

Shearing

Promoting our industry, sport and people

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Chloe Ransfield (Peter Lyon Shearing Ltd) launches the Golden Fleece at Matarae Station, Central Otago



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UNDER COVER STORY

Greetings readers and Facebook followers and welcome to this 116th edition of *Shearing* magazine, No 3 of Vol. 40.

Eminent New Zealand poet Brian Turner once wrote a little verse about cricket. It's a game, he says, about which you can know very little, and say just about anything, and be right sooner or later. As a brother to Glenn Turner, our champion batsman of the 1970s, Brian probably had more insight than most into his subject.*

You might say the same about about (the alleged) climate change. There are those who claim it to be the real deal ("trust the science") and there are those who claim it to be a giant hoax. Bullshit, in other words. This writer counts himself among the latter skeptics, having put his faith in the findings and opinions of several eminent scientists brave enough to put their names to their opinions. (Lindzen, et al.)

America's President-elect is also among those who consider it a hoax and Donald J Trump has indicated his country will cease to spend billions of dollars on 'climate change' and the reduction of 'carbon emissions' when he takes office in January 2025.

Could this result in some benefit to New Zealand agriculture? If America is no longer concerned about the 'carbon footprint' attached to its imported goods and produce from animal agriculture and pastoral farming, should New Zealand also be less concerned? Perhaps all our 'carbon farms' can be returned to running sheep and cattle again? Land producing real food instead of the manufactured crap that Bill Gates and his cronies at the Davos-based World Economic Forum would have us eating if they can ever implement their New World Order. Mr Trump will almost certainly tell them where to stick their NWO, along with their alleged climate change.

Just some idle thoughts from a simple Southland country boy who would rather see our "grand hills for sheep" again dotted with woolly beasts instead of pine trees. Call him a fool if you wish! But hey – I still believe in Santa Claus! Happy festive season dear readers, see you in April 2025.

* *Taking Off. Poems by Brian Turner, VUP 2001.*

*Ka kite ano
Nga mihi, Des Williams*

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The Revered Mister Black

By Marg Forde

When Peter Black (Ngati Kahungunu) was approached to agree to a submission being made for him to enter the Australian Shearers' Hall of Fame his reaction was predictable: "Na, that's not me, you know I'm a background sort of person."

However, Peter's friends responsible for the nomination showed that knowing him well meant something of the man had rubbed off on them; they persisted.

On 5 October 2024 Peter William Black (73) - Australian citizen – became the first New Zealand-born inductee into the Australian Shearers' Hall of Fame at the Shear Outback facility in Hay, NSW. The Hall of Fame was established in 2002 when five shearers, including the legendary late Jackie Howe, were inducted. Since then, after careful consideration by a nationally represented committee, four to five shearers have been inducted every two to three years. The other four inductees with Peter this October were Damien Boyle, Peter Orcher (the third indigenous Australian inductee), Brian Sullivan and Alan Williams.

Hall of Fame Citation

The official citation for Peter's induction read: "Peter has had a lifetime of involvement in the shearing industry as a shearer, trainer, advisor, judge and software development. Peter managed/coached the Australian Shearing and Woolhandling team at three World Championships. Quick to apply technology to the betterment of shearing he developed the website shearingworld.com and also created the app LOJIK Shearing."

Peter dedicated his honour to his father the late John Black, an Australian Infantryman in WW2, who served in the Middle East and Papua New Guinea.

John Gordon Black AIF VX3652
Australian Infantry WWII
Middle East Campaign 6th Division Provost Co
7th Division Milne Bay New Guinea

One of the people behind the Hall of Fame submission, Western Australian shearing contractor and previous Australian team shearer Mike Henderson (Ngapuhi), also a NZ-born Australian, explained: "Peter took some convincing, but we got him in the end! We just felt it was time people really understood and acknowledged what the guy has contributed, how he has changed things, how much influence he has had."

Wide Support for Induction

Testament to the support for his induction, Peter had 19 family members and friends travel from many parts of Australia and New Zealand for the official proceedings in Hay in October. One of those was former Golden Shears champion, world record holder and NZ team shearer Edsel Forde, who echoed Mike Henderson's sentiments and expanded on them:

"Peter's positive influence on the shearing world hasn't just been confined to Australia, it's both sides of the Tasman and many other countries too," said Edsel. "I've known Peter for 35 years. His tallies day in day out, especially around



Above: Peter William Black, Hall of Fame Inductee 2024.

Esperance, were legendary but he has backed that up by being an innovator who has always been generous with his knowledge and time.

"He's never been afraid to push boundaries, challenge norms and get people thinking despite at times bearing the brunt personally of opposition to change. He's probably the most fearless bloke I've ever known."

Not One for Accolades

Another friend, who travelled with Mike Henderson from WA to Hay for the induction, Steve Thompson a WA farmer, shearing and agriculture trainer, former shearer and shearing contractor said Peter took some convincing by a number of people to agree to accept the honour. "He's just not someone who seeks personal accolades or recognition," said Steve. "Once he said yes, the next thing was to get him to see the value in using his acceptance speech as a platform to lay out all the changes and improvements for all in the shearing world, not just in Australia."

Formative Years in Foster Care

Peter spent most of his formative years in foster care. He began his journey in the shearing world as a presser at 15 years old in the North Island of NZ. His tenacity showed early. The contractor told him he couldn't have a stand until he could shear 200, so he saved his money, bought his own gear, practiced all he could till one day an opportunity arose and he stepped up, shearing 200 on his first full day.

He first went to Australia in the 1970s, shearing a season in Queensland with as he describes it "strict union rules" and narrow gear only. "There was no wide comb made for fine wool sheep in the late 70s and early 80s so of course I

started pulling my gear and putting time into preparing it". He saw opportunities in Australia so moved his family there, eventually settling in Esperance, Western Australia. He earned great respect from local wool growers, contractors and fellow workers for his work ethic, tallies and willingness to help others.

Business Opportunities

He started a shearing supplies business. This was described within Mike Henderson's Hall of Fame submission for Peter: "He assisted many local shearers with their gear. Be it dressing combs, rebuilding handpieces, sharpening combs and cutters, PB was passing on the knowledge that he had gained from personal experience, and the advice of those that had nurtured him."

"PB's ability was noticed and he was offered a position with the Australian Wool Corporation, first as a trainer, and from 1992-95 he was given the responsibility for setting the national shearing pattern, gear preparation and maintenance which included training AWC trainers in all States.

"PB conducted AWC in-shed training and multimedia workshops for professional shearers from 1988-95. He also composed the AWC national shearers newsletter and grinding pamphlet plus built a computer database for recording AWC trainees. In 1996 PB formed his own registered training organisation and won tenders in WA to administer training for TAFE and WADOT. He was asked to assist South African shearer trainers in 1998, and he continued to train shearer trainers in Africa, Australia and New Zealand until 2018."

Esperance Shears

In 1983 Peter was asked to help run the Esperance shearing competition. Over time, this led to his decision that here



Above: The Black Whanau came from New Zealand and Australia to support Peter's Hall of Fame Induction. Pictured at the Induction Dinner are (back left) Koen, Morry, and Joy. Front: Peter, 'PB' and Dwayne.

was an opportunity to make an example of the event. It is a mark of the regard in which he was held that he got support to do things controversially differently. Extra stands were added, yards and a grandstand were built and the prizegiving was turned into a glitzy evening event. It attracted great sponsorship and offered the largest prize money in Australia at the time.

Under Peter's leadership the rebranded "Esperance Shears" was launched. It was a radical outlier show, the only one in Australia at the time that any width of comb was allowed to be used. The judging and scoring had no "fleece control" aspects and was more similar to shearing competitions in NZ than Australia. He introduced computer scoring, digital timing and single judging. A NZ vs Australia shearing and wool handling event was organised.

Sport Shear Australia Formed

New judges had to be recruited and trained because the Esperance Shears was blacklisted by the traditional show shearing community. Competitors were openly encouraged to take part, regardless of any union or particular shearing competition affiliation.

History has illustrated this show became a vector for change and by the time Peter ended his years of involvement with the Esperance Shears, which became the WA Shearing Championships, a national body, Sports Shear Australia, bringing together all states and national rules, had been formed.

Peter noted in his acceptance speech at Hay: "We have a truly national competition now with each state involved." From the submission: "PB managed/coached the Australian team at three World Championships, which yielded three world titles and three runner-up titles. He coached South Africa at four World Shearing Championships. He also trained the international referees at the 2005 World Shearing Championships in Toowoomba."

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Above: Peter with some of the large group of people who travelled to Hay, NSW, to support his Shearers' Hall of Fame induction. Pictured at the unveiling in the Hall of Fame at Shear Outback. Back left: Dwayne Black (son), Peter Black, Martin Forde, Morry Black (brother), Koen Black (son), Callum Burns, Chris Pritchard. Front left: Peter Black (grandson), Joy Clareburt (sister), Margaret Pauley, Bronwyn Reece, , Marg Forde, Kath Pritchard, Edsel Forde (front).

World Shearing Records

Peter also took on the “world” shearing record establishment. His first involvement with an official world shearing record was in 1992 in Southland, New Zealand when he was asked to come from Esperance to help with Edsel Forde’s successful nine-hour ewe record. At the time official shearing records were called world shearing records, run under rules set by the World Shearing Records Committee which consisted of only New Zealanders, and all attempts were in New Zealand. Recalled Peter: “Since 20 September 1997 when I organised the first official world shearing record set outside of New Zealand, by Brett Cavanough at Wiggee Waa Station, Riverina, over 20 Australians have held or hold official world shearing records.”

From the Hall of Fame submission: “In 1997 PB set up the first official world shearing record in Australia, and (Australian) shearing records committee, and did the same for South Africa in 2003. PB has been involved in over 20 world record attempts (1992-2022) advising all aspects of records. He also served as an official World Shearing Record referee for 20 years.”

Things Needed Doing!

Peter acknowledged in his acceptance speech in Hay in October: “I felt a pull and need to do things in our industry through training, gear design, councils, committees etc, to do things that needed doing. To me then, it seemed obvious, and today it is nice to see the proof from what was a hell of a lot of persistence, to try and implement change for the good. Back then it had many complications but I knew it was necessary for me to see it through as the coal face of the industry, I realised, could benefit so much with this knowledge.

“I think the opposition from some was just that I was from New Zealand originally, and shored in a different way with a very efficient style. This was proven through my career in Esperance for two decades and raising my four sons, three of them to be shearers, two of them to be world record holders.”

Peter has four sons; Perry, Dion, Dwayne and Koen. Family members present at his induction were Dwayne, Koen, Koen’s eldest son 8-year-old Peter, brother Morry and sister Joy.

Peter acknowledged the benefit of his training focus on gear and efficient techniques. He said in his speech: “Blue printing handpieces and sharpening wide gear was a huge advantage to me (when I was shearing). I also made that a big part of the training we were doing, as few knew very much about that within the industry when wide gear became present in Australia.

“Also there were many untrue myths that put people on the wrong track. I’ve been through AWC/AWRAP/IWS (many of you probably don’t know who that even is haha) now it’s AWI. Plus many Government bodies like TAFE, WADOT. (To page 9.)

FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

- CONNECT**: TALK & LISTEN, BE THERE, FEEL CONNECTED
- Give**: Your time, your words, your presence
- TAKE NOTICE**: REMEMBER THE SIMPLE THINGS THAT GIVE YOU JOY
- KEEP LEARNING**: EMBRACE NEW EXPERIENCES, SEE OPPORTUNITIES, SURPRISE YOURSELF
- BE ACTIVE**: DO WHAT YOU CAN, ENJOY WHAT YOU DO, MOVE YOUR HOOD

INTRODUCE THESE SIMPLE STRATEGIES INTO YOUR LIFE AND YOU WILL FEEL THE BENEFITS.

FARM STRONG
Live Well Farm Well



Above: Peter Black's Hall of Fame Induction provided a great opportunity to catch up with old friends. **Left:** Peter with Bernie Walker (Hall of Fame Inductee 2022) and Callum Burns. **Right:** Peter with Margaret Pauley and Callum Burns – now living in Queensland but spent many years together in Esperance. **Opposite:** Shearers past, present and future checking out the impressive displays in the Shear Outback museum which is in the same building as the Australian Shearers' Hall of Fame. All were there for the induction of Peter Black. **Back left:** Koen Black, Steve Thompson, Mike Henderson, Martin Forde and Edsel Forde. In front, Peter Black and Koen's son, eight-year-old Peter. **Below left:** The five 2024 HOF Inductees, from left: Damian Boyle, Peter Orcher; Peter Black, Brian Sullivan and Alan Williams. **Below:** Mike Henderson, the man who prepared the submission for 'Blackie's' successful Hall of Fame nomination .



Opposite: Shearers past, present and future checking out the impressive displays in the Shear Outback museum which is in the same building as the Australian Shearers' Hall of Fame. All were there for the induction of Peter Black. **Back left:** Koen Black, Steve Thompson, Mike Henderson, Martin Forde and Edsel Forde. In front, Peter Black and Koen's son, eight-year-old Peter. **Below left:** The five 2024 HOF Inductees, from left: Damian Boyle, Peter Orcher; Peter Black, Brian Sullivan and Alan Williams. **Below:** Mike Henderson, the man who prepared the submission for 'Blackie's' successful Hall of Fame nomination .



Many of these organisations were tricky to work with. Sometimes, getting the actual money to the coal face where it was most needed proved difficult.

“Above all though it has led me through an amazing life in an industry that I think we all feel so lucky to have been part of and/or are still in. The simplicity of shearing sheep and moving wool wherever it is in the world makes it such a unique industry. To advance in the shearing industry in all areas we must always look at innovation and improvement or we risk being left behind.”

Adopting (and adapting) Technology

Peter has a strong track record as an early adopter of technology, seeing potential for it's application across the shearing industry. The Hall of Fame submission read: “In 1998 PB built the world's first shearing website, “shearingworld.com”. He also developed a Windows-based shearing software programme in 2001, to fill a void in the market for shearing employers. PB also developed a shearing injury management programme to partner the payroll system, which assisted in lowering (Australian) workers compensation premiums for employers. PB's company (Shearing Industry Consultants) assisted insurers with independent expert advice. “

Continued from the submission: “PB's most recent achievement is assisting in and driving the design, supplying content and building the shearing app LOJIK. This could well be his defining achievement, jointly operated, created and promoted by his son Dwayne. LOJIK is an amazing resource both as a training tool and an historical resource, with much rare footage of early shearing and interviews with many old shearers.”

Peter emphasised in his acceptance speech: “But we must not forget the majority of people in our industry. The 95 percent of the workforce that don't do records or competitions. They go to work to support their families, are part of local communities, schools, footy, golf, bowling clubs.

“They now have access 24/7 to the latest, easiest most efficient shearing pattern and gear preparation techniques through my son Dwayne and his business partner Ross Paton of Lojik Shearer Training and their shearing app.

“This continues the work that we started many years ago. I know that Dwayne calls it ‘A legacy that is in the digital space now’. Where information is so much easier to access than in the past – big old camera and data projectors, posters, pamphlets or laminates...all gone.

“To me it's always been about the most ergonomically friendly, efficient, minimal strain technique on the shearer. By having better balance, weight transfer and less blows to a more efficient pattern. The majority of fine wool world record holders now use this pattern as do the majority of the fast, quality shed shearers, now more so than ever.



Above: Peter with Fran Abbey, who travelled from WA with her husband Tony. The Abbeyes are old friends, farmers and have both been long time supporters of Peter's efforts to effect change for good in Australia's shearing competition, record and training organisation.

Industry in Better Place

“I know the industry is now in a better place than when I arrived and that is thanks to many who have supported and been part of my journey. I am grateful to them all.

“Thank you once again to the Shear Outback Committee and the Australian Shearers' Hall of Fame for the recognition of the many years of work I have put into the industry. I will always treasure this induction.”

Editor's Footnote


My introduction to Peter Black came in (I think) 1995 when I was working on a little book about world shearing championships history (Eventually published as *Top Class Wool Cutters*.) I emailed Peter in Western Australia, seeking a photograph for the book.

A day or two later Peter phoned me from half way across the Nullabor Plains (heading east) to tell me he was about to send the photo. 'Oh that's great, I said – you mean when you get to Melbourne?'

"No, I'll send it now. I'll just hook up my mobile phone to my laptop and send it to you now."

By the time I emerged from my stunned silence [*Hook up a Mobile phone to a Laptop? Ya wha...?*] the photo was in my computer inwards email!

And our heading, *The Revered Mister Black* – for those too young to know – a touch of the hat to an old Johnny Cash song, *The Reverend Mister Black*: 'He stood like a rock, a man among men ...' Not unlike our honoured Mister Black!



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Tahi Ngātahi is an online platform that uses video clips to pass on skills and safety tips to farmers, shearing contractors and shearers.

Our aim is to:

- reduce common injuries by 30% and prolong careers
- 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.

Visit www.tahingatahi.co.nz and sign up to show your support for this great industry.

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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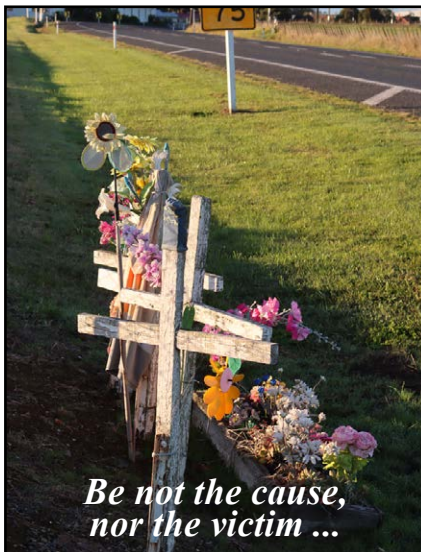
Every year over 9,000 days are lost to injury in the wool sector. That's a lot of pain for no gain. Tahi Ngātahi's videos are designed to help everyone raise their game in the shed. You can learn short warm-up routines that help prevent back strains at www.tahingatahi.co.nz. A few extra minutes of simple stretches a day could save your back and boost your wallet.



DON'T BLOW YOUR WRIST

Don't Blow Your Wrist

With main shear looming, now's the time to prepare the body for those big tallies. Blown wrists are really common among shearers who hit the board hard after a bit of a break. Just like the All Blacks wouldn't play a test without a pre-season or any warm-up, you need to make sure you're in good nick before you pick up the handpiece. You can learn simple warm-up routines that help prevent blown wrists at www.tahingatahi.co.nz.



*Be not the cause,
nor the victim ...*



STAY
WEIRD

*Get with the in-crowd:
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Chilean needle grass – a real pest!

(From the Environment Canterbury Regional Council website.)

Chilean needle grass (*Nassella neesiana*) is an erect, tufted, perennial grass around 1m high with hairy seeds. It can cause blindness in livestock as well as reduce agricultural land use.

Description

- It has bright green leaves, around 5mm wide, which are flat and rough to touch when stroked downwards towards the base.
- Flowerheads are large, drooping and purplish and occur in spring.

- Seed head is hard and hairy and is pointed and spear-like with a very sharp, penetrating base.
- Seeds occur in late spring to mid-summer.
- Seeds are dispersed by attachment to livestock and feral animals.
- Human-mediated dispersal through the movement of contaminated machinery, clothing and hay.
- Habitats include pastures, grasslands, roadsides, open areas, cliffs, lake and forest margins, and lawns.

What you need to know

Highly invasive in pasture and sharp seeds can penetrate pelts and cause blindness in livestock. Infestations can severely reduce agricultural land-use and profitability.

Management approach

This is a declared pest managed under the Canterbury Regional Management Plan 2018 – 2038 within the sustained control programme.

Sustained control

Pests in the sustained control programme vary greatly in their distribution across the region. Some are found in low numbers, while others are already well-established pests.

The intention of the sustained control programme is to reduce the impact on values and spread of a pest onto neighbouring properties.

The community should make us aware of any Chilean needle grass plants in Waitaha/Canterbury. We will work with affected landowners to undertake control of Chilean needle grass.

Rules

Properties with a known occurrence of Chilean needle grass are required to eliminate all Chilean needle grass plants within 5m of adjoining property boundaries and hold and operate a Chilean needle grass management plan.

Land occupiers must either prevent Chilean needle grass from producing seeds or be party to a written management agreement.

Any species declared a pest cannot be sold or be in a place where plants are being sold. Pest plants cannot be propagated, bred, multiplied, communicated, released, caused to be released, or otherwise spread.

Control

Do not attempt to undertake control of Chilean needle grass yourself. Report any sightings to us [Environment Canterbury], including if you think you have bought contaminated seed, stock, or feed.

* * * * *



Chilean needle grass (CNG) is an invasive grass that can grow up to one metre tall. It has bright green leaves and distinctive long-tailed seeds with a pointed base (6-7cm long). CNG has flowerheads between October-December that are drooped with a red-purple tinge.

CNG spreads easily on clothing, machinery, vehicles, feed and livestock and is very difficult and costly to control once established.

Its sharp, needle-like seeds can also penetrate the flesh and eyes of livestock, causing serious injury and degrading meat and wool products.

CNG can be tricky to identify but our team is here to help.

If you have seen CNG or think you have it on your property, contact us on **0800 324 636** or email **biosecurity@ecan.govt.nz**

[ecan.govt.nz/
chilean-needle-grass](http://ecan.govt.nz/chilean-needle-grass)

Chris Thurston – 'Who works the hardest?'

By Des Williams

Christopher Thurston doesn't raise any serious argument against the notion, proposed by this interviewer, that he is one of the three best-known wool pressers in New Zealand. Along with Vorne Wheki and Lachie Nixon (and leaving aside those Goodger names on the Golden Shears Honours Board!) that places him in some serious company. (His actual answer of suitable modesty is 'probably yes').

And it's time for the interviewer/editor to admit that 'probably yes', Christopher has long (16 years) been on a list of in-depth stories for the capturing since he dropped a little note to the magazine in November 2008: *"You can talk all you like about the David Fagans of shearing and the Joanne Kumeroas of woolhandling. But who hardly ever gets a mention? The presser! I can't shear 800 lambs in a day, but can David Fagan press 50 plus bales and then walk out of the shed at the end of the day and beat the shearers to the shower?"*

Christopher ('Chris' from here on) was born in September 1969 and spent his early years on the family farm at Hikumutu, eight miles south of Taumarunui. He recalls his father (John Thurston) farmed 1000 acres of hill country, carrying 1500 ewes and from



Above: John Thurston – Taumarunui and Cambridge-based farmer, shearer, fencer, farrier, horse trainer, who handed down his wide range of rural skills to his son, Christopher Thurston.



Above: Chris Thurston, gun wool presser and sober driver.

150-200 beef cattle. He was also a very good shearer and competed in the open at Golden Shears in 1968, shearing in a heat alongside Murray McSkimming and Allan Williamson (see page 36).

"Dad took over the farm in the late 1960s when his own father had a stroke at the age of 48 and in between running the farm he did little shearing jobs around the district and also some fencing. He had the farm for about 10 years then sold it in 1979 and moved to a 100-acre property at Cambridge.

"He had a stallion on the property for a year and then he started getting into breeding and training racehorses. He actually proved to be quite successful at it but he also had some trouble getting owners to pay their bills to keep their horses in work. From 1979 through to about 1986-87 he would have had no more than half a dozen horses in work each year. But I'm picking he would have trained close to 50 winners in that time. He had a top two-year-old in 1982 named Andretti that used to race against the champion McGinty, which was owned by race commentator Keith Haub and the All Black, Bernie McCahill. Andretti was second to McGinty twice and beat him once.

"Then McGinty was taken to Australia and while he was away Andretti cleaned up the Group One double here in New Zealand – the 1982 Manawatu Sires Produce Stakes at Palmerston North (equalling the track record of 1min 23 set by La Mer in 1976) and

the Ellerslie Sires Produce Stakes at Auckland. He also bred a horse called Our Epilogue that ran (unplaced) in the 1980 Melbourne Cup which was won by Beldale Ball.

"Dad continued training horses for about four years after that and then it all came to a halt and he went back shearing, including seasons spent in Western Australia and New South Wales. And Mum, who had been a schoolteacher, went back to teaching.

"I started working around Cambridge when I left school in 1985, rousieing in the shearing sheds for a local shearer, Julian 'Rocky' Stone and we also worked together in the off-season for a Cambridge fencing contractor, Dennis Cook. Dennis also used to be a shearer and Dad remembered working with him in the South Island in the 1960s. He was a lefthander. We did the fencing at big horse stud properties – the Cambridge Stud (Sir Tristram) and also the Oaks Farm Stud at Leamington.

"While Dad was training the horses I worked as a strapper and also helped with a lot of the associated farriering work and almost got to the stage of nailing shoes on, but then I sort of lost interest. I put that down to doing too much work at too young an age and just got sick of it. The routine was getting up at 5.30 in the morning and taking the horses to the track, and home again at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. So, I 'drifted off' the race horses at that point!

BARROWCLIFFE SHEARING

Fancy work in the King Country, Nov-Feb and May-July periods?

Have you got:

- Good work ethic?
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In 1990 at age 21 Chris “got away from Cambridge,” and made his first trip to Australia, going with his father to New South Wales for shearing. They were based at Gilgandra near Dubbo and travelled all over NSW.

“I remember having about 20,000km recorded in my vehicle log book. We went up to New England where all the super fine wool shearing is done – Armidale, Walcha, and right up to Ashford. I pressed a 12-micron bale of wool in a shed one time at Walcha, it was a 170kg bale spread over about three weeks of shearing. The wool is so white up in that area it looks like snow on top of a mountain. By the end of September we were back working around Dubbo, Gilgandra, Nyngan, Lightning Ridge. After that we moved further south to Canberra and the Snowy Mountains area.”

Chris remembers working in a 26-stand shed at Woodstock, near Cowra, but they only had six-stands set up in the middle, for shearing. The shed (Waugoola) was used for three or four months each year and the neighbouring farmers would drove their sheep to the shed from miles around.

“Another big shed we worked at was called Canonba, not far from Nyngan. It was part of the Haddon Rig Merino Stud, just out from Warren.”

Although he has done some shearing in his time, Chris describes himself as a ‘presser-rousie’ and he also did some overseeing (non-shearing ganger) while in Australia. Much of his later career in New Zealand has been spent around the Taumarunui-Taihape areas.

“I did a couple of seasons down south more recently when Covid was on and apart from the years in Australia, my work has been limited to the North Island. Really, the only parts of New Zealand I haven’t worked in are North of Auckland and Stewart Island/Rakiura.

“I virtually travelled all over New South Wales with Dad years ago and I’ve also been to Western Australia, working down around Katanning for Michael James Terry, Robin Terry’s young fella. We go back quite a way, me and Michael James. We were the same level together at school, Leamington Primary for a start, then Cambridge Intermediate and on to Cambridge High School in 1983.”

Chris also had some of his early interest in racehorses renewed when he and his father were working for New South Wales contractor Brian Cleaver, who was also a bookmaker.

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Top left and right: Chris pressing at Paparata Station in March 2019. Above: Working on his 50th birthday!

“There was one shed up in the New England area we worked at where Brian, and his father before him, had been doing the shearing for about 80 years. One of the real fine micron sheds, a place called Walgu? Brian would go to the race meetings and setup shop as a bookie. He was good for the odd winning tip, here and there.

Chris nominates deep sea fishing as his favourite pastime away from the sheds. He likes to ‘chuck the old rod in the water for deep seas fishing’. He doesn’t have his own boat but takes the charter boats at Kawhia. “I’ve had some real good luck out there – snapper, kahawai, gurnard ... The boat owner clicks a shearing counter every time someone catches a snapper so he keeps within the limits.

Chris says he doesn’t really have a favourite memory from his time in the sheds but he does remember one day at Morendah in New South Wales when he pressed 58 bales, while his best New Zealand tally is 63, at Erewhon. He also did 131 in tandem with Jake Casual at Ngamatea when Mackintosh Shearing had the shed.

And while they don't quite fit the category of favourite memories, Chris can remember at least three "accident incidents" or mishaps while pressing. Once in Australia he opened the press door too quickly and jammed his hand between the door and his leg.

"Then at Highland Station near Rotorua one time I was operating a crank down and was just on the last few clicks when the bolt holding the pulley broke and I hit the floor in a hurry and smashed my fingers between the bar and the floor. I got taken to hospital for an x-ray but there was nothing broken, just a huge blood blister.

"Another time at Makino Station near Raetihi I was winding the top box up and the press lid fell off and hit me on the head. I was a bit fazed for 10 or 15 minutes and then I was back up and into it again. My head is hard!"

Chris is also happy to reveal that “Something else happens to me at times, although I haven’t been unwell with it for a long time, I was first diagnosed as bipolar in 1985, a schizophrenia condition which is now controlled by medication. It came back again in 1989 on quite a regular basis until they put me on lithium. Apparently it was traced back to the fact that I was a very sick baby with inflammation of the brain and meningitis B.



Above: Injuries are part of the game for a top gun 'PRESSR'.

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- Give**
Your time, your words, your presence
- TAKE NOTICE**
REMEMBER THE SIMPLE THINGS THAT GIVE YOU JOY
- KEEP LEARNING**
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FARM STRONG Live Well Farm Well

Top and centre: Samples of the horse stud fencing erected at Cambridge and Leamington by Chris Thurston and Julian Stone (RIP) many years ago. "Built to last. A bit more art to it than ordinary sheep and cattle fencing," Chris suggests. Above: Edible spoils from the deep sea, courtesy a Kawhia charter boat.

At one stage there the doctors said my chances of kicking the bucket were 50/50 and/or being intellectually handicapped.

"It hasn't been a problem for quite some time now and the medication that I take all the time seems to have it beaten. It was probably more known to the people I worked with in Australia than with the people around Taumarunui, where the Aussie heat in Australia contributed to its occurrence at times.

"But I haven't been shy about letting people know or having them find out, it's just the way it is and something I have to live with. People probably realise there's something wrong when I start going around giving them shit or a hard time.

On the other side of his good nature is that fact that Chris has never been much of a drinker, and there are times when he's in demand (and makes himself available as a sober driver. "I can always limit myself to a couple of beers on most occasions and can drive workmates home from parties after they've had a few more than me!"

A word or two from Charlie Burton, Mackintosh Shearing: *"Chris has worked with us at MSL since 1997. He's been a loyal team member and is very much a part of the furniture here. He's one hell of a presser and has trained loads of pressers in his time, many of whom are still in the industry.*

"We were at work one day and Chris had somehow stuffed up a bale or something of the sort and Monty Searancke (RIP) told him that would cost him a box. Chris replied, "What, to box your ears in?" Monty said, 'Come over here, I'll box your ears in. Wasn't it a shearer that gave you your last hiding?" Chris replied quick as a flash – 'No, it was a truck driver actually!' There's many who've tried to give him a crack but it didn't work out too well for their hands! We could fill a book with all the yarns about Chris. He's a bloody top man!"

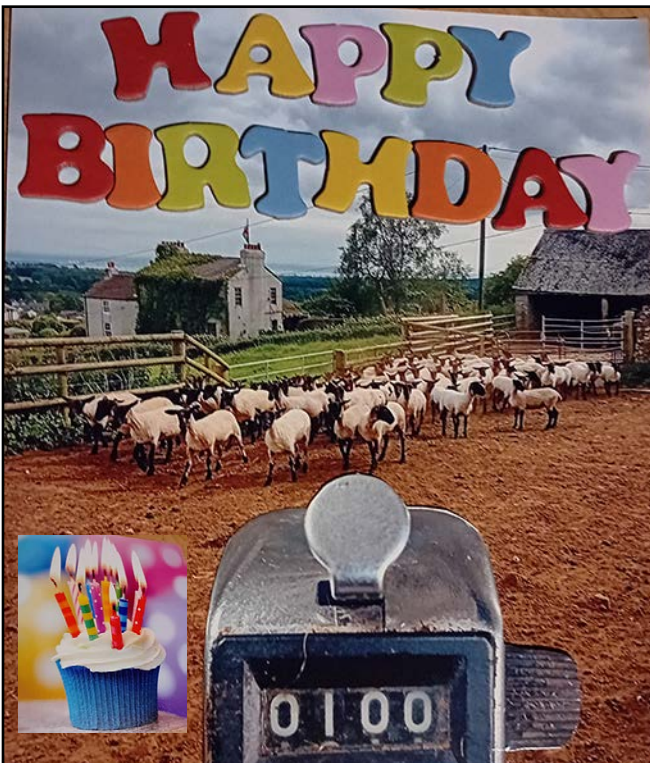
And our hardest-working Mr Thurston would also be a useful man to have in your pub quiz team to answer questions about Australian horse racing history!

* * * * *



Above: A Dion Morrell gang. The last day crew at Matakauui Station, September 2024. **Below:** Action at Craiglea, with (at right) Taiwha Nelson and contractor Peter Lyon admiring the team at work. (See more from Craiglea at page 44.)





Above: From Tom Harding in Wales: "The oldest lady in our church complained that there weren't 99 candles on her birthday card last year, so this year she's got exactly 100 freshly shorn yearlings, at a farm just outside Chepstow!"

Above: Images from Una Cameron, somewhere in Englandshire, south of Scotland: The photos were taken in October, doing second shear ewes with cover combs, down in the south of England, shearers were Matt Smith, nine-hour ewe record holder, myself nine hour ewe record holder and Martin Howlet who is part of the eight-hour ewe two-stand record. The farmer was very excited to have world record holders shearing his sheep. We hadn't thought anything of it, just three mates going to work. (And note, spuds and mutton again for lunch.)

Half-combing it with ... © Last Side Publishing 2024

I bet the American people were sooooo glad to have all those Hollywood celebs telling them who they should vote for.

Oh yeah nah, definitely!

Buck Naked ... and ... Doug Deep


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THANKYOU FOR YOUR LOYAL SUPPORT

A genuine Kiwi chap

By Roger Leslie

There's lots of discussion these days around immigrants, illegal or otherwise. Many western nations who have been heavily involved in the affairs and natural resources of other countries, are now reluctant to let the natives of those lands move onto their own patch.

I've been shearing in Europe for almost 40 years, mostly in Germany, and have felt a heavy responsibility to behave in a manner that enhances the reputation of Kiwis abroad. We should be expert immigrants and travellers because we are all descended from folks who moved to NZ because they weren't happy where they were, and in the big scheme of things, not all that long ago.

I have heard many in Europe complaining about immigrants and when I point out, I'm one too, they say, "Yes but you're different." In what way am I different? Well I bring something they need. A skill and a willingness for hard work. Don't tell anyone, but my willingness for the hard work part, is growing less as the years go by.

One German shepherd put it in perspective though, when he said, "Anyone who comes to work with a sweat towel, and uses it all day, is worthy of special consideration, and you have learned the language."

That then is the crux of the matter. If we want to work or live in another country, we must be prepared to do our share. Produce more than we consume, and at least try to learn their language, manners and customs.

When I was first in Germany (1986) I was referred to as a profi (professional) or a specialist. I liked the sound of that as



Above: A genuine Kiwi chap in Germany.

I hadn't been referred to in terms like that at home. It made me want to act in a professional manner and be invited back. The early NZ Wool Board shearing courses, of which I am a product, placed great emphasis on professional conduct, both on and off the board. I hope we are still doing that.

I well remember my first trip to Europe. I called a prospective client and suggested we could shear his 2,500 sheep. He asked how good we were and that's not an easy question to answer over the phone. He said he'd heard of Kiwi shearers before and not all had been good or desirable. He decided to take the risk and off we went.

He wasn't easily found, as he moved from place to place every day. He was known as a wander shepherd and the whole crew lived in caravans. The sheep grazed canal banks, military areas, and occasionally some places they weren't meant to be. When we caught up with him, he asked how many the two of us would shear in a day?

I looked at his sheep and they were comparatively large.

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FARM STRONG
Lilo Well Farm Wool

They had long tails and most were liberally covered in dags. They had lambs at foot, and when I asked where we would be shearing, he waved an expansive arm at the canal and woods along-side. This would be one of those wait and see situations. We were eager to impress, so we suggested 400. He laughed with undisguised mirth and uproarious mockery. He passed on our good joke to everyone who was interested and a good few who weren't.

The next morning they set up a temporary pen on the side of the canal (The Mitland) and drafted off 100 ewes from the lambs, goats and other assorted menagerie. They did this with reasonable efficiency and a lot of shouting, and mainly good-natured verbal abuse. They fired up the generator, and off we went. Only one of their team seemed to be able to get the generator running so he received a bit less abuse. It was their job to catch the sheep and present each one to us shearers when required. We had to teach them to get another sheep well before we were finished the last one, to prevent long and frustrating waits (and we had a boast to defend).

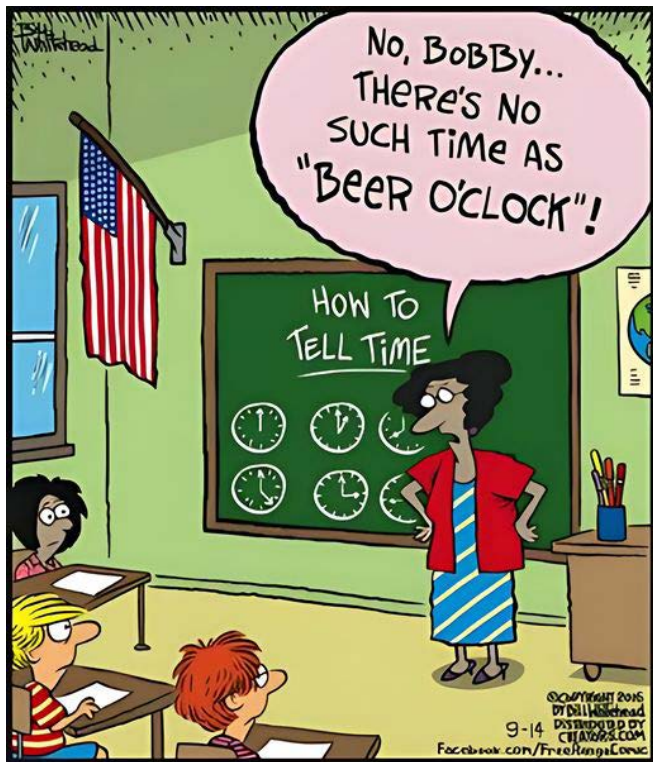
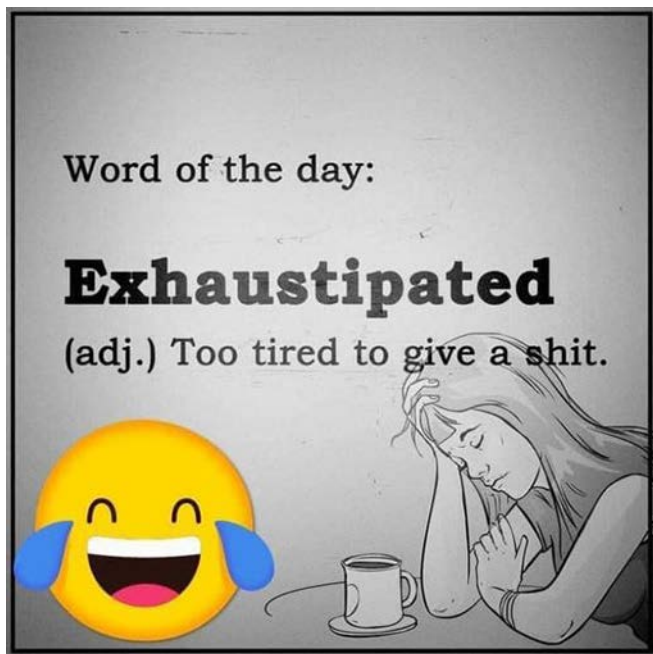
We shored 435 and no one said anything about the mockery of yesterday. The shepherd himself rang everybody he knew to boast of the outstanding result. When I reminded him that he had laughed at us the previous day and he responded to this with a downward wrist-flick of the hand (a German sign of casual dismissal).

A well-dressed chap came riding past on his bicycle and stopped to enquire how many days we had been shearing? The shepherd answered with great pride. "These two have shorn 435 in one day. Unbelievable." The visitor looked a bit unbelieving and the shepherd finished with a quote that has stayed with me these 38 years: "Das sind echte Neuseeländer." (these chaps are genuine Kiwis)

The proof, as they say, of the cake, is in the eating. I'm still welcome there.



Above: As that big fellow on the TV quiz programme *The Chase* (Shaun Wallace, the dark destroyer) would say, "It's just another day at the office." And Willie McSkimming looks like he's ready to handle 20 questions with rapid fire answers.



Above: Flash Duxfield, we know this will come as a major disappointment ... and we know you will think of something!



Above: Exhaustipation personified, after an extra-long day at the office.

Women with shear determination

By Jills Angus Burney and Des Williams

With the women of our industry making most of the headlines over the past year or two, and 'women of the handpiece' at unprecedented numbers on both sides of the Tasman Sea, *Shearing* magazine has gone in search of some established and rising stars and gathered their stories. Here we profile five examples of the amazing talents who are leading the way into the future.

Nikki Lyons (Good Hope, New South Wales)

Nikki Lyons first learned to shear as a teenager while attending the local agricultural college in Harvey, Western Australia in years 2003 and 2004. Though not of a 'farming background' herself (father was a chemical engineer and mother managed the school canteen) she found herself captured by the challenge of that aspect of the college programme. The college had its own flock of several thousand sheep for the students to shear and Nikki was among a group of 44 pupils who were rostered at shearing time to remove the wool.

"I really enjoyed shearing right from the start and was competent by the time I left school. Shearing contractor Aaron Piper at Boyup Brook gave me my first stand and I sought to improve my ability by attending shearing schools. I was also able to do some overseas travelling and have done some shearing in Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland and Italy.

Those early years in the profession were not without challenges, Nikki recalls, especially being a female in the long-time male-dominated industry. Such attitudes just made her more determined to succeed and eventually she was able to "let her handpiece do the talking."

"I first got the idea of someday attempting a record when I was still at school, learning to shear and hearing about the exploits of a local man, Dwayne Black, who was setting several records on merino sheep at the time. Little realising then that the same Dwayne Black would play a major role when my own opportunity came around! And back then Una Cameron from Scotland was the only other woman shearer I'd heard of!

In 2011 Nikki and husband Fergus Lyons (also a shearer) bought a 100-acre property at Good Hope, New South Wales. When their family of four children started arriving (ages 12, 10, 9 and six) Nikki's shearing went on hold for some time until she was able to come back, shearing "school hours" while fulfilling the role of busy parent to the growing youngsters.

"Being able to combine those two roles is probably my most satisfying achievement as a shearer, life is busy and I have fallen asleep many times waiting in the car for my child dance class to finish."

Nikki's recent record took place at Marilba Station, near Yass, just a few kilometres up the road from their Good Hope farm, on 17 November 2024. With great support from Heiniger supplying gear (she loves that gear!) and sponsorship – and providing her 'gear man' Rick Chilcott on the day, it proved to

be a tough challenge against the lamb's condition. "I think Rick had the hardest job of the record, he finely tuned the combs done up for me by Klynt Correll.

To select the combs for the record he loaded six handpieces and I'd shear a few lambs without looking what the comb was. On the record day I still had no idea what I was using until it was decided I needed to change combs during the run, they were huge."

While initially hoping for a tally something over 500, the sheep were not there for shearing those numbers, more gear changes than normal were necessary because of grit in the wool. "We used two combs the first run, three the second, four in the third run and 5 in the last run, when I



Top: Nikki Lyons during her record-setting day at Marilba Station. **Above:** Records referee Alastair Emslie congratulates Nikki with the official certificate for 395 merino lambs shorn.

Heiniger

asked Rick how many cutters I was using he said it's probably best I didn't know that". Nikki was finally credited with 395 after having eight rejected by the judges. The final tally came from runs of 97, 99, 102 and 98.

A day later, Nikki posted on Facebook her grateful thanks to Dwayne Black who had first inspired her 20 years ago and who stood beside her and "got her through" every sheep on the day. And even better than the official certificate from the World Records Society was the note "Blacky" had written on the back: *"That was one of the most amazing performances I have seen. (That's not pissing in your pocket, either.) Very solid lambs. You showed awesome composure, technique and mental strength. You are a champion, welcome to the club!"*

Nikki says she also drew plenty of inspiration from her good friend Jeanne Kimm, who had set an eight-hour record of 358 on merino ewes in May of this year. "Jeanne is a great role model to women in the industry, she shears a heap of sheep every week consistently and is such a down to earth team person."

Looking to the future and with her youngest child just six-years-old, Nikki says it would be at least another 11 years before she could return to the sheds full time (if she wanted to) and by then, "who knows what the sheep population in Australia will be like?"

In the meantime, she's happy to be a school-hours shearer and recommends for any young women taking on the profession or starting their careers to "Just have fun. It's a great industry to be in so make the most of it and enjoy the experience."

Nikki Guttler (Yanko, New South Wales)

Without hesitation, Australian Open shearing sensation, Nikki Guttler praises her mum, Helen when asked who inspired her to shear. Attending Yanco Agricultural High School (YAHS), a co-ed fully residential high school on the Riverina, NSW is part of that story.

When YAHS held a small shearing competition to encourage students to have a shear, Nikki turned to her Mum for coaching. In the weeks leading up to the competition



Above: Nikki Guttler in competition mode - no second cuts!

Nikki's Mum would run a couple of sheep in the shed and Nikki says she would just try to copy her Mum. Sometimes neither of them would know their left foot from their right, but they kept at it.

Nikki doesn't say how she did in that first competition, but her Mum's inspiration has led her all the way to the remarkable achievement last month at the Katanning Shears of being the first Australian woman to make an A-grade Open Merino Semi-final. No mean feat when she was up against the best of the inter-state, and the Australian and New Zealand shearing teams.

It's a doggedness and striving that saw a determined Nikki attend the two-week Wagga Wagga TAFE shearing programme in 2015. Not one to muck around, Nikki shored her first 100 tally on a mix of merino ewes and lambs on her second day out of the school. The following three years were spent half shearing, half woolhandling, slowly improving her shearing the more she got on a stand.

Nikki passionately enjoys shearing competitions which is where she spends most weekends travelling across the state (NSW) and has represented the NSW team in the trifecta of machines, blade shearing, and woolhandling.

Great success in the lower grades of competition led Nikki to a national ranking in the Senior grade at last year's National's, just below her Western Australian compatriot Danielle Mauger. On Nikki's return from impressive form on crossbreds in the ten weeks leading up to the NZ Golden Shears 2024 last March, she formally moved up into the Open Grade as one of the few Australian women to do so on merit. Nikki says she is enjoying the challenge of finding her feet in the Open grade, rubbing shoulders with many top-class shearers and the Australian champions who up until recently, she has only been looking up to.

Nikki loves the places she can travel to with shearing and the people you meet along the way. At 23 Nikki shored in the UK and since has made several trips to New Zealand, as well as having shorn right across Australia with her partner, Connor.

Some of Nikki's biggest challenges have been navigating through a number of injuries over the years and learning how to look after one's own body. The essence of longevity as she closes in on her thirties is finding ways to shear especially

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Above: Nicki Guttler at Golden Shears New Zealand, 2024

large framed sheep or tough dense Merinos that take as little toll on the body as possible. Shearing is already a tough job, so why make it harder for ourselves?

Nicki says she's had many highlights over the years. In the competition world, two notables were winning the NSW State Senior title in 2023 to winning an Open speed shear shearing two lambs in just sixty-five seconds.

Nicki counts the ordinary working day with Connor when they both reached their first 300 tallies in 2021 as another milestone. Doing 400 on lambs in New Zealand earlier this year lifted her confidence even further, but competing with her Mum in the "Father and Son" competition each year at their local show ranks as one of her favourite events.

Nicki enjoys using Heiniger gear because she reckons you get the bang for your buck. Over the past decade she's tried using other brands but always find herself coming back to Heiniger. It's what she's comfortable with and it works for her.

Nicki Guttler's advice to up and coming female shearers is to give it a go as you never know where it might take you. It's as hard as stepping outside of your comfort zone and take risks, and as easy as working hard and enjoying the journey. The key to her success is her Mum's values; always taking pride in one's work and looking after yourself along the way.

Laura Bradley (Woodville, New Zealand)

At twenty-seven and Mum of one wee boy, rising New Zealand senior shearer Laura Bradley of Woodville has now spent more than half her lifetime on a shearing handpiece.

Laura entered her first competitions in the novice grade in 2015, and has now amassed more than fifty wins across the four lower shearing grades, novice, junior, intermediate and senior, notwithstanding her consistent results as a junior woolhandling finalist.

The daughter of Kiwi shearer, Wayne who brought a Welsh wife, Helen from Llangyniew, Powys home from his OE, three of the four Bradley kids have featured in a decade

of North Island shearing, woolhandling and Young Farmer competitions.

Raised on the Woodville family farm, schooled as a boarder at Feilding High School, Laura held an early fascination with shearing watching her parents shear their way into farming. In spite of opposition from one or two locals not to shear, Laura continued to pester her dad for pointers as he was training Laura's older brother, Tegwyn.

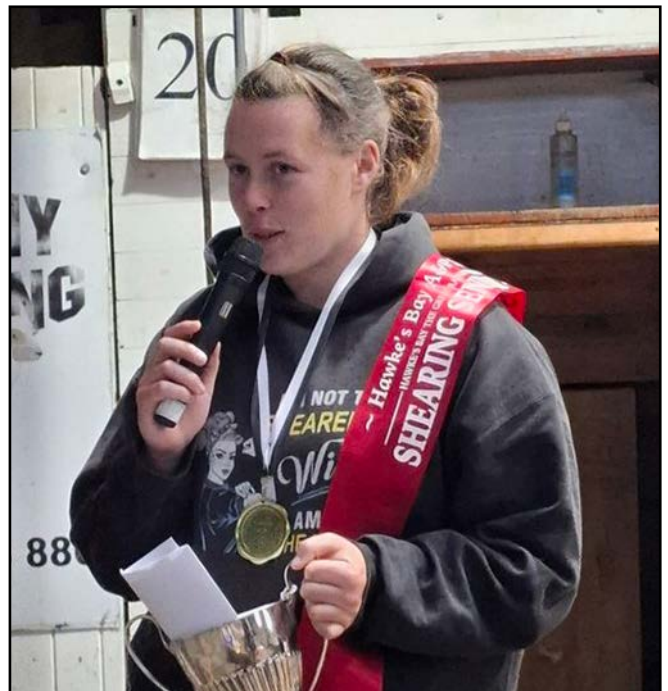
What Laura most likes about shearing is that it has 'everything' – good earnings, fitness, meeting people and travel. Although, the travel has taken the back foot for much of the past three seasons since Laura's son was born and she has battled constant back niggles.

Natural height and long reach have gifted the five-foot seven (170 cm tall) shearer many memories so far, encompassing some serious tallies when she was only 21, of 451 lambs and 330 ewes (both in 8 hours) when she was shearing for the Paewai Mullins Partnership near Dannevirke.

Currently intensive farming a family property at Papatawa with her partner, Cam, Laura ably juggles farming, shearing and motherhood. Making time to join the local shearing team, Tararua Shearing, is one of the Laura's goals this summer as she explores her potential in what may become her penultimate year in the Senior grade.

Coming from Welsh stock, Laura has lost count of how many trips she's made to the UK. Laura says that Heinger gear is all she has ever used across New Zealand, and in the one UK season she competed in.

In fact, when young Gisborne pop-gun Jodiesha Kirkpatrick, a double double Junior Shearing and Woolhandling champion (Gisborne and Hawkes Bay) found at the Wairarapa Spring



Above: Laura Bradley, victory speech at Hawkes Bay Shears.



Show at Clareville, Carterton that she had left her gear behind in Gisborne, it was Bradley she turned to. The loaned Heiniger gear paid off, and Bradley has a Gisborne fan club of at least one!

It was with the same generosity of sharing that saw Bradley partner up in her gear preparation with a close family friend, and former multiple Golden Shears Open and 2008 World Shearing Champion, Paul Avery of Awakino.

With two wins and two seconds each, Laura and her nemesis, Bruce Grace have been battling the spring rounds on full wool, with wins at the Great Raihana Show in the Hawkes Bay and at Waipukurau to her credit. Bradley's record of wins across the grades is second to none, seeing her as the top New Zealand Junior and then Intermediate ranked shearer in past years. With Grace as the top NZ Intermediate shearer last season in April 2024, Bradley will have to use all her guile, experience and speed for the formidable task ahead of her this season.

One thing for sure, the ever direct and front-footed speedster Laura Bradley doesn't set limits on herself, is constantly reevaluating her goals and continuously working on her strengths and weaknesses as a shearer. Her impressive win at the NZ Corriedale Championships at the Canterbury A&P Show near Christchurch this month adds a second national senior title to her North Island Championship win in Marton last February.

Catherine Mullooly (Piopio, New Zealand)

For those that know Gisborne's world shearing record holder, Catherine Mullooly, it's hard to imagine her when she says as having no idea what she was doing when she started in the shearing industry.

Catherine says what inspired her to get into shearing was being at that sticky point in her life as a school leaver, where it felt like all her friends were off to university and had a life plan, and Catherine still had no idea what career she was looking for, so went woolhandling for a local Matawai shearing team. Once woolhandling, when Catherine ended up learning to shear the last side, then her farmer dad, Miles taught her to shear on big full wool ewes, she says she felt that was when she caught the shearing bug.

While still woolhandling in her late teens, Catherine met former world team record shearer and award-winning Wairoa farmers, Bart Hadfield and his wife, Nuku who gave her a first shearing stand at their place. From the outset Bart encouraged learners to compete at shows and where Catherine modestly says she did alright, she was rapt when she got her first stand after a couple of junior wins.

As she ventured into shearing fulltime, for Catherine the journey from school to a shearing life just felt right. For the first time as a young adult, surrounded by Hadfield's stable of talented learners, she felt a place of belonging.

Catherine says that the woolshed vibes are 100% her comfort zone. She loves that you never stop learning and can always set new goals. It doesn't matter where you are in the world, it's where you get to listen to good loud music



Above: Catherine Mullooly the shearing instructor.

all day long, share that quirky, slightly 'out the gate' sense of humour you gain after working days on end with the same people. Classic 'shed humour' with the people.

In a journey that's taken her around the world, from being a Golden Shears champion to winning a Scottish Senior title at the Lochearnhead Shears, to co-starring in the 2018 documentary film, 'She Shears', Catherine says she's met the best kind of people in shearing!

She says her biggest challenges for her shearing career has been both as a partner to her King Country man, Ardie and Mum of her two young boys, Bryn and Cole. Her priorities in life are now different than they used to be. Catherine, who's been shearing for fourteen years, says that when she was full time shearing ten years ago, she thought she was so busy just working and only having to worry about herself. Now with her own family, shearing, farming and parenting is trying to do all those same things and more, with two boys in tow!

Where Catherine says her biggest challenge has been being able to be a good mum, and filling her cup as well with mahi, it's hard to get that good work/life balance. But so much more



Golden Shears 27 Feb – 1 Mar 2025

Online Entries now open. Please note that the SPEED SHEAR is now included as an ONLINE ENTRY. Entries at the door will be taken only if numbers allow.

www.goldenshears.co.nz





Above: Catherine the versatile blade shearer

rewarding for her now when achieving goals like her stunning Heiniger sponsored world eight-hour crossbred shearing record of 465 ewes at Nukuhakari Station, King Country last January, with the two babies by her side.

Always modest when talking about her career, Catherine says her greatest achievement is her family and her two boys, for giving her the biggest motivation to try and be a better version of herself. With all the reluctant limelight of the world record, Catherine says it's her kids that keep her grounded.

Thinking back to 14 years ago as an almost twenty-year-old desperately wanting a shearing stand and competing in the junior grade at shows, Catherine is definitely blown away by where shearing has taken her.

Catherine never imagining shearing her way into the Open grade where she's now competed for two years in the National Circuit and is rapt with qualifying these past two years into the three-heat Quarter-finals of the NZ Open Merino Championship.

Catherine is immensely grateful for the gift of having had just the best people in her corner, with much support from friends and whanau. When doing the world record, she had four former world champions from the King Country in her corner, and says she couldn't have asked for better.

Catherine looks back on being given her first handpiece by one of the shearers she first worked with, as one of those gifts. It was an old green Heinger, and she thought this was Christmas. Ever since then Catherine has always gone with Heinger gear, and felt privileged that Heinger sponsored her record attempt. It is not just luck about Heinger sponsoring Catherine, as she paves the way for women as a shearing tutor with Elite, successfully recently hosting the first all-women's shearing course.

Catherine's best advice on those courses encouraging an up-and-coming female shearer is just to keep setting goals and keep putting yourself out of your comfort zone. She says, it's important to try to see the positive every day. And just like her foray from Gisborne to the Wairarapa under David Buick's tutelage, to becoming yet another King Country legend, it's important to put yourself around the best, most driven people if that's who you want to be – a decision that paid off for this quiet achiever!

Savvanah King (Eketahuna, New Zealand)

Twenty-five-year-old Savannah 'Savv' King from Eketahuna in the lower North Island, New Zealand, is a full-time shearer with a talent to watch. A cousin to former world record holder and Golden Shears open champion Dion King, Savv hails from an upbringing in station woolsheds beyond Taihape that her Wairarapa father, Raymond shore in.

Savv by nickname and savvy by nature, the daughter of a Tararua shearing contractor, was barely interested in the shearing industry growing up. However, shortly after leaving Y13 at Tararua High School, she discovered that cash was one of the harsh realities and essentials of life. The practicalities of rent and food bills kicked in, and so she reluctantly went woolhandling with the Eketahuna Braddick's team to pay her way.

Savv learned to shear as a novice in her first mainshear but typically struggled to get a stand as a learner. Where she had done no travelling as a woolhandler, as soon as she picked up the handpiece a wanderlust set in.

In her first full season shearing in 2021, Savv went south for a Mid-Canterbury winter pre-lamb with Barry Pullen of Lincoln. She shored her first mainshear in late 2021 with the Braddick's, then migrated south again for a pre-lamb 2022 with Kevin Hessell in Fairlie, then late season relocated a few paddocks north to Rakaia with Grant and Lynn Smith at Proshear.

After shearing the 2022 mainshear season two years ago back home in the Tararua's, Savv won the 2023 Golden Shears Women's Pressing title, where she also competed in Goldie's Triathlon doing both the Novice Woolhandling and Junior Shearing too.

After her 2023 pre-lamb in the deep South using Heiniger cover combs, primarily with Proshear in Mid-Canterbury, Savv jumped the ditch to Australia. By now a competent intermediate-level merino shearer, she landed a stand in Western Australia with Floyd Neil's stable of up and comers, based in York and Boyup Brook.

Savv recalls those mentally tough first few weeks shearing merinos using flat combs. Using Heiniger gear, Savv has gone on to confidently tackle the demands of wrinkly necks, wide bodies and soft skin. With the flexibility of a newly seasoned professional, Savv has travelled across the West, from woolsheds in the south-west, near Franklin River, to Katanning and Kojunup.

Savv has had some success over the past two years in fine wool competitions. Firstly, she won a Novice at York in early 2023. Since then, and advancing quickly through the grades, Savv placed third in the Intermediate in late 2023 at the Kojunup Shears, then took sixth place in the Senior at Katanning earlier this year.

Like many kiwi shearers, Savv travels widely to keep herself busy. From March through to June this year, Savv crossed the Pacific Ocean to take on a more arduous challenge of the Rambouillet merino, a French breed common in the rigs she joined. Woolhandling for some of the time, Savv ended the season shearing her way Stateside, traversing Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Utah and California.

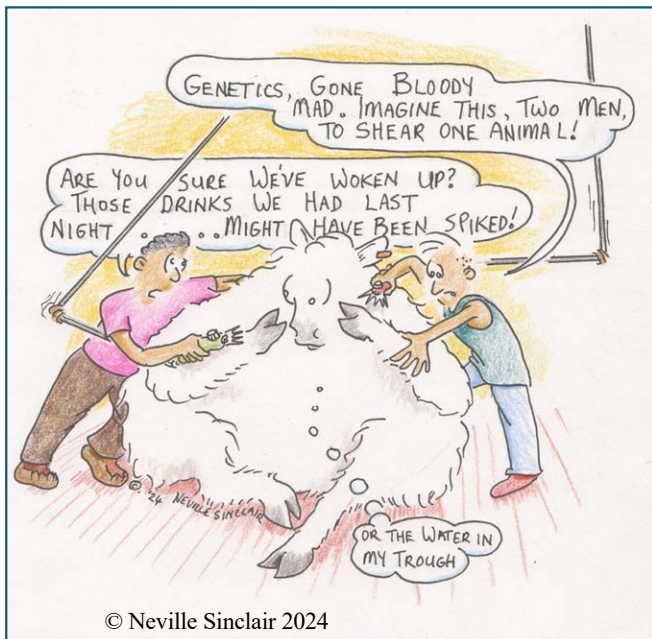




Savv (pictured above) says she has experienced the same mental challenges of self-doubt as any woman learner in the trade does; always compared to men. She says that you don't know your limits until you exceed them.

Savv says that skill is such a combination of trusting your gear to be reliable. With a highest lamb tally of nearly 400, and a 350 on ewes under her belt going into this mainshear, Savv has proved to herself her resilience. She offers credit where credits due. It helps by switching breeds and locations, she says to be taught by some of the newest guns in the game and to have confidence in her Heiniger gear.

Returning each summer to the Tararua for Ngaio and Steve Hansen, and with Hemi Braddick who taught her to have confidence to develop this shearing dream, Savv's well on the way to her dream of raising the women's benchmark.



Truth Inside Of You

The rich would have to eat money if the poor did not provide food.
- Russian Proverb



Above: A thing of beauty: Elco Direct passing through Tirau.



Above: Mid-micron wool harvesting returned to Kingston Station for the first time in a decade this August and September. An Andrew Leith Contracting gang came up from Southland to shear and prepare the 8000 1/4BD ewes and hoggets for Matt Tayler, and did a great job, according to classer Marg Forde A1260. Pictured back left: Keegan Currie, Troy Shirley, Andrew Leith, Mere Hiha, Jacqui Kingi, Susan Burns and Jordan Ramage. Front left: Malu Mamkeli, Gerard Waata, Pip MacLean, Joel Malcolm. (Marg Forde photo).



"There's nothing quite like a nice cold beer after a nice cold beer." (Norman Harraway Esq.).

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2026 World Championships team selection

The National Committee of Shearing Sports New Zealand has decided on three separate Circuits with points from placings in Open competitions to select the New Zealand team of two machine shearers, two blades shearers and two woolhandlers for the Golden Shears world shearing and woolhandling championships at Masterton on March 4-7, 2026.

General Rules.

1. Competitors must enter by notifying the Shearing Sports New Zealand media officer Doug Laing before the notified start time for the first round. The relevant contact details are email doug@shearingsports.co.nz or text message to 0274690644 stating event, name, and contact details. Entries will be acknowledged by return message

2: In machine shearing and woolhandling, there will be qualifying rounds and finals. In blades shearing there will not be a final. In all cases placings at each competition and in finals will be decided by the normal competition points rules.

3: In qualifying rounds, Circuit points will be awarded based on final placings amongst those who have entered the Circuit. The points are based on placings graduating from first in finals through semi-finals, quarter-finals and heats, being 1 = 9pts, 2 = 8pts, 3 = 7pts, 4 = 6pts, 5 = 5pts, 6 = 4pts, 7 = 3pts, 8 = 2pts, 9 and any other placing = 1pt.

4: In deciding placings and where there is a tie of two or more competitors impacting on who qualifies for finals or selection, best-placings countback processes across the series (ie, most wins etc) will apply.

5: No points will be awarded in any competitor's absence from any event other than by Shearing Sports New Zealand rules for competitors otherwise engaged in representing New Zealand, such as in a transtasman test.

Specific rules:

Machine Shearing: The Circuit will comprise eight qualifying rounds, plus a final. The top points-scorer in the Circuit (based on total of up to best seven results) will be automatically selected, and the second member will be the winner of a final among the next six, at the 2026 Rangitikei Shearing Sports, contested over 10 full-wool and 10 second-shear each. Should a tie impacting on qualifying for the final remain after countback processes precedence will go to the higher placing at the 2025 Golden Shears. The team member selected as winner of the circuit is expected to be at the Rangitikei Shearing Sports for outfitting and media purposes. The qualifying rounds are:

February 14-15, 2025: Southern Shears, at Gore

February 27-March 1, 2025: Golden Shears, at Masterton.

March 27-29, 2025: New Zealand Shears, at Te Kuiti.

October 10-11, 2025: New Zealand Spring Shears, at Waimate.

October 24, 2025: Great Raihania Shears Hawke's Bay, at Hastings.

January 16, 2026: Northern Southland Community Shears, at Lumsden.

January 17, 2026: Southland Shearing Championships, at Winton.

January 24, 2026: Taihape Shears.

January 31, 2026: Final, Rangitikei Shearing Sports, at Marton.

Blades Shearing: The Circuit will comprise eight rounds. The members of the team will be the top two on points from best seven results throughout the series. There will not be a series

final. If there is a tie impacting on team selection precedence will go to the better pen points, and if still unresolved the better combined board and pen points.

February 1, 2025: Inangahua A and P Show Reefton Shears.

March 8, 2025: Mayfield A and P Show.

March 29, 2025: Oxford A and P Show.

April 21, 2025: Mackenzie A and P Show New Zealand Lambshearing Championships, at Fairlie.

October 10-11, 2025: New Zealand Spring Shears at Waimate.

October 25, 2025: Northern A and P Show, at Rangiora.

November 1, 2025: Ashburton A and P Show.

November 13-14, 2025: New Zealand Corriedale Championships, Canterbury Shears, at Christchurch.

Woolhandling: There will be six qualifying rounds. The top points-scorer in the Circuit (based on total of best of up to five results) will be automatically selected, and the second member will be the winner of a final among the next six, at the 2026 Rangitikei Shearing Sports. Should a tie impacting on qualifying for the final remain after countback processes precedence will go to the higher placing at the 2025 Golden Shears. There will be a two-heat final over five full-wool and 5 second-shear for each competitor. The team member selected as winner of the Circuit is expected to be at the Rangitikei Shearing Sports for outfitting and media purposes.

The Qualifying rounds are:

14-15 February 2025: Southern Shears at Gore

27 Feb-1 March 2025: Golden Shears at Masterton.

27-29 March 2025: New Zealand Shears at Te Kuiti.

16 January 2026: Northern Southland Community Shears at Lumsden.

17 January 2026: Southland Shearing Championships at Winton.

24 January 2026: Taihape Shears.

31 January 2026: Final, Rangitikei Shearing Sports at Marton.

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Book Review: Woolsheds

By Des Williams

Many years ago it is now since a good friend suggested to this writer he should tour New Zealand, photographing and writing stories about old woolsheds. "And when you do, I'm coming with you," he said, as if to clinch the deal.

It was agreed immediately there would be some fabulous road trips, some great stories to be discovered and told, and probably several months of simply living the dream.

"Just one major and insurmountable problem," I replied. "You would be a great travelling companion, though you might have to learn how to drink whisky, and I might have some ability as a writer, but I certainly don't have the skills as a photographer to do justice to that mission."

Well mate, here we are maybe 25 years later and the job has been done, by two absolute professionals.

Writer, Dr Annette O'Sullivan from Massey University has teamed with Jane Ussher MNZM, "one of New Zealand's most lauded photographers." The result is *Woolsheds – the historic shearing sheds of Aotearoa New Zealand*. Published earlier this month by Massey University Press, the book contains 330 pages of text and images of spell-binding quality, capturing intimate interior shed details from the past 150 years and more.

The large format book focuses on fifteen sheds, chosen from an initial list of about 70 according to a rigorous set of criteria. "The woolshed had to be in original or near-original condition and

preferably with a long history of family ownership. I looked for unique features such as building materials, differences in woolshed design, rare equipment and other historic farm buildings," Dr O'Sullivan explains.

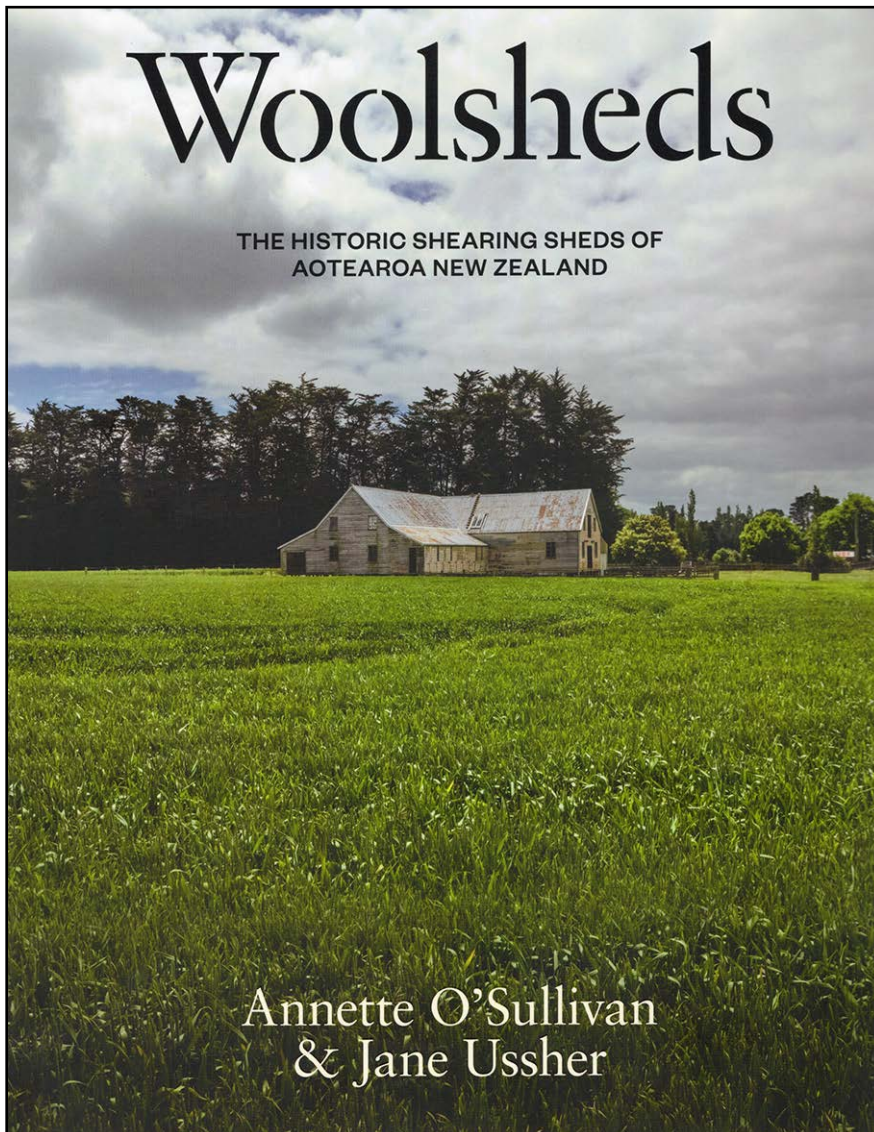
Her list resulted in eight sheds in the South Island and seven in the North. **South Island:** Highfield, Homebush, Terrace Station, Longbeach, Te Waimate, Kuriheka, Shag Valley and Kawarau. **North Island:** Puketoro, Maraekakaho, Moawhango, Opiki, Moanaroa, Bowlands and Lagoon Hill.

Each of the 15 stations is introduced with a four-page essay (1600-2000 words) focused on the history of the woolshed, followed by 12-20 magnificent images (photos!) of varying sizes, many of them full-page size.

Here we take a closer look at Lagoon Hill, which may be among the sheds more familiar to readers of today and recent decades. The history of Lagoon Hill station, 27 kilometres towards the coast from Martinborough in the Wairarapa, is caught up with one prominent family, the Riddifords, whose early family history began in 1840 when Daniel Riddiford arrived in New Zealand as an emigration agent for the New Zealand Company. Several large properties were acquired over the years including Te Awaiti and Tora. Lagoon Hill itself was established in 1915 by the original Riddiford's grandson, (also Daniel). Follows some of Dr O'Sullivan's detailed description of the Lagoon Hill shed and surrounds:

"The well-preserved green and white painted, corrugated-iron clad woolshed with its open, airy feel was a sophisticated and advanced design in its day. The interior is built of matai and rimu, thought to have been milled on the property. It has five ventilation lanterns with wooden louvres equally spaced across the corrugated iron roof and sash windows above the stands. To the right is the shepherd's house, also clad in corrugated iron, at the back of the woolshed are covered sheep yards. Together they are an impressive complex of farm buildings.

"The woolshed's two-storey design provided storage space for wool bales on the upper floor. Bales were hauled up on boards attached to the sides of stairs by a belt-driven winch powered



by the Lister engine in the expert's room. Bales were stored until transport was arranged and then lowered through double doors at the front onto transport below by a pulley attached to the centre of the storeroom floor. The lower floor of the wool room has the same double doors for loading bales from a raised platform.

"The woolshed is an L-shaped design and has 10 machine shearing stands along the side wall, making a long shearing board. The sheep pens can hold 2500 sheep, brought in from the covered yards at the rear of the building. After shearing they exit portholes into another, smaller set of covered counting out pens. The shed's Lister shearing machines were installed when the woolshed was built and are still attached to the original shearing shaft. They are regularly maintained and still work well. Before they were converted to electricity in the 1960s the machines were driven by a Lister engine, located in an open-sided room built into the side of the shed. It was powered by diesel, as was the grinder. Both the engine and grinder still sit in the expert's room at the end of the shearing board. The vertical sliding hatches in the wall allowed shearers to leave their combs and cutters for the experts to sharpen.



Above: A Collins Brown gang at the historic Lagoon Hill shed near Martinborough, the day before Golden Shears 2002. Front left: Hamish Robertson, Blair McGregor; Oti Mason and Gloria Shelford. Middle left: Brendan Elers, Kevin Gibbs, Ken Fergusson, David Reiri (ganger). Back left: Phil Holland and Jaws, Yvonne Abraham, Mic Nooroa, Anthony Mason. (Note: This is not a photo from the Woolsheds book. From Shearing magazine archives.)

"The catching pens are shared by two shearers and have double doors opening onto the board. Behind them the rest of the shed is made-up of a series of holding pens. Back in 1915 the mobile wooden wool bins on wheels - an update of the traditional baskets - and the Avery scales placed level with the floor must have seemed a modern model of efficiency during the big shears of Lagoon Hill's glory days, when the station carried around 40,000 sheep.

"The group of farm buildings set among trees a short distance from the woolshed indicate the scale of the original farm, back in an era when six permanent shepherds lived on the property. There was a nine-room accommodation block for shearers, single men's quarters, a toilet and shower block, a wash house, a cook house, a drying room, a stable and a station shop. Not far away is the handsome manager's house, where a little library built into a corner of the veranda was available to the farm staff to borrow books. Its shelves remain well stocked."

Questioned about what she hoped readers would take from the book, Dr O'Sullivan said her aim was to create a lasting record of some of the most significant historic woolsheds in New Zealand and record their histories and heritage objects.

"The stories speak of vision, resilience and resourcefulness of early farmers and the woolsheds are their legacy. Shearing histories told through objects found in the sheds include handmade stencils that carried the identity of the owner to international markets on the other side of the world. This is a branding history of New Zealand's first export brands, some of which have stood the test of time.

"The book is a celebration of the architectural, economic, cultural and social contribution of sheep farming to the history of the nation and a sober reminder of the importance of wool today."

And did her producing the book result in her developing a new respect for shearers? "... Once the music starts, it is all on. This is teamwork at its best with each person playing an important role in keeping pace with the shearer till the next smoko break.

"It is an impressive operation that is both compelling and exhausting to watch," Dr O'Sullivan concluded.

The book became available from "all good bookshops" on 7 November 2024. Recommended retail price \$85.00.





Nominations are now being sought for the 2025 Ford New Zealand Rural Sports Awards. Convenor of Judges, Paul Allison MNZM said the 2024 awards were his first and he was incredibly impressed by the calibre of nominees and professionalism of the awards.

"The awards play a vital role in recognising and celebrating the incredible achievements of rural sportspeople. They not only shine a spotlight on those who excel in their fields but also acknowledge the significant contributions of those working behind the scenes who ensure the success of rural sports."

Nominations are open to rural sports organisations or clubs involved in wood-chopping, shearing, horse-riding, tree-climbing, shooting, rodeo, harness racing, highland heavies, gumboot throwing, ploughing and fencing. The award categories are:

- The PTS Logistics New Zealand Rural Sportsman of the Year Award
- The RX Plastics New Zealand Rural Sportswoman of the Year Award
- The Fonterra Young New Zealand Rural Sportsperson of the Year Award
- Permobil Rural Sportsperson with a Disability
- The TAB Outstanding Contribution to New Zealand Rural Sports Award
- The Courtesy Ford Lifetime Legacy Award
- The Sir Brian Lochore Memorial Award for Outstanding Sportsperson from a Rural Background – finalists and the winner are announced on the night of the awards.
- The Ford Supreme New Zealand Rural Sportsperson Award – judges select one overall winner to go home with the Supreme Award.

Paul Allison is urging sports administrators and Regional Sports Organisations to submit nominations for the NZ Rural Sports Awards. Nominations close on 24 January 2025, and finalists for the Men's, Women's and Youth categories will be announced in February 2025. While winners of other awards will be announced on the night of the awards.

Save the date: The Awards will be presented at a gala function at Awapuni Racecourse on Friday, 7 March 2025, during the Ford Ranger New Zealand Rural Games Weekend in Palmerston North.

For more information:

Steve Hollander
 Founder
 Ford New Zealand Rural Sports Awards
 021973207

Above: The team at Y-Not Shearing in South Australia recently posted on Facebook a photo of Peter (surname not revealed), a wool classer who has had his stencil for 50 years! Peter has spent a lifetime in the industry himself, they said, being a farmer at Port Germein Gorge and having spent 40 years in shearing crews pressing and classing in the far north.

"He's a very tall man, it's hard to imagine him not getting a sore back at the table, although he said his height helped him out as an advantage as a presser which he did for 20 years!"

"Pete classes once a year at the Waterman's Shed in Melrose (semi retirement) where Y-Not shearers and shedhands were working at the time. Melrose is a beautiful little town, known as the oldest town in the Flinders Ranges at the foot of Mount Remarkable."

Shearing magazine says thanks to the Y-Not team for shining a little light on another unsung hero of our industry!

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Above: Geraldine's iconic man of the blades was found doing some noble community service recently, in the form of demonstrations of his ancient craft for the local Geraldine school children. The teacher reported on Facebook:

"Today we furthered our learning and inquiry into wool! We began with a demonstration by Phil Oldfield using both machine and blade shears to remove a fleece from a hogget.

"We then continued the process by watching the raw fleece being turned into yarn with spinning wheels and a spindle by Mary, Sue & Prue. What amazing skills and knowledge we have right here in Geraldine, and we are very grateful to them for giving up their time to come along and share their passion with us!"

Well done Mr ShearSharpNZ, we say.

"Whoever put guts into Leon Samuels was using a wide-mouthed shovel." (Norman Harraway Esq.).

Everything starts in the feet

By Gabriella Schmidt-Morrell

'Fast hands', 'What a drive', 'Incredible strength', 'Unreal hand-eye coordination', 'Check out that return' ... Sound familiar?

Never do we hear: 'What an incredible foot placement' ... And yet, that is where all the performance results start from. Not just in shearing, but in most physical activities and sports. Feet don't lie.

I know this to be true for martial arts for instance. Every strike and block (or kick) starts in the feet. The point of impact is simply the end of the whipping action of our body. In our training, we work on foot placement all the time. From there we move up: Controlling the knee, then the movement and rotation of the hip, the core, the shoulders and finally the elbow and fist. When we coach students, we look at their feet first and last.

Shearing and wool handling is no different. The feet of shearing industry people are generally strong and have high mobility. No surprises there: You use them intensely all day long.

Wool handlers and presser are lifting and walking, bending over, throwing and pushing, shuffling, standing, squatting and lunging, reaching and pulling continuously. The only way they may enjoy a long-lasting career is by perfect foot placement and weight distribution for all those actions.

For shearing, the placement of the feet is even more crucial.

A little tweak or shuffle may mean your sheep is more relaxed and better controlled. Correct foot placement allows for your body to be under as little strain as is possible. If your feet are in the right spot, your entire position is one of strength and balance. All your joints are aligned, making your work more sustainable.

Each section of the sheep has important changes to the foot placing. Depending on the breed, the size, the season, and of course your size, this may need adjusted individually.

A good shearer or shearing instructor should be able to explain to you exactly why the foot should be placed there, what its placing achieves and how a minimal change can improve the entire routine.

If you struggle to control your sheep, check on your feet first (assuming your gear is cutting, and your handpiece is buzzing smoothly?).

A lot of this you can work out yourself. Study your body, how it feels to place it in a certain way. Work with intent, focus and awareness, and of course: Observe others.

Basic gym movements should be studied and practiced avoiding back and joint issues.

Have a few lessons with a personal trainer to learn the movements we use the most. In the case of a wool handler that may be squats, lunges, deadlifts, russian deadlifts, shoulder presses, chest presses.

For a presser: seated rows, lateral pull downs, squats, goblet squats, chest presses, shoulder presses.

For a shearer: lunges, seated rows, deadlifts, chest presses, torso rotations with resistance, hamstring curls.

Above all though are mobility exercises, aiming to gain full range in all joints.

Explain and demonstrate your movement patterns to a personal trainer and they should be able to create a programme for you.

Spending a little bit of money should increase your work capacity and lessen the days to recover from injury. Plus, your work becomes even more enjoyable.

The feet are the body's first point of contact with the ground. Many health and performance issues that people face can be prevented if the feet are healthy, are functioning properly, are used correctly and with intent.



Above: "Everything starts with the feet." Some in-shed training advice about improving his footwork in 1999 turned Paul Avery from an excellent shearer into a future Golden Shears and world champion.

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SHEARING SPORTS CALENDAR 2024-2025

- November 30 (Saturday): Taranaki Shears, at Stratford A and P Show.
- December 7 (Saturday): Whangarei A and P Show, at Whangarei; Geysersland Agrodome Shears, Rotorua A and P Show, at Ngongotaha.
- January 4 (Saturday): No competitions scheduled.
- January 11 (Saturday): Peninsula Duvauchelle Shears, at Duvauchelle.
- January 17 (Friday): Northern Southland Community Shears (NZ Full wool championships), at Lumsden; Wairoa A and P Show Speedshear
- January 18 (Saturday): Kaikohe A, P and H Show, at Kaikohe; Wairoa A and P Show, at Wairoa; Golden Bay A and P Show, at Takaka; Southland Shears (New Zealand Crossbred Lambs Championships), at Winton A and P Show.
- January 19 (Sunday): Horowhenua A, P and I Show, at Levin.
- January 25 (Saturday): Taihape A and P Show, Taihape; Tapawera Shears, Tapawera.
- January 31 (Friday): Dannevirke A and P Show, at Dannevirke.
- February 1 (Saturday): North Kaipara A and P Show, at Paparoa; Rangitikei Shearing Sports, at Marton; Reefton Shears, Inangahua A and P Show, at Reefton.
- February 5 (Wednesday): Aria Cosmopolitan Club Speedshear.
- February 6 (Thursday): Aria Waitangi Day Sports, at Aria.
- February 8 (Saturday): Northern Wairoa A and P Show, at Arapohue (Dargaville); Te Puke A and P Show, at Te Puke; Otago Shears, at Balclutha.
- February 14-15 (Fri-Sat): Southern Shears, at Gore.
- February 15 (Saturday): North Hokianga A and P Show, at Broadwood; Ohura A and P Show, at Ohura; Murchison A and P Show, at Murchison.
- February 16 (Sunday): Counties Shears, at Pukekohe.
- February 21 (Friday): Taumarunui Shears, at Hikurangi Station, Taumarunui.
- February 22 (Saturday): Apiti Sports, at Apiti; Kaikoura A and P Show, at Kaikoura.

BACK TO ENTRIES ON THE DAY AT TAIHAPE

Initial details about the Taihape Shears on Saturday 25 January 2025 (in the competition directory) informed prospective competitors that entries would be taken on-line only. That decision has now been revoked and it will be enter on the day, as in previous years.

Long-serving (and out-going) Taihape Shears chairman Stu Munro says the proposed change was made at the Annual Meeting but the incoming committee preferred to leave options open for people who might "decide on the day" to go to the show.

"Last year we had phenomenal entries on the day which made a long day for everybody but we got through it. The Taihape A&P Society has now folded after more than 100 years so the shearing sports is a 'stand-alone' event, though this year's North Island gumboot throwing contest will be held on the same day.

Stu says there will also be a speedshear held at the Utiku Clubrooms on the Friday night (24 January).



- February 23 (Sunday): Pahiatua Shears, at Mangaone Valley, Pahiatua.
- February 25 (Tuesday): Hawke's Bay Autumn Shears.
- February 26 (Wed): Wairarapa Pre-Shears Woolhandling, at Mikimiki, Masterton.
- February 27-March 1 (Thu-Sat): Golden Shears International Championships, at Masterton.
- March 1 (Saturday): Amuri A and P Show, at Rotherham.
- March 8 (Saturday): Kumeu A and H Show, at Kumeu; Cheviot A and P Show, at Cheviot; Mayfield A and P Show, at Mayfield.
- March 15 (Saturday): Warkworth A and P Show, at Warkworth; Waimarino Shears, at Raetihi; Methven Lamb Shears, at Methven A and P Show.
- March 22 (Saturday): Waitomo Caves Sports, at Waitomo.
- March 23 (Sunday): Flaxbourne A and P Show, at Ward.
- March 27-29 (Thurs-Sat): New Zealand Shears, at Te Kuiti.
- March 29 (Saturday): Oxford A and P Show, at Oxford.
- April 5 (Saturday): No competitions scheduled.
- April 12 (Saturday): No competitions scheduled.
- April 19 (Easter Saturday): No competitions scheduled.
- April 21 (Monday): Mackenzie A and P Show (NZ Lambshearing Championships), at Fairlie.



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Shearing magazine's New Zealand Shearing Industry Hall of Fame

Subjective category: By reputation and deeds, their names endure through New Zealand shearing history and folklore:

- James Apes (1855-1938)
- Alex Hutchinson (1865-1943)
- Raihania Rimitiriū (1868-1934)
- Jimmy Power (1869-1902)
- 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 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.
- Peter Casserly 1980; NZ Golden Blades 1975-76; Omarama Shears 1995.
- Colin King 1984; Golden Shears 1982, 1987-88; National circuit six times.
- John Fagan 1984; National Lamb Shearing champion (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.
- Joanne Kumeroa (1969-2015) 2003, 2005; Golden Shears 1995, 2001, 2004, 2010-12; NZ Open 1992, 1995-96, 2001-02, 2007.
- 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.



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

Refresh needed at SSNZ (Opinion)

By Jill Angus Burney

"If you keep doing the same things, you'll get the same results" is often attributed to Albert Einstein or Henry Ford – a simple yet powerful reminder. Great leaders don't just do what's expected; they pave new paths and innovate beyond the norm. This requires governance skills, visionary thinking, and the ability to unite people. 'He tangata, he tangata, he tangata'.

In his letter to the North Island Shearing Committee on 4 November 2024, Shearing Sports New Zealand Acting Chair, Sir David Fagan has admitted that on 12 August 2024 in the ballot for a new independent Chair for SSNZ from the three nominees, he first accepted an illegal proxy vote to then use his casting vote to declare an initial new appointment of former North Island Chair, Warren Parker.

Four months after the matter was brought to light, and no closer to a new Chair being voted on, the National Committee is equally divided between those that want to restructure and raise the bar on governance responsibilities, and those who continue to see only that the constitution was the problem, not the attitudes of the people who committed the electoral fraud.

Over the past four months, the Shearing Sports New Zealand National Committee has faced critical questions. How did a decade of seemingly stable leadership end in constitutional missteps and embarrassment for three nominees, including former two-term Member of Parliament, Jo Hayes and former New Zealand Business Woman of the Year, Mavis Mullins?

For the first time in 37 years, three candidates competed, yet a delegate's request for candidate speeches was dismissed, revealing communication failures. Reports suggest voting confusion among South Island members, with some not recognising candidates, mistaking Warren White of Waimate for Warren Parker of the Waikato.

SSNZ's financial instability, lack of reserves, and minimal plans for revitalisation are alarming. Recent AGM documents indicate procedural breaches, with eleven attendees casting twelve votes. Despite a world records judge, Paul Harris who is also a Judges Examiner on the Executive Committee,

constitutional rules were ignored. When a female delegate sought accountability, she faced hostility, raising concerns of systemic bias and potential misconduct. Legal opinions confirm procedural errors, reinforcing doubts about leadership integrity.

For the past ten years, Shearing Sports has remained outside Sport NZ funding, with outdated goals. Meanwhile, Sport NZ emphasises volunteer development, leadership growth, and inclusive programmes like 'wahine toa'. SSNZ must evolve to serve future generations, with leadership that leaves the organisation stronger than before.

Our legacy is the development of all of those that contribute to the sports, volunteers and competitors alike. The way we measure our progress should not just be by the presence of the New Zealand team at world champs or in trans-Tasman events. Heaven forbids if that were our only measure, as our results these past five years have been limited. And that's not an indictment on our individual team members, but speaks volumes to the planning and support we give them.

Ten years ago, we had Sport New Zealand-carded athletes as well supported at the time as Olympians, Black Ferns 7s Captain, Sarah Goss Hirini or canoeing's multiple Gold Medallist, Dame Lisa Carrington.

Addressing structural issues, such as female representation and more inclusive governance, is not just ethical – it can also improve financial health, open access to sports grants, and attract philanthropic support. By creating a diverse, forward-thinking leadership, SSNZ can build a foundation for sustainable growth and increased funding opportunities. To do that we must appraise our leaders by the standards and depth that we want the sport to reach.

Now is the time for change. We call on SSNZ leaders, stakeholders, and community members to demand transparency, enforce constitutional integrity, and foster a culture of growth and innovation. Together, we can restore trust, revitalise the sport, and secure a thriving future for the next generation of shearing sports.

* * * * *



Above: The mystery faces in our recent FB advert. Colin Thirkell and Kerry Win, c1993.

Tribute: John Lawton

By Jills Angus Burney

Arohanui mai, moe mai ra, moe mai John Lawton, who passed away peacefully at home in Gore on 3 October 2024, aged 82.

There's something poignant about the strong image of John's coffin covered in a woven korowai cloak, on the dance floor of the Gore Town and Country Club in early October.

'It's hard to turn the page on the next chapter', so started Otago shearing stalwart, retired shearing contractor, Ronnie Davis to conduct the service for 'Big John'. An apology and sincere condolences next from the New Zealand Shearing Contractors Association President Mark Barrowcliffe, who spoke of the twenty years John contributed to their industry association, including his ten years as President.

Both John and Ronnie were my points of contact, alongside Peter and Elsie Lyon, and the late Elbert de Koning when in 1998/99 I did my Waikato University Master's Thesis on New Zealand shearing contractors' experience of the ACC scheme.

He was a man of few words, but Ronnie reminded us that John was one of the original contractors, alongside Elbert de Koning, Bill Potae and Bill Morrison, that set up the New Zealand Shearing Contractor's Association (NZSCA) in the early 1980s.

Contracting was a great step for the quietly spoken giant who had left New Plymouth Boys High school at age 14, who returned to his home town of Taihape to work as a farm labourer, and fencing his way around the district. Along with his best mate, who married his twin, John loved shearing and soon after getting married, was travelling to Australia and down south.

Settled in Otautau, John partnered with Elbert De Koning who was based in Ohai, to run de Koning Lawton Shearing Services, until they developed first, the Eastern Northern Southland run and another in West Otago, where Sam Boyton ran the Lawrence crew. Once in charge of the Eastern Northern Southland run, the Lawtons moved to Otama, purchasing five acres and a house that soon became the Otama Shearing Quarters.

Eldest son, Willie told the story of being a young lad running across from the house to the quarters each night to blu-tack up the work lists, surrounded by a hundred workers and fifteen gangs eager to know John's plans for the next day's work.

Like many that started shearing under John's quiet and humble tutelage, I'll never forget my summer in 1983 shearing for John and Kay. It was my first year in the senior grade when John encouraged me and Joe Clarke to do the southern circuit. John was happy to give us a day off, or two, if necessary, to go to the competitions and he was always there too, in the background doing points or judging, always wanting to know how we did.

As the business grew, the de Koning partnership separated into the three individual runs, which the Lawton's continued until John sold the business in 1997 to Davis Shearing when John faced adversity with dignity, suffering some unfortunate events along the way and then the death of his son, Matt.

Kay and John moved into Gore in 2004, where he proudly worked in the grain industry and continued to support his family through their range of sporting endeavours.



Above: John Lawton at a Shearing Sports New Zealand annual meeting, mid 1990s.

Gavin 'Swampy' Rowland, who sat next to John at countless shearing competitions, says none was prouder than John when the girls did well. John was delighted at his daughter, Sharon's wool classer skills that took her to score the winning fleece in New Zealand last year from the Williamson's of Glenbrook Station (formerly of Birchwood Station), Twizel.

And towards the end of the service, Swampy paid another tribute to John's connections to shearing sports, where son, Willie had outlined John judging at the world championships at the Royal Bath and West Show in Shepton Mallet in 1984, managing the New Zealand team to the Perth World Championships in 1986.

Swampy said John spent a long time as a New Zealand Wool Board shearing instructor, was a life member of the Southern Shears, and received a special award from the South Island Shearing and Woolhandling Committee for his outstanding contribution to shearing sports. John touched a lot of areas in the industry and had a lot of friends because he gained so much respect from his peers. These images remain ever so poignant as a profound contribution by John to the industry and its sport.

As our Shearing editor put it, we all have a total admiration for John's decades-long, selfless contribution to shearing sports and the industry. He literally went to every competition for decades, back when the points scoring was a series of manual calculations, to the high-tech computer programmes of recent times.

John is survived by his cherished Kay, dearly loved father and father-in-law of Matthew (deceased), Nelson, George and Rebel, Sharon and Puddy, William, Kelly, Christine and Tawhi, Raha and Ranui. Adored Granddad and great-Granddad of all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, loved twin brother of Glenda, and his siblings, Barbara and Roger, loved uncle to all his nieces and nephews.

RIP Big John.

He kept Her Majesty waiting

By Des Williams

"You know Mr Williamson, you are the first man in the world ever to keep me waiting." With those words – perhaps the most iconic 'sound-bite' in New Zealand shearing history – Queen Elizabeth II presented Allan Williamson with the Borthwick-Caltex silver cup at Lower Hutt on 11 February 1963.

The occasion was the 'Royal Invitation Golden Shears', one of the special events staged for the Queen and Prince Phillip during a 12-day New Zealand tour in February 1963. When plans for the Royal tour were first announced there were high hopes in Masterton that the Queen's itinerary might coincide with the Golden Shears in the first weekend of March, which had enjoyed phenomenal success since its 1961 inception.

"Suggestions were made to Government that a Royal visit to the Golden Shears competition would be a worthy item for the tour itinerary. The idea was accepted as an excellent one, but when it came down to the fine detail, the dates for the two events were just at odds with one another by a couple of weeks or so," Laurie Keats told this writer in *Last Side to Glory* (1991).

"Not a problem," said the Society, "we've been talking about taking the show on the road for some time and this could just be the opportunity we have waited for. The Queen is going to Lower Hutt – we will come to Lower Hutt – it's just over the hill. So the date was arranged and the huge jigsaw puzzle which, until then, had only been erected at the Masterton War Memorial Stadium, was indeed taken 'over the hill'.

"A shearing programme was organised. With an eye to selecting a New Zealand team for international competition against Australia at the forthcoming 'real' Golden Shears, two heats of merino shearing were arranged. The big event would be the Royal Invitation, featuring the six finalists from the Golden Shears 1962."

The major difference between the Masterton 20-sheep finals and Lower Hutt was that the latter contest involved 10 sheep per shearer.



Above: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the late-arriving, admonished Mr Williamson. All in good fun, we suspect. And the brothers Bowen, in the background, were also well remembered, as *The Press* newspaper recorded: "The Duke of Edinburgh left no doubt today that he remembered the famous shearing brothers, Godfrey and Ivan Bowen. After the Golden Shears events at Fraser Park the Duke noticed the Bowens at the end of the presentation line. A huge grin broke over his face, and from about 15 yards away he called out – "And how are you?" Then, with hand outstretched, he almost raced across to the brothers, leaving the rest of the Royal entourage behind." [The brothers had given shearing demonstration for the Royals during previous visits to New Zealand.]

And the wool was literally flying, as the *New Zealand Press Association* took delight in recording: "The precision and speed which have made New Zealand shearers renowned in all the world's wool producing countries were demonstrated to the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh at Fraser Park, Lower Hutt, this afternoon. The Royal couple literally saw the wool fly from a special shearing stand opposite their dais – the nor'-wester was still blowing. A burly Ohakune shearer, AL Williamson, outpaced his rivals – including one Australian – in the invitation shearing event.

Recalling that famous day many years later, Allan Williamson had thanks for Brian Waterson, who despite having just returned from shearing merinos in Australia, had talked him into taking part in the merino shearing heats just prior to the Invitation event, in place of another contender who had failed to show up.

"It gave me the chance of a warm up before the big event – no small thing when shearing against the likes of Bing Macdonald, Colin Boshier, Joe Ferguson and Co." And a [Williamson] scrapbook clipping described the action:

From the 'go' of the Marshall, Mr. RE O'Hara, Williamson took the lead, with Macdonald close behind. Ferguson was fifth. Williamson held the lead during his second sheep; Ferguson came up to second, leaving Macdonald third.

At the third change-over Ferguson took the lead and raced away, leaving everyone else at least five blows behind. Williamson dropped into second place with Macdonald third. Kevin Sarre, apart from a brief burst up to fourth at the end of his fifth sheep, remained consistently last – sixth place.

The positions held, with Symon fourth, and Boshier fifth, until the last two sheep. Then finishing bursts made the result Ferguson, Williamson, Macdonald, Boshier, Symon and Sarre last. Points for the event were allotted 50 for speed and 50 for final appearance of the sheep. Final points were: Williamson, 83.15; Symon 82.4; Macdonald 81.90; Boshier 78.25; Ferguson 74.68 Sarre, 68.30.

Allan Williamson, from *Last Side to Glory*: "When it came to the presentations, people were yelling for me because I wasn't there when the Queen came forward to make the presentation. Colin Boshier and I were late getting back, having gone away to the tent to dry off, as it were. In one sense, as a shearing contractor, I did the best thing I ever could have done as far as advertising was concerned.

"They had given us singlets to shear in during the competition, with WELLINGTON printed on them. While we were in the tent waiting for the ceremony I thought, 'Blow it, I'm not getting up there with that on, I come from OHAKUNE, not Wellington – so I changed back into my own singlet. I knew there would be TV and other cameras around, so I thought it would be better to have that on.

"When we went to get back through the crowd it was just about impossible. I could hear the yelling but I didn't know what it was all about until Colin gave me a big push from behind and we managed to get through. When I got into the open and saw the Queen already at the table, I realised she was waiting for me to come forward and receive the trophy."

"That victory gave Allan Williamson a unique place in the history of the Golden Shears championship. He can't claim to be one of the [then] 18 authentic Open Champions, but then none of them won a Royal Invitation championship. What's more, he is likely to remain forever, the only person to win a New Zealand Golden Shears championship away from Masterton. On the strength of his four appearances in Golden Shears open finals (excluding Lower Hutt) he is assured of a permanent place among the great shearers to have graced the War Memorial stadium."

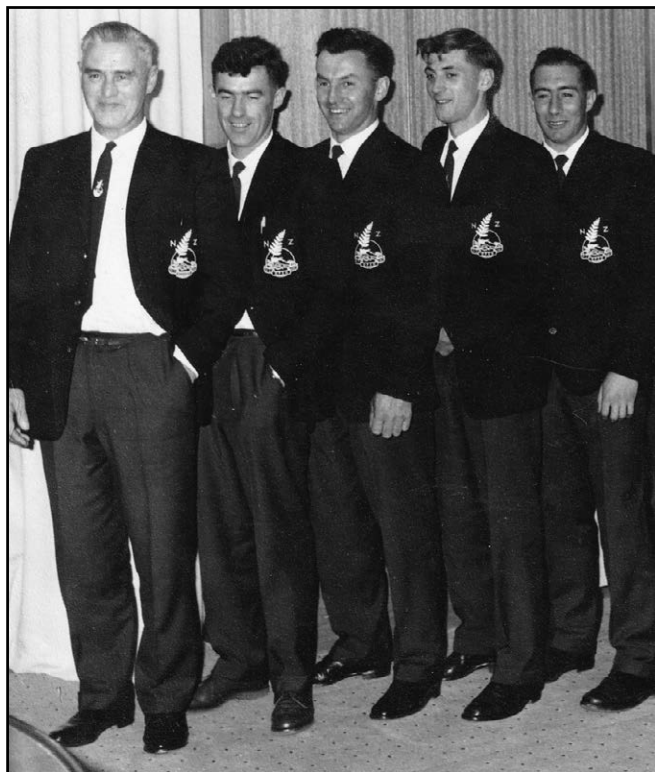
And while that famous day at Lower Hutt will always be the event for which Allan is best remembered, he also came up with some important innovations for improving our sport. It was he who first advocated to the Golden Shears committee that the competition sheep be prepared with a blow above the teats, in order to protect the farmer's assets. And did you ever win a ribbon as a finalist in a shearing sports event? That was one of Allan's recommendations, too. "We are here for the honour and glory, not for the money," he suggested at the time.

Now, just one more thing (as Lieutenant Colombo might say), it was actually Murray McSkimming who overheard the Queen's mild admonishment of Williamson for his lateness. He related the incident in another book, *Top Class Wool Cutters*: "Allan was very embarrassed at being late, but eventually managed to squeeze his way through. I was standing just a couple of feet away from the Queen and I heard her say, "You know Mr Williamson, you are the first man in the world ever to keep me waiting!"

Allan Williamson was born at Hunterville on 21 October 1931. He spent his early days as a shearer working for Clevedon-based contractor, Wally Scorrar. Allan's early days in the industry were recalled in *Last Side to Glory* (Hazard Press 1999): "Wally had his main shearing contract run around the Ohakune-Whanganui regions and it followed as



Above: New Zealand's team for the first official shearing test against Australia, at Golden Shears Masterton in 1963. From left: Murray McSkimming, Allan Williamson and Bing Macdonald. The "test" was staged over three rounds on three consecutive nights. Round one involved ten long-wool Romneys, round two ten merinos, and round three, six merinos and six crossbreds. Macdonald won the first round, Kevin Sarre the second and Peter Kelly (Australia) the third. Maurice Doyle was the third Australian shearer. New Zealand won on the basis of accumulated points from the best two shearers from each country, 401.633 points to 395.053 points. And Peter Kelly, incidentally, was a member of the Australian team for the 1975/76 series at Euroa and Masterton. **Below:** Allan was also a member of the New Zealand shearing and woolhandling team to Australia in 1963, from left: Claude Waite (manager), Allan Williamson, Morry Lawton, Johnny Harrison and Des Smith (woolhandlers). The tour was for 'educational purposes' rather than for competition.



night follows day that Allan would move down to the shadow of the mountains for the mainshear season. He says he did the summer-winter transfer between the two regions (Clevedon-Ruapehu) for a couple of years before actually moving down to live at Ohakune in 1957, where he eventually took over one of Wally's contracts. "I did that for a good number of years but I didn't chase the sheep around an awful lot, so I would only have been doing 20,000 in a season – perhaps 25,000 in a really good year. I shored more sheep in a season when I was 44 or 45 than I ever did when I was younger."

And it wasn't only sheep shearing that kept Scorrar and his crews gainfully employed for most of the year. In the off-season during the early to mid-1950s, Wally and several of his team, including Allan and Morry Lawton, would head down to Riwaka to pick tobacco. That's where Allan met his future wife, Riwaka girl, Colleen Coleman. The couple were married in September 1954 and eventually produced a family

of five – Athol, Sharon, Robert (Bob), Gavin and Brenda. Bob proved to be a talented shearer with a great style and Gavin says he shored enough sheep to pay his way through University.

[Incidentally, Morry Lawton also met his future wife at Riwaka – he and Thelma Middleton from Invercargill were married in May 1957.]

"... Then in 1965 I bought a farm at Raetihi and the number of sheep shorn in a season was cut right back, though I never actually gave it away completely. I was on the farm for nine years and then I sold out in 1974 and moved up to Omokoroa to establish an orchard. Obviously, the orchard wasn't producing any income for the first few years, so I went back to shearing. I found then that I was able to shear more sheep and do higher tallies than I'd done previously. I never did 400 on big sheep but I was quite able to manage 400 or 500 on lambs in a day. I did that comfortably up until about 48 years of age."

Allan farmed the orchard until the early 1990s until he started having some health issues – problems that his son Gavin Williamson suggests may have been traceable back to an incident on the Raetihi farm when he nearly died following exposure to chemical sprays used on brussel sprouts. He then developed allergies which were attributed to sprays used in the orchard.

"So the orchard was sold and he bought a 150-acre retirement block at Honikwi, west of Otorohanga. This was a return to his real passion – farming – but sadly his health deteriorated quite quickly and he didn't really get to enjoy the farm too much," Gavin says.

Apart from those Golden Shears open finals he shored in (1962, 1965, 1967, 1968) and the 'day before the Queen' in 1963, Allan had some other career highlights. He brought his handpiece along to the 30th anniversary 'Goldies' in 1990 and won the 'Vintage Veterans' event, against old foes like Ivan and Godfrey Bowen, Bob Reed (who shored with his lower leg in plaster), Barry Broome, Morry Lawton, Harry Zank and Brian Waterson.

Allan Williamson died, aged 63, at the Honikiwi farm on 26 November 1995, surrounded by his family. He is buried at the Otorohanga Public Cemetery and survived by his wife Colleen (now 90) and their family of five.



Above: The 'burly' Allan Williamson loaded up with tobacco at Riwaka, early-1950s. **Below:** Golden Shears open finalists 1967, from left: George Potae, Tom Brough, Eddie Reidy, Morry Lawton, Allan Williamson and Brian Quinn.



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Have records gone off the rails? (Opinion)

Introduction:

In September 2024 Dwayne Black of Lojik Shearer Training posted a video on his website, talking about some of the widespread discontent that exists in the shearing industry about the present state of shearing world records. Essentially, about how standards seem to have eroded over recent years and many inconsistencies arisen in rules and judging.

That first video [dated 11 September, available for viewing on the Lojik – Shearer Training Facebook page], he says on a follow-up offering (20 October), created quite an awakening, resulting in receipt of dozens of messages and eye-witness accounts from leading names in the industry.

What some might have initially seen as just Dwayne Black's point of view and experience was, from feedback received, obviously so much more than that. The following edited transcript attempts to summarise Black's second narrative:

"That video created what you might call quite an awakening, because of the dozens of calls and messages and eye-witness accounts received on the subject of world records. These came in from many leading names in the industry and instead of being just Dwayne Black's opinion, it is obviously so much more.

"In bringing up the subject, I didn't realise just how bad things have become and issues clearly now have to be addressed. There are many big names in the industry who want something done about it.

"Some have previously tried to instigate changes but haven't had any luck in communicating that to the World Records Society, so I created a catalyst. And there's certainly a lot of alignment from those involved in record shearing, from all over the world.

Do I have credibility to talk on this subject? Yes, I believe I do. I am still the only shearer to have held five current world records at once. I've been involved in over a dozen setups, organising and mentoring Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. My father, Peter Black, served 20 plus years as a world records judge. He also has been involved in over 20 world records between Australia and New Zealand and South Africa.

So, I'm not commenting on something I'm not schooled in or because I'm chasing attention. I've taken this on because someone had to do it and that might as well be me.

In any sport, including ours, you play to the rules, and get away with whatever you can. That's why we have adjudicators, or it becomes an open slather shed tally, not a world record. But it still requires the sacrifice, commitment, time away from families, the many friends and other people who give up time to support your cause up to months before a record day.

Training, building a body and mind fitness to levels you've never had before from up to a year or more beforehand. Dreaming, visualising, usually starts way before that. I know, I've been there many times. You simply can't play with people's efforts like that with inconsistency and favouritism that has now become pretty obvious.

I'm not going too much into specifics here. But I have made note of all the feedback and eyewitness accounts and some of the bigger names in our industry as I've received them and noted them down. It's simply not right and it's not good enough. You can't treat such commitment, hard work and sacrifice without the respect it deserves.

The inconsistency has always been my whole point of concern here from the start. Be clear on that. I've not spoken out of school, I've not attacked anyone personally or any individuals personally, I've got way much more professional respect and support for this industry than to be like that. Quite simply It's just about being not fair at the highest level.



Above: Judges and World Records officials at Justin Bell's world lamb shearing record (851) at the Onuku Maori Trust, Rerewhakaaitu, on 4 December 2004. This and the other photos in this story are for illustrative purposes only.



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Who's judging the judges?

How do they get consistency across the board? Who's keeping an eye on them? Why are people with minimal knowledge or less knowledge than other judges convening fine wool?

The convenor is basically the boss judge. Aren't the local people who live in the country, shear the sheep, farm the sheep more inclined to have a better understanding of the job at hand?

How many past world record holders on the Society's judging panel? From what I can gather, Australia has three out of six who have attempted, organised or been involved in records. South Africa has two out of their three referees. New Zealand has one person out of the six who's been involved in or done a record and the United Kingdom has zero out of four judges that have been involved in records shearing.

Show-based [competition] judges are judging records instead of experienced record people. Why? I feel another part of the problem that I've seen recently too is too many referees at a record attempt, which can bring in more opinions than necessary and bring in more inconsistent ratings.

Solo records were mostly three referees, two-stands were mostly three referees. The three-stand done at Mount Linton Station in 2006, had 2350 shorn and rated on the day by three referees, no worries.

Since around the mid-2000s, solos now have four or five referees. Two-stands, five or six referees three-stands five or six, four-stands six to eight referees. Why? Too many opinions making it naturally harder for clear decision-making. Rules that have been contradicted and probably need to go.



Above: Hendrik Botha (South Africa) and Mark Baldwin (Australia), officiating at Justin Bell's nine-hour lamb tally in December 2004.

Woolhandling

Woolhandling has always been an issue. The rule: Only one board wool handler attending a shearer at any one time and must not assist the shearer.

Well, this hasn't been consistent. We have the most sheep ever being shorn yet can't have an extra wool handler to help. Normal sheds put extras on when required. A normal shed scenario has wool handlers helping set up fleeces to be removed and getting wool out of the way of the shearer. That's just teamwork in the sheds and why shouldn't that continue in the record situation?

I suggest it would be common sense to delete this rule as it has not been consistent and adhered to. Also, it doesn't reflect what happens in a normal shearing shed.

Normal shed design.

The rule states the shed must be standard design, operated as in normal conditions. No alterations can be made for a record except slight relocation of the shearing plant to achieve the optimum relationship between the downtube, port hole and catching pen. The use of a light catching pen door must be hinged as per the original door in the shed.

Porthole and chutes – floor not to be cut more than 100 millimetres into the shearing board. No wings are allowed on board. This rule also has not been adhered to.

So, what is a standard shed? We've had attempts made on a platform outside the shed. Some were made inside a shed away from the original shearing board, some on special new builds inside existing implement sheds.

Why is there a limit on port holes and chutes when many sheds have 200 millimetre or more insets as standard anyway. Mount Linton, 12-stands 200 millimetre sets, had to be blocked into 100. Angled chutes are standard in many sheds.

Why have this rule at all? When the sheep is shorn get rid of it in the most innovative way as possible. Why should the shearer be penalised or handicapped after the sheep has been shorn?

Suggestion: If the catching pen size is set, 11 adult sheep, 22 lambs, I think it is, the pen built and the door is compliant, then penning up from the front, side or back should be left to the team and whatever works best in that scenario.

Port holes and chutes: No limits. Too many contradictions to that rule have already happened. It needs to go. Is that fair to the previous record? Well, no, it's not, but it's a bit too late now. It's all been done.

An advertisement for Waimate Shearing (2011) LTD. The background is a close-up of wool. At the top, it says 'WAIMATE SHEARING (2011) LTD' in a bold, sans-serif font. Below that is a stylized illustration of two sheep. Underneath the sheep, it says 'WARREN WHITE' in a large, bold font. Below that, it lists 'MOBILE 027 489 2866' and 'PHONE 03 689 1197'. The bottom half of the ad contains several lines of text: 'We have experienced staff available for shearing crossbreeds & Merinos.', 'Good old fashioned service.', 'We are always looking for experienced, reliable, drug-free staff for our busy main shear & pre-lamb seasons. Top rates offered above NZSCA recommended rates.', and 'Servicing South Canterbury through to Otago Inviting new and existing customers to give us a call.'

Humidifiers and heating: The rule, because of animal welfare requirements, the restriction of air flow by covering of sheep will not be permitted. No artificial or screening walls above top rail height of internal shed pens and no false ceilings.

Suggestion: keep the no covering of the sheep. No more plastic, no smothering. Delete the no artificial screening walls and false ceilings. It's all been done and been allowed before.

The rules. No artificial heating to take place in the catching pens or in and about the sheep pen.

Well, that's all been done before too. So once again changes make it unfair to previous attempts. Cigar heaters have been used, humidifiers have been used and all been allowed. It seems like we can have fans when it's hot, but we can't have heaters when it's cold. Why?

Some sheds have 10-metre roofs and other roofs are only three metres high. Suggestion: change no artificial heating rule to none in the catching pen, which it was before they changed it to none anywhere.

Sheep must be no less than two years old. After 56 years these rules have been added. It makes a mockery of the world's sheep shearing record society.

I understood it went lamb hogget then 2-tooth. If younger sheep are being slipped into the mob, then it's the referee's job to check them and slip them back out with a warning, same as you would for bare bellies, same as you would for sheep that have been over crutched. That's the referee's job. It's about adhering to the rules that's there already, not changing the rule due to the referees not upholding or judging or refereeing the original rule correctly.

Suggestion: change back to sheep no less than 18 mths old.

Numbers in the catching pen. Suggest only six people per stand. You have your second, you have your drinks and gear person and you can have four other people allowed in the sheep pens area for penning up. It's easier for referees to keep an eye on.

At some stages of records we've see 8-10-12 people all around that catching pen, cheering and yahooing. There has to be a limit there so the referees are able to do their job properly. The more people in there, the harder it is to see what's going on.

Roped off area for judges and shearer liaison. This should be implemented, provide a roped off area outside for referees only and official persons liaising between the referees and the shearers. They're the only people that should be allowed there, to get the ratings. The referees don't have to show or discuss their ratings with anyone else. That change is going to help the referees do their job properly, with less intimidation, with less inconsistency and be able to keep the rules more in line with most past record attempts.

Consult with the industry. That's where you come from in the beginning, from the industry that will keep you relevant and you're not sitting above the industry, you're working with the industry. Unnecessary rule changing in the past has already contradicted the Society's own mission statement.

Need to modernise? Do we have room for women judges and convenors or is it just a Boys' Club?

New Record Categories? Rod Sutton and others have made suggestions in the past about a one run record setup? A one hour record? (Had them in the past.) What about male and female records. I think going into the future that one male, one female doing a record would be a great category, it could

be lapped up with the number of women shearers around now that are attempting world record tallies.

Merino Shearing Records. It's almost turning into a half-bred merino. The wrinkle is gone, we've got bare heads, bare hocks. They act more like a crossbred than a merino. We always found the straightest merinos we could for records but with one dewlap wrinkle up the middle.

Cartwright Terry and Michael James Terry had the same in their ewe record. They found the best ewes they could, but they still actually had a wrinkle on.

Now I see merinos that act more like crossbreds, with very little wrinkle and more 'kickie' than a merino used to be. That's all good. That's no one's fault. That's change for the modern times. But aren't these some of the things that are worth at least discussing, going into the future?

Society loath to change. A lot of the feedback I've received from people, and seen through emails etc suggests there is reluctance on behalf of the Society to even consider these things, with some responses offering a "we know best" attitude.

We need changes that are relevant to the industry, not patch and stick band aids on rules that have pretty much brought in the inconsistency in some sort of self-sabotage.

I think a discussion with the Society on their terms is urgently required. I have the names of Ivan Scott, Lloyd Rees, Rod Sutton, Shane Harvey, Sasha Bond, Peter Black as a 20-year Judge, Stuart Weir as a long-serving judge, Jeff Dorset, who has been involved in setting up seventeen record attempts since December 1991, when he orchestrated a six-



Above and Below: Keen watchers at Justin Bell's record: Pen assistants and judges.





Above: Justin Bell nearing the end of his nine-hour, 851 lamb shearing ordeal at Onuku Maori Trust in 2004.

stand record at Hautu Prison Farm, and Arwyn Jones, who has recently resigned from the WRS judging panel.

We're all ready and happy to take part in such a meeting to help drive positive future outcomes. These are only some of the people who see the need for change and are willing to offer their experience and help make things better.

This group of people, I said, are happy to join a zoom meeting and that was the point of my original e-mail to the Society. It was never to hang anyone out to dry on social media.

But as opposed to me directing or controlling such a meeting, they [Society] should set it up and control it. The people I've mentioned are happy to participate and some (including me) are happy to travel to meet with the committee in person, if necessary.

The Society is a global organisation and hold zoom meetings to bring their worldwide members together. That system should work fine for the discussions we seek.

Summary: Desired Actions

- First, there has to be an admission from the Society that there is a problem. Without that, it's not worth taking this any further. It will just fall on deaf ears.
- Second, a discussion on maybe some sort of line in the sand being drawn. But the inconsistencies highlighted here have been too much and too broadly contradicted for some time now, and I don't know if you can get it back actually.
- Third, a new set of rules that aren't open to any interpretation from any one judge, that can be consistently carried out worldwide, that has been created WITH industry and with people who have done records or are heavily involved in the setup of records.

These suggestions mean no disrespect to show judges, but isn't experience in the actual sport you're refereeing essential? A nine-hour ewe tally bears no resemblance to a 20-sheep Golden Shears open final. Or at least have the correct training from the experienced people so the global judging between records is fair.

Not so it depends on who the judge is on the day. The referee has to be able to uphold their rules or they shouldn't be there. No excuses.

Recommendation

That the above highlighted issues, and any other issues that may come to light as a result of this being published, be placed before the Society with request for a "round table" discussion (in person or by way of technology) aimed at removing the anomalies and inconsistencies in the present WRS rules and interpretations.

"It's time for action, time for change, or at least a discussion that many in the industry are willing to have. I'm sure their names are big enough, credible enough to have a bit of a yak about it, aren't they? It's now up to the Society."

Dwayne Black. October 2024.

Footnote: Jeff Dorset Supports Call for Action

In lending his support to Dwayne Black's call for action about the 'state' of world records, Rotorua contractor Jeff Dorset says he raised issues about judging with the World Records Society several years ago, and "got nowhere".

With the experience gained from organising and managing 17 record attempts since 1991, Dorset sought an end to inconsistencies and bias (specific details provided in his submissions) in judging and rule interpretations, and in applying quality ratings.

More recently, Dorset says, there is clear evidence from photos posted on social media that records conducted in the United Kingdom and wool being left on sheep just do not meet the quality standards that were being applied in records 15-20 years ago.

"If you examine those photos and know what you are looking for, in my opinion you are looking at "very rough shed jobs" rather than shearing of a quality demanded in a world record situation.

"If this 'open letter' to the World Records Society meets with the result suggested by Dwayne Black, those photos could be examined for detailed discussion.

"I have been involved with our industry for nearly 60 years and over that time have helped a lot of tough, determined and dedicated men to reach their goals," Jeff Dorset says. "It has now got to the stage where chasing world records is not worth the effort that it takes from a whole team of people over many months and with success far from guaranteed."

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Tribute: Terry Casey, shearer, wool buyer.

Shearing magazine notes the recent death of East Coast shearer and woolbuyer Terry Casey, at the age of 94. Notes received from family friend Jenny Manttan of Gisborne record the following: "Terry Casey had a number 8 wire mentality. His motto was 'Why buy something if I can make it myself'.' And that is why, at the age of 92 he made his own coffin. Terry lined his coffin with a fabric dear to his heart – a wool fadge! This paid homage to a working life spent serving both the wool and shearing industry that he dearly loved.

"Terry was an entrepreneur. He started his own business as a wool buyer. He was also a shearer, on both blades and machines in New Zealand and in Australia. However, he mainly worked around the East Coast of the North Island – from Gisborne up around the Point [Lotton Point] and back down the other side. He would stay en route – but if there was no accommodation he was known on many occasions to throw a fadge under his truck and sleep on that! Old School!

At the age of 91 Terry visited his grandson, Gus Finucane at the shearing shed. Although Gus had to remind him of the pattern, once old Terry got into the swing of it, he flipped his hat off and went solo, shearing right through smoko.

In his later years Terry lived in Gisborne with his daughter Rose. He became an icon around town, walking miles everyday with his doggy companion. People knew him, they looked out for him. He always turned out well-presented in his signature stylish felt Fedora hat .

The legacy Terry passed down to his family was simple: Be kind. Work hard. Enjoy life. RIP Terry Casey.



Above: Terry Casey aged 85, giving a blade shearing demonstration at the Edendale Crankup.



Above: Terry Casey, then 91, at the shearing shed of his grandson, Angus Casey. After a brief 'refresher course' on the shearing pattern from Angus, Terry threw aside the sunhat and proceeded to shear through the smoko break.



Top and Above: Terry Casey, for many years a Poverty Bay Wool and Skin Merchant. Top photo from 1956.



Pre-lamb at Craiglea through the lens of Barbara Newton

THE CLOTHES LINE. © M K Walker

A clothesline was a news forecast to neighbors passing by,
there were no secrets you could keep when clothes were hung to dry.
It also was a friendly link, for neighbors always knew,
if company had stopped on by to spend a night or two.

For then you'd see the fancy sheets and towels upon the line,
you'd see the company tablecloths with intricate design.
The line announced a baby's birth to folks who lived inside,
as brand new infant clothes were hung so carefully with pride.

The ages of the children could so readily be known,
by watching how the sizes changed, you'd know how much they'd grown.
It also told when illness struck as extra sheets were hung,
then night-clothes and a bathrobe too, haphazardly were strung.

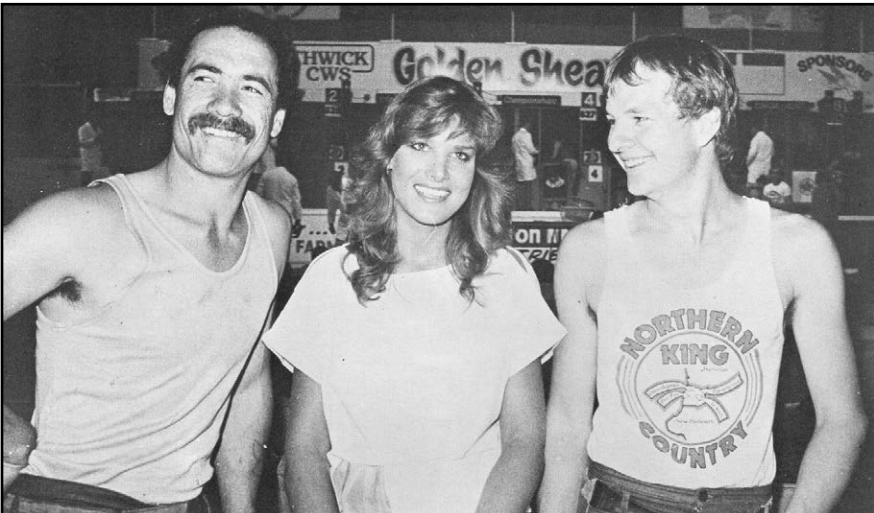
It said "Gone on vacation now" when lines hung limp and bare,
it told "We're back" when full lines sagged with not an inch to spare.
New folks in town were scorned upon, if washing was dingy grey,
as neighbors raised their brows & looked disgustedly away.

But clotheslines now are of the past, for dryers make work less,
now what goes on inside a home is anybody's guess.
I really miss that way of life, it was a friendly sign,
when neighbors knew each other best by what was on the line.

(From the Australian Rhyming Poets Facebook page.)



Above: Somewhere in Ireland. Are ewe waiting for a call?



Above: This pair could have been stringing a line (of clothesline length) to Miss New Zealand 1982, Susan Mainland, at Golden Shears. Koro Mullins (RIP) and the youngster, David Fagan. (Back before colour photography.)



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Above: Congratulations to new world record holder Steven Mudford who set an eight-hour tally of 373 merino wethers on Saturday 8th September 2018. First Run 94, 2nd run 93, 3rd Run 92, 4th Run 94. The official wool weight was 4.56kgs. Dave Grant held the previous 8-hour record of 356 merino wethers for just under eleven years and "Muddy" has added 16 sheep for the new record. We should add an extra ten for the spectacular celebration!



Hey look! The new season's Shearing Sports New Zealand Competition Directory has again been published in 'hard copy' – back by popular demand from those who couldn't quite master the digital 'app'. As usual, it contains all the rules you'll ever need to know, details of all the competition dates and venues and judging personnel. Copies available from Raylene Kirkpatrick, phone or text 021 887 843.

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Above: And just how did that get up there, we ask.

Tribute: Nolan Kraiger

By Jills Angus Burney

I think we always remember our first shearing contractor, our first woolshed and our first day shearing.

Fifty years ago this month, mine was Alan Barker of Palmerston North, who took me from Feilding to Willow Flat, Kotemaori near Wairoa. And then there was Nolan Kraiger of Feilding under whom I learned to shear. Within twelve months of my first day in the woolsheds in December 1974, Nolan had taken over Alan's run after Alan's first heart attack in early 1975.

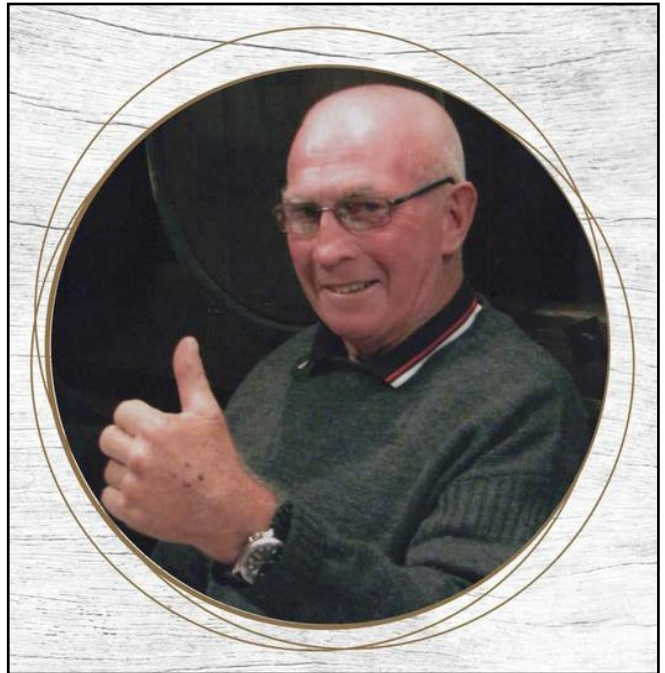
There's no doubt that Nolan, or 'the General' as many nicknamed him, was a presence in the lower North Island shearing industry for many years. From a modest open run, Nolan learned to carry the big sheds out the back of Taihape and Ohakune, the Duncans of Hunterville, Tera Whiti Station, Wellington, and for the Camerons, out the Wairarapa Coast to Flat Point Station, Waimoana and Hinekura.

It was at Erewhon and in behind Hunterville and Ohingaiti for Nolan that Geordie Wilson would return, one of the first British shearers to make that annual pilgrimage from the Borders. The Scottish shearer that was my first coach would return yearly to the big sheds that Nolan thrust him into below the shadow of Mount Ruapehu.

Nolan was from the land; a Kiwitea farmer and a shearer, and a Golden Shears shearing judge. Anyone who knew him and understood him saw that he embodied the values of those tough, demanding professions. Shearing isn't easy work, and both Alan Barker and Nolan, as men of their era, were sceptical about women shearers.

But Nolan fostered my calling, took pride in my achievements and taught me to rise early to work out five o'clock starts in the sheds. And if you weren't doing a good job he'd call you out, bomb you, and when he was short a shearer, Nolan would take his place alongside other members of his shearing gang, hands weathered by years of dedication.

Patience when things didn't go to plan wasn't one of Nolan's greatest skills though. In the same way that Nolan approached work, he also approached life – with grit and a quiet determination. He knew the value of hard work and passed those characteristics on to those who had the privilege of knowing him.



Whether it was through a lesson learned in the shed, his cattle farming ventures out the Rangitaiki, Central Plateau, his beloved dive club or working the North Canterbury vines, he was always a man of integrity and values and when he had a Speight's at the end of the day, he had earned it.

In his fifties, in the mid-1990s, Nolan had moved south and returned to shearing in the Te Anau woolsheds. He soon moved north towards Christchurch when he met his partner, Carol in Canterbury where they lived in Scargill for five years managing a cafe, and two other ventures in North Canterbury before settling together in Leithfield where Nolan was shearing and pruning vines until his retirement three years ago at 80 years-of-age.

We can remember Nolan for his unyielding strength, his quiet kindness, and his love of both the simple things in life and the people closest to him. Just as a shearer's work is never fully appreciated until the wool is spun and woven, so too may we continue to see the impact of Nolan's life over many who worked for him.

He nurtured our strengths as much as we cherished the life-long connections with him. For many of his staff the legacy of his hard work, and just like many old shearers, his commitment to the industry will remain in our hearts.

*Oh, the shears are sharp, and the days are long,
But the wool will tell of a journey strong,
Each fleece a story, each clip a mark
Of a life well-lived from dawn till dark.
(The shearers Lament).*

Nolan, who passed away in Burwood Hospital, Christchurch following a stroke on 15 September 2024, is survived by his three sons, Todd, Brett and Scott, his sister Natalie and in Leithfield, Carol, his partner of twenty-seven years.

* * * * *



Above: Nolan (left) the shearing judge, with Robin Kidd and Ian Buchanan, back in the 20th century.

Chris Vickers lands the biggie

By Doug Laing (*Shearing Sports NZ*)

Veteran Otago shearer Chris Vickers had possibly his biggest moment in 37 years of shearing by winning the 63rd New Zealand Merino Shears Open final in Alexandra last month. The win came in a six-man final with the opposition comprising four who had been acclaimed 'Master Shearer' and an Australian hopeful who even at the age of 28 was less than half the age of the winner. Even then, Vickers was not the oldest in the field.

Just the third win ever for the 56-year-old from Shag Point, near Palmerston and north of Dunedin, it was a title he was determined to get, to claim a place in the Shearing Sports New Zealand team for this season's trans-Tasman test series in West Australian shearing hub Katanning, less than 60km from Wagin, where he first started Australian shearing as a 20-year-old for uncle David Iles.

When he first shored 100 in a day on the big ewes the workmates asked why he was shouting "three" boxes, instead of one. He told them he'd done 69 on his first day, but it took three weeks to get to the magic three-figure tally, but he's shorn many seasons in Australia since.

Harking right back to the early days Chris wanted to win so "all the family and mates" could come to the test, and, showing the respect and for extra motivation throughout the day in Alexandra, he wore under his show singlet a singlet produced in memory of cousin Chris Iles, who died three years ago from cancer.

As an extra touch, when he needed a headband, he borrowed one from one of the youngsters in the Teddy Bear Shear held earlier in the day.

Vickers' first "win" was actually in a trans-Tasman test match, after he won a place in the annual home-and-away series after finishing runner-up and first eligible-for-selection New Zealander when Australian shearer Damian Boyle won the Alexandra final for a third time in 2012.



Above: Chris Vickers, New Zealand Merino Shears champion for 2024. He was previously placed second, in 2012.

Australia won the ensuing Australian leg by just 1.48pts at Warrnambool, Vic., with Vickers second-best individual behind South Australian legend Shannon Warnest. But together with Hawke's Bay gun John Kirkpatrick and Marlborough shearer Angus Moore, he then helped stop Australia from making it four-in-a-row, by winning a test at the 2013 Golden Shears in Masterton. It was soon afterwards that he had his only other individual show win, in Tasmania.

The Saturday at Alexandra became a special day for New Zealand's only finewool shearing championships. Vickers qualified sixth of 24 for the quarterfinals, 10th of 12 for the semi-finals, and third going into a final which could have doubled as an invitation to the merino shearing all-stars.

They left behind many top other hopes, including defending champion Leon Samuels, of Roxburgh, who was eliminated in the quarterfinals, which he had reached as just 22nd of the 24 qualifiers – an ironic end for a man later recognised later in the day as the most recent to be acclaimed a Master Shearer.

Also eliminated along the way were new New Zealand team teammates Jack Fagan of Te Kuiti, who disappeared in the semi-finals, and Moore, who missed the cut from the heats.

Second to finish the 12-sheep final, Vickers did enough with his quality and time points to claim the honours by more than three points from first-man-off and pocket-rocket James Fagan, of Te Kuiti, who in 2008, in his 5th final, became a



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rare finewool winner from the strongwool competitions of the North Island.

Third place went to 61-year-old Central Otago shearing contractor Dion Morrell, a four-times winner and the top-qualifier from the semi-final and into the final for a 12th time, spanning 28 years.

Five-times winner and Invercargill shearer Nathan Stratford, in the final for a 20th time, was 4th; 28-year-old Sam Mackrill, of Shepparton, Victoria 5th, and 6th was Rakaia shearing contractor, former title winner and 13-times Alexandra finalist Grant Smith.

Woolhandling

Pagan Rimene provided a Central Otago triumph when she won the Open woolhandling title for a fifth time, having won in 2015, 2016 and 2018 and been runner-up twice since last winning of the event in 2019.

Daughter of Dion Morrell and former Golden Shears Open woolhandling champion Tina Rimene, Rimene also claimed a place in the trans-Tasman series, where she was out to extend her unbeaten record in New Zealand teams after she and Taihape woolhandler Sheree Alabaster won the World teams title in France in 2019 and then trans-Tasman tests in Dubbo, NSW, and Masterton in the ensuing summer.

With more than 30 Open final wins to her name, Pagan was last to finish Saturday's final, to card the highest time points, but being about a sixth of the total, her expertise with the board job, oddments and fleece points gave her a winning margin of almost 50 over runner-up and Alexandra-based Foonie Waihape, originally from Gisborne. Third was Monica Potae, from Kennedy Bay, and fourth was four-times Alexandra winner Joel Henare, from Gisborne.

With 41 in the heats, Rimene was seventh in qualifying for the semi-final, which saw the elimination of defending champion Tia Potae, but which saw her go into the final with the No 1 ranking.

Rimene is planning two months in Australia to be back in New Zealand for mainshear and a run at the New Zealand 2026 World Championships selection series.

West Australian shearer Danielle Mauger, in her first season in the South Island, carried on almost from where she left-off last season in the north when she became the third woman to win the Merino Shears' senior shearing title.

Shearing her four sheep in 12m 22.62s, she was third to



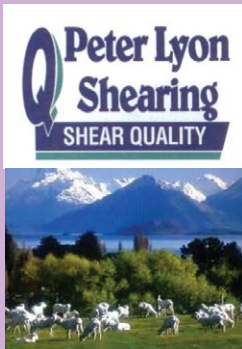
Above: Pagan Rimene, NZ Merino Shears open woolhandling champion for the fifth time, earning her place in the New Zealand team for coming trans-Tasman test matches. **Below:** NZ Merino Shears senior shearing champion Danielle Mauger of Western Australia, just the third woman to take the title since 1985.

finish, over a minute behind defending champion and King Country shearer Aiden Tarrant, of Piopio, but strung together match-winning quality to claim victory by 2.345pts from the eventual runner-up, Tarrant's brother, Taelor Tarrant. Third place went to Shaun Goosen, from Phillippolis, South Africa.

Mauger hit near immediate form after arriving in New Zealand last season and won four intermediate finals on second-shear strongwool sheep in February, at Dannevirke, Aria, Te Puke and Taumarunui.

The last female to win the Merino Shears Senior final was Te Atakura Crawford, from Te Karaka, in 2013, and Jills Angus Burney, from Feilding, who won in 1985 and was present to see Saturday's finals. Other winners were Autumn Waihape, of Matura, in the Senior woolhandling final, and first-timer Miria Hohepa, from Napier, in the Junior final.

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The championships attracted 145 individual entries, with 91 in the two shearing grades and 74 across the three woolhandling grades, a combined increase of 11 on last year.

It was the first of 57 shows on the 2024-2025 Shearing Sports New Zealand calendar and one of 11 stand-alone shearing sports events, the rest being mainly A&P show dates.

RESULTS: 63rd New Zealand Merino Shearing and Woolhandling championships, 4-5 October 2024:

Shearing:

Open final (12 sheep): Chris Vickers (Palmerston) 21m 47.07s, 90.3535pts, 1; James Fagan (Te Kuiti) 21m 40.68s, 94.034pts, 2; Dion Morrell (Alexandra) 22m 2.09s, 96.8545pts, 3; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 25m 4.35s, 100.4675pts, 4; Sam Mackrill (Shepparton, Vic.) 23m 4.22s, 104.8776pts, 5; Grant Smith (Rakaia) 25m 30.49s, 110.7745pts, 6.

Senior final (4 sheep): Danielle Mauger (Boypup Brook, W.A.) 12m 22.62s,

59.881pts, 1; Taelor Tarrant 11m 39.53s, 62.2265pts, 2; Shaun Goosen (Phillippolis., South Africa) 12m 58.63s, 67.1815pts, 3; Aiden Tarrant 11m 16.97s, 67.5985pts, 4; Tawhaarangi Taylor (Murupara) 14m 4.57s, 68.9785pts, 5; Dre Roberts (Mataura) 14m 4.56s, 69.478pts, 6.

Woolhandling:

Open final: Pagan Rimene (Alexandra) 129.032pts, 1; Foonie Waihape (Alexandra) 178.976pts, 2; Monica Potae (Kennedy Bay) 188.306pts, 3; Joel Henare (Gisborne/Motueka) 199.85pts, 4.

Senior final: Autumn Waihape (Mataura) 144.542pts, 1; Lucy Elers (Mataura) 152.326pts, 2; Stoneigh Waihape (Mataura) 172.956pts, 3; Lucy Gee Taylor (Alexandra) 187.712pts, 4.

Junior final: Miria Hohepa (Napier) 167.182pts, 1; Misty Rose Kokiri Elers (Mataura) 179.09pts, 2; Capree Wallace (Taihape) 272.268pts, 3; Grace Croasdale (Masterton) 276.188pts, 4.



Above: The ribbon and the smile leave little to be said. NZ Merino Shears junior woolhandling champion Miria Hohepa of Napier.



Above: North Otago farmer Justin Meikle, a former top South Island shearer, is now back in the hunt while following his son on the competition circuit. Meikle claimed his first win for 18 years with victory in the Open final at the Ellesmere A & P Show, Leeston, on 19 October 2024. It was a successful mission for father and son, with Tye Meikle's success in the junior final. Justin Meikle's triumph came in a four-man final of 15 hoggets each, in which he was first to finish, in 14min 20sec.

Earlier in his career Meikle won the 1993 Golden Shears Junior final in Masterton, just missed a place in the Intermediate final 12 months later and was fourth in the Senior final in 1995, when he was Shearing Sports New Zealand's No 1-ranked Senior shearer for the season, with seven wins from 17 finals from Riversdale in the south to Taupo in the north.

He had last clasped a winning ribbon with two victories



back-to-back in November 2006, including the New Zealand Corriedale Championship in Christchurch, and the return has brought another silver lining in that he is currently, after early qualifying rounds at Alexandra and Waimate, in the top 12 in the five-rounds national shearing circuit, in which he was fourth in a final at the Golden Shears in 2004.

Tye Meikle, *pictured above* with Dad Justin at Leeston, showed he's being well-tutored, by hammering the opposition in the quality stakes to take first place by more than 10 points from runner-up and Canterbury-based Aucklanders Sam Story. John Cherrington, of Oamaru but from Waikato, had a win by more than four points from runner-up James Wilson, from Winton, in the senior final, and Trae Karaka, of Amberley, had a three-points buffer in winning the Intermediate final. And with the precedent set at Leeston, the Meikles senior and junior repeated their success at the Marlborough Show three weeks later.

'Okay, but I'm not doing the cooking!'

'Okay, but I'm not doing the cooking!' Those were what you might call Michelle Forde's famous last words when she and husband Glenn first started talking about becoming shearing contractors, several years ago!

The Fordes have since sold their run to daughter Kelly and her partner, Liam Lowry. But Michelle has done the noble thing and produced a book of recipe ideas for feeding shearing gangs – one that should be welcomed throughout the industry and anywhere else where cooking for large groups is involved.

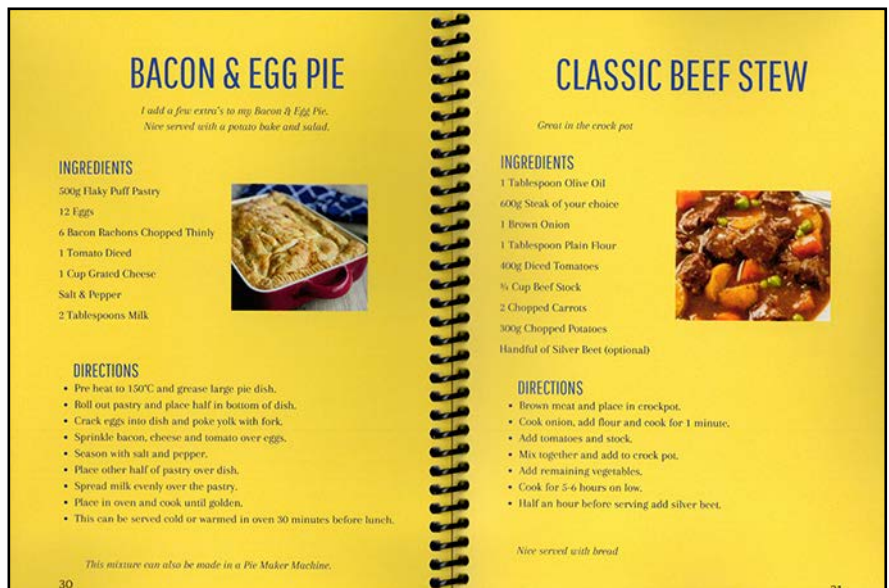
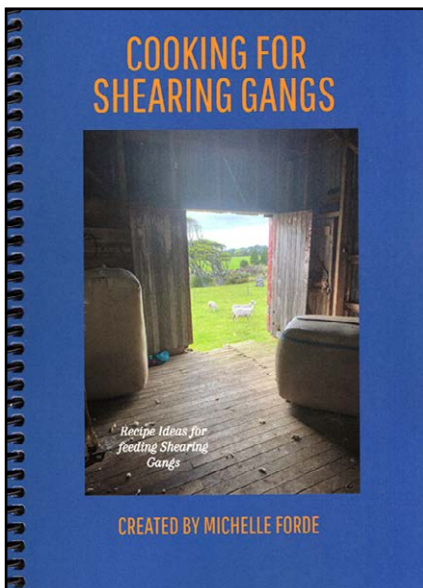
Michelle says she "kicked and screamed to the startline" but soon realised shearers and shed staff work hard and need to be well fed with nutritious food. The book contains about fifty recipes split up into different categories – Smokos, Lunches, Salads, Baking and Desserts. The recipes have mainly come from friends and family, "with a few tweaks of her own".

As well as the recipes (the majority of which are for 8-10 people), Michelle adds some useful tips:

- Shearers and shed staff love

tomato sauce

- Morning smoko is their main meal (and breakfast for some)
- It's better to have too much than not enough
- Icecream is very popular (if there is a freezer in the shed)
- Cakes and slices freeze well
- Sandwiches are nicer made in the morning
- Make friends with the presser – they become the cook in the shed
- Don't forget the tea and coffee (and teaspoons)



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- Do a meal planner one or two weeks in advance
- Always have a back up lunch in the freezer (late calls are common)
- Write instructions for the presser
- Ask the presser to make sure the lids are securely on when packing up
- Have an extra set of tucker boxes so you can set up for the next day.

If you would like a copy of this fine publication contact Michelle Forde on 021 042 4135 or email maandpaforde@gmail.com. The cost is \$35.00 plus postage.

"And if the shed has a sink and hot water, chuck in a tea towel and dishwashing liquid. You might get a nice surprize with the dishes coming home clean!"

Norwegian shearing and woolhandling 2024

Report from Sven Reiersen

On the last weekend in September the Norwegian Championships for shearing and woolhandling were held in the beautiful village of Etne on the west coast of Norway.

The competitions were held in Etne Sportshall (Skakkehallen) and was a excellent arena both for organisers, competitors and spectators.

The organising committee in Etne sau and geit had it all well planned and with help of good, hard working crew and support of slaughter company Nortura and Fatland all the competitions went like clockwork.

Big lambs, 45–60 kg, were shorn in the competitions and they came from local farmers and were well sorted and crutched. 80% were Norwegian Whites and 20% were Norwegian Spel with longer wool and more temper. So these strong lambs straight from mountain pasture gave the competitors a challenge.

Entries were received from ten different countries, Norway, Sweden, England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Estonia, Czechia Republic and last but not least, New Zealand.

We are grateful to have all these competitors from so many countries coming for work in Norway in the shearing season and to take a weekend off for competition and meet up with old friends and to make new friendships.

And there was a good line-up with ladies both in shearing and woolhandling.

Judges were from Norway and Wales, Rhys Jones and Elfed Jackson strengthened the judging team both on the judging day before, and during competitions days.

It all started on Friday night with heats and semi-finals in junior and intermediate classes and the night was topped with an exciting speed-shear. The final was between four shearers, three from Wales and one Irishman, and it was very close between them. Dylan Jones, 24.20sec. 1; Penri Metcalf, 24.24sec 2; Aaron Magee, 25.18sec 3; and Elgan Jones, 29.00sec 4.

On Saturday competitions started early, 0800hrs, with

heats in senior and open class shearing and went on with woolhandling. The arena was packed with spectators from early morning to end of day with all the finals.

In addition to machine shearing and woolhandling we had blade shearing, ladies final and teams-final between four countries. Elfed Jackson had been in Norway the whole week before and had held shearing schools on blades. It paid off well and we had a good final with three Norwegian and one Czech blade shearers.

As per results shown under: the winner and runner-up in Norwegian machine shearing, blade shearing and woolhandling are all qualified to represent Norway in the World Championships in Masterton, New Zealand 2026.

And in teams final Norway had its best result ever, number two after winner New Zealand and for the first time ever, with Wales behind on third place.

After all competitions were finished and prizes awarded, the party started and in normal Norwegian manner, everybody were included and new friendships were established.

And in September 2025 our next Norwegian Championships will be held at the island Bokn, close to Haugesund, you are all welcome.

Results were:

Norwegian Championships machine shearing:

1. Lars Sønstevoldhaugen 65,083
2. Åsmund Kringeland 67,167
3. Odd Kristian Håland 71,633
4. Wilson Wyllie 72,850

Norwegian Woolhandling Championships

1. Gerhard Jonathan Håkull 32,00
2. Amy J. Krogstad McNeill 66,00

Open International Woolhandling

1. Amy Bell, New Zealand 59,00
2. Beca Jackson, Wales 66,00

Junior machine shearing

1. Sondre Lauareid Hovda, Norway 46,65
2. Tane Maguire, Wales 54,47



Above: From left: Åsmund Kringeland, Lars Sønstevoldhaugen, Odd Kristian Håland and Wilson Wyllie.

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Above: from left, Åsmund Kringeland, Lars Sønstevoldhaugen, Norway; Eddie Maguire, Ray Kindsman, New Zealand; Dylan Jones, Elgan Jones, Wales; Viktor Larsson, Edwin Hellgren, Sweden.



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3.	Ola Aarø, Norway	58,07
4.	Emilia Meling, Norway	60,15
Intermediate machine shearing		
1.	Ludvig Gulliksen, Norway	46,6
2.	Kate Donald, Scotland	49,6
3.	Gudmund Håkull, Norway	59,2
4.	Erland Dahlgren, Norway	62,5
Senior machine shearing		
1.	Aaron Magee, Ireland	45,3
2.	Anthony Vassbø, Norway	49,8
3.	Julian Markus Karl, Germany	54,2
4.	Ola Gudmestad, Norway	59,7
Open International machine shearing		
1.	Dylan Jones, Wales	57,117
2.	Ray Kinsman, New Zealand	63,817
3.	Stuart Davidson, Scotland	64,950
4.	Elgan Jones, Wales	69,550
International Ladies Final		
1.	Inga Lill Rossevatn, Norway	32,88
2.	Katerina Strejcova, Czech Rep.	43,12
3.	Kate Donald, Scotland	44,20
4.	Emilia Meling, Norway	46,72
International Blade Final		
1.	Wilson Wyllie, Norway	114,15
2.	Odd Kristian Håland, Norway	127,25
3.	Jana Sinova, Czech Rep.	147,25
4.	Caroline Nicol, Norway	159,00
International Teams Final		
1.	Eddie Maguire / Ray Kinsman, New Zealand	
2.	Lars Sønstevoldhaugen / Åsmund Kringeland, Norway	
3.	Elgan Jones / Dylan Jones, Wales	
4.	Viktor Larson / Edwin Hellgren, Sweden.	



Norwegian Championships action: **Above left:** Jonathan Hakull. **Above right:** Woolhandling judges from left: Hilde Fosen, Terje Bakken and Ahenata Leira.



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Mental Health line 1737 (open 24/7)

Lifeline (open 24/7) – 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE)

Depression Helpline (open 24/7) – 0800 111 757

Healthline (open 24/7) – 0800 611 116

Samaritans (open 24/7) – 0800 726 666

Suicide Crisis Helpline (open 24/7) – 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO). This is a service for people who may be thinking about suicide, or those who are concerned about family or friends.

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

0800 WHATSUP children's helpline – phone 0800 9428 787 between 1pm and 10pm on weekdays and from 3pm to 10pm on weekends. Online chat is available from 7pm to 10pm every day at www.whatsup.co.nz.

Kidline (open 24/7) – 0800 543 754. This service is for children aged 5 to 18. Those who ring between 4pm and 9pm on weekdays will speak to a Kidline buddy. These are specially trained teenage telephone counsellors.

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).



Top: More action from Norway – Sondre Lauareid Hovda, junior shearing champion. **Above:** Inga Lill Rossevatn, winner of the Women's final.

Contractors

Out upon his tractor sat the young contractor
 In those days so many years ago.
 On a little diesel Ford – it was all he could afford –
 Like the double-furrowed plough it used to tow.

In the sunshine and the dust he worked hard to make a crust –
 He shivered in the rainstorms and the sleet,
 And the snowy winds that froze icicles about his nose
 Gave him chilblains on his fingers and his feet.

He seemed always dogged by fate – oh, the months he had to wait
 For the 'cockies' to remit that wanted cheque.
 And if a crankshaft broke, why he nearly had a stroke
 And a shattered piston left him quite a wreck.

And a broken axle, well, 'twas the nearest thing to Hell
 And a bent beam when the plough struck on a stone
 Was enough to make him tear out great handfuls of his hair –
 That's why most contractors' heads are skin and bone.

And the way his poor old wife had to listen all her life
 To the trials and tribulations of her spouse,
 Made her take more than her fill of the tranquilliser pill
 And wonder why she married such a louse.

But he stuck it, right or wrong, and the good times came along,
 And the bank manager met him with a grin.
 Driving posts and making hay, working fifteen hours a day,
 In the summer he was 'raking in the tin'.

Now I saw him yesterday – he was working out my way,
 With a multi-powered screaming big machine.
 Eight furrows every round, he was turning over ground
 While seated in a warm cab nice and clean.

And his latest gleaming Ute seemed to speak to me of 'loot',
 (I'm just a poor old cockie, don't you see)
 And next time I'm in the pub and I start to feel the rub,
 How I hope the old contractor 'shouts' for me.

(Author not known.)

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Roger, the walking wordsmith returns

By Des Williams

Roger Leslie (aka The Po-it), the regular *Shearing magazine* contributor who walked the length of New Zealand during Covid lockdown in October-November 2021, then wrote a book about it, is back in print. This time it's a book of poetry, with verses inspired by his experiences as a Department of Corrections prison officer.

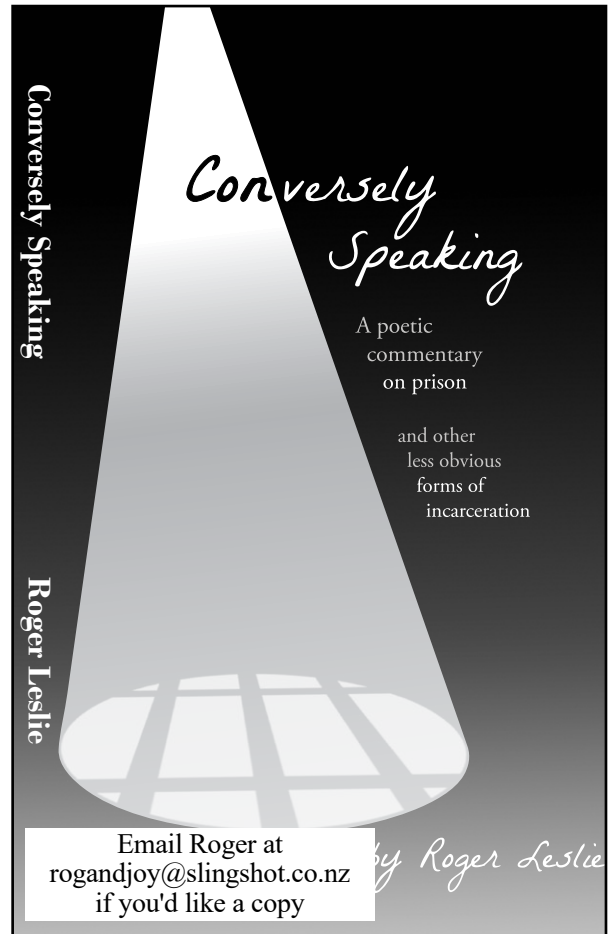
The book, *Conversely Speaking*, contains 121 items, all of which display Roger's fine eye for detail, handsome vocabulary and (sometimes obscure) acerbic sense of humour. He explains:

I love language. I love the sound of words. I love the sound of rhyme and the feel of rhythm. In my view all singing is sweeter to the ear when there is good harmony. Good writing is enhanced by metaphor, allegory and imagery. The sweetest things I remember from my childhood were learned in song. I was dyslexic and struggled to read and form 'correct' answers from numbers. Numbers and words seemed arranged in a way that formed no basis for recognition in my hyperactive mind. I found school hard work and would have been another drop-out statistic, but for two important things. My mother, a couple of excellent teachers, and good friends who stuck by me even when I wasn't keeping up.

And in keeping with our Undercover Story at page 2, we choose this topical example from The Po-it's collection:

Carbon - Credit Where Credit's Due

I'm just a humble element – though not of great surprise
but I can, when in crystal form – light up a maiden's eyes
For countless years I formed a part – of earth's great global orb
and doctors of the ancients found – I, poison could absorb
I'm found in many varied forms – coal black or white like snow
The plants are mostly made of me – and with my help they grow
I'm found in liquid form as well – quite deep beneath the earth
and some will say my stocks are low – to lift my barreled worth
I fume exhausted from the cars – and belch from chimney stacks
When tankers giant run aground – I ooze from damage cracks
They fight their righteous 'holy' wars – to keep control of me
but publicly confessing that – it's terror they can see
My diamond form is cause enough – for men to shed their blood
For me, the loftiest of them – would grovel in the mud
Though I, a stable element – among a world of strife
the doctors spin, have found a way – to bring this mole to life
But first they had to find a way – to slight my Carbon name
and charging millions for the job – consultants called me Thane
With laws of physics cast aside – it's CO2 you fear
They had to cover up the truth – that I weigh more than air
With fiction of the Potter kind – they say I'm in the skies
And blamed me for the weather cold – then blamed me for the rise
They said with all the melting ice – the sea would flood the shore
But after decades of the heat – it's not a whisker more
Perhaps you ponder as you read – why folks would sell their soul
And all at Kyoto gather round – to sign a protocol?
What common theme, pray ask yourself – drives panics pop-u-lar
besides the need for sleight of hand – diversions oc-u-lar?
The bugs of birds, computer nerds – and nuclear tragedy?
The remedies were all the same – they cost a massive fee!
The carbon cycle predates man – now fiscal bondage cruel
Success will need one further thing – to make of you a fool!



Fagan wins second Corriedale title

By Doug Laing (Shearing Sports New Zealand)

King Country shearer Jack Fagan has won his second New Zealand Corriedales shearing championship title after almost disappearing from the contest during the race for places in the final at the Canterbury Shears in Christchurch.

Fagan, who flew in from West Australia in his successful bid to regain a title he won for the first time two years ago, was in second place as four previous winners led the 20 shearers in the heats, but, shearing in the quarterfinals, was last man into the 12 for the semi-finals, with just a 0.39pts buffer from the best of the rest.

Putting the near demise behind him, he made the top six in fourth place, and with fastest time in the final and best quality in pen-judging won by 2.37pts from 2020 winner, Scotland international and Southern Hawke's Bay farmer Gavin Mutch. Southland shearer and defending champion Nathan Stratford, with four wins in the event dating back to his first in 2005, was third.

They were followed in order by Casey Bailey, of Riverton, a first-time Golden Shears Open finalist eight months ago, Rangiora shearer Hugh De Lacy, who was top qualifier for the final and winner of the Canterbury All-Breeds Circuit the previous day, and Marlborough shearer Angus Moore, who won the title in 2021.

Fagan, son of Sir David Fagan, who won the title 13 times between 1984 and 2009, shored the 12 sheep in 13min 19.56sec, with Mutch second to finish, in 13min 31.91sec, with De Lacy next half-a-minute later.

Stratford was second-to-last off the board, but had the best quality points, highlighted by incurring just seven penalties in judging on the shearing board.

And Fagan made an even more successful trip of it by winning the Waiatu Rugby Club Speedshear Open final in North Canterbury on the Saturday after the championships, with a fastest sheep of 22.8 seconds. Lionel Taumata, of Gore, was second, and third was New Zealand-based Scotland shearer Scott Wilson.

Success for Laura

Southern Hawke's Bay shearer Laura Bradley firmly established herself as possibly New Zealand's, and even the world's most successful female competition shearer when she

won the Senior final, as well as the Women's event.

It was a big day for female shearers, with fellow women's event entries and Rangiora-based Ella Caves, of Rangiora, winning the Intermediate event, and Holly Crombie the Junior event.

From Papatawa, between Dannevirke and Woodville, Bradley now has seven wins in the Senior class and is on the brink of becoming the first woman to be promoted to Open class based on competition results. She has won three successive Women's events this year, at the Golden Shears in Masterton and the New Zealand Shears in Te Kuiti at the end of last season, and now the Corriedale championships.

The Senior final was also triumph for the north, with Taumarunui shearer Taelor Tarrant first to finish, shearing the seven sheep in 12min 1.13sec, beating Wairoa shearer Bruce Grace by 15 seconds, with Bradley next in 12min 27.84s.

Bradley had enough quality to beat Tarrant by 1.1pts, with Grace taking third place, although the best quality points were scored by Tarrant's brother, Aidan, who was fourth overall.

While competitor numbers did not meet organisers hopes, with just 59 entries across the six events – of whom eight shore in two events – the Senior event had an encouraging 16 entries. In the women's final, of four sheep each, Bradley was, surprisingly beaten to the finish by Caves, who shored the four sheep in 8min 11.62sec, but had vastly superior judging-quality and claimed the win by almost 10 points from first-year Senior Emma Martin, of Wyndham, who won the event last season when she was No 1-ranked Intermediate shearer nationwide.

Number 20 for Dobbs

Blades shearing legend Tony Dobbs, of Fairlie, showed no sign of drawing the curtain on his career, winning the show's Golden Blades title for a 20th time, his fourth win in four finals this season, in a career tally of more than 110 wins in blades finals spanning four decades.

Landscaper wins senior woolhandling

Brittany Smith certainly knew her ground, and her fibre, while winning the Senior woolhandling title on the first day of the Canterbury Shears' national Corriedale shearing and woolhandling championships. Taking a brief break from her studies toward a Masters degree in Landscape Architecture, it was just her second competition, but she has two national titles, adding the Senior win to the Junior title she claimed in



Above: We recognise Jack Fagan, Nathan Stratford, Hugh De Lacy and Angus Moore. Awol: Gavin Mutch and Casey Bailey.



Above: Senior finalists: Laura Bradley, Taelor Tarrant, Bruce Grace, Aidan Tarrant, Liam Norrie and Emma Martin.



Above: Open blades finalists Tony Dobbs, Mike McConnell, Scott McKay, Tim Hogg, Phil Oldfield, George Mudge.
Below: Senior woolhandler Brittany Smith.



her home-town Christchurch show 12 months ago.

Born into a family sheep and deer farming background around Otautau in Southland but moving to Christchurch at a young age, Brittany keeps the studies viable by working part-time as a woolhandler for Christchurch contractor Pullin Shearing, and had just one answer when asked for the key to her success in its sporting arena.

“I’ve been encouraged by many woolhandlers who have taken the time to teach me well,” she said after the latest dabble on the board and the tables of what was the last woolhandling competition of the 2024-2025 season in the South Island until the Northern Southland Community Shears near Lumsden on January 17. “I would like to travel to more shows this season. I’d like to try another show at some point. Depends on the season here.”

The Open final, which attracted 12 entries, including Taiwha Nelson, who won the title in 2012 and had another rare win at Waimate in October, provided a win for Southland woolhandler Amy Ferguson, who won the Junior final at Christchurch in 2008.

Second in the Open final last year, she turned the tables on defending champion Joel Henare, from Gisborne, who was going for a fourth Canterbury Shears title in a row, but had to settle for second.

The No 1-ranked Junior in New Zealand in the 2008-2009 season and the Senior grade a year later, it was Ferguson’s third national title but also just her third win in an Open-class career spanning about 25 finals over 14 years.

Her first was the New Zealand Merino Championship in Alexandra in 2013 and the second the New Zealand fullwool title at Lumsden in 2022.

The Junior woolhandling final was won by Jayda Millanta, from Te Kaha, while the only shearing event on the opening



Above: Open woolhandlers: Sponsor, Amy Ferguson, Joel Henare, Cushla Abraham.

day, the Donaghys Canterbury All Breeds Multi-Breeds Circuit final, was won for a second year in a row by Rangiora shearer Hugh De Lacy. In the six-man showdown of 14 sheep each, he was closely-challenged by North Otago shearing contractor Willy McSkimming, who finished in 16min 17.91sec, and beat De Lacy by about 11 seconds. But De Lacy, with the least penalties in pen-judging and the best quality overall, won by 3.69pts

RESULTS: New Zealand Corriedale Shearing Championships in Christchurch 14-15 November 2024:

Open final (12 sheep): Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 13m 19.56s, 50.31pts, 1; Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Dannevirke) 13m 31.91s, 52.68pts, 2; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 14m 25.66s, 53.12pts, 3; Casey Bailey (Riverton) 14m 44.28s, 55.21pts, 4; Hugh De Lacy (Rangiora) 14m 1.5s, 55.49pts, 5; Angus Moore (Ward) 14m 4.34s, 61.47pts, 6.

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Above: Donaghy's Canterbury Circuit finalists: Hugh De Lacy, Willy McSkimming, Shaun Burgess, Thomas Lambert, Dave Brooker and Alex Smith.

Open Plate (6 sheep): James Ruki (Te Kuiti) 8m 23.59s, 36.01pts, 1; Lionel Taumata (Gore) 7m 23.75s, 36.52pts, 2; Lyall Windleburn (Rangiora) 8m 22.16s, 38.11pts, 3; Willy McSkimming (Oamaru) 7m 28.66s, 41.27pts, 4; Duncan Leslie (Alexandra) 8m 6.5sec, 42.83pts, 5; Floyde Neil (Taumarunui) 6m 31.28s, 48.56pts, 6.

Senior final (7 sheep): Laura Bradley (Papatawa) 12m 27.84s, 46.39pts, 1; Taelor Tarrant (Taumarunui) 12m 1.13s, 47.49pts, 2; Bruce Grace (Wairoa) 12m 16.5s, 47.97pts, 3; Aidan Tarrant (Taumarunui) 13m 38.63s, 48.5pts, 4; Liam Norrie (Cheviot) 12m 55.34s, 48.77pts, 5; Emma Martin (Wyndham) 17m 38.44s, 60.92pts, 6.

Intermediate final (5 sheep): Ella Caves (Rangiora) 10m 5.34s, 49.27pts, 1; Sam McGuigan (Gore) 10m 25.87s, 50.49pts, 2; Ricky Power (Gore) 12m 5.79s, 51.09pts, 3; Izaak Cleland (Oamaru) 12m 23.19s, 55.16pts, 4; Kyle Viljoen (Bloemfontein, South Africa) 14m 51.82s, 58.19pts, 5; Foonie Waihape (Alexandra) 13m 59.84s, 59.99pts, 6.

Junior final (3 sheep): Holly Crombie (Te Anau/Rangiora) 11m 11.04s, 50.55pts, 1; Levi Beedles (Rangiora) 10m 17.16s, 53.52pts, 2.

Blades final (5 sheep): Tony Dobbs (Fairlie) 17m 51.47s, 60.97pts, 1; Scott McKay (Kaikoura) 16m 57.03s, 63.35pts, 2; Mike McConnell (Christchurch) 18m 22.91s, 66.55pts, 3; Tim Hogg Timaru/Rolleston) 18m 42.66s, 70.13pts, 4; Phil Oldfield (Geraldine) 20m 31.69s, 76.18pts, 5; George Mudge (Devon, England) 24m 38.06s, 93.1pts, 6.

Women's final (4 sheep): Laura Bradley (Papatawa) 8m 18.19s, 32.41pts, 1; Emma Martin (Wyndham) 9m 54.72s, 41.99pts, 2; Ella Caves (Rangiora) 8m 11.62s, 47.08pts, 3; Foonie Waihape (Alexandra) 10m 32.85s, 51.39pts, 4; Holly Crombie (Te Anau/Rangiora) 12m 11.68s, 71.08pts, 5.

Open woolhandling final: Amy Ferguson (Invercargill/Alexandra) 130.106pts, 1; Joel Henare (Gisborne/Motueka) 134.024pts, 2; Cushla Abraham (Masterton) 139.418pts, 3; Charis Morrell (Alexandra) 4.

Senior woolhandling final: Brittany Smith (Christchurch) 104.626pts, 1; Nadine Smith (Christchurch) 156.58pts, 2; Hemi Paniora (Christchurch) 238.124pts, 3.

Junior woolhandling final: Jayda Millanta (Te Kaha) 72.844pts, 1; Richanna Clarke (Seddon) 77.268pts, 2; Tessa Kirby (Ashburton) 88.782pts, 3; Miriama Thompson (-) 4.

Shearers with new body bits

We posted recently on Facebook that a magazine "reader" had let the editor know he would shortly be getting a hip replaced, and said he has every intention of shearing sheep again when fully mobile. He raised the question about others who may have resumed shearing after having 'body parts' replaced.

We can now reveal the information and question came from Godfrey Potterton (**opposite**), in Ireland, who would make good his intention despite the fact that: Sheep numbers are dropping despite good prices and government financial support. The age profile of sheep farmers is getting older and dairy farmers are expanding; blue tongue is a big worry with our neighbour the UK but at least the wool price is up a few cents per kg.

We conclude therefore there will still be some sheep left for Godfrey, post-op!

And in answer to the original question we were able to cite the example of legendary Ken Pike (**opposite**), who recovered from the insertion of a plastic knee to shear 500 in a day.

While the response to our FB post wasn't overwhelmingly spectacular, we also noted the following:

Brian Kelly: Said he would be shearing four rams the following day and the hip replacement he received five years ago is now the best part of his body!

Kevin Hickman (America): "The late, great legend Kerry Johnstone shore into his late 70s while wearing a colostomy bag. (We'll count that as an additional bit, rather than a replacement bit!)"

Una Cameron: "George Bayne had both his knees replaced eight years ago and still shears."

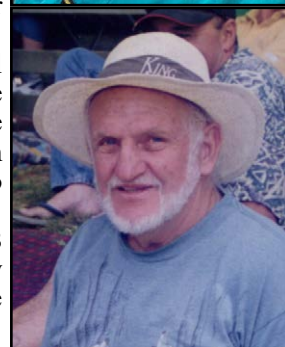
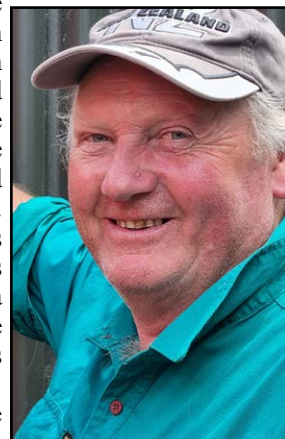
Anderson Bob (in Chile): "Had major knee reconstruction surgery in 2011 after dive-tackling a ewe. The knee has lasted 13 years and I'm still shearing, hoping for another seven years so I can retire from the sport at 80!" Bob noted the Chilean surgeons are experts at fixing soccer players' knees. (Ednote: Especially after they fall down injured when someone pulls their jersey!)"

Tom Hindmarsh: "Just getting over a knee operation and will be testing it out next year."

And we caught up with Dean Redman (**opposite**) on the day that he'd just shorn 200 after having his hip replaced six months ago (in May).

So, on the evidence gathered thus far, Godfrey Potterton, you should first aim to beat Brian Kelly's four rams (or six ewes?), and then be content to claim second spot on the ladder!

Yeah!





Pre-lamb at Hartfield through the lens of Barbara Newton



RESULTS: Waimate Spring Shears 10-11 October 2024:

Shearing:

Open final (16 sheep): Leon Samuels (Roxburgh) 16m 4.86s, 54.556pts, 1; David Buick (Pongaroa) 15m 46.98s, 54.6pts, 2; Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Dannevirke) 15m 30.59s, 54.781pts, 3; Casey Bailey (Riverton) 17m 0.81s, 55.417pts, 4; John Kirkpatrick (Pakipaki) 16m 23.17s, 55.66pts, 5; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 16m 46.56s, 56.328pts, 6.

Open Novice final (10 sheep): Llyr Jones (Wales) 10m 31.11s, 43.656pts, 1; Paraki Puna (Napier) 12m 8.45s, 43.923pts, 2; Alex Smith (Rakaia) 12m 19.42s, 43.971pts, 3; Corey White (Waimate) 12m 6.86s, 44.843pts, 4; Adam Gordon (Masterton) 11m 18.14s, 45.207pts, 5; Floyde Neil (Taumarunui) 9m 47.47s, 45.274pts, 6.

Senior final (8 sheep): Bruce Grace (Wairoa) 10m 15.25s, 37.763pts, 1; James Wilson (Winton) 10m 39.91s, 38.996pts, 2; Emma Martin (Wyndham) 12m 2.94s, 41.272pts, 3; Jack Pringle (Balclutha) 11m 41.81s, 42.091pts, 4; Aiden Tarrant (Mapiu) 11m 40.45s, 43.398pts, 5; Taelor Tarrant (Taumarunui) 11m 19.73s, 43.737pts, 6.

Intermediate final (5 sheep): Blake Mitchell (Patea) 8m 6.81s, 29.341pts, 1; Kaivah Cooper (Napier) 7m 53.78s, 30.889pts, 2; Connor Wilkinson (Wyndham) 9m 25.86s, 33.693pts, 3; Sam McCone (Temuka) 9m 24.13s, 34.207pts, 4; Caleb Brooking (Rakaia) 8m 31.22s, 35.761pts, 5; Levi Uluakiahoia (Auckland) 10m 20.67s, 41.234pts, 6.

Junior final (3 sheep): Dante Devitt (Ranfurly) 7m 47.17s, 31.359pts, 1; Emilia Meling (Norway) 6m 51.89s, 31.928pts, 2; Tye Meikle (Oamaru) 7m 20.41s, 33.354pts, 3; Reuben Wilkinson (Wyndham) 9m 0.98s, 33.716pts, 4; Marcel Perrin (Winton) 8m 4.8s, 38.573pts, 5; Morgan Ngaronga (Taumarunui) 9m 53.55s, 42.011pts, 6.

Novice final (1 sheep): Jonty Unahi (Winton) 2m 52.66s, 11.633pts, 1; Zac Schofield (Oamaru) 4m 24.08s, 19.204pts, 2; Tamati Dennison (Kurow) 3m 8.83s, 19.442pts, 3; Bridee Wilkinson (Winton) 6m 23.78s, 30.189pts, 4; Sarah Davis (Rerewhakaaitu) 5m 4.09s, 30.205pts, 5; Tyrone Manu (Kurow) 3m 21.39s, 38.07pts, 6.

Blades final (5 sheep): Tony Dobbs (Fairlie) 16m 35.64s, 58.182pts, 1; Scott McKay (Clarence) 15m 27.78s, 58.789pts, 2; Alan Oldfield (Geraldine) 15m 40.36s, 64.018pts, 3; Mike McConnell (Christchurch) 16m 49.11s, 64.656pts, 4; Tim Hogg (Timaru) 16m 36.41s, 66.421pts, 5; Johnathon Dalla (South Australia) 18m 0.42s, 66.621pts, 6.

Women's final (4 sheep): Danielle Mauger (West Australia) 7m 15.5s, 27.775pts, 1; Emma Martin (Wyndham) 6m 59.17s, 27.959pts, 2; Emilia Meling (Norway) 8m 37.92s, 37.896pts, 3;

Foonie Waihape (Alexandra) 9m 55.25s, 48.763pts, 4; Katarina Ngahooro (Taumarunui) 11m 17.19s, 56.61pts, 5; Tracey Paton (Otaio) 9m 48.92s, 61.196pts, 6.

Winter Comb:

Open final (10 sheep): Leon Samuels (Alexandra) 17m 24.39s, 73.42pts, 1; Paerata Abraham (Masterton) 17m 31.94s, 74.897pts, 2; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 20m 43.91s, 81.196pts, 3; Stacey Te Huia (Mossburn) 19m 23.64s, 81.382pts, 4; Paraki Puna (Napier) 20m 59.39s, 83.97pts, 5; Brett Roberts (Mataura) 21m 13.53s, 86.277pts, 6.

Senior final (5 sheep): Tawhaarangi Taylor (Murupara) 13m 20.45s, 53.423pts, 1; Ludre Pelsler (Bloemfintein, South Africa) 13m 8.16s, 54.408pts, 2; Danielle Mauger (West Australia) 14m 54.33s, 57.117pts, 3; Taelor Tarrant (Taumarunui) 14m 20.11s, 65.406pts, 4; Jadas Guelfi (Gisborne) 15m 37.17s, 74.859pts, 5; James Scott (Haka) 13m 19.16s, 78.558pts, 6.

Woolhandling:

Open final: Taiwha Nelson (Alexandra) 92.018pts, 1; Kelly McDonald (Waimate) 100.994pts, Amy Ferguson (Alexandra) 113.574pts, 3; Charis Morrell (Alexandra) 120.812pts, 4.

Senior final: Amber Stringer-Houpapa (Ranfurly) 83.77pts, 2; Misty Rose Kokiri (Mataura) 85.624pts, 2; Tre Ratana Sciascia (Taihape) 98.982pts, 3; Lucy Elers (Mataura) 111.274pts, 4.

Junior final: Capree Wallace (Taihape) 100.94pts, 1; Chloe Henderson (Huntermville) 110.45pts, 2; Mere Maraki (Flaxmere) 112pts, 3; Skyanne Edmonds (Seddon) 130.96pts, 4.

South Island Woolhandling Circuit:

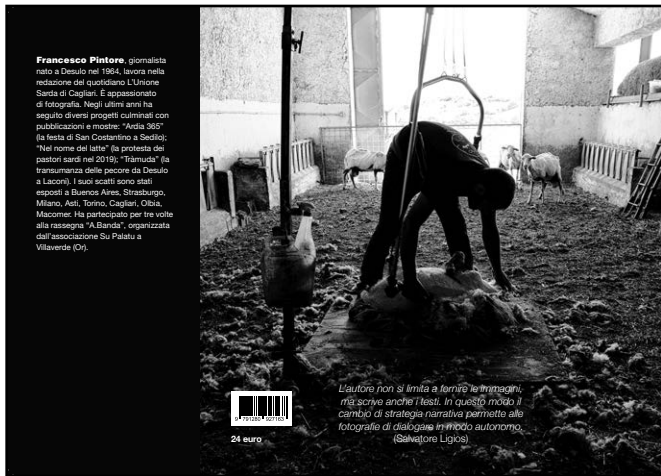
Open final: Cushla Abraham (Masterton) 71.82pts, 1; Nova Kumeroa (Mataura) 77.562pts, 2; Amy Ferguson (Alexandra) 87.726pts, 3; Keryn Herbert (Te Kuiti) 87.956pts, 4.

Senior final: Emma Martin (Wyndham) 78.512pts, 1; Saskia Tuhakaraina (Gore) 96.118pts, 2; Charlotte Stuart (Middlemarch) 103.4pts, 3; Autumn Waihape (Gore) 117.56pts, 4.

Junior final: Chloe Henderson (Huntermville) 86.08pts, 1; Kelly Barrett (Kawhia) 101.72pts, 2; Te Aroha Kelly (-) 103.138pts, 3; Tess Kelly (Ashburton) 137.45pts, 4.



Above: Remember when all our 'leaders' got their pretend Covid jabs on the six o'clock news? Well, this is no pretender, this is the real deal. Norman Harraway getting a genuine health and wellness check from the Carr Family Foundation at Waimate Shears in October. The nurse is Kirsten Barnes.



And Now For A Different Book (Review)

Shearing magazine has received notice of a book produced by Francesco Pintore, an Italian journalist-photographer, about sheep shearing in Sardinia. "I would be happy to have a review in your newspaper," he says. "In the book I interviewed numerous New Zealand shearers working in Sardinia, where Bowen shearing began in the early 1980s. The book is called *Tundhimentas*, it is a reportage on sheep shearing in Sardinia.

Although printed in the Italian language, the book is full of absolutely stunning images that would make it a treasured item for any collector of shearing publications. Francescon explains: *"This project was created to tell the world of shearers through images and their testimonies. Starting from that of the Frenchman Denis Buffet, a professional who arrived in Sardinia in 1981 and pioneered, together with a group of compatriots, mechanical shearing on the island.*

"It was the transalpines who led the way. Later came the Spaniards, the New Zealanders and finally the Romanians. There are also many Sardinian shearers. To learn the technique better, some have followed training courses and gained work experience in New Zealand."

Francesco has supplied an English translation for a section on New Zealand shearers entitled *The New Zealand Masters*.

"In the 1990s, the number of foreign professional shearers increased. Darryl Keeman [Keenan?] was the first New Zealander to arrive in Sardinia. Their arrival sparked curiosity in the farming world, much like the French in 1981.

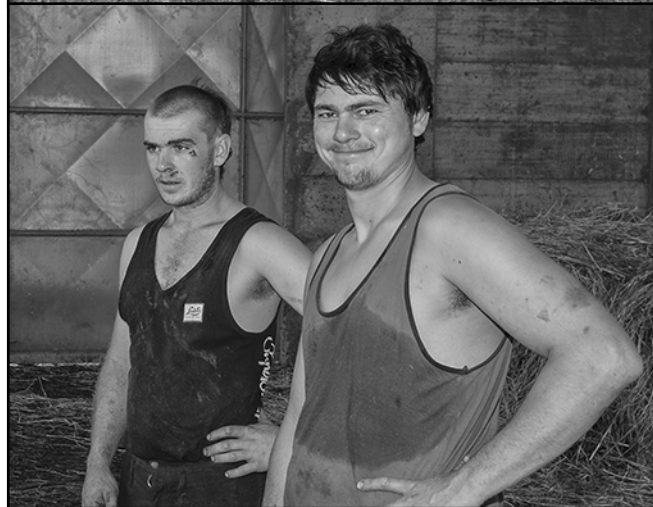
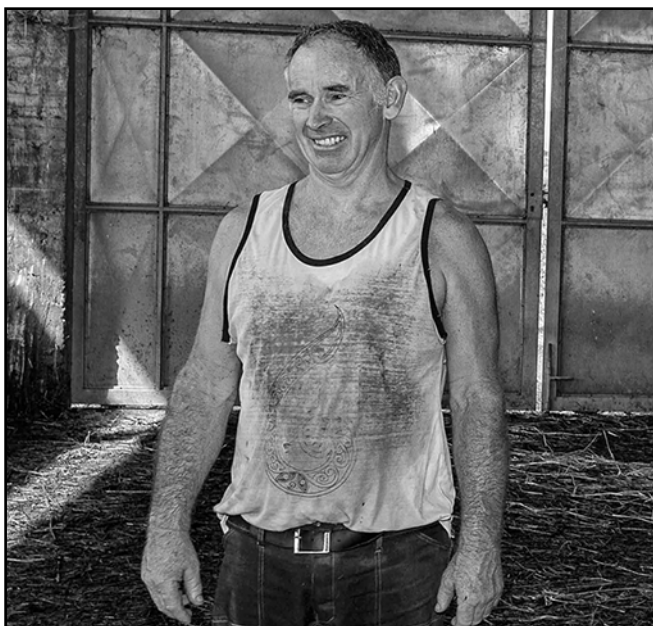
"The initial teams included a few women who handled wool collection. "But they didn't stay long," Keeman recalls, "because the farm owners used employees and family members for this task, not only to save money but also because in Sardinia, wool collection was typically done by women and children."

"The professionals from Oceania brought radios and sound systems with them to the farms, blasting rock music while they worked. "It helps us focus better," explains Andrew Snow Tilson, a New Zealand team coordinator based in Villacidro, interviewed on June 3, 2018, during a workday at the Zanda brothers' farm (sons of the late Giovanni, known as Battaglia) in Villamassargia.

"In the group, there were some very young, skilled shearers. Among them was an especially experienced professional, Edsel Forde, who won numerous competitive events for professionals.

"I was born in 1961 and started shearing at 16," he says.





Above: There's one familiar face among the 'Sardinian' shearers featured in Francesco Pintore's book: Edsel Forde.

"I took a week-long course at the New Zealand Wool Board training school. I learned the rest by watching other shearers and practicing on the job."

"Forde has competed in many contests. In New Zealand, shearing is a national sport. "I started competing in 1979 to improve my technique and challenge the best. Between 1986 and 1994, I won the NZ Golden Shears, NZ Shearing championships, and many other competitions in New Zealand, Australia, the UK, and Europe. I represented my country on the official shearing team in competitions in Australia, the UK, and France from 1989 to 1993. Back then, there were international-level training schools run by the NZ Wool Board, which no longer exists. Shearers came from all over the world to learn. Today, private companies handle professional training, though many young people prefer learning the technique by working with experienced shearers. It requires observing, listening to advice, and practicing with consistency and discipline."

Despite his age, Edsel Forde can still shear 300-400 sheep daily. "You need to conserve your energy," he notes. "Shearing is very demanding. We're at it morning and evening. Making unnecessary efforts is pointless. Ideally, you maintain the same pace each day, but that's not always possible."

The New Zealand professional first came to Sardinia in 2008, working on the island for twelve consecutive years until the pandemic halted him in 2020.

The book is of some 120 pages (dimensions 24 x 24 cm) and can be obtained by contacting Francesco Pintore at francescopintore@yahoo.it . Estimated cost plus postage \$NZ67.00 (37 euro)

* * * * *

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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.)

George Mudge on back-packing trip

Having represented England at 11 consecutive world championships since 1998, George Mudge is probably more often seen in public with a set of blade shears in his hand, but he's not unfamiliar with a handpiece, having first represented his country in the 1980 and 1984 world champs as a machine shearer.

And it's the machine style of 'clipper' that brought George 'down under' for a recent trip of several weeks in October and November, demonstrating his latest invention, a battery-powered, self contained back pack, designed for the small flock owner.

	George Mudge & Co. Shearing Equipment Specialist	
	George Mudge t: 0044 + 01822 615456 e: info@mudgeshearing.co.uk www.georgemudgeshearing.co.uk	Meadows Collaton Tavistock Devon England PL19 9JT

"There's an English motor in the black box, there's an English controller, the backpack I've had made in England and we are making all the mechanical bits ourselves in our Tavistock [Devon] workshop, so about 98% of the equipment is made in England," George says.

George Mudge & Co. is a family business that has been operating for 50 years, started by George and his late wife in the 1970s. Family members still do most of the work, with part time people helping out as required.

"Shearing equipment and clothes is our main line of business and we also make shearing trailers and pens and stands. They are things that I have designed over the years to make it easier for the farmer," says George, the self-taught engineer.

"I was born and raised on a farm and always had an 'engineering bent', even when I was a kid I would be making things in the workshop. But no, I've had no formal engineering training but always seemed to have a knack for it.

"In terms of the backpack, the skill required in programming the computer to make it all work is beyond me and that's where you get the experts in!"

George was in Western Australia in early October, spending time with friends and business associates. He was at Katanning for the Australian national

championships and had a shear in the blades competition before coming to New Zealand. He spent several weeks in the South Island, where he made the open blades final at the NZ Corriedale Shears, Christchurch, for sixth place.

His homeward journey was to include two more weeks in Victoria and New South Wales before arriving back in Britain a week or so before Christmas.

George says his remarkable longevity in representing England as a blade shearer at world championships started at Royal Bath & West in 1998. Unbeknown to him at the time ("I must have missed a meeting somewhere") Andrew Wear (England blade rep at Masterton in 1996) had talked the RB&W committee into holding a blade competition.

I was busy at the Show and heard it announced over the microphone that there would be a blade competition and the top two placegetters would represent England at the world championships in Gorey a fortnight later.

"My father had taught me to shear with blades at a young age and I saw Godfrey Bowen when I was about 10 so I thought to myself I was pretty sure I could shear two sheep. So, I got up on the lorry with two brand new pairs of blades. I didn't even have anything to sharpen them with but I got the wool off somehow and I made the team with Andrew Wear.

With two weeks to get in some practice, George found a couple of pairs of his fathers old blades, sharpened them up and shored some sheep around the district before going over to Ireland.

"And later, when the New Zealand blade shearer Alex McDonald saw what I'd been using he said he would take two new pairs back to New Zealand, sharpen them up and return them to me. Which is what he did!"

George has had three different team mates over the years apart from Wear: Craig Mudge, Forty Bush and more recently his own son, Andrew Mudge.

* * * * *








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