the steppes in order to compete. One of them was an entrant in the novice wool handling event, while six participated in the junior shearing category, and three competed in the intermediate shearing classes.

Paul Brough, founder of Share Mongolia told the *Wairarapa Times-Age* last year that Golden Shears was an incredible experience for the Mongolian shearers.

"They were so nervous," he is reported as saying. "They had never seen a stadium, let alone been up on a stage to shear a sheep."

A Mongolian team has entered again in the 2025 Golden Shears and the shearers have every intention of entering a team in the World Championships at Masterton in 2026.

As well as teaching herders to farm more productively, profitably and sustainably, the Share Mongolia initiative also aims to connect the herders with buyers who will buy wool for \$1.00 per kg. As a result, some herders have now enjoyed their first formal deals with buyers. Most herders are used to just leaving their wool in a heap in the desert in the hope that passers-by will buy it. Added to which, mechanically shorn wool and pelts demand twice the price of products shorn with scissors.

The goal of Share Mongolia is to provide 150 Mongolian herders each year with the skills and equipment they need to start their own businesses and prosper, thereby supporting Mongolian employment, the economy and social cohesion.

Larry Clark's month in Mongolia

"I was talking with Charlie Burton at Mackintosh Shearing one day last year, he had some of the Mongolian shearers from the Rabobank Share Mongolia programme working with him and he said that he might go over next June as part of the team involved in training the local shearers.

"That got me quite interested so I told him that I wasn't planning on doing very much at home at that time and if there was a spare seat on the plane I might go with him.

"So, that's how I ended up going there last year. Rabobank is the overall sponsor of the Share Mongolia programme. You pay your own airfare, but once you get there you are pretty much catered for. And there's nothing to buy once you get there so you don't need much money!"



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“Our trip took place in June, which is in the Mongolian summer and we were there for the whole month. While we were there the temperatures were between 35 and 40 degrees Celsius, but it's much drier than our heat in New Zealand. Back here we would frazzle in those sorts of temperatures.

“We got to Mongolia by flying direct from Auckland to Beijing, a flight of about 14 hours, and then Mongolia is another couple of hours further north. Then after driving forever and ever – two full days – we got to the first site for shearing and set up a gazebo so the sheep were undercover while being shorn. We get all the shearing gear from China, little flexi units run by generator that, hopefully, somebody can get going. “Everything is ‘hopefully’ over there!”

“They set up yards in the middle of nowhere and they bring the sheep to the yards. We’d be set up with four or five stands in this round yard. Then they start proceedings by killing a sheep and cooking up all the ‘inside bits’ [writer’s interpretation of Larry’s more wholesome description for family magazine purposes!] – that is quite the delicacy over there, the first meal we get – guts, lungs, everything joined in. That’s the equivalent of a hangi in Mongolia. The rest of the sheep is eaten during the rest of the week, I think the only bits they throw away are the toenails.

“The conditions are reasonably harsh, obviously because you are in the middle of nowhere under a little tent. But they are lovely people. Like anywhere, it’s the poor people who look after you the best. You wouldn’t want to go there unless you are a little bit hardened to extreme conditions. It’s a bit harder even for the girls because the ablutions available are not that flash. Having said that, I have seen worse conditions in some New Zealand shearing quarters than what we experienced in Mongolia.”

Larry says there were 18 in last year’s group. Other instructors included Ronnie King, Charlie Burton and Colin Baynes, working as three separate crews. They worked with maybe 30 local shearers, all of them learners. There were ten on each course and each crew did three courses. “They were all keen to learn so there weren’t many duds among them. After a week of training the better ones were probably able to shear 100 a day, Others would do maybe 40 or 50.

“Some of the boys I trained in Mongolia at last year would



Above: Larry Clark (the thorn) with roses Debbie Whitari left, Jayda Millanta and Harata Taunoa at Golden Shears 2025.

be capable of doing maybe 150 or 200 in New Zealand this year. Two or three of them have been to New Zealand for three years now. They did a season with Mark Barrowcliffe at Piopio, followed by a couple of seasons with Charlie at Mackintosh Shearing in Taumarunui.

“One of the guys that shore here last year took home \$25k, that’s quite a difference after being used to making maybe \$2k at home. So, being part of this Rabobank Share Mongolia programme changes their life hugely. It may not drastically change Mongolia as a country but it certainly changes the lives of the individuals lucky enough to be part of the programme.

“Paul Brough started the programme about four years ago and he and his wife Toni have gone back each year with a different crew. Paul first saw the herders cutting the wool off their sheep with a large pair of scissors and saw an urgent need to try and organise something better for them. They would tie the sheep up by their feet and proceed to cut the wool off by the ‘snip-full’ as best they could.

“Now, with the wool coming off as a fleece it is in a much better condition to have something useful done with it. The wool type is maybe a cross between a goat and a sheep so it’s not flash. Most of the herds are too far out in the sticks to do anything viable with the wool so in the past it has just been left in heaps on the ground. But now they have a woman that has been buying the wool because it is available in much better quality and larger quantities, making it more economical to do something with.”

Larry says it’s the vastness of the country that creates most of the difficulty. Like the long drives getting to the place of shearing. He’s been told there are places in Mongolia where they shear their camels. That’s something he hasn’t seen but believes it may be like shearing alpacas in New Zealand. “They are able to tip them over somehow so that would be good to see.”

And that may be a definite item on the agenda for Larry Clark as he prepares to go back for another season in June 2025. “I’m allowed to choose my own crew so I intend taking my grandson and a few other youngsters. The Mongolian boys are all very young so it will be a great experience for them all.”

Watch this space, as they say!

(Share Mongolia photo essay pp36-39)

Kirkpatrick Shearing
Hawke's Bay

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*This and next three pages, images from Larry Clark's tour of duty with the Paul Brough-led Rabobank-sponsored Share Mongolia programme, in June 2024. Pictured above from left are Bridie King, Ronnie King, Colin Baynes, local shearer; Larry Clark, Buzz King, local shearer and Harata (Ha) Taunoa. **Bottom photo:** Harata with Toni Brough, all done and dusted. Harata says, "Places we travelled to were: Ulanbatar – Capital, Gorky – Terelj-National Park, Dzunmod, Ovorkhangai, Bulgan, Arkhangai and Kharkhorin, but don't ask me to pronounce them!"*



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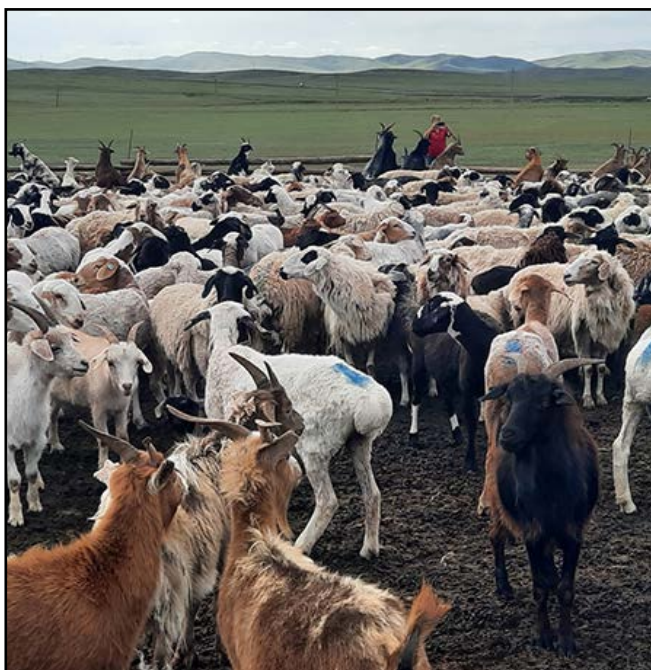
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Wild Bill Smith

Wild Bill Smith was shearing rough and chanced to cut a tit
 He stuck his foot in front at once and slewed the sheep a bit.
 Now Old Jim Nation, who owned the Station
 And rarely left the farm
 Just happened by, and with his eagle eye
 Was quick to raise the alarm.
 "You've cut a tit, you hairy brute
 The cost you'll have to meet.
 I've had enough, I can't go on
 You've ruined my very best sheep."

Now Wild Bill Smith, who'd just returned
 After a stint in World War II
 Wasn't about to be labelled a lout
 For the price of a dog-tucker ewe.
 He fixed old Jim with a drop-dead grin
 Then adjusted his belt made of leather
 "You'll find," said Bill, "that the tit I cut off
 Actually came from a wether."

(From *It's a Rough Ride to Erewhon* by EB 'Snow'
 O'Halloran. Holos Books, Auckland, 2006.)



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John Hodder – Minister of woolpressing

(From Golden Shears Programme 2025)

John Hodder, now aged 76, has been shearing since 1964 or thereabouts. He estimates he's shorn more than a million sheep. Even as a pre-schooler, he used to try and catch lambs so he could 'pretend shear' them. In woodwork at school, John made a box to hold shearing gear.

After leaving school in 1963, John worked for local farmers including as a woolhandler for Bob Reed and a shearer in Graham Clegg's gang. He moved all around the sheep catchments in Wairarapa, got to know the farmers, was a shearer for the New Zealand Wool Board, and attended Godfrey and Ivan Bowen's shearing schools.

"I was very influenced by my father, a highly-self-sufficient farmer who did all his own shearing."

Approached by Ian Stewart in the 1980s, John began to get involved with Golden Shears. He was asked to run the woolpressing and has been doing that ever since, lending his own wool presses to the competition each year. He even has a badge reading 'Minister of Woolpressing'.

John has been a Golden Shears committee member and was awarded a life membership in 2024. His contributions include supporting the competition to raise its profile in the 1980s and 1990s, incorporating speakers, MCs, and entertainment. He mentions that big screens are about to be installed to allow the audience better viewing of the shearing action.

John says, "I love the whole wool industry: shearing, woolhandling and woolpressing. It's challenging, it's competitive and requires skilled techniques. There's nothing else like it."



Above: Golden Shears programme manager Philip Morrison presents John Hodder with the Alastair Simpson Memorial Trophy, for services to the industry. **Below:** Back in 1996 John was entrusted with the role of keeping Miss New Zealand (Lana Coc-croft) entertained at Golden Shears. ("Anyone could have done it but they picked me!")



Above: John Hodder drinking coffee alone, about the time he first came onto the Golden Shears committee. The ministerial appointment came much later!

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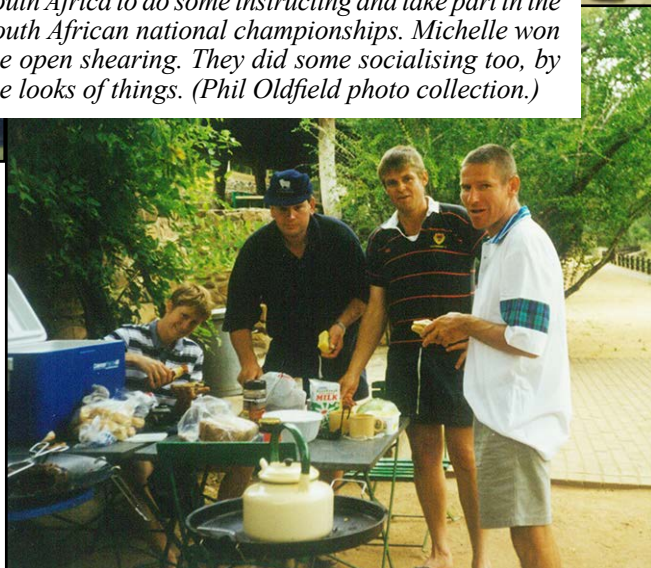
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Flashback to 1996 when New Zealand machine shearers Michelle and Barry Harrex, together with blade shearers Phil Oldfield and Allen Gemmell visited South Africa to do some instructing and take part in the South African national championships. Michelle won the open shearing. They did some socialising too, by the looks of things. (Phil Oldfield photo collection.)



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Update on the Quit Paris campaign

Since we started calling for New Zealand to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, both ACT Leader David Seymour and NZ First Leader Winston Peters have made comments indicating they agree that there's no point being in the Paris Agreement while big emitters are pulling out:

We're in the early days yet for a campaign on what would be such a big policy turn around, but it's clear the politicians are getting the message.

So many of you have supported our campaign so far, so we want to let you know our plans. We get a lot of questions about when we will start a protest about the Paris Agreement - and we may get to that point - but there are a few things to get done first.

Unlike you and the rest of our diligent supporters, most people don't follow politics and especially don't follow the details of agricultural emissions policy and international treaties. That means they don't know anything about the Paris Agreement and a successful protest to get politicians moving needs some basic understanding of the issues among the people seeing the tractors rolling through town.

Otherwise, those people we need to convince just get annoyed at the disruption and nothing comes of the protest (think of how many protests just make noise, annoy locals, and don't get anything changed). Groundswell protests always have a clear goal and try to bring the public with us.

From here, we'll be continuing to inform the public and see what arguments are made against withdrawing so we can make the best case for quitting the Paris Agreement to the politicians.

On those other arguments, we want to cover the main ones we've heard in response:

Quitting Paris would hurt our trade agreements

You might hear that our trade overseas, especially for food products, relies on our participation in the Paris Agreement. As we've said before, this just isn't true. The people buying our products overseas are buying them because we efficiently produce high quality food at competitive prices.



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If there was a premium for low emissions food to be had, New Zealand would already be earning that premium since we're so much more efficient than most countries' domestic production.

There is just one case where the Paris Agreement is explicitly mentioned in a trade deal. Our free trade agreement with the European Union says (Article 19.6) that we'll "effectively implement the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, including commitments with regard to nationally determined contributions."

But it also says just after that (Article 19.7) that both parties will reduce fossil fuel subsidies and European fossil fuel subsidies are up since the trade deal came into effect.

These deals and breaches of certain bits aren't a binary on/off switch. Just like New Zealand hasn't blown up the deal over the EU's fossil fuel subsidies, the EU won't blow it up over New Zealand rethinking how the Paris Agreement doesn't work for our situation.

If New Zealand were to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, the EU might say they're unhappy, but the actual trade consequences would be limited. While the trade deal includes commitments to environmental standards, it does not grant the EU the automatic right to impose tariffs or suspend trade preferences over a withdrawal.

Any formal dispute would go through a consultation process, which is largely cooperative rather than punitive. While the EU could introduce stricter environmental import standards or apply its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) more aggressively, these measures would likely be sector-specific and incremental rather than any all-out economic retaliation.

And that CBAM process is unlikely to hurt New Zealand's food export competitiveness, given that our food production is among the most carbon-efficient in the world. The CBAM is primarily designed to target carbon-intensive industrial sectors (such as steel, cement, and fertilisers), rather than agricultural products.

The EU's own interests, such as maintaining access to New Zealand's agricultural exports and upholding free trade principles, would act as a natural check against an extreme response like tariffs.

In short, the idea of widespread trade sanctions or the dismantling of the deal is highly unlikely. Our trade, even our trade with the EU is not dependent on the Paris Agreement.

The Paris Agreement exempts food production anyway. This one is more often raised by people on our side who have been following this issue for a while.

It's true that the Paris Agreement says (Article 2.1.b) that efforts to foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas

emissions development should be done “in a manner that does not threaten food production.”

There is clearly a way out for New Zealand government, within the black-and-white of the Paris Agreement text, to say that reducing agricultural emissions would threaten food production, as New Zealand food production is already maximally efficient under current technologies and best practice. And if that had been the case, we might not be campaigning to quit Paris.

But in practice, first the Ardern Government and now the Luxon Government have both set emissions reduction targets so ridiculously high that they would have to eat into agricultural emissions.

We say we need to quit the Paris Agreement because of how the New Zealand political class interact with it in the real world, not just how the text is written up in theory.

So, while it's correct to say that the Paris Agreement allows for policies to maintain food production, New Zealand politicians have been unable to use it. We need to deny the choice to them all together and quit Paris.

We've made real ground so far in this campaign by making it an issue that politicians are talking about and (some) media are asking questions on, but there's plenty of work left to do. Thank you for your support.

Meetings

Your support and the support from the tens of thousands of other Groundswell supporters means the politicians are paying attention. In the last month, we've met with both Todd McClay (Minister of Agriculture) and David Seymour (ACT Leader, Minister for Regulation among other portfolios, and acting Prime Minister at the time).

We told both that we expect action on pulling out of the Paris Agreement, along with other key priorities we've been pushing on like rural banking regulations and RMA section 6 land classifications (SNAs, SASMs, etc.).

While you can never count on a politician beyond their interests in the next election, there are some promising comments out of the ministers.

We'll see if they deliver and keep the pressure on them in any case.



WHO referendum

With our campaign about withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, we've had many supporters asking what we think about the petition for a referendum on withdrawing from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

That isn't a part of the Groundswell mission, but we know it will be something many of you care about. If that's the kind of thing you're interested in, you can find out more at www.whoknows.co.nz. Thank you again for your support.

Kind regards from Bryce, Laurie, Mel and the Team at Groundswell NZ. *(We are a grassroots movement representing farmers, growers, and rural communities without the resources of the political parties or levy bodies. If you can, chip in to our campaign fund and join the fight to free New Zealand from the Paris Agreement.)*

(See next page for some heavyweight support from eminent international scientists.)



Women woolpressers at Golden Shears: **Top**, Savannah King (1st). **Above**: Mollie Moffat (runner-up.)

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Effects of Net Zero by 2050 – Summary

Richard Lindzen: Professor of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences, Emeritus, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. William Happer, Professor of Physics, Emeritus, Princeton University.

Physics proves that policies by the United States and other countries to reduce CO₂ emissions to Net Zero by the Year 2050 and eliminate fossil fuels will have a trivial effect on temperature and weather, but disastrous effects for the average citizen and countries worldwide.

We [Lindzen and Happer] are career physicists with a special expertise in radiation physics, which describes how carbon dioxide (CO₂) affects heat flow in Earth's atmosphere.

Saturation. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has long claimed that the “evidence is clear that carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the main driver of climate change,” where they define “main driver” to mean “responsible for more than 50% of the change.”

To the contrary, physics proves that carbon dioxide is not now, nor at higher levels, “the main driver of climate change.” At the level carbon dioxide is at now, about 420 parts per million (ppm), physics is clear that it no longer is an effective greenhouse gas.

Carbon dioxide's ability to warm the planet is now very small because its effects on Earth's heat flow are what is called in physics “saturated.” Further increases in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere cannot cause catastrophic global warming or extreme weather, only slight and beneficial increases in warming. (Neither can methane and nitrous oxide, whose level is so small that they are irrelevant to climate).

Net Zero by 2050 will have only a tiny effect on temperature. As we have demonstrated in a technical report, reducing United States and worldwide CO₂ emissions to Net Zero by 2050 will avoid only a tiny temperature increase:

- United States Net Zero by 2050 — only 2/100 °F (0.015 °F)
- Worldwide Net Zero by 2050 — only 13/100 °F (0.13 °F)

These numbers are trivial, but their cost is immense.

Disastrous Net Zero Effects on the U.S. and Worldwide. The United States and worldwide Net Zero regulations and subsidies will have disastrous effects, including but not limited to, essentially eliminating in numerous countries, but not all:

- gas cars and trucks, and forced purchasing of electric vehicles (EVs)
- fossil fuel electric plants that provide the majority of electricity worldwide
- gas furnaces, gas stoves and gas heaters, and requiring heat pumps and electric appliances
- fossil fuels because they are the source of approximately 90% of human carbon dioxide emissions
- fossil fuels critical to producing nitrogen fertilizer that feeds nearly half the world
- weekend car driving and restricting airplane travel

- farms and a shift in diets away from meat and dairy products related jobs and revenue they create
- substantial market investments in businesses that create jobs and GDP because of subsidies and regulations diverting huge amounts of capital to achieve Net Zero, for example, \$12 trillion in global renewable energy investment
- the increased food that more carbon dioxide creates

In addition, various countries require companies to report carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions and what they are doing to reduce them. However, since carbon dioxide is saturated, that data is immaterial, misleading and very expensive. Therefore it should not be done.

More carbon dioxide means more food. Contrary to common reporting, carbon dioxide is essential to life on earth. Since carbon dioxide is now saturated, more carbon dioxide increases the amount of food available to people worldwide, with no risk of catastrophic global warming or extreme weather. For example, if carbon dioxide doubled to 800 ppm, carbon dioxide will increase the food available worldwide by approximately 60%.

Accordingly, Net Zero regulations and subsidies in the United States and worldwide must be stopped as soon as possible to avoid disastrous effects on Americans, America, and people and countries worldwide.

Further, fossil fuels must continue to be used and expanded to provide more carbon dioxide and make more nitrogen fertilizer to make more food available around the world, and to provide reliable and inexpensive energy for people everywhere.

Read the entire Net Zero Averted Temperature Increase report here: <https://co2coalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Net-Zero-Averted-Temperature-Increase-2024-06-11.pdf>

References

Lindzen, W. Happer and W. van Wijngaarden, Net Zero Avoided Temperature Increase, (Net Zero Averted Temperature Increase – CO₂ Coalition; <https://co2coalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Net-Zero-Averted-Temperature-Increase-2024-06-11.pdf>)

R. Lindzen, W. Happer and S. Koonin, “Fossil Fuels and Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) Climate Science.

Ed Note: Since the change of government in America, above comments above re impact on the USA will be greatly diminished because of its intended withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord. For every reference to America in the above summary therefore, feel free to substitute 'New Zealand'.

* * * * *

"... I reckon if some scientist sorted out the ingredients of sheep shit, piss, grease, sweat, hard work and the woolshed they'd come up with the ultimate happy pill, not to mention the answer to most of New Zealand's problems."
(Doug Laing, Shearing Sports NZ)

The Return (Short story)

By Arthur Ings (1929-2005)

They parked the car on the side of the road and walked slowly along the seldom-used farm track. There were two of them. A grey haired old man, his back stooped and walking with the aid of a stick. The youth walking beside him was obviously his grandson. In this environment he looked out of place. The old man paused and gazed at the derelict building further along the paddock, shaking his head in disbelief.

"Hell Granddad, did you really use to shear in that dump?" the boy asked.

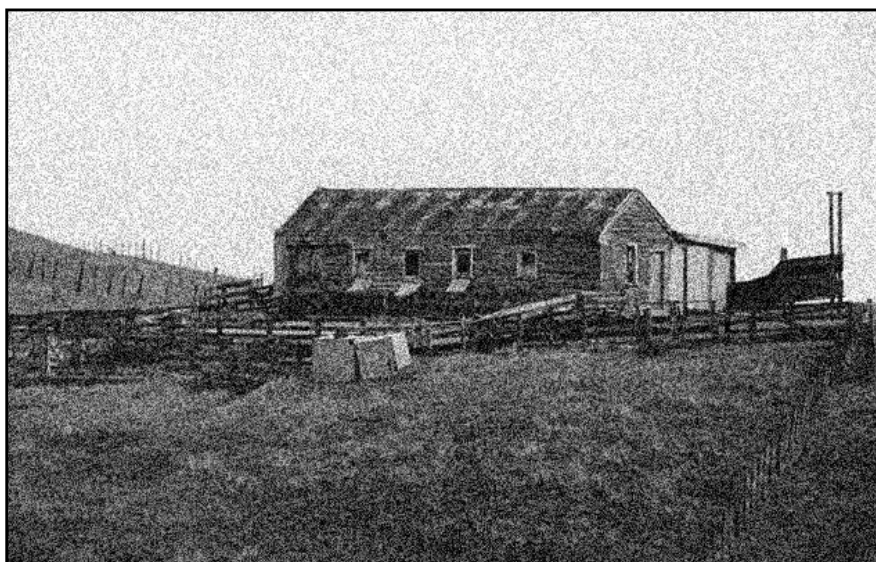
'When I shored in that shed boy it was one of the top sheds on my run,' the old man quietly replied.

"Must have been a long time ago."

'Guess it was a long time ago,' he said, 'long before you were born.' The building showed every sign of total neglect. Many of the weather boards were rotted and areas of roofing were missing. Every window on the side facing them was broken. This was a casualty of a sheep farm converting to dairying.

'Bloody crying shame,' the old man muttered as he continued walking along the once familiar track.

As they climbed the steps onto the landing, he noticed that the wire netting that had once covered them to prevent slipping had disintegrated with rust. The main door no longer ran freely along its rails and had to be lifted.



'Hey boy,' the old man said to his grandson, 'put your back into this.' Once inside, the boy gazed with undisguised horror at the mess. "Bloody hell," was all that he could think of to say.

The old man walked towards the shearing board, oblivious of all the rubbish and neglect. He was re-entering a world that he knew, understood and loved. In his mind he was no longer an old man as he relived the past. He was young and physically strong. A reliable perfectionist at his job. A 'Gun Shearer' in the true sense of the word. He gazed at the wall above the shutes to where

the old Cooper machine, rugged but reliable, had once hung.

The grinder stand was still there but the double-ended grinder, along with the shearing machine, was long gone. He remembered the days when this four-stand shed had been a vital part of the farm management and economy. The shearers would arrive just after daylight ready for a 5:00am start. A pleasant part of the day, cool and fresh. That was before some damn fool politician down in Wellington lumbered the country with daylight saving and plunged the starting time back into darkness.

The 'score' marks were still clearly visible on the wall studs where numberless shearers had 'stropped' their combs. The nails on which they had hung their combs and cutters were still there. Two-inch nails, from which their heads had been removed, driven into the stud. On number three stand a gear tin still hung on its hook, the bottom completely rusted out.

"Where did you shear Granddad?" the boy asked, oblivious of the fact that he was intruding.

'Here,' said the old man, indicating the number one stand, 'the Ringer's stand.'

"My Dad said that you only have to be strong in the back and weak in the head to be a shearer."

'Your dad should know,' answered the old man. 'He's never shown a bloody sheep in his life. Nor done anything else worth-while,' he was going to add, but decided against it.

The catching pens were now empty, as

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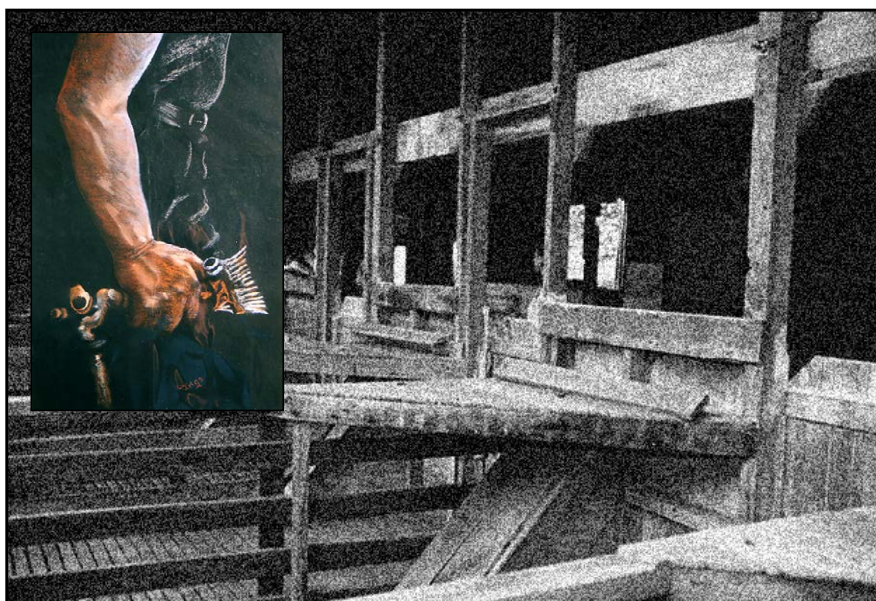
they had been for many years. Strangely, all the doors were still swinging. There had been thousands of sheep dragged through these doors and across the board over the years. The shute slides were still in place and on the old man's stand the shute pin was still hanging from its string. He grabbed the slide with both hands and was surprised at how easily it opened. There was a rush of fresh air around his legs.

The shed had been gutted and used to store hay. The stable-type doors, through which so many thousands of sheep had entered were missing, and the interior of the shed had been desecrated by starlings. He clearly remembered where the old Donald tip-over wool press had stood. The only evidence now was a bent and buckled press pin hanging from a nail on the wall.

He quietly remembered some of the shearers who had worked with him. There was young Owen Morgan, whose ability was matched only by his enthusiasm. His promising career was cut short when, as a passenger in his mate's Ute, he was killed when they collided with a bridge, after spending too long in the pub.

There was Wally Coombs. A good honest worker who had never mastered the skill of shearing. The job never came easy to him, so he gave it away and went share-milking. There was Johnny Ellis, a top shearer with an infectious grin and a never-ending repertoire of smutty yarns.

There had been some great 'fleece-o's' too, most of them girls. The old man always regarded 'fleece-o-ing' as a thankless bloody job, but someone has to do it.



"Hey, Grandad, why has this old broom got this rubber thing on it?" the boy asked. He had found it among a heap of rubbish. 'It's in case the fleece-o drops it,' he answered.

"What difference does that make?"

The old man ignored him. He would never understand the effect that a dropped broom has on the nerves of shearers concentrating on what they were doing. Many a fleece-o has been abused for 'dropping the broom'.

He looked out the window at the count out pens. Most of the posts were still there and a few of the rails hung precariously on rusted nails. Many were the times that he had gazed out this window at the end of a run, as his sheep were being tallied out and recorded. There was a lot of personal satisfaction watching well-shorn sheep 'running out'.

His gaze shifted to the distant paddocks. In his mind he could still see the mobs of sheep being driven along the gully towards the shed. Once in the yards they would be drafted and the night pen left to empty out before being shedded later in the evening.

Most of the shepherds who had mustered here had great teams of dogs. There were the great bully huntaways. The fast, sleek heading dogs, and at least one 'all rounder' capable of doing everything from 'backing' in the yards to boiling the billy. That's if you want to believe the shepherd.

'Bloody pity it's not still a sheep and cattle place,' he murmured to himself. He drifted off into a world of memories.

It was his grandson who brought him back to reality.

"Grandad," he said, "I think that we had better go soon. Mum and dad are going out tonight."

"Sure boy," answered the old man quietly. He lowered the shute slide, allowing it to drop with its once familiar bang. He took one long look around before returning to the real world.

Old habits die hard. As he turned to leave he reached out and latched his catching pin door.

(Reprinted from *Out of the Scrub* by Daylight, by Arthur Ings, Kiwiana Publications 2005. Copyright approval to publish received from the Ings family, March 2025.

- Inset image of handpiece, from an original painting by Lois Ings. The other shed images are not directly related to the 'shed' in the story.
- See more over page.

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About Arthurs Ings:

Arthur Ings was born in 1929 and raised a farmer at Otewa, "a small farming community nestled between the hills, south of Otorohanga," in the King Country. His mother died when he was just a child and he started at Oturoa Primary School [a farming district near Hamurana, east of Lake Rotorua] when he was six. He walked out the gates aged twelve.

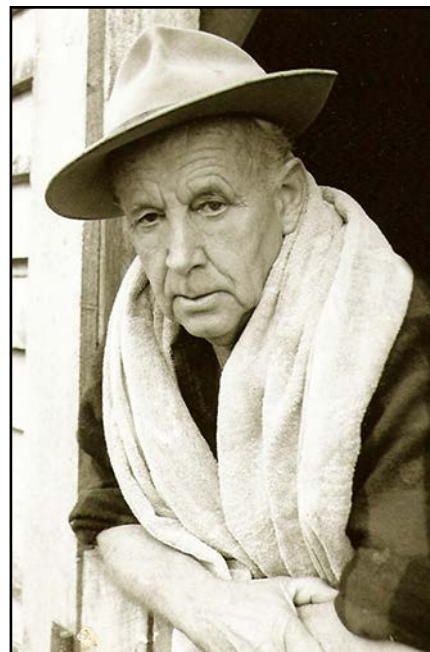
"Over-educated, and having a penchant for writing stories, he became one of those kids whose instruction was cut short in New Zealand, when they left school to help fill the labour shortage caused by World War II."

Biographical notes on Arthur's book cover describe how, "over the next 60 years, between fencing, shearing, and dairy farming, writing remained a passion. He wrote for radio and museums, recorded ballads and filled books with poetry and short stories."

"Arthur's stories are timeless and engaging, funny and enlightening. They tell of a world that is now passing into history."



Arthur's shearing runs were around Ngaroma, Arohena, Pukeatua, Wharepapa South, Parawera and Puhue in the South Waikato. He was the ringer in a small shearing gang. His wife Lois was his 'fleece- o' (shedhand).



Above: Arthur Ings (1929-2004), writer and shearer, pictured at a Wharepapa South woolshed in the 1990s. **Opposite:** Clad in the compulsory black singlet, c1960. Arthur died in 2004 and is buried at Te Awamutu Cemetery.



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Youthline (open 24/7) – 0800 376 633. You can also text 234 for free between 8am and midnight, or email talk@youthline.co.nz

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Your local Rural Support Trust – 0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP)

Alcohol Drug Helpline (open 24/7) – 0800 787 797. You can also text 8691 for free.

For further information, contact the Mental Health Foundation's free Resource and Information Service (09 623 4812).

"I'd like to thank the (unknown) farmer ..."

By Des Williams

If you've been around the shearing competition scene for any length of time you will have heard the little speech a thousand times: "I'd like to thank the sponsors, the committee, the judges, the other competitors and the farmer for supplying the sheep." In most cases, the nervous young speechmaker (novice or junior shearers or woolhandler) would not know the actual names of the sponsor, the committee, the judges or the farmer who supplied the sheep.

At Golden Shears for more than 40 years Murray Tomlin has been one of those farmers supplying the sheep. He reckons he started in 1979 and apart from a year or two when the farm *Te Matai* was too dry to present sheep in good competition order, has been doing so ever since. This year sheep from the Tomlin property were in the novice heats and semis, the Student challenge, the junior heats and the senior and open speedshears.

Situated at Tauwheru, about 20km west of Masterton, *Te Matai* (1500 acres) carries about 2600 ewes and a Hereford stud of some 80 cattle. Murray runs *Te Matai* in conjunction with son Bruce, who also has a house on the property.

"All the sheep we supply for Golden Shears are two-tooths. We get them in a week or so before the Shears and draft off 700 or 800 from which the competition sheep are then sorted."

From statistics readily available we are able to extract the following information on just where some of those Tomlin sheep have been utilised in the Shears events over the years:

2002	180 for contractors event
	48 for junior semifinals
	90 for intermediate semifinals
2003	156 for contractors event
	48 for junior semifinals
	90 for intermediate semifinals
2004	156 for contractors event
	48 for junior semifinals
	90 for intermediate semifinals
2005	450 for open shearing heats
2006	78 for novice shearing heats
	12 for novice final
	200 for senior heats
	Sheep for YFC Blue Ribbon final
2007	54 for novice heats
	186 for junior heats
	12 for novice final
	228 for intermediate heats
	24 for NI woolhandling circuit
	96 for senior shearing semifinals
2008	28 for novice heats
	126 for junior heats
	12 for novice final
	260 for intermediate heats
	36 for NIWH circuit
	96 for senior shearing semifinal

Worldwide, the ten richest people are collectively worth more than the economies of the poorest eighty-five countries combined. (Peter S Goodman, Davos Man, Custom House, 2022.)

Apart from being a long-term supplier of sheep, Murray has served the Golden Shears Society in many ways. He served on the General Committee at least since 1983. He succeeded Gavin Tankersley as President in 1998 and served in that position for three years.

Murray was bestowed with Life Membership in 2004 and awarded the Alastair Simpson Memorial Trophy in 2013 for outstanding service to Golden Shears.



Above: Lucinda ('Lu') and Murray Tomlin at Golden Shears 2025 – suppliers of sheep to Golden Shears since 1979.



Above: Murray with Raelene McConachie, judging at the trans-Tasman woolhandling test at Armidale in 1998.

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Tom Kelly back in the Green blazer

By Des Williams

Tom Kelly was no stranger to the green blazer with Australia's Coat of Arms on the pocket prior to his appointment as a shearing judge for the 2025 trans-Tasman series at Masterton. His credits include managing the Australian team attending the world championships at Scotland in 2023, and he was Australia's representative shearing judge at the 2012 world championships in Masterton.

Even further back in time Tom was the self-appointed 'Bag carrier' at Gorey in 1998 when his wife Marion Kelly was one of the Australian woolhandlers (with Craig Rowsell). Self-appointed maybe, though he recalls being elevated to 'team official' in order to attend the world banquet that year – perhaps an example of Peter Black's managerial vision and perception coming into play! Although Tom didn't earn a blazer on that occasion, both Craig (2nd) and Marion (5th) made the world final which was won by Angharad Mair Lewis of Wales.

And just to keep the balance right in the Kelly family household, Tom reminds us that Marion Kelly was Australia's woolhandling judge at Golden Shears Masterton in 2017! So, it's one-all on that score.

With the handpiece, Tom (and Trevor Bacon) represented Australia's Eastern States at Golden Shears in 1997, prior to the reintroduction of fully representative, three-man shearing sports teams at Perth later that year. Western Australia's pair were Paul Kirk and Mike Henderson and New Zealand had Colin King and David Fagan, who won the contest.

Tom was with the Australian team on stage at Masterton prior to the start of the 2025 trans-Tasman test, but the team manager didn't introduce him by name. While not overly upset by that, Tom confirmed other people had noted the omission. He suggests it would be useful for all speakers to have a 'running sheet' of things to cover off so 'more important' people like sponsors get mentioned and thanked.

Tom and Marion live at Kilmore, 60 kilometres north of Melbourne, though Tom observes "Melbourne is getting closer all the time!" Having lived and grown up on the family farm, he still runs the property and has a smaller block



Above: Tom Kelly on stage, thumb at the ready.

of his own. His father was killed in a traffic accident when Tom was just seven – he hadn't been a shearer himself but did all the crutching on the farm. "So, I lost my father when I was young and that was a devastating thing but I also had a terrific mother who held the family together. I have two sisters and a brother. One sister, Joanne was married to 1986 world champion, Mark Conlan (RIP).

Tom describes Kilmore as a great place to live. "We've got some really good facilities in the community, good schools and opportunities for kids and we've reared our three girls here so everything you might need is close by. Brianna, the eldest, studied agri-business at University and now works for an agricultural company that collects data and generates statistics so she is pretty entrenched in that role.



Above: Trevor Bacon and Tom Kelly – Eastern Australia States reps at Golden Shears 1997 when, Tom says, he weighed 70kg and was shearing 51 weeks of the year. The numbers have gone up (and down) in the years since!



Above: Tom Kelly judging "out the back" – assessing the penalty value of 'scratches' and wool left on the sheep.



Above: Judge Tom Kelly (left) on stage as the unnamed judge while Australian team manager Stuart Grigg talks with host Ro Duncum and introduces his (soon to be) victorious trio – Daniel McIntyre, Jamie Boothman and Nathan Meaney.

"She and her partner live about 35 minutes north of Kilmore. Shannon is also engaged in business studies and both she and Petria live and work locally.

Tom's first visit to New Zealand was in 1990 and he recalls being at the New Zealand championships in Te Kuiti when Edsel Forde and David Fagan waged their magnificent, epic battle over 25 sheep. "That was just mind-blowing, I had never thought I would ever see anything like that. The lead changed several times over those last few sheep – David would get ahead by a couple of blows and Edsel kept coming back. Unbelievable.

"I think my trip here in 1990 came as a prize out of the Warrnambool Shears, where I won the intermediate final, and I made the intermediate semis at Te Kuiti. Then I came back in 1992 as an open

shearer with Sam Te Whata – he was a super slick shearer. But we in Australia were coming from a competition format that was a fair way back compared with what we witnessed at Te Kuiti – our own competitions were based on set times and just a few sheep in the finals.

"I remember getting to look at a scoresheet somewhere and noted David Fagan had shorn the quickest time, had the lowest board score and was lowest score out the back – I just didn't believe that somebody could do that!

"In Australia at that time, the quicker shearers were generally rough, and it was the slower shearers who produced the good quality. But looking back now, we are pretty proud about where we have got to with Sport Shear Australia. Our boys can swagger into Golden Shears now, confident of taking on the

Kiwis on with a fair chance of winning.

"Personally, I wasn't all that fast but generally had good quality. Then shearers started coming along with pace and quality and I was thinking, 'That's not how it's meant to work.' So we've seen a huge improvement all round.

"So, over time we have developed a pretty sound pathway for finding and producing Australia's best. Our systems at State and National level are working well. Our nationals at Katanning last year were really hot. The only time Daniel McIntyre looked like winning it was when he won it! A couple of young fellows were really shearing well and putting the pressure on him, and that's what you want – it was so enjoyable to watch.

"In our three rounds of qualifying at Katanning there was a different shearer on top for each round, but Daniel McIntyre came through and won for the seventh time. He surely has to be at the top end of the very best ever among Australian shearers, following on from the great (two-times world champion) Shannon Warnest.

"I thought Golden Shears was fantastic this year, with six finalists, none of them had won it before and the elation that Toa Henderson showed when his name was called – you could see all the work and the passion coming out that had gone into his victory.

"I was also here [in Masterton] in 2017 'loitering around' while Marion was judging the woolhandling events and I got to see Rowland Smith win the Open for the fourth time. He was shearing well – so composed, controlled, so accurate. You think you've already seen everything in David Fagan at his supreme best – but then Smith comes along years later, had that great battle for time honours with Gavin Mutch (Smith one blow ahead after 18 sheep and six shots ahead at the end) and produced the best quality to go with it." [Smith ultimately beat Aaron Haynes by 3.5 points with Mutch well back in sixth place.]

Away from farming responsibilities, Tom and Marion both work in the industry as instructors. "We've got our own network with Shearer and Woolhandling training in the Eastern States which is funded by Australian Wool Innovation (AWI). Marion teaches woolhandling and wool classing and I do follow up work in the sheds with young shearers that have been to a shearing school, trying to get them established as employable shearers."

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Perhaps not surprisingly (given sister Joanne's connections), Tom got his start in shearing with John and Mark Conlan at Kyneton, back in the late 1980s. "They organised the annual Kyneton Shears and they told me I had to enter in it. I thought, 'Nah, that's not for me' but they were struggling for numbers in the learners' division and told me I had to be there! I reluctantly turned up on the day and won and that changed my attitude to competitions.

"So then I started getting around the sports shear circuit and I've won probably 27 or 28 open titles over the years, including a couple of Victoria State titles. I could always shear a merino pretty clean and that can take you a long way towards winning a competition in Australia. I've also done a little bit of shearing in WA and South Australia but I never had to travel too far from home to find work. The sheep weren't always overly nice but the work was there and available."

Tom acknowledges involvement with competitions brought opportunities for both he and Marion to travel overseas. "Like going to Scotland in 2023 – probably you wouldn't go so far to attend a world championship unless you had some family interest.



Above: The Australian team at the world teams reception at Gorey, Ireland, in 1998 when Marion Kelly (front) was an official woolhandler and Tom Kelly (not pictured) was the unofficial baggage manager. Others from left: Brett King (shearer), Peter Black (team manager), Mr Ernie Stevens (Australian ambassador to Ireland), Craig Rowsell (woolhandler) and Mike Henderson (shearer).

"But when they make you the team manager you hop on the plane and go to the United Kingdom and Scotland to do the best you can for your country.

"I really enjoyed judging at Golden Shears Masterton this year. Back in 2012, the last time I judged there, I was a bit younger and I suppose a bit more

anxious to do everything right. This time was more relaxing, we were really well looked after and the way they catered for us made it a neat experience.

"And as an unbiased judge I can admit that seeing the Australian boys get the job done in the trans-Tasman test added a few extra degrees to the enjoyment."



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Above: Joanne Conlan (nee Kelly) and husband Mark (RIP) pictured at the Warrnambool Shears in 1992. That forearm around Joanne's shoulder wielded one of the most educated handpieces in Australian shearing history. And Joanne was a highly skilled woolhandler in her own right.

That's a (feed) lot of lambs to shear!

By Hilary Gietzen, Minot, North Dakota, USA.

In the 1990s, the feedlot at Oriska, North Dakota where I sheared a lot of feeder lambs was cutting back on their workload and numbers of lambs to shear, and eventually they completely retired. About the same time, there was another feedlot getting started southwest of Fargo in the Wyndmere, North Dakota area.

Some of my friends were shearing at this feedlot, so I never inquired about working there, but I would hear about the place frequently. Then at one point, these other sheep shearers asked me to come and help them. I was happy to help. Then later these sheep shearers wanted to retire, and the feedlot owner, David Buskohl, was already familiar me and my work. David hired me to take over from the retiring sheep shearers.

The first year that I sheared there, I sheared less than 1,000 feeder lambs. The second year I sheared closer to 1,800 lambs. The third year there was about 3,000 lambs. That was full capacity for his facilities. I enjoyed working there, and it fit in very well with my route. Most of the work was coming in the fall before my main sheep shearing season would begin.

This lasted for a few years, and I was enjoying every moment that I was working there. Then the feedlot decided to expand, and he went to about 5,000 lambs. This time he wanted to have more sheep shearers there to do the job in a shorter time.

It was possible to get sheep shearers in the fall and early winter, but when the main sheep shearing season came, then no sheep shearers would come to help, and I was responsible to shear the remaining lambs. So to put this situation in the eyes of the other sheep shearers, it was “our” job in the fall, and “my” responsibility during the busy season.

I had different sheep shearers help, just whoever I could get. The lambs varied in size and condition, so we couldn't do them all at the same time. We would only shear a few days at a time, which made it hard for me to schedule help. There were sheep shearers available, but it was sometimes hard to make schedules work. I was losing time and efficiency, and losing production.

When the other sheep shearers were there, it made a lot more workload for me. Whenever there was a problem, it always came back to me. Some of the other sheep shearers

had unsatisfactory workmanship, at least by my standards.

Several of the other sheep shearers wanted to stay at my place. I didn't really mind other shearers being there, but it made more workload for me to clean up behind them. There were a couple of them that I would describe as slob. Then the one “slob” complained about the food that I provided.

It wasn't my responsibility to provide a place for them to stay and provide food, so when the guy complained, I told him that I wasn't prepared to provide a meal, and that he should stop in town and pick something up when we drove through. As we passed through town, I could see in my rear view mirror that he just kept following me. When we arrived my place, I asked him why he didn't stop. He said that he didn't have any money to pay for food.

To have a different perspective, I felt that after working with other sheep shearers, I was gaining experience in babysitting, and should have more qualifications for operating a day care center.

I talked to the owner, David, about the situation, and told him that I was better off when he had less lambs, and I was able to shear them all myself. I told David that I would like to give up the job, and he should hire someone else, and I would work for them.

That really got David's attention, and we decided that I would do the entire job myself. The problem that I had was when I worked alone, one sheep shearer can't shear enough lambs to justify for David to help, or to hire someone to do the wrangling. So I needed to do the wrangling myself.

So I charged David a certain amount to do the shearing, and an additional amount to chase the lambs up the chute, and yet another additional amount to pick up the wool and run the



Above: Hilary Gietzen travels first class whenever possible!

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wool packer. When I did the extra work, I received more pay per sheep, but I was shearing about twenty five less sheep per day. So it was about a wash for me, and a better situation than hiring other sheep shearers and someone to do the wrangling.

There were some advantages as well. Most importantly, I was completely on my own schedule, and I could work whatever days, and whatever hours that were best for me. I had less workload and less stress when there were no other sheep shearers to deal with.

Whenever I had a group of lambs to shear, I would drive my pickup on the first day, and drop off my equipment and wool packer. Then I would drive an old car on subsequent days. This saved miles on my pickup, and I had lower operating costs. This worked good for quite a few years.

When David would have about 5,000 feeder lambs, that was really nice. Then some years, he would have about 8,000 feeder lambs. I could do that, but it was certainly a heavier work load. Then when he jumped from 5,000 to 8,000 feeder lambs, to around 11,000 to 13,000 feeder lambs, that was really hard, but I managed it for several years.

While I was doing this exorbitant amount of feeder lambs alone, word was getting out among other sheep shearers and other feedlots nationwide, and somewhat with other sheep shearers in other countries. Keep in mind that I was doing my regular route of ewes on farms as well. Of course, it wasn't really an ordinary situation.

Then when David's boy joined the operation, a new building came up, there were more feeder lambs again. This time there were 18,000 head. That is a lot. I ended up doing all of those feeder lambs alone. It was a lot of work, and it took a toll on my body. And furthermore, a lot of these feeder lambs needed to be sheared at the same time that I should've been doing pre lambing ewes on the farms. These feeder lambs were really interfering with my route.

It was at this time that I sheared sheep every consecutive day from January 16th to the middle of June, making for 147 consecutive days of shearing. I have never done this sort of thing before, and I certainly won't be able to do it again.

What I was accomplishing was unheard of by anyone, both in the United States and abroad.

When I finished the 18,000 feeder lambs, I told David that

we got them done, all went well, and I was prompt in doing it, but I won't be able to do it again. It was in the spring of 2019 when I sheared the last feeder lambs at that particular feedlot.

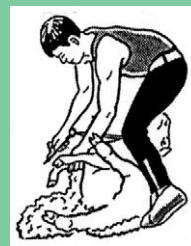
I am thinking that it was twenty one years of driving into that driveway, and the total number of sheep sheared was an astonishing 184,000 sheep in that one building in that farmyard.

Hilary Gietzen is an occasional contributor to Shearing magazine. His most recent story about going North to Alaska appeared in the November 2023 edition.

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Waitomo Shearing Sports



Above, Waitomo Novice finalists: Phil Johnston (committee), James Anderson, Aimee Atkin, Briar Joines, AJ Hall.



Above, Waitomo Junior finalists: Sue Turner (whaea), Jodeisha Kirkpatrick (1st), Tana Maguire (4th), Sonya Fagan (3rd), David Hagley (4th).



Above, Waitomo Intermediate finalists: Phil Johnston (committee), Hamuera Henderson, Moana Nikora, Luke Marsden, Matthew Smith.



Top: Yep, it was definitely that sort of day at Waitomo! Middle: Judge Richie Maguire and daughter Ria. Above: Watch out Eliza McCartney, Teresa Hall may be changing sports! (See next page, also.)



Above, from left: Phil Johnston (committee), Rheinallt Hughes (manager), Gethin Lewis, Llyr Jones, David Buick, Jack Fagan, Neil Fagan (NZ manager). Below: Senior finalists Taelor Tarrant, Gabriel Winders, Ethan Fladgate, Callum Bosley. Bottom: Open finalists, Toa Henderson, David Buick, Jack Fagan, Dig Balme.



Above: You'd go a long way to hear the Welsh National Anthem (Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau) sung any better than this man's rendition at Waitomo Shearing Sports last month – maybe even back to the Millenium Stadium! Team manager Rheinallt Hughes got his team to within one point of victory. New Zealand (David Buick and Jack Fagan) 118.000 penalties beat Wales (Gethin Lewis and Llyr Jones) 119.000 penalties. (Buick conceded seven strokes on 20 sheep!)

RAIN FROM NOWHERE

His cattle didn't get a bid, they were fairly bloody poor,
What was he going to do? He couldn't feed them anymore,
The dams were all but dry, hay was thirteen bucks a bale,
Last month's talk of rain was just a fairytale,
His credit had run out, no chance to pay what's owed,
Bad thoughts ran through his head as he drove down Gully Road.

*"Geez, great Grandad bought the place back in 1898,
Now I'm such a useless bastard, I'll have to shut the gate.
Can't support my wife and kids, not like Dad and those before,
Crikey, Grandma kept it going while Pop fought in the war."
With depression now his master, he abandoned what was right,
There's no place in life for failures, he'd end it all tonight.*

There were still some things to do, he'd have to shoot the cattle first,
Of all the jobs he'd ever done, that would be the worst.
He'd have a shower, watch the news, then they'd all sit down for tea
Read his kids a bedtime story, watch some more TV,
Kiss his wife goodnight, say he was off to shoot some roos
Then in a paddock far away he'd blow away the blues.

But he drove in the gate and stopped – as he always had
To check the roadside mailbox – and found a letter from his Dad.
Now his Dad was not a writer, Mum did all the cards and mail
But he knew the writing from the notebooks that he'd kept from cattle sales,
He sensed the nature of its contents, felt moisture in his eyes,
Just the fact his Dad had written was enough to make him cry.

*"Son, I know it's bloody tough, it's a cruel and twisted game,
This life upon the land when you're screaming out for rain,
There's no candle in the darkness, not a single speck of light
But don't let the demon get you, you have to do what's right,
I don't know what's in your head but push the bad thoughts well away
See, you'll always have your family at the back end of the day.*

*"You have to talk to someone, and yeah mate, I know I rarely did
But you have to think about Fiona and think about the kids.
I'm worried about you son, you haven't rung for quite a while,
I know the road you're on 'cause I've walked every bloody mile.
The date? December 7 back in 1983,
Behind the shed I had the shotgun rested in the brigalow tree.*

*"See, I'd borrowed way too much to buy the Johnson place
Then it didn't rain for years and we got bombed by interest rates,
The bank was at the door, I didn't think I had a choice,
I began to squeeze the trigger – that's when I heard your voice.
You said, 'Where are you Daddy? It's time to play our game'
'I've got Squatter all set up, we might get General Rain.'*

*"It really was that close, you're the one that stopped me son,
And you're the one that taught me there's no answer in a gun.
Just remember people love you, good friends won't let you down.
Look, you might have to swallow pride and take that job in town,
Just 'til things come good, son, you've always got a choice
And when you get this letter ring me, 'cause I'd love to hear your voice."*

Well he cried and laughed and shook his head then put the truck in gear,
Shut his eyes and hugged his Dad in a vision that was clear,
Dropped the cattle at the yards, put the truck away
Filled the troughs the best he could and fed his last ten bales of hay.
Then he strode towards the homestead, shoulders back and head held high,
He still knew the road was tough but there was purpose in his eye.

He called his wife and children, who'd lived through all his pain,
Hugs said more than words – he'd come back to them again,
They talked of silver linings, how good times always follow bad,
Then he walked towards the phone, picked it up and rang his Dad.
And while the kids set up the Squatter, he hugged his wife again,
Then they heard the roll of thunder and they smelt the smell of rain.

© From *A Whole Lotta Muz* by Murray Hartin, (2010)



Phoebe Smith from Monroe USA was one of at least 26 overseas-based shearers competing in the intermediate grade at Golden Shears last month. (Admission – there are 27 towns or cities named Monroe in the USA and we can't remember which State Phoebe's from!) But if you're weak on geography, try some of these names: Morus Whalley from Llangaffo, Owen Martin-Jones from Llangollen, Bedwyr Siencyn from Tal-y-Bont, Paddy Dunne from Wicklow, Ruan Visagie from Bloemfontein, William Snowden from Drybrook, Evan Rowbotham from Pontrhydfendigaid, Lewis Mackay from Thurso, Daniel Kerr from Galashiels, Iwan Robert Ellis from Llanfyllin, Ethan Gellatly from Boyup Brook, Tristan White from Yearling, Kate Donald from Blairdrummond, Baasandorj Erdenetsogt from Mongolia. But Waomio Paewhenua from Masterton gives them a good run for their money!

The (amazing) handpiece

By Roger Leslie

I was shearing a huckery old ewe the other day and came across some fencing wire in the wool. The worm drive disengaged as expected and everything came to a safe and happy halt. In the past if I was lucky and didn't get injured by the inevitable lockup, I'd have put the sheep back in the pen for someone else (preferably the sheep owner) to remove the wire.

Now, as an old hobby shearer, I have time to deal with this myself, although it's still not easy hacking a section of 12.5-gauge high tensile wire out of a cotty fleece. As I hacked away, I thought of the ease the worm drive had dealt with disengaging me from potential harm.

I recalled only too well some of the lockups of the past and the mayhem a spinning handpiece could deal out on a shearing board. I remembered too, driving a fellow shearer to medical help while his inadequately bandaged arm dripped life blood onto the floor of my car. His recollection, after hitting a sneaky brass tag on the back of the right ear, was of the handpiece turning into a ravening monster. He had fended it away from his throat with his more expendable left arm.

The modern shearing handpiece is an amazing collection of advanced technology. We can easily forget those who strove to bring us this piece of engineering excellence. I purchased my first, a Sunbeam EB, in 1971, I still have it. I suspect, only I care about that.

When Fred Wolseley put together the first viable shearing machine in the early 1870s, there was no applause from the shearing community. Indeed there was anger and strike action (I love that oxymoronic phrase). With the help of John Howard, a mechanic, and the station blacksmith George Gray, he got a working model going.

It took a long time though, to convince the wool industry that this was a good idea. I, for one, am glad they persevered. The ingenuity of the whole unit, but particularly the front end of the handpiece has remained unchanged my entire shearing life (55 years). The parts of my old EB are interchangeable with the latest model on the market.

Many engineers and mechanical



bright sparks have looked at the handpiece and almost all agree, it shouldn't work as well as it does. They ask questions like: "What keeps the tension on? Why does the tension screw stay where you put it? Surely it vibrates too much to stay there? Why doesn't it get hot? You mean that fork body just sits on the centre post, with the tension pin pressing down on the front end while the other end is hanging in thin air? All this is driven from side to side by a crank head on the spindle?"

"Yes."

"Unbelievable."

I've crunched some numbers. My best model shored over 100,000 sheep. That's an average of 150,000 minutes where that assortment of metal parts has driven a cutter across the comb at constant pressure over 81 million times. All this without breaking down, falling to pieces or getting hot. All it required was a bit of oil in the barrel every run.

I'd take my hat off, if I wore one, to the genius of the people who were involved in the development of this finely tuned piece of equipment. The price has stayed relatively the same too. My EB cost \$45 at a time shearers got \$12.50 per hundred. I had to shear 400 sheep to pay for it.

Many Germans who watch the shearing are more fascinated with the intricacies of the handpiece than the

shearing itself. They are inclined to pick it up and fiddle with it as soon as my back is turned. They unscrew the tension nut just to see how it works. They pick it up by the downtube and wonder why I shout as it crashes to the floor.

On one memorable occasion a pig farmer with 20 sheep, stood on the handpiece while delivering a sheep to me. I winced and was about to check if it was ok when he picked it up, handed it to me, and turned the machine on, all in a fluid poetry of movement. The cutter had been displaced and the handpiece locked up, as they did in those days, and flew into a frenzy of spinning violence.

By the time I got it turned off again, the handpiece was dead. It was smashed beyond repair. He kept bringing little bits and pieces to me, hoping I'd be pleased with his part-finding prowess. I wasn't.

Another day, years later I was changing a cutter when a helpful spectator pulled the rope, engaging the handpiece. Unbelievably I retained all my fingers, but needed some repairs to a few of them. The rest of the crowd heaped condemnation on his head and asked him what he thought he was doing? He said he just wanted to see what the rope was for and how it all worked?

Don't we all?

DM Shearing moving on

By Gabriela Schmidt-Morrell

As some of you may have heard, some changes have occurred at Dion Morrell Shearing. Oh, no, we don't like change! But alas, so far, we coped. Read on for the DMS Whakapapa.

2006: Dion and Gabriela are given the opportunity to take on Snow Quinn's shearing run while living in Clyde. This work is based around Omakau, Poolburn and Maniototo. We feel forever grateful for this head start Snow gave us back then.

2009: We move to Alexandra and purchase Mt Ida Shearing from Damien and Philicia Jorgenson, based in Wedderburn. (For the old ones amongst us: This was formerly Stan Hiroti Shearing. Incidentally it was with Stan and Maree Hiroti, Dion did his first season of Pre-lamb shearing back in the early 1980s in Wedderburn)

2010: We purchase our first quarters: The old Poolburn Pub. We do it up a bit ... a lot. (My parents spend a few weeks fixing and building and it was thanks to them we managed to get it ready on time) We used it for the next six years as a base, kitchen and accommodation. We also re-opened it as the local pub for a few years and managed to keep the "Meeting place of the Valley" going.

2012: We purchase Blair Johnston Shearing, based in Heriot, a nice add on, creating more consistent work throughout the year. (For the older reader: Clutha Downs Station was part of that run, which is where Dion did his very first world shearing record in 1986: the still-standing, three-stand 9-hour crossbred ewe record with Chris Brooker and the late Rick Pivac).

2014 and 2015: We begin to buy and rent houses in Alexandra and make them our shearing quarters as our young crew increasingly prefer to live in town. (We name the houses by their number: people either lived at 48, 12 or 112.)

2016: We sell the Poolburn quarters, and everyone moves to Alexandra where we create our new base on 136 Earnscleugh Road. We build our meeting place and commercial kitchen there as well as a little shearing shed (thanks again to my father).

2018: We expand further with the purchase of Robertson Shearing plus quarters in Lawrence sold by Mouse and Jude. They stay for a while and help with the transition. The quarters is the old pub and was used for shearing quarters ever since its closing in the 1980s.

2019: We decide to fill our working gaps between seasons with a Northland run and purchase Paul Paikea's run in the Far North. This includes the most far north-placed sheep station plus Lochinver. A great option for our staff to have a working holiday and do some diving at the most beautiful beaches.

2019: Another opportunity presents itself and we purchase Michelle Shearing from Dick and Charmaine, based in Roxburgh. We reach 100 employees for the first time, things are getting busy....

Thankfully we get through Covid pretty well as an essential service for animal welfare. (This is where we come up with our DMS phrase: "We ride at dawn".) We feel very grateful for all our staff facing those challenges and carry on through to the now, January 2025.

Dion and I have decided that this is a good time for a change. We want to step back a bit and feel this is the right moment for new blood to take our business further. We are



Above: Gabriela and Dion at Lake Wanaka.

excited about the new structure that has been implemented and grateful to the new owners and our staff who made the change a breeze.

Jock Martin and Maree have taken on our Lawrence and Southland/ South Otago based clients and have added them to their existing run. Jock has been a shearing contractor for a few decades already. He has been involved in the shearing industry all his life, starting out as a presser and shearer on his brother's run. Dion used to work for him back in the day, and those two have been friends ever since. Jock was the first person to give me a job when I came to New Zealand from Switzerland via Australia, and he even was the best man at our wedding. Jock is using our quarters in Lawrence to base himself from.

Scott Cameron and Ashleigh, who have taken on the rest of the run: All the fine wool work, all sheds in the Maniototo, Poolburn basin, around Omakau, Moa Flat, Roxburgh and Teviot Valley. They are adding this to their existing shearing run based in Otama/Gore.

Scott Cameron is an Alexandra based local shearer. He is very well integrated and liked in our farming and shearing community. Scott has previous business experience with a crutching trailer, a dipping business and has been involved in the sheep industry for most of his life. He and his partner Ashleigh are the new generation shearing contractors bringing freshness and innovation to our area.

Both Jock and Scott have made a great start to their new business venture and we wish them great success on their journey as employers!

Our staff now has access to even more work between the two operators than they had with us. One of our main goals was always being able to provide 12 months work for local staff. And here we definitely have that.

Basing yourself with Scott and Jock pretty much guarantees work any month of the year, allowing you to stay home with your family, without having to leave up north or to Australia.

We recommend all current and past DMS staff to book in with Scott or Jock for the coming pre-lamb.

Much will stay the same in terms of the running of the business, the staff, and the clients. Dion will continue to be involved in a managerial role supporting Scott Cameron.

For myself, my focus is now on my Foot Reflexology business and Karate Dojo, both giving me a lot of joy. I probably won't have all that much to say anymore in the next *Shearing* magazine

Shearing contracting has been our life for almost 19 years. My kids don't remember a time we weren't DMS and have all been involved in the running and success of the business to varying degrees, various lengths and mixed levels of enthusiasm. It fills me with sadness to pass our work on, and yet I know it is the right thing for us. Change is good. (And for the ones wanting some memoirs, we still have some of our hoodies and singlets left at a discount since they are old hat now).

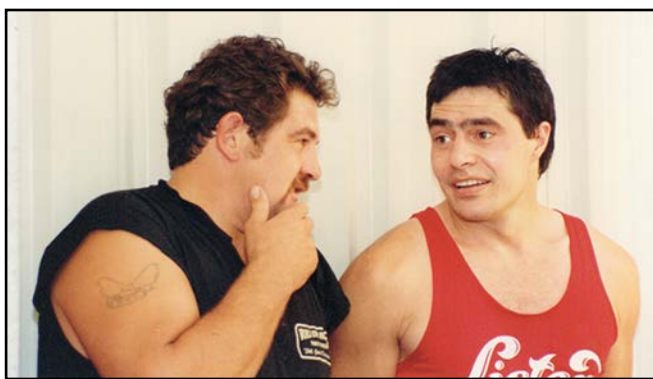
We thank everyone from the bottom of our hearts who have supported us over the years, have helped us out during difficult times, stepped up when it was needed, cut us some slack, trusted us with their work, showed flexibility, provided us with sheep to shear, came to us with their skill and workmanship, were loyal to us, went for the cut out, did all the ugly work, jumped on the empty stand, cooked breakfast at 4.30am, managed our run when we were away, backed our decisions, or just simply turned up on that dreaded Sunday morning.

We are nothing without you. You are DMS and it is you who made our business to what it was. Ka pai.

He aha te mea nui o te teihana kuti hipi? He tangata he tangata he tangata! (What is the most important thing in the shearing shed? It is the people, the people, the people.)



Above: Dion Morrell has had some fun along the way – for example, winning the New Zealand Merino Shears open championship three times (1996, 1997 and 2002) and making the final on nine other occasions. He also has an Australian national title among his souvenirs, in 1995, the year Sport Shear Australia was first established.



Above: From deep down in *Shearing* magazine archives (very deep down!) comes this image – are they plotting murder and mayhem, or just mayhem? Brendon Potae and Dion Morrell at Southern Shears, many years ago.



Above: This picture may be worth more than a thousand words (but let's not go there!). Dion Morrell receives his world record certificate from judge Doug Oliver, acknowledging the tally of 716 shorn at Wairaki Station on 1 February 1995. On a memorable night for Dion, he also made the Golden Shears open final for the first and only time, and was sixth in the National multi-breeds circuit final (Fred McSkimming Memorial Trophy, pictured below) (which he would win in 1997.)





Above: From left, Esther Paewai, Fayln Hoggard, James Mack and Ringakaha Paewai. Mainshear done and dusted, bagged and baled at Pongaroa.



Above: You can Hough and puff all the Bull you like, but we know that's not Ricci Riccitelli in the hooker's position.



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Above: Last day of shearing at Coryston Sheep Stud. 6900 ewes and 6500 lambs shorn by Ant Frew's Ewe Need Us Shearing. Early morning photo taken looking towards Timaru.

"A healthy person has a thousand dreams. A sick person only has one." (Robert F Kennedy Jnr).

'Pretty Boy' Meikle returns (and leaves) in style

By Des Williams

'Pretty Boy' Meikle – That was (sometimes commentator) Jerome McCrea's nickname for the young lad from Oamaru thirty years ago. Reasonably accurate too, you might agree after a glance at the two 'old' photos on this page.

In one, Justin is firmly clutching the RE O'Hara Memorial Trophy he won for best quality across the grades as junior champion at Golden Shears in 1993. In the other, two years later, he displays the pure wool ribbon handed out to winners at the New Zealand Merino Shearing championships. Justin was senior champion at Alexandra in 1995.

He also topped the Shearing Sports New Zealand senior national rankings that year, ahead of Grant Black, Nathan Stratford, Ken Fergusson, Jerome McCrea and others. (Way ahead of the afore-mentioned Jerome McCrea!)

And on that note of versatility, Justin Meikle can count himself among a fairly select little group of shearers who have won titles across the grades at Alexandra and Masterton: Brian Quinn, Alan Donaldson, James Fagan, and Leon Samuels among the big guns: Lane McSkimming and Meikle as seniors and several others – Brett Roberts also comes to mind.

Justin enjoyed a successful shearing sports career for several seasons – he made the national multi-breeds final at Masterton in 2004 and perhaps his biggest moment came at Canterbury Shears in 2006 when he won the New Zealand Corriedale championship. Two months prior to that he'd placed fifth in the New Zealand Merino Shears open final.

And then it seems, without farewell or fanfare he quietly disappeared from the competition stage to concentrate on his own farm and his sheep pregnancy scanning business. Not entirely forgotten, but gone anyway.

Come the start of the 2024-25 competition season and a youngster named Tye Meikle comes to the fore in junior competitions down South. Following in father's footsteps, makes the Junior final at Golden Shears and comes second, less than half a point from emulating 'Dad'.

So what has 'Pretty Boy' (now aged 51) been up to these past 20 years or so? Married to former prominent woolhandler Renee Hooper, the couple have three other children – Joel, 27, has enjoyed a successful career as a moto-cross rider, winning national age-group titles. Zeke has a digger contracting business and Zoe works as a beautician in Oamaru.

"Tye (aged 16) actually first picked up a handpiece about a year ago to help Barry Taylor [yep, that Barry Taylor!] crutch some merinos and then started helping me with the shearing of our own sheep and he took to the craft pretty quickly. When he showed interest in doing some competitions I thought I might as well have another go myself."

Justin runs about 12,000 sheep on his property and has always done the shearing himself – enough to 'keep his hand' in, albeit away from the public arena.

"Tye started winning some ribbons and I found myself enjoying the challenge again, perhaps even more so than years ago without the stress attached. Making the multi-breeds final at Golden Shears was a good example – I got up there with nothing to lose and came fourth, the same as I'd done twenty years ago. [He also made the SISOY final at Gore.]

"So, the plan is just to support Tye for the next little while, do some shearing myself and see where that takes us to."



Above: Justin Meikle with son Tye at Golden Shears 2025. The younger Meikle finished second in the junior final. **Below left:** Justin Meikle pictured in 1993 with a firm grasp on the RE O'Hara Memorial Trophy for best quality in a Golden Shears final, the year he won the junior championship. With him is Richard Tyree, who placed second that year. **Below right:** Justin Meikle two years later, New Zealand Merino Shears senior champion at Alexandra. Pretty Boy indeed!



Conference: 30 April 2025
Annual General Meeting: 1 May 2025

Venue: Rydges Latimer Christchurch

Theme for 2024: Thriving through change
Additional information will be emailed to
members before the AGM.

Contact The Secretary for further information or to
register/send apologies

contactus@nzshearing.co.nz

And in the 48 hours following that little chat (first day at the New Zealand Championships), the Tye and Justin Meikle journey actually took them to some exciting places! Tye won the New Zealand junior title and was named top-ranked junior shearer (14 wins from 21 attempts); Justin made the multi-breeds circuit final and finished fourth.

He then qualified easily into the Top 24 for the New Zealand open. He didn't make that final but heard his name pulled out of the hat as winner of the Pratt Motorcycles Can-Am-sponsored Outlander Pro quad bike. The speed and agility with which he flew from the hall floor to the stage and leaped aboard in triumph was a sight to behold.

Renee Hooper, meantime, took her place in the open woolhandling heats to prove her skills are undiminished (she still competes at some shows in the south). She didn't make the semifinals but who knows, maybe next year ...



Top: Renee Hooper in the open woolhandling at the New Zealand championships. She finished ahead of several hot favourites. **Above:** 'Pretty Boy' Meikle was 'Pretty happy' with his good fortune. Did he ride it home all the way to Oamaru?

Top: Where it began for Tye Meikle – sharing the board with former New Zealand fine wool champion (1992, 1998, 2003) Barry Taylor. **Above:** Where he has come to: Runner-up at Golden Shears; New Zealand junior champion 2025. (Judge Dawson Biggs.)



New Zealand Junior finalists 2025: Jack Fagan (committee), Tye Meikle, Jodeisha Kirkpatrick, Sonya Fagan, Riley Norman, Tom Clarkson, Trent Alabaster

Dr Clive remembers Dr 'Daddy' Dry

Dr Clive Dalton of Hamilton, one-time regular contributor to Shearing magazine and described on Google as a 'retired Animal Scientist', reflects on his association with Dr Francis William Dry, a geneticist who developed the Drysdale sheep breed. Dr Dry was:

- Born at Driffield, East Riding of Yorkshire, 23 October 1891. Attended Driffield Boarding School. Awarded scholarship to Bridlington Grammar School.
- B.Sc. (Leeds) 1913. Hons in Zoology (Class 1) 1914. M.Sc. (Leeds) 1914.
- Awarded Carnegie Scholarship to visit USA research institutions.
- Awarded Ackroyd Memorial Research Fellowship at University of Leeds 1921. D.Sc. (Leeds) 1925.
- 1928 appointed Senior Lecturer in agricultural zoology at the newly founded Massey Agricultural College, Palmerston North, NZ.
- 1929 established flock of hairy Romney sheep at Massey. Work finally reported in detail in 1955.
- Retired from Massey in 1956 and took up honorary fellowship in Department of Textile Industries at Leeds University.
- 1958 Hon Life Member of the NZ Society of Animal Production.
- 1961-62 specialty carpet wool production established under control of Massey College.
- 1963 returned to Palmerston North and continued work on fibre types.
- Hon D.Sc. (Massey University) 1966.
- Hon Fellow of Textile Institute, Manchester 1971.
- Awarded O.B.E. (1973).



Above: Dr Clive Dalton

- Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural Science (1976).
- Died Palmerston North 1979.

Generally known as 'Daddy' (but not to his face), Dr FW Dry lived and worked in the days of formality when, from school onwards, we males were only addressed by surnames. In some schools, girls got their surnames too, but more often these were preceded by 'MISS', said with cutting emphasis if they were in trouble.

So nicknames became very popular in this era – especially for much-loved and much-hated people we knew. So, apparently in Dry's early days he became 'Daddy' behind his back, but always Dr Dry to his face or if in the company of others. He never, ever said – 'Oh call me Francis, or Frank or whatever'. He liked to be addressed as Dr Dry.

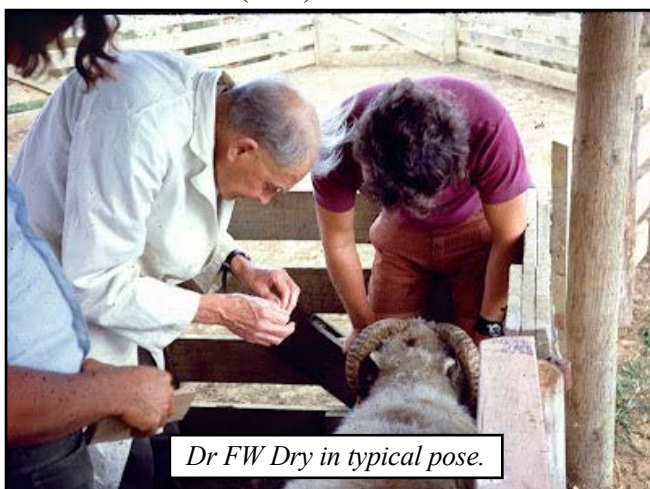
The term 'Daddy' apparently came from the fact that Mrs Dry always referred to him as 'Daddy', which he would have been called within the family made up of two children, Avis Mary who was a psychiatrist in Leeds, and David who was a photographer in Palmerston North. Both are deceased.

The F.W.Dry Memorial Award arose from a fund established in his memory, being founding lecturer in Animal Genetics and Wool Science at Massey Agricultural College, and a member of staff from 1928 to 1956.

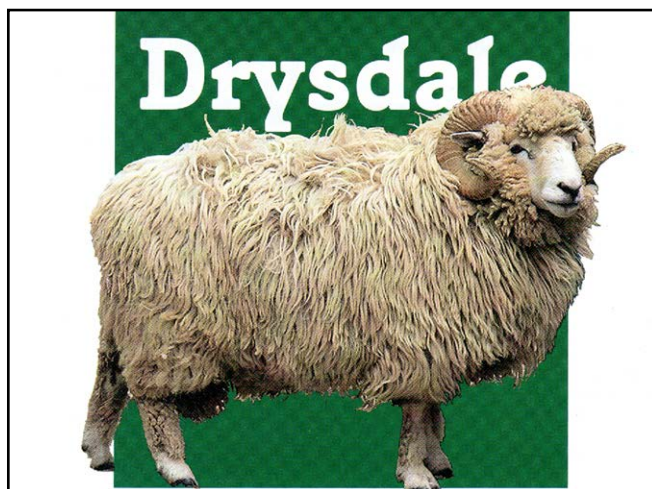
Daddy, being a good Yorkshireman, knew his cricket. When he was at Whatawhata we worked out that the carpet company UEB who had control of supplying heterozygous rams as well as homozygous ones. Using the heterozygous ones meant it took longer to produce the real high quality carpet fibre. I suggested to Daddy that he should contact the big cheeses at UEB and get stuck into them. His reply in his carefully chosen Yorkshire prose was: 'No, No, I think not. When I retired, there were two things I swore I would not do – one was to [not] step out of my crease, and the other was to [not] hit the ball in the air'!

[Sir Donald Bradman had a similar dictum: 'You can't be out caught if you don't hit the ball in the air'.]

In the 1970s – 80s Dry regularly attended the APS conferences and always sat in the very front row. At question time he would stand up, not being able to hear that someone else had grabbed the floor. He would sort of 'unfold' from his seat and always



Dr FW Dry in typical pose.



had the manners to half turn around to address the audience as he offered his 'observation – not a question Mr Chairman'. It was regularly about when the work had been done 40 years ago (which the current young scientist didn't know!) and how the answer was a lemon then too.

Once when chairing a session I stupidly handed him the microphone so we could hear his comments, and then had a hell of a job getting it back off him to shut him up. I was looking for the plug to pull it out.

'Thank you Dr Dry, Thank you Dr Dry, THANK YOU DR DRY', didn't seem to work! Lesson – never give Daddy the microphone.

Brown envelopes and black velvet: When ready for the field, Daddy always carried his set of gear in the deep inside pockets of his fading brown Gabardine raincoat. Any hope of it turning rain had long gone. His gear consisted of:

- One pair of surgical scissors with upturned points.
- A pack of brown 'government' envelopes held by a thick elastic band.
- Pointed tweezers.
- A piece of black velvet about six inches square to put on his knee to show up white fibres for inspection.
- Small lens.
- A sandwich

His headgear was either an English-

style cap or a gamekeeper's helmet with side flaps to tie under his chin if things got really rough.

I went to the station one evening and saw the lights on in the lab and there he was sorting his fibres into his famous 'arrays'. He had one fibre in a pair of tweezers when I went in and he held it there for at least half an hour of our discussions. I sort of followed him around the lab in our chat and he never let go of the fibre. I bet he knew into which 'array' it fitted – probably one of his favourite 'Super sickle fibres'.

When Daddy finally came back to New Zealand from Leeds, by then well into his 80s, he must have gone 'right daft' for an Yorkshireman who was always canny with his 'brass'. To everyone's amusement and amazement, he bought a brand new Raleigh 20! This bike with its small wheels, low crossbar and good sound carrier was 'top of the line' at the time. Everyone commented that Daddy clearly had no intentions of giving up the struggle for a while yet, which was true. None of the recorded anecdotes ever mentions Daddy driving a car.

The work on the genetics of the Drysdale had a pretty big effect on the viability of carpet manufacture in New Zealand at a time when carpeting and carpet yarn was difficult to market unless it contained about 10-20% of medullated wool. If the manufacturers

had continued to get their medullated wool from United Kingdom (often very poor stuff), they would not have lasted as long as they did. I suspect the farmers did not do as well out of the Drydales as the processors did.

Dry got very obsessed with fibre-type work and why he didn't move sideways to examine the validity of some of the theories he hatched needs to be considered. I guess his training in Zoology at a time when Zoology was an observation and classification-based science with little experimentation was a major factor.

Also, while he encouraged post-grad students to approach new people in other fields and to broaden the techniques available to them, he did little to try new techniques himself. Despite being a great conference attendee in New Zealand, he was fairly introverted, and this might have been a factor in his reluctance to move outside his comfort zone.

Mike Warman in his little booklet 'What Sheep is That' (GP Books 1991) described how the Drysdale breed had grown into something that has been called a "carpet on the hoof".

Largely because of that, and despite the fact the breed now exists in very low numbers, Dr 'Daddy' Dry's name has its rightful place in the annals of agricultural and New Zealand history.

* * * * *

Hec Oliver Trophy Goes Overseas Again

The late Hec Oliver (1922-2008), King Country shearer, farmer, long-time shearing judge and New Zealand Shearing championships life member, retired from judging in 1992. Prior to that Hec had, in 1990, donated a handsome silver cup to the New Zealand Championships to be awarded annually to the shearer with the highest [best] quality, irrespective of class.



In the 35 years since then, Dig Balme and Nathan Stratford have both won the trophy four times, Dean Ball three times and Conor Puha twice. And now, for just the second time ever, Hec's trophy has "gone overseas" – figuratively if not literally – to Welshman Gethin Lewis, who has been representing his country in the season's test series against New Zealand. (Australian Corey Mifsud won it in 2011.)

Names recorded on the silver cup are as follows: 1990 G Best. 1991 Edsel Forde. 1992 Dig Balme. 1993 Paul Grainger. 1994 Peter Lyall. 1995 James Fagan. 1996 Colin Thirkell. 1997 Rangi 'Bill' Nikora. 1998 Dion Morrell. 1999 Dig Balme. 2000 Dean Ball. 2001 Not recorded. 2002 D Smith*. 2003 Dean Ball. 2004 Dig Balme. 2005 Rowland

Smith. 2006 Dig Balme. 2007 David Hape. 2008 Nathan Stratford. 2009 Tama Niania. 2010 Dean Ball. 2011 Corey Mifsud (Australia). 2012 Not recorded. 2013 Jothan Rentoul. 2014 Conor Puha. 2015 Conor Puha. 2016 Whanake Whare. 2017 John Kirkpatrick. 2018 Nathan Stratford. 2019 Nathan Stratford. 2020 No competition. 2021 Nathan Stratford. 2022 No competition. 2023 Ant Frew. 2024 Reuben Alabaster. 2025 Gethin Lewis (Wales). * Douglas, Dino or Darren (Aust.)?



Above: Gethin Lewis, best quality shearer at Te Kuiti with team manager Rheinalt Hughes. Just the second overseas winner of the Hec Oliver Trophy in 35 years.

Tributes



Robert ("Rabbit") McLaren (1962-2025)

Prominent shearing referee, judge and recent national committee member Robert ("Rabbit") McLaren, passed away at his home near Ashburton on 1 February 2025.

Pictured above judging at the 2023 Golden Shears in Masterton, McLaren was a former open-class shearer, and renowned for his array of stories and tricks [his high-flying belly once seen, never to be forgotten] in the aftermatch setting, he had been a qualified judge for many years.

Just a few weeks past his 62nd birthday, Robert had officiated at both competition level and at world record attempts, including the most recent, that of Jamie Skiffington's bid for the solo nine-hour strongwool lambs record in Southern Hawke's Bay on 20 January 2025.

World Sheep Shearing Records Society secretary Hugh McCarroll said Robert McLaren had officiated at 20 world record attempts since December 2017, including 12 successful attempts in New Zealand, and successful attempts in all four in which he was the panel convenor in Australia.

"A special character who was highly respected by his fellow referees," McCarroll said.

Shearing Sports New Zealand chairman Sir David Fagan was at the Shear for Life fundraiser, barely five minutes from Robert's home when the fraternity learned of the death, thought to be from natural causes.

"Rabbit was to have been at the event but did not arrive," Sir David said. "The passing had come as a great shock to everyone at the event.

"He was an extremely competent and well-liked judge and referee, and this was a big event, in his home patch."

Sir David expressed condolences to McLaren's partner, Kathy, his three daughters, Nicole, Jessica and Emily.

(Doug Laing)



Richard Owen 'Blue' Stephens 1937-2025

'Blue' Stephens of Te Mata spent more of his 88 years on earth as a dairy farmer than he did as a shearer, but he was carried to his eternal rest in a woollen casket. True colours! Moving to the Waikato from Hawkes Bay at a young age, Blue spent the rest of his life at Te Mata, inland from Raglan.

He learned to shear sheep as a youngster and eventually became a contractor, which led to his becoming a foundation member of the Western Shears Committee in 1969 – along with Bren Vowles, Taff Rangiawha, Angus Wilson, Bob Curry, Owen Given and others who would devote the next 30 years or more helping run what became one of the most popular shows in the North Island.

Held annually on or about New Year's Day, the competition hosted the National Lamb Shearing championship from 1973 until its closure in 2011. That national title did much to attract the country's very best shearers to Raglan – the likes of Joe Ferguson, Tom Brough, Martin Ngataki, Jack Dowd, Rick Pivac, Ivan Rosandich and John Fagan all shore their way onto the Honours Board in the 1970s and 1980s. In later years David Fagan ruled the roost with brief incursions by Colin King, Edsel Forde and Paul Avery.

Speakers at Blue's funeral told attendees [the largest crowd seen at the Raglan Club in many a long year, according to club manager Craig Bridgeman] about a man who loved his family, loved his work and loved indulging in good-hearted mischief whenever he could. A man who contributed much to his community in all sorts of ways.

Blue was one of that now ever-decreasing band of shearers who attended the first Golden Shears in 1961, as a junior competitor. He attended many more years as well, loved taking part in the YFC Blue Ribbon event and made the final in 1965. He later served as a shearing judge, officiating at many competitions around the North Island.

Blue Stephens is survived by Eileen, his wife of 54 years and their grown children Helen, Wayne and Donald. Eileen Stephens served as secretary of Western Shears for many years and co-erced this writer into producing a Silver Jubilee publication (*Gone West for the Shearing*) in 1993.

(Des Williams)

Dutchmen doing it for Charity

In a unique and admirable effort, Dutch sheep shearing champions Johannes Kloosterman and Gerrit Crum are getting ready to shear for 24 hours straight for charity. This exceptional event is not only a testament to their skills and perseverance, but also a tribute to their determination to give something back to society.

Johannes and Gerrit, numbers one and two at the Dutch Sheep Shearing Championship, have decided to make this effort to raise money for the Dutch Cancer Society. Both men have been confronted with illness in their immediate environment, which made them feel the urgent need to contribute to the fight against cancer.

Event details:

- Date and Time: 23-24 May 2025, 11 am start 4:30 pm finish
- 24 hours non-stop
- Location: Sportweg Heerenveen (northern Netherlands)
- Program: twelve times two hours of shearing, with half hour breaks

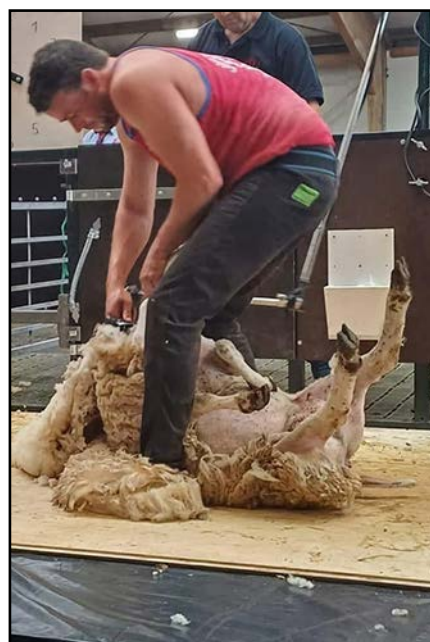
Says Johannes Kloosterman: "We not only want to show our skills, but also make a difference for those who really need it. Everyone can contribute, every sheep shearing counts."



Johannes Kloosterman.

Gerrit Crum adds: "The fight against cancer affects us all. This is our way of doing something. We hope that people will come and support us and donate to KWF" (Dutch Cancer Society).

These shearers urge all who can to come along, support this remarkable effort and contribute to a worthwhile cause. All proceeds from this event will go directly to KWF to support cancer research and the fight against cancer.



Gerrit Crum

During the event, the sheep of Schaapskudde By de Han will be sheared. By de Han grazes sheep in the municipality of Heerenveen and Fryske Marren. They think it is a great initiative to participate in.

(Item supplied by Johannes Kloosterman. He and Gerrit Crum represented The Netherlands at the 2023 world championships in Scotland and Johannes was also at Le Dorat in 2019.)



Above: The resident woolhandlers and front-of-the-house wool removers at the New Zealand championships. They certainly earn their volunteer's tickets.

Opposite: They came, they shored but could not quite conquer the top placegetters. Southern lads, minor place-getters Leon Samuels and Nathan Stratford enjoy an amusing moment during the presentations.



MOUNGANUI STATION

Photo Essay: Burton Mackintosh Shearing at Mounganui and Erewhon



Above: Team photo of the Taumarunui stay out crew working at Mounganui Station, Taihape 29th March 2025. Back row; Bert Van Den Bosch, Luke Turner Kino, Luke Mullins. Third row; Joe McCauley, Logan Burton (Ganger), Bailey McCarthy, Molly Scott, Everlyn Morrison. Second row; Millie Juland, Duke (dog), Shari Saies (Head Woolhandler), Joel Burton, Raefon Adams. Front row; Jedd Houppapa-Barrett, Coke (dog). **Below left:** Shearing and woolhandling action from Erewhon, January 2025. **Below right:** Sasha Burton and one of her learners working hard at the Erewhon table.





Above left: Taihape local shearers; Isiah Edwards, Atawhai Blackman, and Kiel Martin making sheep shearing look easy. **Above right:** Nothing like a bit of workplace competition for two Burton & Mackintosh Shearers. Danielle Fitzgerald and Joel Burton have both been employees of BMS since they started in the shearing industry. Starting off as a wool handler and presser to eventually working their ways to a stand. Not only do these two continue to progress, they are

motivated shearers who enjoy a race every so often to set the record straight on who is a cleaner shearer and who can shear more in an eight-hour day. In this image provided from mainshear, you see Danielle giving Joel a solid run for his money in the last run of the day working, 15 minutes south of Taihape, New Zealand. "These two have come a long way with their shearing career and continue to progress every season they return," says Charlie Burton, BMS Contractor.



Above: Some of Burton & Mackintosh foreigners enjoying a well deserved drink on Christmas Eve 2024 after a busy December. BMS is a diverse workplace employing a wide range of foreigners from England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Australia, South Africa, France, America, Italy and Mongolia. **Opposite:** Team work makes the dream work! BMS shearers helping a few of the Mongolian learner shearers get the hang of the correct shearing pattern and New Zealand sheep."

Profile: Multi-talented Shane Ratima

By Des Williams

Huntermville-based contractor Shane Ratima was born into a shearing family. His father, koro and uncles were all shearers and the whanau had its own run, doing many of the big sheds in the Taihape district. Then his father John Ratima had a run at Mangaweka and he also used to gang for Bob Leary, a big contractor in that area.

"I guess that's where it all started for me. When I was old enough I was dragged along to stayout sheds and would get there after breakfast for the second run, helping the presser with penning up and that sort of thing. My sister would be there too and half the time there would be a couple of young cousins in there as well. So we all just sort of grew up in that shed environment."

Shearing had to ask the obvious question – was Shane related to the rising star of All Black rugby, Cortez, son of Peter Lee Ratima and the Ratima family from Piopio/Aria? But apparently not.

"My grandmother told me my great-grandfather had just one name back in the day and that was 'Romana'. Then a teacher at school insisted that he had to have a surname and Christian name like everyone else and gave him the surname 'Ratima'.

"My early years were spent around Taihape and Mangaweka and then further south to rural Huntermville where I grew up on a farm and did my early primary school years there. Then I went to the Huntley Prep boarding school at Marton for two years, 1991 and 1992.

Being a boarding school, we had sports every day. Rugby was quite a big thing there as well as cricket and I started to excel at both sports. Then I went from Huntley to Palmerston

North Boys' High School (PNBHS) for the next five years from 1993 to 1997.

"I carried on my rugby and cricket activities there, playing age-grades until I was 16-years-old. Then I gave up chasing the little red ball and concentrated on my rugby. I was chosen for the Young Hurricanes while at High School and my coach was Joe Schmidt. He was just 'wow', you couldn't ask for a better coach at secondary school. He was outstanding, way before his time. Joe was an English teacher at PNBHS who later gave up teaching and became a full time coach. He went on to become coach of Ireland and the All Blacks and Wallabies.

"Joe led us to two national finals in what they call the Top Four – three teams from North Island regions and one from the South Island. We were from the Hurricanes region and had to play against Rotorua BHS from the Chiefs region. We beat them and then beat the top South Island team and ended up playing Kelston Boys. And they were just massive. They had a guy named Loki Crichton sitting on the bench! He was already playing provincial rugby for Counties-Manukau alongside Jonah Lomu and Joeli Vidiri and went on to represent Waikato and the Chiefs in Super Rugby and then the Samoan national team. We went down to them by 15 or 17 points. The following year we played against Wesley College and they were even bigger boys. We also lost to Auckland Grammar at U15 Colts level.

After leaving High School Shane went overseas with a mate for a couple of years and played some club rugby in England. He then made the North Midlands Under 19 team and they got through to a national final, playing against Northamptonshire. But it wasn't just any old final!

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Above: Shane Ratima competing at Waitomo Sports. He'd won the open final at Ohura a couple of weeks prior.

"We got to play the curtain-raiser to the England vs Australia test at Twickenham, on 28 November 1998. That was amazing, a boy coming from little old Hunterville in the central North Island to play on Twickenham, arguably the most famous rugby ground in the world. A rugby player's dream!"

"Before I went to England I'd been shepherding for four or five months on a property on the Parapara Road, up the river from Whanganui. Had a team of dogs, doing casual work. At that point in my life I didn't know how to shear a sheep, despite having spent those early years in and around the sheds."

Shane stayed on in the UK for a few months after his rugby experience and had a look around Europe. He was intending to stay longer but then started to get a bit homesick so he came home to Hunterville. He got a job pressing for a local gang down in Mangaweka and started doing a few last sides and that sort of thing, but still didn't have much idea about how to get around a sheep with handpiece in hand.

"Then my Dad at the time was living in Western Australia, about three hours east of Perth so I went over there and did some tractor driving to start with, before getting a job pressing with Dad's contractor. He started teaching me how to shear merinos, so I started off my shearing career doing fine wool sheep. When I came back to New Zealand I did my first shearing course with WoolPro at Longburn. Russell Knight, Peter Taylor and Robin Middleton were the instructors, also Bill Birdsall. So that was my first course and from there I got a stand with Rewa Shearing at Hunterville and my life has revolved around shearing from there, really."

In between these busy episodes in Shane's life he spent some time as a 'scarfie' at the University of Otago, studying Te Reo Maori and law with ambitions of becoming a te reo-speaking lawyer. Many Treaty of Waitangi claims were being heard by the Waitangi Tribunal at the time.

"Then after some time pursuing those studies I realised I was better equipped for life around sheep and the people of the shearing industry than I was for suit and tie and life in the office of some law firm in Auckland.

"I was back north having a beer in our local pub one night and a local contractor, Henare Potaka asked me if I was going back to University. I said yes and he then suggested I take



Above: Shane Ratima, NZSCA Executive member.

over his shearing run instead. He had operated an open run for a long time with one gang and had some good shearers working for him.

"So, I bought the run from Henare in April 2005 and suddenly had the responsibility for getting 90,000 sheep shorn and by the time mainshear came around I'd picked up another 25,000 sheep. I've continued to steadily grow from there and here we are 20 years later with 300,000.

"I inherited all the old workers, including Disraeli (Dessie) Downs. I ended up working with Dessie for about ten years and over time he seemed more like an uncle to me than an employee. A real gentleman, a pleasure to have around.

In between shearing sheep and organising gangs, Shane has found time to get involved with rugby coaching at provincial level for the Whanganui and Manawatu Turbos. His Whanganui teams won the Meads Cup twice (2015-2016), he got to work with Hurricanes players, including Aaron Smith, and associating with top coaches, including John Plumtree. He harboured thoughts of looking for coaching roles overseas in the UK or Japan but then thought better of it. "It was time to knuckle down with the shearing again!"

"Business-wise I'm quite happy with where things are at the moment. After the run started to expand I got to the

point where I needed some help with employment laws and issues because big changes were taking place. That's when I joined the NZ Contractors' Association, where the likes of Peter Lyon, Jamie McConachie and Jock Martin were so helpful. They brought out this accreditation programme called ShearNZ – there were about seven or eight of us that signed up for it at the start. We had to tick all these boxes about employment, health and safety and what have you. Things that were all new and strange then but have become standard operating procedures now.

"Back then most contractors didn't even use employment contracts, and neither did we. People wanting jobs were just given an IRD form to fill out with their bank account and they were paid each pay day.

"I've really enjoyed my involvement with the Association and have been a member of the executive committee since 2013. From the Association you learn much more than just being a shearing contractor. Many of the guys have been doing it for years and they have great knowledge of business practice and different ways of managing a business, managing staff. We are all in the same boat so if you find yourself with a problem or having a bad day you can just get on the phone to another member and talk things through and find solutions."

As the business has grown, Shane has found himself shearing less sheep than before on a daily basis but last year decided to "have a go" at a shearing world record. On 18 December 2024, after a strenuous build up of some months duration, he teamed up with Jimmy Samuels (Marton) and Akuhata Waihape (Tuatapere) for an attempt on the world record three-stand strongwool lambs tally of 1976 set by Coel L'Huillier, Kaleb Foote and Daniel Langlands in 2019.

Shearing at Ferndale Station near Hunterville and needing to average 495 per run among the three of them, or 165 each, the marks never quite came within reach on the day and the attempt was abandoned during the third run, though Shane completed the run for 166, adding to his morning tallies of 164 and 166. Shane was matching the required pace which suggests there maybe some 'unfinished business' in that space (as David Fagan once said!)

Shane has recently added the role of commentator to his repertoire of skills.

Though he had, some years ago provided commentary at local speedshears, he found himself thrust into filling a real-deal commentary position at Marton's Rangitikei Shears in February this year.

"The people at Marton asked if I could help out so I agreed. Then it seems [leading North Island commentator] Tuma Mullins heard me on the live-stream from Marton and must have been impressed because he invited me to do some commentary work at Golden Shears. So it was really cool being able to do that and as an experience I'd put it right up there with my past involvement with our top rugby coaches.

"Being able to call the open final with 'experienced old hands' like Norm Harraway and Gerald Spain, and then doing the same at the New Zealand championships has been a rapid rise but it's something I really enjoy doing, focusing on improving the viewer or listener's understanding of what's happening up there on the stage."

It was the same Norm Harraway at the recent New Zealand championships who suggested that some people can multi-task and some can not. [He may have been referring to 'she who must be obeyed' at home.] But for one who can, he need have looked no further than the man sitting beside him in the commentary box. The multi-talented, multi-tasking Shane Ratima.

One recalls NZ Shearing Contractors' Association life member Ron Davis (Balclutha) echoing that sentiment years ago when he said that being a shearing contractor gave you excellent qualifications for just about any other business or task you might wish to take on.

Postscript: Shane's son Orlando Ratima (coming up 19) has been shearing at competitions for the past two seasons. He was runner up in the junior final at Golden Shears last year and made six other finals, including a win at the Hawkes Bay Autumn Shears.

That success saw him promoted to the intermediate grade but he is now working as a builder for Delaney Construction at Palmerston North and only made it to three shows this season – Apiti, Golden Shears (made the semis) and Te Kuiti, where he and Shane were finalists in the Whanau Teams event.

Shane's daughter Brenna, still at High School, has tried her hand at some novice woolhandling this season.



Top: Shane Ratima calling the action at the New Zealand championships last month. **Above:** Shane was himself very much among the action at Te Kuiti, competing in the open championship and making the top 24 for quarter-finals, and also in the Whanau Teams event with son Orlando, finishing 'among the money'.

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'Toa-nado' does the big double

By Doug Laing (Shearing Sports NZ)
Northland shearer Toa Henderson dispatched 25 second-shear sheep in under 20 minutes to complete a 2025 Golden Shears and New Zealand Championships Open titles double in Te Kuiti last month.

Nick-named the 'Toa-nado' by the Shears commentary team, Henderson won his first Golden Shears final over 20 sheep, in Masterton four weeks ago and stepped up to a new challenge by shearing the first 25-sheep final in more than three decades in 19m 57.44s. He averaged 49.64 seconds a sheep caught, shorn and dispatched to finish 28.65 seconds before next-man-off Mark Grainger, of Te Kuiti.

He was a total of 49.08s ahead of Scottish shearer and Southern Hawke's Bay farmer Gavin Mutch, who made the pace early and hung-on to claim second place, Henderson winning by 1.534pts, with a further 0.274pts back to Marlborough shearer Angus Moore in third place.

Mutch had earlier in the night mastered the merinos, second-shear ewe and lambs of the New Zealand Shears Circuit final to claim his biggest Southern Hemisphere win after his 2012 World Championship and 2015 Golden Shears Open win, both in Masterton.

Mutch shore the 15 mixed-sheep in 14m 9.59s and won by 2.174pts from next-man-off Grainger, who, because the winner is ineligible for New Zealand selection on a nationality basis, will with Henderson make-up the New Zealand team for test matches in the UK in July.

Their thunder was all-but stolen, however, by Southern Hawke's Bay mum Laura Bradley who completed the most successful season ever by a female shearer, by beating her five male opponents in the Senior shearing final, to become the first female to win either the Senior or Intermediate final in Te Kuiti.

Earlier in the day she won the Junior woolhandling final, and on Friday night she had completed her second Golden Shears-New Zealand Shears women's finals double.

Although finishing just fourth in the Golden Shears Senior final a month ago, Bradley has won twelve finals this season, to go with four from last season and as a result will she will top the Shearing Sports New Zealand senior shearing national rankings and become the first woman promoted to Open class on the basis of competition performances. She will also be promoted to Senior class in woolhandling, after four wins in Junior events this season.



Above: Toa the Toa-nado Henderson in full-force gale mode.

Below: Laura Bradley, too good for all the senior shearers.



Keryn Herbert, of Te Kuiti, retained the Open woolhandling title, after winning the event last year for the first time in more than 20 years of trying, with Logan Kamura, of Marton the runner-up. Motueka-based Joel Henare, who four weeks ago won his 10th consecutive Golden Shears Open title, was fourth. Herbert has won more than 60 Open woolhandling titles.

Friday night belonged to Te Kuiti shearer Jack Fagan who won the North Island Shearer of the Year (NISOY) final and with Buick completed a 3-0 series win over the Wales team of Llyr Jones and Gethin Lewis, as well as being in the Balme and Sons team that won the contractors teams final.

Fagan, who won the Shears Circuit final last year, has been shearing in the Open class for 12 years, had been in the NISOY final a few times, had his “arse kicked” a few times, and was starting to wonder if he would ever win it.

Fagan was runner-up in the South Island Shearer of the Year final won by Dipton shearer Corey Palmer in Gore on 14 February.

Buick combined with Henderson and Masterton shearer David Gordon for a win by almost four points in the inter-island match, having also won the match in Gore six weeks ago.

Oamaru teenager Tye Meikle will end the 2024-2025 shearing sports season with more wins than any other competitor in any grade.

His win in the Junior final in Te Kuiti on Friday was the 16-year-old's 14th in his season of 21 finals at 21 venues from Winton in the south to Whangarei in the North over the 22 weeks of competition, with one more left, the national lamb shearing championship in Fairlie on Easter Monday.

The win over five sheep each was a near head-to-head North-South match with Gisborne teenager Jodiesha Kirkpatrick, the winner of 11 of her 20 finals.

The Novice shearing championship attracted 17 entrants, with four of the six girls in the event making the final of six shearers. But they had to ultimately concede the point, with James Anderson, 21, claiming the red ribbon 0.751pts from the runner-up, and only other male shearer Sam Lawson, of Onga Onga. Anderson had had just one previous win, at the Waitomo Caves Sports Shears the previous week, and said he shears only the sheep on the farm with Dad and mentor Nigel. “Thanks Dad,” he said in the short victory speech. Third – and first of the female quartet – was Jessica Lusby, of Matiere. Shortly beforehand the young ladies domination went even further, in an inter-island development teams match won by the all-female King Country team of Sarah Bryant, of Arohena, Chloe Bingham, of Pukekawa, and Sonya Fagan, of Te Kuiti.



Above: Keryn Herbert, New Zealand open woolhandling champion for the second time.

They scored victory by almost 13pts over the North Canterbury-Marlborough competitions representatives, of whom top-performing Junior shearer Tye Meikle was the only male among the six shearers on the board. Meikle took top individual honours, but beat the second-best, Bryant, by less than three-tenths of a point.

RESULTS 39th New Zealand Shearing Championships at Te Kuiti on March 27-29, 2025:

Shearing:

International (20 lambs): New Zealand (David Buick 15m30.64s, 56.932pts; Jack Fagan 15m 51.86s, 57.643pts) 114.575pts, beat Wales (Llyr Jones 15m 28.97s, 58.599pts; Gethin Lewis 15m 52.97s, 60.599pts) 119.198pts. New Zealand won the Wools of New Zealand Series 3-0.

Inter-Island (10 sheep): North Island (Toa Henderson 8m 36.09s, 33.305pts; David Gordon 9m 32.23s, 34.012pts; David Buick 9m 15s, 35.05pts) 102.367pts, beat South Island (Casey Bailey 9m 12.97s, 32.949pts; Angus Moore 8m 36.16s, 36.308pts; Corey Palmer 9m 38.16s, 37.008pts) 106.265pts.

New Zealand Shears Circuit (15 sheep – 5 merinos, 5 second-shear ewes, 5 lambs): Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Dannevirke) 14m 9.59s, 54.146pts, 1; Mark Grainger (Te Kuiti) 14m 27.73s, 56.32pts, 2; Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 15m 19.38s, 57.169pts, 3; Casey Bailey (Riverton) 15m 34.94s, 57.68pts, 4; Justin Meikle (Oamaru) 14m 41.59s, 58.28pts, 5; Brett Roberts (Mataura) 16m 26.8s, 64.206pts, 6.

North Island Shearer of the Year (20 sheep - 10 ewes, 10 lambs): Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 14m 55.83s, 54.092pts, 1; David Buick (Pongaroa) 15m 20.84s, 54.142pts, 2; Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Dannevirke) 15m 38.7s, 54.335pts, 3; John Kirkpatrick (Pakipaki) 16m 23.03s, 56.302pts, 4; Paerata Abraham (Masterton) 16m 9.77s, 58.789pts, 5; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 17m 20.45s, 59.523pts, 6.

New Zealand Shears Open final (25 sheep): Toa Henderson (Kaiwaka) 19m 57.44s, 69.592pts, 1; Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Dannevirke) 20m 46.52s, 71.126pts, 2; Angus Moore (Ward) 21m 21.59s, 71.4pts, 3; Mark Grainger (Te Kuiti) 20m 26.09s, 72.105pts, 4; Leon Samuels (Roxburgh) 21m 6.78s, 72.379pts, 5; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 22m 42.09s, 74.225pts, 6.



Above: Newsflash: A special breed of sheep known as 'Fliers' are being specially bred for use in future top class shearing events. Will they be ready for the 2026 world champs?

New Zealand Shears Senior final (12 sheep): Laura Bradley (Papatawa) 13m 16.8s, 48.10pts, 1; John Cherrington (Oamaru/Ngaruawahia) 13m 13.95s, 48.115pts, 2; Taelor Tarrant (Taumarunui) 12m 44.16s, 50.875pts, 3; Gabriel Winders (Kakanui) 12m 57.42s, 51.037pts, 4; Bruce Grace (Wairoa) 13m 52.78s, 51.389pts, 5; Callum Bosley (England/Otorohanga) 12m 56.81s, 6.

New Zealand Shears Intermediate final (8 sheep): Keahrey Manson (Piopio) 10m 28.41s, 37.546pts, 1; Ryka Swann (Wairoa) 9m 37.78s, 38.514pts, 2; Sarah Bryant (Arohena) 10m 49.23s, 40.337pts, 3; Hamuera Henderson (Kaiwaka) 10m 40.64s, 42.657pts, 4; Josh Balme (Otorohanga) 12m 3.39s, 43.545pts, 5; Owen Martin-Jones (Wales) 11m 24.84s, 43.742pts, 6.

New Zealand Shears Junior final (5 sheep): Tye Meikle (Oamaru) 6m 29.3s, 27.265pts, 1; Jodiesha Kirkpatrick (Gisborne) 7m 23.81s, 28.191pts, 2; Sonya Fagan (Te Kuiti) 7m 7.52s, 30.776pts, 3; Riley Norman (Eketahuna) 8m 0.72s, 31.836pts, 4; Tom Clarkson (Martinborough) 6m 54.41s, 33.521pts, 5; Trent Alabaster (Taihape) 8m 47.09s, 36.905pts, 6.

New Zealand Shears Novice final (2 sheep): James Anderson (Pukeatua) 7m 26s, 29.3pts, 1; Sam Lawson (Onga Onga) 6m 41.02s, 30.051pts, 2; Jessica Lusby (Matiere) 6m 30.3s, 3; Holly Bird (Taihape) 8m 41.36s, 35.568pts, 4; Aimee Atkin (Eketahuna) 7m 40.27s, 36.514pts, 5; Briar Joines (Kawhia) 7m 24.58s, 38.729pts, 6.

Women's final (6 sheep): Laura Bradley (Papatawa) 7m 45.39s, 28.103pts, 1; Sarah Bryant (Arohena) 8m 17.95s, 32.064pts, 2; Jodiesha Kirkpatrick (Gisborne) 8m 35.95s, 35.132pts, 3; Lydia Thomson (Rangiora) 10m 4.05s, 39.203pts, 4; Sonya Fagan (Te Kuiti) 8m 55.84s, 39.79spts, 5; Ashlin Swann (Wairoa) 11m 36.14s, 47.307pts, 6.

Development teams relay (2 sheep each): King Country (Sarah Bryant 3m 23.14s, 19.657pts; Chloe Bingham 4m 53.55s, 23.278pts; Sonya Fagan 3m 10.28s, 25.014pts) 67.849pts, beat North Canterbury-Marlborough (Tye Meikle 3m 47.3s, 19.365pts; Holly Crombie 4m 23.22s, 28.661pts; Ella Caves 3m 11.2s) 80.586pts.

Local Contractors Relay (10 sheep): Balme and Son (Digger Balme, Jack Fagan, Josh Balme) 10m 44.05s, 37.903pts, 1; D and H Shearing 10m 59.58s, 39.879pts, 2; C.T.Shearing 10m 43.13s, 40.257pts, 2; Barrowcliffe Shearing No 1 11m 41.94s, 40.697pts, 4; Taumata Shearing 11m 30.11s, 43.206pts, 5; Monk Shearing No 2 11m 23.48s, 48.374pts, 6.

Whanau Dads and Sons (6 sheep): David Fagan/Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 6m 28.33s, 28.084pts, 1; David Buick/Michael Buick (Pongaroa) 7m 31.52s, 30.076pts, 2; Digger Balme/Josh Balme (Otorohanga) 7m 46.98s, 31.182pts, 3; Justin Meikle and Tye Meikle (Oamaru) 7m 9.16s, 31.624pts, 4; Riki Alabaster and Reuben Alabaster (Taihape) 7m 22.34s, 32.451pts, 5; Shane Ratima and .Orlando Ratima (Hunterville) 8m 3.78s, 36.022pts, 6.,

Woolhandling:

Open final (6 sheep): Keryn Herbert (Te Kuiti) 58.592pts, 1; Logan Kamura (Marton) 68.742pts, 2; Pagan Rimene (Alexandra) 77.92pts, 3; Joel Henare (Gisborne/Motueka) 78.16pts, 4; Marika Braddick (Eketahuna) 88.49pts, 5.

Senior final (5 sheep): Kelly Barrett (Kawhia) 91.4pts, 1; Amy Bell (Weber) 99.99pts, 2; Te Whetu Brown (Wairoa) 114.74pts, 3; Alice Otimi (Taumarunui) 119.96pts, 4; Sonya Fagan (Te Kuiti) 120.554pts, 5.

Junior final (4 sheep): Laura Bradley (Papatawa) 1; Jayda Millanta (Te Kaha/Tauranga) 2; Paige Marshall (Te Awamutu) 3; Jodiesha Kirkpatrick (Gisborne) 4; Ffion Haf Jones (Wales) 5.

Novice final: Opal Ramsay-Houpapa (Pongaroa) 1; Harry Tipene Jones (-) 2; Cordell Boyd (Taumarunui) 3; Marieke Muller (Otorohanga) 4; Gwen Rata (Taumarunui) 5.



Top descending: King Country development team; Chloe Bingham, Sarah Bingham and Sonya Fagan with Heidi Monk (committee). North Canterbury-Marlborough development team; Tye Meikle, Holly Crombie and Ella Caves. Three Monks all in a row during the junior shearing heats; Hamish, Phoebe and Angus. Job done: Hamish, Phoebe and Angus. Phoebe is 18 and the boys are 15-year-old twins.

New Zealand Championships Photo Gallery



Top left: New Zealand open finalists from left: Toa Henderson, Gavin Mutch, Angus Moore, Mark Grainger, Leon Samuels and Nathan Stratford. **Top right:** "All this and the Ringer's Cup!" Toa Henderson's unbridled joy.



Middle left: Welsh team manager Rheinallt Hughes demonstrates the ancient craft of blade shearing with Dig Balme commenting. **Middle right:** The Mongolian contingent at Te Kuiti. From left (English names): Ariuka, Moko, Bodra, Toni Brough, Paul Brough, Anje and Sambuu.



North Island Shearer of the Year finalists, from left: Sponsor PGG Wrightson, Jack Fagan, David Buick, Gavin Mutch, John Kirkpatrick, Paerata Abraham and Nathan Stratford.



Shearing judges at New Zealand Championships 2025, from left: Russell Knight, Rheinallt Hughes (Wales), Colin Jay, Paul Avery, Richie Maguire, Steve Manson, Ed Morrow, Gordon Duxfield, Dawson Biggs, Vanessa Weily, Greg Stuart, Ronnie King, Bart Hadfield and David Hodge.



Woolhandling judges at New Zealand Championships 2025, from left: Linda Tarrant, Rochelle Ashford, Ian Hopkirk, Kelly Frisby, Bo Paku-Clark, Heidi Middleton, George Hawkins, Gail Haitana, Holly Tarrant, Jo Hopkirk, Libby Alabaster.



Above: Novice shearing finalists at New Zealand championships, from left: Briar Joines, Aimee Atkin, Holly Bird, Jessica Lusby, Sam Lawson, James Anderson, Dig Balme and Stacie Fagan. Opposite: Mark Grainger shearing his way into a meritorious second placing in the New Zealand Shears multi-breeds circuit final.





Above: Dig Balme receives the Lance Waddell Trophy (from Lance) for outstanding voluntary service to shearing sports.



Above: From one vice-president to another – Alan MacDonald presents Stacie Fagan with the Keith and Maureen Wilkie Memorial trophy for outstanding service as a committee member.



Above: Open woolhandling finalists, from left: Sponsor (Wools of New Zealand), Marika Braddick, Joel Henare, Pagan Rimene, Logan Kamura and Keryn Herbert.



Above: Charlotte Stuart (Middlemarch) competing in the open woolhandling.



Above: Heidi Monk (Monk Shearing, sponsor), Laura Bradley, Jayda Millanta, Paige Marshall, Jodeisha Kirkpatrick and Ffion Jones (Wales).

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- Ihakara 'Ike' Robin (1886-1968)
- Bill Vella (1886-1971)
- George Stuart (1890-1953)
- Bill Higgins (1894-1939)
- Johnny Hape (1900-1969)
- Percy de Malmanche (1902-1968)
- Bill Richards (1907-1995)
- Claude Waite (1911-2000)
- Bill Meech (1914-1985)
- Ivan Bowen (1915-2007)
- Les Richards (1917-2000)
- Godfrey Bowen (1922-1994)
- Bing Macdonald (1928-2004)
- Makaore Potae (1934-2001)
- Ken Pike (1938-****)
- Barbara Marsh (1943-2014)
- Mavis Mullins (1956 -****)
- Keith Wilson (1957-****)
- Darin Forde (1965-****)

Objective category: World individual or teams shearing championship winner supported by at least three major New Zealand titles:

- Roger Cox 1977; Golden Shears 1977-78, 1980; Southern Shears 1974-79 incl.
- Brian Quinn 1980; Golden Shears 1965, 1967-68, 1970, 1971, 1972; NZ Merino Shears 1968, 1970, 1978-79.
- Martin Ngataki 1980; Golden Shears 1979; National Lamb Shear (Raglan) 1977, 1978, 1979.
- Peter Casserly 1980; NZ Golden Blades 1975-76; Omarama Merino Shears 1995.
- Colin King 1984; Golden Shears 1982, 1987-88; National circuit six times.
- John Fagan 1984; Golden Shears 1984, National Lamb Shear (Raglan) 1981, 1984, 1985.
- David Fagan 1988, 1992, 1996, 1998, 2003; Golden Shears 16 times; NZ Open 16 times.
- Tony Dobbs 1988; Golden Blades 20 times.
- Paul Avery 2008; Golden Shears 2005, 2007; NZ Open 1995, 2000, 2007.
- Rowland Smith 2014; Golden Shears eight times; NZ Open eight times.
- John Kirkpatrick 2017; Golden Shears 2002, 2008, 2011-12; NZ Open 2008-09, 2012.
- Nathan Stratford 2017; New Zealand Merino Shears 2006, 2009, 2016, 2018, 2021.



TE TAURA WHIRI
I TE REO MĀORI
MĀORI LANGUAGE COMMISSION



Whakataetae Kutihipi Kupu Pakeha

Judges
Competitors
Get set
Go
Commentator
Time keeper
Wool handler
Sheep-O
Presser
Grandstand
Belly
Long blow
Crutch
Smoko
Sponsors
Spectator
Entertainment

Shearing Show Kupu Maori

Kaiwhakawā
Kaiwhakataetae
Kia rite
Tukua
Kaipaōho
Kaitatau-wā
Pirihiō / Kaiwūru
Hīpō
Kaiperehi
Taunga Mātaki
Takapū
Kuti roa
Waru
Paramanawa
Kaitautoko
Hunga Mātakitaki
Whakangahau

Taukutihipi Kupu Pakeha

Sheep
Wool
Shearing
Shorn
Shearing Plant
Handpiece
Cutters
Moccasins
Grinder
Pendulum
Sand paper
Glue
Fadge
Broom
Catchingh pen
Wool Press
Sheep truck

Shearing Industry Kupu Maori

Hipi
Wūru
Kuti
Kutia / Morea
Wahi Kutikuti
Mau Kutikuti
Kututi
Hiripa
Pehu
Taima Tārere
Pepa Whakamaene
Kāpea
Pēke wūru
Puruma / Tahitahi
Taiwhanga
Perēhi wūru
Taraka Hipi