

# Shearing

*Promoting our industry, sport and people*

Number 79. Vol 28, No 2, August 2012  
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*Champion rowers and shearers in combat together at Narrows Landing in April. From left: Mahe Drysdale, Duncan Grant, Emily Welch, Ben Hammond, Sam Welch, Hamish Bond and Edsel Forde. (And yes, Mahe is standing on steps two lower than the others!) See Cover story page 5.*



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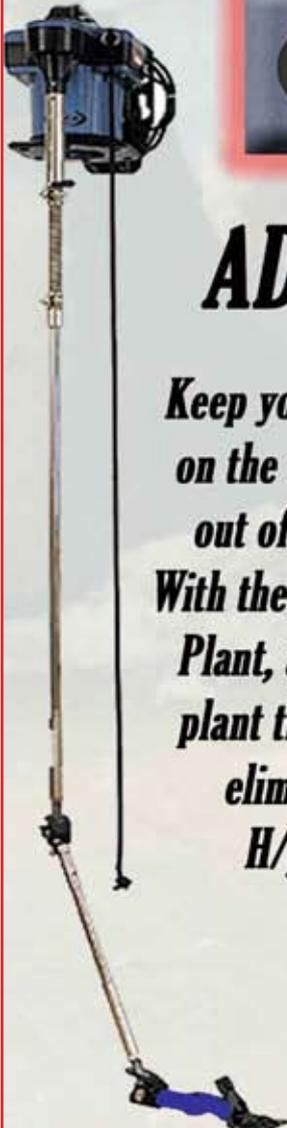
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## UNDER COVER STORY

### Time to wake up and grow up, excessive drinkers!

There's a story in a book written a couple of thousand years ago about a woman who was, in modern lingo, "caught in the act of being a bit free with her favours".

At that time there happened to be a wise man roaming the countryside, preaching peace and goodwill and doing good deeds all around. Some of the local smart-arses decided to try and "set him up" by bringing the woman to him and asking what should be done with her. The usual punishment of the day, it should be noted, was for all the righteous male citizens to throw rocks at the poor unfortunate until she was dead.

The wise man's forgiving of the woman would therefore go against the law of the land, while any condoning of the stoning would place him in an equally awkward position. "We've got him trapped," the smart-arses said to themselves - "now let's see how wise he is."

Confronted with this apparent dilemma, the wise man paused for just a moment before suggesting to all the accusers that he among them who had never stuffed up or made a serious mistake could throw the first stone at the woman. One by one, they all had to slink away.

"*Sorry, didn't mean to preach,*" as Joshua Chamberlain said to a group of deserters before the Battle of Gettysburg. Because yes, we have all made mistakes major and minor in our own lives that warn us not to be judgmental of others. But in that context, one couldn't help wanting to scream out loud, **'How bloody dumb do you want to be?'** at reading the recent *Sunday Star-Times* headline:

### Shearer crashes after 24 stubbies

Surely it doesn't take much brain power to work out that driving while drunk ends with people killed, maimed, or scarred for life. Most often it's not the drunk driver who dies, but the passengers, or innocent victims in the wrong place at the wrong time. Assaults and other violence come into the same category - inexcusable and incredibly damaging for victims, offenders, families, local communities, and the reputation of our industry.

Think on this - it might be just your name in the court report or the newspaper headlines, but our whole industry wears the embarrassment, or is left to mourn yet another senseless and needless death on the road.

There is no pride, no respect and no professionalism in such anti-social behaviour and enough is enough. It's time to grow up, get your shit together, and take responsibility for your actions. If the shoe fits, start wearing it!

*Ka kite ano*  
*Des Williams (editor)*

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## O for Oarsome

By Des Williams

Which is the tougher example of humanity – your supremely fit, world record setting shearer, or your world and Olympic medal-winning oarsman? That’s a question James Casey of Cambridge tried to answer back in April by setting up a “Great Debate” between the two factions at the Narrows Landing, a high class venue near Hamilton.

With the main purpose of the function being to raise money for the Hamilton Boys’ High School rowing team, James assembled two worthy teams, a noted “compere” in James (“I almost have my own TV Show”) McOnie and a couple of hundred guests prepared to part with their money for auctionable goods during the course of the evening.

Former world record holder (664 ewes in nine hours) and Golden Shears open champion 1989, Edsel Forde, together with [more recent] world record-setting husband and wife team Sam and Emily Welch of Waikaretu, represented shearing. The towering figure of Mahe Drysdale (five world titles, Olympic bronze), supported by Duncan Grant (three world titles), Hamish Bond (four world titles) and Ben Hammond (member NZ rowing eight and son of former Wanganui shearing contractors), fronted up for the rowers.

And while some patrons might have been hoping for a good old slagging match when the two teams got to have a go at each other, it soon became obvious that the mutual respect between the world class athletes of both codes would win the day. Hamish Bond reckoned things could get pretty hot out on the water at times, but acknowledged the four walls of a corrugated iron shearing shed as a bad place to be in the middle of summer.

Emily (“butter wouldn’t melt in my mouth!”) Welch came up with the observation, ever so nicely, that while the water really couldn’t care less about the rowers skimming up and down all day, shearers had to deal each and every

day with live animals that definitely didn’t want to be there. And it’s fair to say *The Crowd Went Wild* when the incompere-able McOnie announced the shearers marginally ahead after the first exchange of views.

After two more inconclusive rounds of questions and answers, it was time for action to replace words. As the son of a South Canterbury farmer, Duncan Grant was nominated to shear a sheep on behalf of the rowers (why not Hammond, one wondered?) while Sam Welch got to demonstrate his prowess on a rowing machine.

After eight minutes during which he barely raised a sweat, Sam had covered two kilometres of virtual reality while Duncan – no virtual about his reality – had a pile of unsaleable wool on the floor at his feet. He also had three exhausted “winders” pondering his handiwork, and a sheep with (remarkably) nearly all of its skin intact. Then with a few effortless blows, Mr Golden Shears 1989 quickly removed most of the wool left on to leave the sheep little the worse for its ordeal and once again presentable in public.

And then the serious fund-raising auction began. Among many attractive items on offer was a New Zealand shearing singlet (signed by the members of both debating teams) which fetched \$350. For more considerable sums you could have obtained an “oarsome” souvenir signed by Georgina and Caroline Evers-Swindell; other rowing memorabilia or even a professional makeover of your garden!

As James McOnie remarked at the outset, the bringing together of shearers and rowers in verbal and physical contest had never been done before, was long overdue, and may never happen again. So hats off to organiser James Casey, for an evening that will linger long in the memory.

*Postscript:* Drysdale and Bond (with Eric Murray) subsequently went on to add London Olympic gold medals to those previously hard-won laurels listed above.



*Role reversal: Sam Welch (left) and Duncan Grant swap jobs for eight minutes – with Sam emerging well ahead on points.*

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## A good clean job

By Roger Leslie

If my grandmother was right and cleanliness is indeed next to godliness then most shearers are probably in big trouble. The shearers of my generation were not known for either.

I shored several seasons in open sheds before I saw a shower or flush toilet. There was the odd long-drop set a suitable distance from the shed with its resident starling nest, but no provision made for washing beyond the purely superficial. There was often a cracked second-hand basin retired to the shed from the last house upgrade, and poised above it, the inevitable zip waiting to drip scalding water onto the back of your hands. There seemed to be an assumption shearers neither required nor desired washing facilities. Probably we brought this on ourselves for I well remember the plaintive cry of Godfrey Bowen in *Wool Away* that shearers needed to tidy themselves up, lift their dress sense and pride to portray a more professional (and clean) image. He was right of course and, to be fair, this has by and large happened.

Many a farmer of those days begrudged the facilities to wash and wondered out loud who would cover the cost of such extravagance? Would he, for example, get more for his wool clip if the shearers went home cleaner? I say cleaner because you never really removed the bouquet of sheep, particularly if, as was the habit of the day, you finished up the shed with the rams. Our gang spent the odd off-season pruning pine trees and my wife commented often on how nice I smelled when I arrived home. She never said that after a day in the shed.

The rural Germans had some curious habits when it came to washing away the remnants of the working day and its accompanying fragrance. First they had to be convinced of the need for such extra-ordinary mollycoddling, and then to let us use their closely guarded private facilities. When we asked those who lived in houses if we could wash gear, clothes or ourselves we would be met with baffled looks of eloquent incomprehension. This was not based on language. It seemed they expected workers that engaged in such a filth-laden pursuit to just disappear in the evening to whence they'd come, perhaps down a burrow. That we turned up each morning with clean bodies and clothes was a matter they preferred to leave draped in the shrouds of time and mystery.

I say those that lived in houses, because not all of them



*Hamish Bielski partakes of some ethnic cleansing in a German River (sewer, actually!)*

did live in houses. Some travelled with the sheep in gypsy-like existence and washing things while travelling with them tended to be a somewhat ad hoc arrangement. The caravan life is a story for another day, but suffice to say I have seen three of us wash our shearing gear and ourselves with three inches of muddy water hoarded in the bottom of a small bucket. This was infested with mosquito larvae and a wide assortment of pond life. Some areas in the moor country of Northern Germany are without surface water and the sheep appear to adapt to this faster than the Kiwi shearers did.

On one memorable occasion we shored a small mob that were being fed entirely from the surplus of the EU subsidised onion-growing regime (the EU rural subsidy system was the beginning of the Euro meltdown we see today). Apprehending the final 10 escapees was fraught with difficulty as mocs were never designed for sprinting at the best of times, and certainly inadequate for sudden direction changes in a field of onion skin. This shepherd's main occupation was a gasthaus with restaurant and he magnanimously offered us a meal. His long-tailed flock of uncertain breeding was liberally covered in onion flavoured dags which appeared (before it grew dark) to be orange in colour.

When we turned up afterwards in the brightly-lit restaurant to eat, we found that we also were liberally covered and the centre of considerable attention. Bill, my offsider, had a fair amount on his face as well. This was because of his failure to negotiate a tight bend while pursuing a fugitive in the darkness. When I asked if we could have a shower the restaurateur, indicating the crowd of well dressed diners with a dismissive sweep of his arm, said, "They won't mind!" (To page 7)



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(From page 6)

Perhaps I was being hyper-sensitive but the collective company of faces were staring at us in a mixture of wonder and wrinkle-nosed horror. We were in our filthy shearing togs and the only attire-change from the shearing pen had been into our red-bands. We hadn't even had the opportunity to wash our hands.

I insisted on a wash, unreasonably it seems, and we were reluctantly shown to the rest rooms. Bill took one and I the other. Mine had Damen written over the door accompanying the standard caricature of a skirted woman, and had no lock.

Often after a hard day, the bathing process can be an occasion of blissful reflection and relaxation. This was not one of those times. There was only a small hand basin and I still have nightmares about it. Standing there in my Y-fronts trying to make myself presentable to sight and smell, all the while keeping one foot against the door. This wasn't how I liked to spend my evenings.

None of the Damen tried to enter; perhaps they had been warned or just used that typically feminine insight and worked it out for themselves. I can hardly remember the meal other than I didn't order onions with my schnitzel.

We have refined our techniques over the years and I now seldom go to bed without a shower and never without some kind of formal washing regime. I still have a horror of sleeping greasy though and occasionally late at night I can smell those onion dags.



*Globe-trotting shearers: Above - South African machine shearers, shedhands and management photographed at the Pongaroa property of Allan and Deb Small (front left) in February 2012 during their preparation for the world championships. Below: Scotland and New Zealand teams after the test match at Royal Highland in July. From left; Callum Shaw, Hamish Mitchell, Tom Wilson (Scotland manager), Willie Buick (New Zealand manager), John Kirkpatrick and Nathan Stratford. New Zealand won this encounter.*



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# Shearing Angoras

By Janice Gillgren

Are goats different to shear from sheep? Yes, in some ways. Mark Gillgren has been shearing goats, as well as sheep and other woolly/hairy animals, for more than 25 years. Here he tells about the specific techniques he has developed for shearing goats, and why. Four main areas of difference are discussed:

1. Temperament – theirs and yours
2. Physical make-up
3. Fibre and skin
4. Techniques suited to the animals.

**Temperament:** Goats are generally more highly-strung than most breeds of sheep. They cry loudly and get frightened easily, attempting escape at the slightest provocation. Your temperament will affect theirs. Goats respond best to calm but firm handling. Try to keep a steady pace. Don't rush, and you'll finish the job quicker.

**Physical make-up:** Their physical make up is different. They're leaner (usually), wriggle more, and can also get on their feet faster, which means you need to grip them well between your legs. This can be harder on your back and leg muscles, especially if you're tense. Their angularity means second cuts are more likely.



*Stance and first tidy-up blow*

To get hold of an animal, grab it by the fibre on their cheek or under their chin. Don't hold or turn them over by their horns, which could snap off. If you control the head, you control the animal, so hold the goat's head between your knees as you are

shearing it. Its body will thus be held mostly against your left knee, and your right leg will be helping to move the animal into positions.

Having its horns behind your legs is much safer than when the head can move freely on the board, although you still have to beware of the horns of course.

Mark holds goats higher off the board than sheep, because holding the animal down firmly on the board for a sheep-style long blow is harder on both animal and shearer.

**Skin and Fibre:** Like a merino, the angora's skin is more easily cut because of their folds and angular body shape. Their skin folds are in much the same areas as the polworth breed, and their skin doesn't stretch the same as most sheep. As you pass the handpiece through the fibre, a tooth can quite easily pick up a bit of skin and cut it.



*Backbone and front shoulder*

Take special care when removing the fibre from around the teats. Use a short blow right at the start so they are clearly visible when it comes time to do the belly blows. Don't remove the dripper hairs around the pizzle, as they help to reduce staining. And of course, be careful not to cut the vulva.

Goat combs are made with 17 teeth, which means there is less gap between each tooth than on the standard 13-tooth sheep combs. The advantages of the narrower gap are that it is easier to get around the tricky areas, and the comb is less likely to pick up an ear,



*First long blow*

or get broken on the horns. Whereas sheep combs range anywhere from 92-100mm wide, goat combs are only about 92mm wide, and their guide tooth is not so far spread out. This makes it easier to confidently guide the handpiece around the animal.

**Technique:** Mark takes the socks off all the feet as part of the longer blows rather than by individual short blows. When doing the first leg, angle the first blow downward from the flank an inch [2.5cm], turning the handpiece and going along the belly line, all the way up to the shoulder. (To page 9)



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(From page 8)

It is only when stepping up to do the neck, that you take the goat's head out from between your legs. As with sheep, it pays to shear towards the left, and then up toward the chin, to avoid the risk of cutting its neck wrinkles. Then do the cheek, but not the top knot yet. Go round the ears, the horn, and down to the nose from the top of the head, taking the top knot off now; then on to the shoulder.



*From horns to nose*

Mark stretches the 2nd side front leg out to shear it, to reduce the likelihood of cutting the skin folds under the shoulder joint, and to make it easier to get the socks off.

The long blows are shorter because of previous blows ending at the shoulder, and these shorter long blows will make it easier to keep the goat's body up; then you are on the last side.

Keep in mind: 'Full comb, less blows, and easy pace.'



*One side done*

## Chips Reid obituary

*By Des Williams*

Allan Reid was a man with a tremendously generous spirit and an abiding love of his work. Those words of tribute came from Colin King MP, when some 200 friends gathered at Rangiora in August 2009, to honour the former contractor and instructor.

Known to all and sundry as 'Chips', Allan Reid, QSM died at Christchurch on 15 May 2012, aged 87. He was pre-deceased by his wife, Joyce, and is survived by his daughter Lois and son-in-law, Ross Turner.

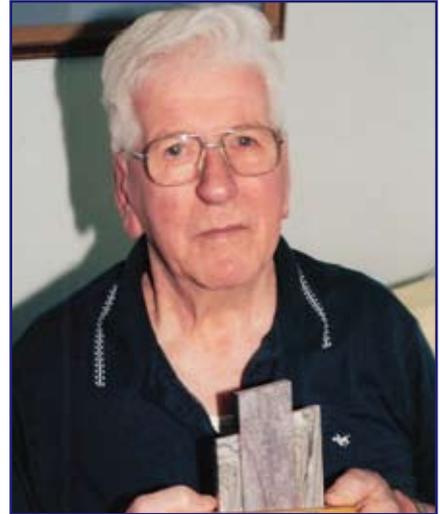
Reflecting on those years back in the 1970s and early 1980s when he had worked for Chips, Colin noted the Rangiora contractor was employing more than 100 shearers and Reid gangs were shearing more than a million sheep a year. "Having served as an army quartermaster in J-Force (Japan) may have helped equip him with the ability to manage people. We called him Mr Chips and for me, Allan was a role model as an employer."

When *Shearing* caught up with Chips a few years ago [November 2005 edition] the then 80-year-old was reminiscing with another of his former staff, Don Toshach, who took over the run in the 1980s. "Chips had a great sense of humour and that included the ability to enjoy a great laugh at his own expense," Don said.

"That, coupled with an inability to say 'no' were among Allan's defining qualities. A farmer would ring up and ask if he could get his sheep shorn this week and Chips would always say 'yes', even though he might have committed his gangs to be somewhere else. You'd arrive at the other place a week later than scheduled and the farmer would ask if everyone had been off sick, or something."

Don recalled how one New Year's Eve, Chips asked if anyone wanted work the next day. Thinking it was just a joke, Don volunteered, before heading out for the traditional New Year celebrations. Chips arrived to pick Don up next morning, about half an hour after he had finally crawled into bed! The day's work involved crutching a thousand wet lambs!

After handing over the business reins to Don, Allan Reid spent 14 years with Ian Rutherford in South



*Allan 'Chips' Reid 1925-2012*

Africa, training local shearers and also putting to good use his skills as a qualified builder. When Ian had asked Chips for his help in the Republic, he was greeted with a response along the lines of, "I'll be on the first plane."

"Chips' ability as both blade and machine shearer and as a builder proved invaluable. We designed multi-purpose shearing sheds that were approved by the South African Department of Agriculture. When they weren't used as shearing sheds they became implement sheds with room under cover for other stock work," Ian explained. "Chips earned a wonderful reputation in South Africa, both as a person and as a hard worker. He was always last to bed at night and first up in the morning."

Although Chips had worked for New Zealand Railways, been an army cook, a restaurant owner and a carpenter, his early upbringing on the family farm at Summerhill had done much to determine that his career would be in shearing. He'd started at age 12 during the Great Depression and within three years was shearing full time and, eventually, had his own contract business.

Chips employed the likes of Peter Burnett, Robin Middleton, Paul Rose, Don Toshach and Noel Handley, all of whom would eventually follow in his footsteps as shearer trainers.

Chips was recognised as a Master Shearer by the shearing industry, and he received the Queen's Service Medal (QSM) several years ago.

# Improving fleece weight

By Dr Clive Dalton

In the 1970s we boffins at the Whatawhata Hill Country Research Station were pushing commercial farmers to increase their wool production, and the best way to do this was to select ewe hoggets for high fleece weight. All farmers had to do at shearing was to find the hoggets with the heaviest fleeces. Sounded simple enough!

Sound theory: It was sound theory – hogget fleece weight was highly heritable, so if you kept those with the highest fleeces, mated to the best rams they'd breed the best offspring. It was a simple and very old principle of 'breeding the best to the best'.

And the other good thing about this was that hogget fleece weight was a very good indicator of lifetime wool production. In boffin-speak it had high 'repeatability' as well as high 'heritability'.

Two snags: The first snag of this sound theory was that commercial sheep didn't have ear tags, so you couldn't record a hogget's number, and then find her again in the count-out pens after you'd weighed her fleece.

Then came the second snag – there was no way shearers were going to stop and wait while you weighed the fleece, and decide if you wanted to keep that particular animal.

Pity it couldn't work: So here was another daft idea from eggheads that couldn't work in the woolshed. But as we found out countless times in our sheep breeding work at Whatawhata and with our off-station work with



*Tallitagged - simply matching up the sheep with its wool after shearing.*

Lands & Survey flocks at Waihora, the day we told managers and shepherds that something was not possible – all we needed to do was to shut up and wait. And this is what happened with the hogget shearing idea.

Tear-off luggage labels: I can't remember who invented these simple labels but they were called 'Tallitags' and were marketed by Allflex. My old Whatawhata Technician mate Bram Uljee seems to think it was a Manawatu rousie who came up with the original idea. They were basically a waterproof paper luggage label with an elastic loop on one end and perforated across the middle with the same number printed on each end. Here's what you did:

- 1 Take a label and tear it in half.
- 2 Wait until the sheep's shorn neck appears through the shearers' legs as

they were going down the last side, and loop the elastic around its neck with its half label on. This could last for up to 10 days.

3 Put the other half in a safe place (like between your lips), pick up the fleece and throw it on the scales.

4 Write the weight on the label and if weight was all you wanted - 'post it' (see below).

5 If you wanted a 'quality' check to ensure the fleece had no major defects and was 'true to type', then the person skirting and wrapping the fleece could decide whether it was a 'keep' or a 'cull'. If it was a keep, then they could post it.

The magic box: This was a smart idea. The first idea was to put all the labels in a heap on the table and sort them afterwards on the proverbial 'wet day'. The next idea was to sort them on the table into small heaps from highest to lowest. But this was equally as messy as the heap idea.

Then somebody (again I can't remember who) produced a box with divisions in it to hold the half tags with the weights written on. Allflex sold it along with Tallitags. To get going, you decided on the weight range, either by guessing or from shearing the first 20 or so hoggets, and used 0.5kg differences between the divisions.

But the inventor wasn't finished; they made a lid to go over the top so it was a collection of little posting boxes below the lid. You wrote the appropriate weight on each hole. The lid was hinged so you couldn't put it on the wrong way and cull the wrong sheep at the end of shearing. (To p11)

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(From p10)

It was a simple job to 'post' the paper tag through the appropriate fleece-weight hole.

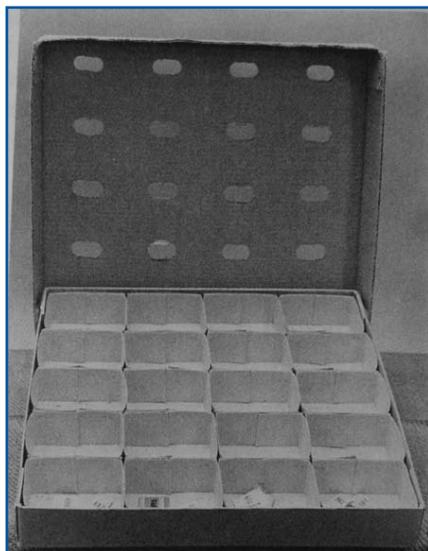
Analysis all done: At the end of shearing you had completed a very simple statistical analysis by creating a 'normal distribution' or 'bell curve'. This clearly showed the range in hogget fleece weight from highest to lowest – how many sheep were in each category and their Tallitag number. Brilliant and simple like all good ideas.

How many to keep?: Then you decided how many hoggets to keep, working backwards from those with the highest fleece weight till you had found enough.

Find the sheep: The next job was to find the sheep you wanted, either before they left the count-out pens that day, or later before the hoggets got too far away from the yards. If there were any hoggets that you didn't like or had physical defects when seen out of the wool, all you did was to pull off the label.

Give a permanent tag: Having done all the hard work, it was worthwhile to give the selected sheep a good permanent raddle mark or a permanent plastic tag. The cost was justified for anyone serious about commercial flock improvement.

Keep the heaviest: If farmers wanted to put more selection pressure on them, they could then go through and keep the heaviest if they had scales. Hogget fleece weight and body weight



*Computer-like – the magic box for keeping track of the tallitags.*

are strongly related so if the farmer didn't have scales, they could rely on this positive genetic relationship to keep the good work going.

Is it worth reviving?: With the depression wool went through over past decades, the motivation to improve fleece weight and quality died. But it's maybe time to get going again. I'd be happy for anyone interested to contact me. There's a rapidly declining number of old MAF mates left who did all this work.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Slight Exaggeration

Our April 2012 edition page 5 stated John Kirkpatrick had won the NZ Corriedale championship five times. In fact he's won it three times – 2004, 2008 and 2010.

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*Opposite: participants in the trans-Tasman woolclassing course at Dubbo's Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Centre, Dubbo, in May 2012. Back left: Peter Beaumont (A), Boydie Aveyard (A), Sharlene Adamson (NZ), Sarah Falconer (NZ), Penny Clout (A). Front left: Nicola Peddie (NZ), Robyne Murray (NZ), Tracey Belliss (NZ), Dayne West (A), Tina Elers (NZ), Vanessa McAlister (NZ) and Bill Greenshields (NZ).*

*Below: Testing their classing skills, from left: Penny Clout, Vanessa McAlister, Tracey Belliss, Nicola Peddie and Bill Greenshields.*

*Tectra's Robyne Murray says the courses were negotiated between Tectra and TAFE several years ago so woolclassers, particularly New Zealanders, could become qualified to work on both sides of the Tasman and thus make for themselves a longer working season. The course involves 10 modules of "paperwork" covering wool types, sheep breeds, branding, etc., and this must be completed successfully before classers with their New Zealand stencil can then attend the two-week practical course.*

*"The courses are held annually if possible but must have at least six participants before they can proceed. I was particularly pleased to be able to attend this course because I can now pass on to future applicants, first-hand knowledge of what is involved.*

*"After the course, Nicola Peddie, Tracey Belliss and Bill Greenshields immediately found classing jobs in Australia so it was very successful from that aspect."*



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## Werner hands over the reins

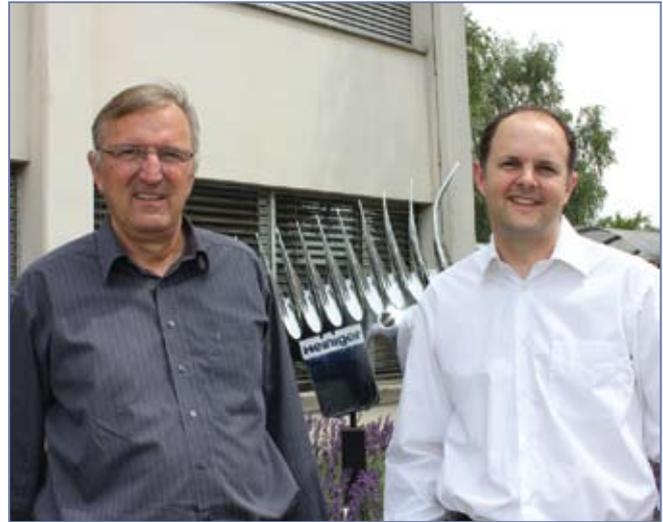
### *Company news release*

In May 2012, Heiniger Limited farewelled its long-serving managing director, Werner Heiniger. After an illustrious 38-year career, Werner stepped aside for son Daniel to take charge of the company.

Respected by those who worked alongside him, Werner was a great business man but, more importantly, a family man and role model to many.

Werner's uncle Hermann Heiniger first founded Heiniger Limited in 1946, fast establishing itself as a quality producer of products and services to the agricultural industry. In 1965 the company manufactured its first electric animal clippers and sheep shearing machines. Entering the company in 1974, Werner played an integral role in Heiniger's evolution, today recognised as the global leader in design, production and distribution of shearing and clipping equipment.

In 1983 Werner became managing director, leading the company with countless achievements including the foundation of daughter companies Heiniger Australia (1981) and Heiniger New Zealand (2002). Conquering the Australasian shearing industry and its demand for quality equipment, Heiniger Australia continued to build product diversity with the acquisition of Elastrator Pty Ltd (1995), TPW Ltd (2000) and Chemical Recovery Company Pty Ltd, now known as Heiniger Home and Garden Care Pty Ltd (2005).



*Werner Heiniger (left) and son Daniel, who has taken over as Heiniger's new managing director.*

Werner was always committed to maintaining high standards of safety and quality. Innovation combining safety was the challenge given to Heiniger's extensive technical team when faced with the challenge of reducing time lost to accidents involving shearing equipment – this resulted in the creation of the Evo Shearing plant, the world's first with a safety cut-out switch. The product has received several award recognitions from Australian government agencies for its contribution to shearer safety.

In 2003 Werner introduced robot manufacturing, allowing Heiniger to produce combs and cutters with a precise uniformity backed up by quality control procedures. Recognising potential in a new market, Heiniger released its first professional small animal clipper. The Saphir clipper released in 2008 quickly developed a reputation for quality and is now one of the preferred choices for professional groomers around the world. To account for this rapid growth and growing product range a new state of the art Heiniger production facility was opened in 2010.

Daniel started with the company in 2006. After spending his early years studying and travelling the world, and with the support of his young family, he now looks forward to stepping into his father's shoes. He has already excelled in the company earning the respect of his colleagues and upholding the same morally astute standards shared by Werner, who will be long remembered for his humble demeanour and the values with which he built the company into the successful powerhouse it is today.

The company will continue to move forward with the Heiniger team dedicated to research, development and innovation. All around the globe animals are being shorn or clipped using Heiniger equipment as testament to the vision and hard work of one Werner Heiniger and the professional team he assembled.

Werner has accepted the position of non-executive Chairman of Heiniger Limited. In his retirement he hopes to partake in some overseas travel and enjoy some quality time with his grandchildren.



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*Australian Shearing Contractors' Association President, Michael Schofield welcomes participants to Shear Harvest 2012 at Surfers' Paradise.*

## Healthy Issues Discussed at Conference

Otago shearing contractors Jason and Shara Davis shared their reflections on their enterprise foray into a public health scheme. They captivated the audience of Australian and New Zealand contractors at Shear Harvest 2012, sharing their experiences linking staff with local Balclutha health provider and the Otago District Health Board Public Health Service.

Alongside Otago Public Health expert, Roger Mangai the Davis's presented on how they became involved in a 'back to the basics' relationship with a local health provider and then ended up hosting evening public health clinics at their shearing quarters.

In partnership with the Otago DHB public health team, the Davis's developed a model to bring health services to their workers since, as Shara Davis wryly put it, "shearing workers mostly don't get help unless they have to."

"We were aware that the DHB were looking to model this programme, and we put our hand up to host. It made

sense as the workers tend not to follow up on health issues after a hard day at work, and most services are closed by the time teams get back to town."

At their shearing quarters the contractors arranged for after-work clinics with visiting public health teams. The Otago DHB Public Health staff coordinated the range of free services presented at the shearing quarters, including medical, dental, mental health, drug and alcohol education and counselling.

A presentation to staff by the shearing contractors enabled shearing workers to engage and then choose to make their own evening appointments at the shearing quarters.

The public health and medical team undertook a range of services including setting up intervention on serious medical treatment. One worker was found to have previously unaware heart troubles and another had serious dental intervention. Other assessments instigated drug and alcohol treatment and further counselling was available for stopping violence services, and mental health intervention.

*(Jills Angus Burney)*

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# Is shearing sports a real sport, Sport?

By Des Williams

That headline question, one might suggest, contains just about the most annoying few words in New Zealand's version of the English language. We know it's not a sport across the Tasman because an application by Sports Shear Australia a couple of years ago drew a solid rebuff from the Australian Sports Commission.

But when the question arises here in New Zealand, this writer (for one) likes to meet questioners with questions: "If it's NOT a sport, why is Godfrey Bowen in the New Zealand Sports Hall of Fame? And [if it's not a sport] why has SPARC, and its fore-runners in charge of national sports funding distribution, been supporting Shearing Sports NZ in international competition for the past 20 years?"

The issue was most recently raised by Federated Farmers earlier this year, in the wake of record-setting efforts by whanau Te Huia and Sam Welch. NZFF Meat and Fibre chairwoman Janine Maxwell generated significant media interest when she suggested shearing should be pushed into a wider realm via Commonwealth or Olympic Games. Shearing, Maxwell was reported as saying, could become for women sports followers what beach volleyball seems to be for men sports followers. (You can count me out of that generalisation, Janine!)

One might assume here that if shearing administrators do make a case



*Sir Brian Lochore, guest speaker at the Golden Shears world championships earlier this year, lent his voice to those calling for recognition of shearing as a demonstration sport at Commonwealth or Olympic Games.*

in future for demonstration status at, say Commonwealth Games, it would be the "Golden Shears" variety rather than the eight or nine-hour tallies that seem to have prompted the initial suggestion. For mine, the success of recent world championships at small to medium locations such as Gorey, Ireland; Edinburgh, Scotland, Toowoomba, Australia, Bjerkreim, Norway and Builth Wells, Wales, and of course Masterton, New Zealand since 1998 provides clear evidence that nothing is broken and therefore nothing needs fixing.

## Now these Sports are real Sports!

And while it might take public opinion to eventually decide whether shearing sports deserves "Games" status, *Shearing* magazine is aware that several top class sportspeople enjoying headlines in recent times have close connections to the shearing industry, through their whanau.

Karen Hanlen and Blair Tuke were London Olympians earlier this month. Hanlen, a 32-year-old physiotherapist from Whakatane, represented New Zealand in mountain-biking, just two years after taking up the sport. She is a daughter of Alan and Merle Brabant of Whakatane, with Alan being a noted Bay of Plenty "tally man" for many years. Karen finished 18th, despite

puncturing in her demanding event.

Blair Tuke of Kerikeri, the 23-year-old grandson of shearing icon Murray McSkimming, paired with Peter Burling to win silver in the sailing "49er" class at Weymouth. Blair has previously competed with distinction on the world stage, winning two world titles in other sailing events.

Also gaining New Zealand honours this month was Sarah Goss, daughter of Alan and Veronica (Ronnie) Goss of Kimbolton. Sarah was vice-captain of the New Zealand Sevens team at the Oceania championships in Fiji.

Sarah and her team-mates will compete at an International tournament in Dubai later in the year. The Sevens team also has its eye on the 2016 Olympic Games to be held at Rio de Janeiro.

But the athlete perhaps making best use of her shearing heritage is multi-sports competitor Candace Hammond of Cambridge. Daughter of former Wanganui contractors, Garth and Barbara Hammond (and sister to Ben, on our cover), Candace includes shearing and crutching in her "cross-training" regime and describes some "obvious parallels" on her website:

*Shearing/dagging is largely about footwork. Get that wrong and you will spend more time sheep wrestling than sheep shearing. I'm speaking from a significant amount of sheep wrestling experience.*

*While in the shed I may end up sheep wrestling from time to time, when I'm training for ironman it's my mind I will wrestle with from time to time.*

*It's essential to work through the sheep one at a time, try and break it down, or it can get a bit overwhelming, especially when the shed is full and there are more sheep outside. Ironman is exactly the same, break it down or it can get overwhelming.*

*This type of cross training will kill, murder, annihilate your hamstrings. Yep that's a parallel.*

*Nutrition, if you don't eat and hydrate properly, you will suffer for it. Both ironman and shearing burn a lot of calories. Consume plenty.*

*Competitive environment. Oh yes, shearing is a competitive industry, just as racing is. Get ahead!*

*And: Sweat. A lot of it.*

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## Rick MacLeod profile

By Tanya Katterns

Sitting down over a cuppa or two with seasoned shearing contractor Rick MacLeod, it is pretty obvious from the outset there will be no click go the shears clichés.

No need to strip away any fanciful turn of phrase before getting reality from Rick. A journey in a hard and body-punishing industry and a struggle of man versus sheep till the body aches and ages, but ultimately a continued passion to diversify to continue to make a mark in the industry.

The lure of the land. It is a natural notion for a man who roamed back country east coast Wairarapa farms on horseback before he even took his first teetering steps.

Rick's story rings true of so many of those who have gone before him and will follow him – of life growing up in a typical back-country farm and a dream that followed to ride off the sheep's back and establish his place in the industry.

"I had a great upbringing for a kid when my Dad was managing these big farming properties, giving us kids a real affinity with the rural side of life where you learned to ride a horse and hunt pigs. I knew right from being a young boy in those surroundings that my life somehow would always revolve around the land."

When his father's health deteriorated and smaller blocks rather than the sweeping demanding hill country



*Rick MacLeod (right front) with his team at Lonestar Farms "Hadleigh" property near Masterton, from back left: Jeremy Goodger, Tim Wilson, Hamish Robinson, Micah Kingi, Buck Thompson, Ricki Jackson. Front left: Kiriana Graham, Rae Thompson, Shona Hing.*

became the work option, the family moved into town where young Rick finished his schooling before picking up a trainee role as a teen-aged junior stock clerk for the farm merchandise store, Dalgety NZ Ltd.

Those days at Dalgety's introduced skills of stock agent and livestock buyer, but it was the woolsheds, bearing the marks and scars of time, that really beckoned Rick.

"When I left Dalgety's, I was fortunate enough to go straight into a

shearing gang where I learned to press wool. When I started out in the sheds, I had John Henson, a bit of a local legend, to mentor me. He was all about quality. You know it was a time that we were surrounded by really positive energy where we learned to shear and develop a strong work ethic."

(To page 17)

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(Rick MacLeod, from page 16)

Along with being championed to be the best of the best, and spending four seasons shearing in the United Kingdom, came a whole lot of goal setting for Rick.

"Shearing in those days was really just a 10-year career. I think that was just the mentality of it. Most guys were looking to buy land or move on into something other than the physical aspect of shearing.

The reality is that, as shearers, we had to be really aware that we needed to be fitter than All Blacks. We are all bullet-proof at 21, but come 40, it is a different story. The human body doesn't take as much as we like to think it can take!" he suggests.

There is no denying that with the physically gruelling nature of the work, for the majority, it was a young man's game, Rick says.

It was that mindset of goal setting that led Rick and his shearing cobbler Chub Lett to establish their own contracting run in 1991 – aptly named Ewenique Shearing.

It was a tough start for the pair as they tried breaking into the close-knit and loyal farming community, but perseverance and being "a couple of local lads with a fairly solid track record" eventually paid off and the business hasn't looked back.

Chub moved on to other things in 2009 and Rick now directs traffic in the sole run business where "team, team, team" may as well be a motto etched in stone wherever his gangers set up for work each day.

"I think as a contractor, the team effort thing is a biggie. It is all

about looking out for each other and protecting each other's livelihoods really. It is true to say the contracting world is a family affair, and while there might be the odd family feud, we are all after the same thing, to perform together and that includes having the farmers in the team."

Even the hard man of the sheds can reveal his soft side when he talks of the young men and women that he has been able to influence during his life.

His "pack horses", woolpressing powerhouses and multiple Golden Shears champions Jeremy and Vinnie Goodger are "a magical duo and one out of the bag," while a teen with no direction was once plucked off his couch and put in the sheds. The gauntlet was laid and the challenge taken with that same once unemployed, directionless teen now a leading policeman.

Rick's team ethic and passion for mentoring will always remain the backbone of his business.

"Sometimes the most satisfying times for contractors is when you see perhaps a hobo who has dropped through the cracks and you pick them up and see them mould into a genuine human being that cares and becomes a really good tradesman.

"It is truly wonderful when you see that happen and I hope in my time, under my care, I will keep meeting and working with many more who will one day move on to greater things because of my being able to give them a chance to succeed in the sheds."

\* \* \* \* \*

## Goldies and NZ Champs winners for 2014 Worlds

The annual meeting of Shearing Sports New Zealand has decided the Golden Shears and the New Zealand Shearing Championships in 2014 will be used to find New Zealand's two shearers for that year's world championships in Ireland.

Assuming the two Open titles maintain their history of being won only by New Zealanders, the team for the championships at Gorey, County Wexford, in May 2014 (the same venue as for the 1998 world championships) will comprise the winner of the Golden Shears Open at Masterton and the New Zealand Open at Te Kuiti. Should one shearer win both events, as did Napier's John Kirkpatrick this year, the vacant berth will go to the NZ Championships runner-up.

The selection method reverts to that used leading up to the 2003 championships in Edinburgh, 2008 in Norway and 2010 in Wales.

Last season, shearers went through a strenuous series in both the North and South Islands before a selection final at the Southern Shears in Gore, from which the winner and runner-up contested the 15th world championships at Masterton earlier this year.

The SSNZ meeting in Auckland last week decided to continue with a proven method of finding the championships' two woolhandling representatives, with the best in separate North and South Island circuits contesting a series final at the Golden Shears. (Doug Laing)

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# Obituary John Hanrahan

By *Bernie Walker*

Trans-Tasman competition shearing lost one of its most experienced and highly respected judges when John Hanrahan passed away at Euroa on 20 February 2012, just ten days before his 80th birthday.

John was born at Toora in South Gippsland in 1932. He had an older brother, Pat, and a younger sister, Marie. The family lived at Wonyip in the hills near Yarram. After leaving school aged 13, John began droving cattle to local markets.

Soon shearing was to become a large part of John's life. He teamed up with John Allan (who later represented Australia at Golden Shears 1962) and the pair enjoyed success in team shearing events at the Royal Melbourne Show in the late 1950s. Another of their claims to fame was that they shore in the most southerly shed on the Australian mainland, owned by the Heyward family at Waratah Bay at the top of Wilsons Promontory.

Not such a claim to fame was when the two of them, after a hard, hot day shearing, went skinny dipping in the Bay, only to have a group of ladies arrive on the beach for a picnic. The boys had to spend about 2½ hours in the surf.

John Hanrahan also went shearing up near Echuca, while John Allan spent time in New Zealand.

In 1963, John and Lil (the couple



*John Hanrahan - major contributor to shearing sports in Australia*

had married two years earlier) bought the 'Hazelmere' property at Euroa, where their three daughters, Diane, Kaye and Maria were born (son Ross had arrived prior to the move).

John continued to shear and also began transporting stock to Melbourne and local centres. This later enabled John to become involved buying and feed-lotting cattle. His keen eye and astute judgment enabled him to become very successful. He also became a sub-agent for VPC Melbourne and often bought sheep and cattle for other people. John was known to shear all day and then take a load of stock to Melbourne that night. Haymaking was also a priority, both for himself and for his neighbours, and he spent many long nights on the tractor "getting it in right".

John became involved as a shearing judge with Euroa Apex about 1972, which also brought him in contact again with John Allan.

John Hanrahan became Chief Judge of Golden Shears Australia as a member of Euroa Shearing Association. His eye for stock and experience as a shearer enabled him to become an outstanding shearing judge and he was invited to officiate at Golden Shears in Masterton on seven occasions, including world championships in 1980, 1988 and 1996. He also attended the 1986 world titles in Perth, Western Australia. At this time John was judging at twelve or more competitions around Australia each year, some as far north as Brisbane Exhibition.

Wherever he went John was regarded as a man of integrity and a true gentleman. He made many friends in the livestock industry as well as on both sides of the Tasman among the shearing fraternity.

Then, about 2004, John developed multiple myeloma and for the rest of his life suffered great pain and distress. But he was the eternal optimist, and was always "going to be better in a day or two". And often was. His family know 'Hazelmere' was more than a farm to John – it was his life. But his family was everything to him and he was everything to them.

The size of the congregation at John's funeral, and the many tributes received by the Hanrahan family, are a testament to the high regard people had for a fine Australian who will be missed by many.

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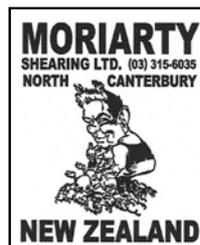
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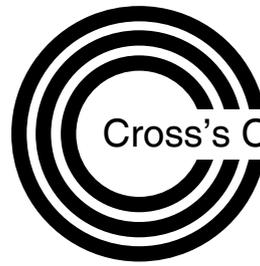
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Images from the 2012 New Zealand Shearing championships held at Te Kuiti in March: Top: NZ Shears President, Ian Buchanan presents Dawn Morrow (treasurer) with the Keith and Maureen Wilkie Memorial Trophy for Excellence. Middle: Junior woolhandling finalists, Stevie-Latoya Mason-Smallman, Willz Marshall, Tara Chapman, Ngaire Puha and Ahotaiewa Broughton. Above: Under no circumstances should this photo be shown to SBW – he would be like, sooooo jealous of Jerome McCrea's powerful tattooed left arm!



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### MACHINE SHEARING LEVEL 3

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### TECTRA TRAINING COURSES SCHEDULE 2012

#### North Island: Shearing

3-7 Sep	Wanganui	Learner Shearing
17-20 Sep	Otane	Advanced Shearing
24-27 Sep	Gisborne	Advanced Shearing
24-27 Sep	Palmerston North	Advanced Shearing
1-5 Oct	Masterton	Learner Shearing
1-5 Oct	Wairoa	Learner Shearing
8-12 Oct	Palmerston North	Learner Shearing
8-12 Oct	Towai	Learner Shearing
15-19 Oct	Taupo	Learner Shearing
23-26 Oct	Kawakawa	Advanced Shearing
23-26 Oct	Raetihi	Advanced Shearing
29 Oct - 1 Nov	Wairoa	Advanced Shearing
29 Oct - 1 Nov	Palmerston North	Advanced Shearing
5-8 Nov	Piopio	Advanced Shearing
5-8 Nov	Masterton	Advanced Shearing
12-15 Nov	Palmerston North	Advanced Shearing
12-15 Nov	Taranaki	Advanced Shearing
19-23 Nov	Taumarunui	Advanced Shearing
19-22 Nov	Palmerston North	Advanced Shearing
26-29 Nov	Palmerston North	Advanced Shearing
26-29 Nov	Taumarunui	Advanced Shearing
3-7 Dec	Central Hawkes Bay	Learner Shearing
3-6 Dec	Taumarunui	Advanced Shearing
10-14 Dec	Feilding	Learner Shearing

#### North Island: Wool Handling & Pressing

2-4 Sep	Gisborne	Pressing L3
11-14 Sep	Marton	Wool Handling L2 & L3
18-20 Sep	Napier	Pressing L3
2-4 Oct	Wanganui	Pressing L3
9-12 Oct	Kawakawa	Wool Handling L2 & L3
16-18 Oct	Masterton	Pressing L3
6-9 Nov	Stratford	Wool Handling L2 & L3
13-16 Nov	Masterton	Wool Handling L2 & L3
13-16 Nov	Napier	Wool Handling L2 & L3
20-23 Nov	Gisborne	Wool Handling L2 & L3

#### South Island: Shearing

17-20 Sep	Balclutha	Advanced Shearing
1-5 Oct	Darfield	Learner Shearing
8-12 Oct	Clinton	Learner Shearing
8-11 Oct	Cheviot	Advanced Shearing
15-19 Oct	Blenheim	Learner Shearing
29 Oct - 1 Nov	Winton	Advanced Shearing
12-15 Nov	Mt Hutt	Advanced Shearing
19-23 Nov	Allandale	Learner Shearing
26-29 Nov	Winton	Advanced Shearing
26-30 Nov	Tapanui	Learner Shearing
3-7 Dec	Washdyke	Learner Shearing

#### South Island: Wool Handling

9-12 Oct	Gore	Wool Handling L2 & L3
16-18 Oct	Canterbury	Wool Handling L4
13-16 Nov	Nelson	Wool Handling L2 & L3
19-21 Nov	Timaru	Wool Handling L4
27-30 Nov	Canterbury	Wool Handling L2 & L3
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# Laurie Boniface - wool studies teacher

By Des Williams

Apart from a few moments, years ago, when Laurie Boniface resigned his position as wool tutor based at Massey University, and then “unresigned” again before he could be replaced, the man has spent more than 48 uninterrupted years working with wool.

Those years, in a variety of roles, have been fuelled by a passion for the wonder fibre that emerges before you can complete a non-provocative ‘Does wool still have any sort of fut ...?’ Laurie’s answer, a ‘definitely yes’ is on its way back to you with an emphasis suggesting ‘end of story’!

Laurie has been teaching wool industry training courses for Tectra (and its forebears, Meat & Wool Innovation and WoolPro) at Massey University since 1985. These days the programme consist of five compulsory papers covering the New Zealand wool industry, sheep and wool production, wool characteristics and their assessment, wool classification, and communication and information. Plus, alternative papers are available on wool processing and slipe wool production.

When Laurie first took up a wool instructor’s position at Massey University in 1985 he had three months of “learning the ropes” before becoming the recipient of a rapid and unexpected elevation when someone above him in the teaching structure suddenly left.

“I was promoted up the scale to replace him. There were 64 veterinarian students here on a course at the time and I was put in charge of 32 of them while Bill Regnault had the other 32 under his control. Here I was, all of a sudden telling these vet students things about wool that I never



*Laurie Boniface, Tectra’s manager of Industry Studies based at Massey University, surrounded by wool of many breeds in what others on campus regard as “Laurie’s woolroom”.*

even knew that I knew myself! I was in absolute shock for a while and lost a bit of sweat that day, I can tell you!”

That experience gave Laurie thoughts that perhaps the position wasn’t really for him, but he eventually came to terms with it, the summer holidays were good and soon enough he was in his element. That lasted for nearly 14 years, and then Massey University decided to divest itself of its wool teaching courses.

“It was a time when a lot of restructuring was going on, there was rationalisation in the industry and they just weren’t getting enough bums on seats to make the courses viable. We had been relying on wool brokers, private buyers and scours to send their students here for training and the numbers just dropped away. So Massey stopped its wool course and Lincoln followed suit a year later.”

Laurie had been teaching the certificate in woolhandling course started in 1984 by Bill Regnault. He catered for people who wanted to know something about wool and its characteristics but did not have the time for full-time study. With Massey opting out, Lance Wiggins at WoolPro contracted Laurie to carry on the service, on site.

“We had farmers’ wives, spinners and weavers, alternative life-stylers who were happy to do assignments at home and then come for a one-week block course in the middle of the year. I think it was one of the first extra-mural courses offered in New Zealand.”

Laurie’s own training in the industry many years earlier had involved a two-year Diploma course at Massey – obtained against the advice offered by his first employer.

“When I left school I’d been working for Noel Beder, a private woolbuyer here in Palmerston North. Noel was hard but fair, called a spade a spade and wanted his pound of flesh for the money he was paying me. (To page 23)



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(From page 22)

“After a couple of years in Noel’s employment and much to his dismay, I decided to do the Diploma in wool and woolclassing here at Massey, through 1967 and 1968.

“I would still work for Noel each Wednesday afternoon because that was sports day on campus, and I earned enough money in that half day to keep me in beer and cigarettes [long discarded!] for the week. Then I graduated in 1969 and went back to Noel on a full time basis. I suggested to him that now I had my diploma I was worthy of a pay increase. He said, ‘You’ve got the piece of paper but you’ve been away for two years and have you learned anything in the meantime?’

“I told him I was much smarter now and he responded in typical fashion: ‘that remains to be seen!’”

But someone else did think Laurie’s “bit of paper” from his two years of university studies was worth something – he applied for a classing job with Williams & Kettle at Napier, and got it, much to Noel’s consternation: ‘How much are they going to pay you? I will match it.’ And match it he did, so Laurie stayed in Palmerston North. “But he still docked my wages for the day I was being interviewed in Napier!”

The years roll by and Laurie notes with some satisfaction that many of the people who are today prominent in the wool industry have passed through the wool courses run by (and later) from Massey University. That early business grounding he gained with Noel Beder all those years ago (“it was an important part of the job to have a few beers with clients on Friday afternoon after the stock sales because it pretty much gave you your next week’s work”) has stood him in good stead.

“Noel was a hard man but fair in his own way and insisted on things being done the right way. Tectra’s Certificate in Wool Technology course mirrors that philosophy, with emphasis on high quality standards right through the clip preparation process from sheep to finished product.”

(See Tectra advert page 21 for further information.)



“How did that go for you, Bro’? Yeah, I’m not sure - could have been a bit faster and cleaner I suppose.” Napier brothers Christopher and Joseph Kyle ponder their chances of making the Golden Shears Top 30 after shearing side by side in one of the early qualifying heats. Next year, guys!



Golden Shears ambassadors Tom Brough and Margie Baynes give motor-cycling legend Aaron Slight (MNZM) a guided tour of Masterton’s iconic annual event. Born and raised locally, Aaron was based at Monaco during the 1990s while competing with huge success on the world professional circuit, and has been back in the Wairarapa these past few years.

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South of Scotland shearing competition committee: Back left: Jamie Murdoch (chairman), Davie McCulloch, Richard Nixon (Vice-chair), Bruce Gallacher, Geordie Mair, Billy Graham, Alan Kennedy, Lewis Harkness, George Brough, David Aitken and Andrew Marchant. Front left: George Bell, June Stewart (treasurer), Russell Marchant and Herbie Kennedy (retired from committee.) Absent: Eilidh Macpherson (secretary)

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## Rudds reunites with Africans

Ian Rutherford returned to South Africa recently to attend the national championships and managed to catch up with old friends from his shearer training team who gave what he calls such wonderful service to the South African wool industry during the years from 1980 to 1998.

Pictured below from left are Elliot Ntsombo, Elliot Nyatsa, Rudds, Seuntjie (who looked after the administration for the training scheme) and Klass.

"These men, together with Allan Reid and Kleinjan Malgas (both now deceased) took shearing in South Africa from an unskilled and low productivity industry to the stage where the Africans are recognised internationally.

"Elliot Ntsombo, I regard as one of

the all-time great blade shearers with five world titles to his credit and he is still going strong, evidenced by his second placing at the recent SA Nationals in Bloemfontein.

"Elliot Nyatsa was the first instructor I employed and has only just retired at the age of 70 years. Klaas won the South African blade championship in 1985 and 1986 and subsequently became a top instructor. Kleinjan won the South African machine championship twice in the 1980s and both he and Klaas were expert trainers with blades and machines.

"This trip brought back so many memories of my time working with these men as they were such good friends and work colleagues and it was great to see the work they started being carried on."



## One for the Blokes

Mark was walking down the street when he was accosted by a particularly dirty and shabby-looking man who asked him for a couple of dollars so he could buy some dinner.

Mark took out his wallet, extracted a twenty-dollar note and asked, 'If I give you this money, will you buy some beer with it instead?'

"No, I had to stop drinking years ago because I couldn't afford it," the homeless man replied.

'Will you use it to go fishing instead of buying food?'

"No, I don't waste my time fishing. It's as much as I can do spending all my time just trying to stay alive."

'If I give you this money will you spend it on duck hunting, instead of on food?' Mark asked.

"Are you completely nuts?" replied the homeless man. "I have no money, I haven't hunted in 20 years."

'Well, in that case,' said Mark, 'I'm not going to give you money. Instead I'm going to take you home for a shower and a terrific meal cooked by my wife, Karen.'

The homeless man was astounded. "But won't your wife be furious with you for doing that?"

Mark replied, 'That's quite okay. It's important for Karen to see what a man looks like after he has given up drinking, hunting and fishing.'

\*\*\*\*\*

(Well, that was a bit one-sided, even if we did find it in a fishing/outdoors magazine. We're happy to offer a lifetime subscription to *Shearing* for the best "woman's" response received in time for publishing in the November 2012 magazine. Ed.)

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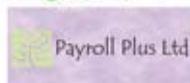
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# Shearing korero on Facebook

By Marg Forde

When shearing industry members take a break the banter distinctive to the industry is inevitably triggered. The unique korero shared when wool harvesters cease toiling can reliably be heard in such time-honoured settings as shearing sheds and quarters, pubs, backyard bbqs, around kitchen tables, at shearing sports after-match functions and even in airport lounges. And in the past 15 months, a new location for the banter has quietly slipped into the mix.

Beau Guelfi's Facebook group *shearingworldwide*, which recently cracked 3000 members, is capturing the appeal of social networking for an ever-growing audience of people with global woolharvesting connections.

In April 2011 Beau, a Gisborne-based West Australian shearer who has also worked in Europe, began a Facebook group that he thought would be useful to those like him who were interested in speedshears and shearing sports. Quickly, Beau realised the wider potential. He changed the group's name to *shearingworldwide* and thus achieved the aim of broadening the reach to all in the industry, not just those competing.

As it grows, Beau admits, the group is "taking on a life of it's own", but that doesn't surprise him. Already well-versed in social networking, Beau first established the group last year by inviting some of his own Facebook friends. He has over 1000 of them, so acknowledges a semblance of a group



Former world record holder Beau Guelfi brings shearing news to Facebook.

was already informally in place when he set up the group that was to become *shearingworldwide*.

Beau is keen on technology and keeps in touch with his family and friends via the internet on his trusty iPhone as he travels and works in Australia and New Zealand. Administering the site is "only a little bit of a hobby", he says, making money from it is "not something I've really thought about."

Content includes news and opinion items related to shearing that Beau sources from an internet feed, and the comments of group members on a range of industry-related subjects and people. Beau likes that the group is also proving useful for connecting people seeking work with those offering it. And he appreciates when

group members share some of their history or funny stories.

Sometimes he is out of cellphone range when working but he is relaxed about monitoring the group. "I hope people enjoy it for what it is, not too serious, but also keeping it real," says Beau. He likes to "let the conversation run" but does delete some comments, and unacceptable conduct results in blocked membership.

Most of all, Beau says, he wants *shearingworldwide* to be a place where shearing folk can share a yarn, have a joke and some fun, glean some useful information, provide support in tough times and let people enjoy each other's company. In other words, an extension of the conversations common to cut-outs, a quiet night in at the shearing quarters, a big night out at the pub or amongst anyone who has ever experienced sitting around waiting for sheep to dry.

*Shearingworldwide* is a Facebook 'open group' which means anyone with a Facebook account can see what is being posted, but only members who have been added by other members and approved by the administrator can contribute to the group.

The name is a nod of acknowledgement to the established website [www.shearingworld.com](http://www.shearingworld.com) which Beau has long appreciated for its wealth of accurate industry information. In turn, *shearingworldwide* has received some flattering imitation.

Another recent industry-related Facebook group, *woolhandlingworldwide*, is also active and growing with nearly 900 members at the time of writing. But nothing to do with Beau.



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## Heiniger News 4 Ewes

In this edition of News For Ewes we summarise the recent visit to the United Kingdom by Johnny Kirkpatrick and Nathan Stratford. This trip was part of the prizes they won for their efforts at the New Zealand championships earlier in the year, when Johnny won the open title and Nathan won the NZ Shears Circuit. They headed off to the UK to compete in some of the shearing competitions being held over June /July.

Their travels began in Scotland with the Royal Highland Show at Edinburgh on 24 June. This brought immediate success for Johnny who won the open event, with Nathan coming in 3rd. They also competed in a test match against Scotland which they were successful in winning by 88.32 penalty points to Scotland's 90.0. From here they travelled north to Lochearnhead for the next event the following weekend. Again Johnny was successful in winning the open, with Nathan not able to make the final. There was another test here and this time NZ (89.9 penalties) lost to Scotland (88.4).

It was now time to travel down to the Lakes District in England for the Lakeland Shears. With competition being a little stronger the results were Johnny 2nd and Nathan 5th in the open event. The next venue was to be the Great Yorkshire Shears at Harrogate, but owing to adverse weather over a three-week period the ground was unusable so the event was cancelled.

Next the team journeyed to Northern Ireland for the Rickamore Show which is a fund raiser for the Cancer Society. Johnny was again successful in winning the open event with Nathan coming in 5th. The pair then accounted for the Ulster team by 82.083 penalties to 84.8.

Then it was off to Wales to the Cothi Shears (20 July). Another win for Johnny and another 5th for Nathan. They were also the winners of the first test with Wales (103.6 to 111.65). Next day it was the Lampeter Show, with Johnny having another win and Nathan again 5th, and a win to Wales in the second test.

It was now time to re-enter England to and go to Devon where they met up with another New Zealand shearer, Matt Smith, for a few days work. After this short break it was back into Wales for the Royal Welsh Show on 25 July. Johnny managed a second with Nathan again taking 5th place, which was looking like his lucky number for the tour. Another test with the Welsh and a win for the boys. The manager of the team (Willie Buick) entered into the Veterans section the next day and won his age division. Then they travelled to Corwen for the tour-ender. Here, Nathan was at last able to shake off his run of fives to score a memorable victory in the Corwen Lamb Shears final. Johnny had to settle for 2nd in this event and unfortunately they lost the Corwen test by a four-point margin to Gareth Daniel and Richard Jones.

It was a six-week trip for the boys from NZ with mixed results for both. It was about even in the overall test results. Heiniger New Zealand is proud to be associated with all the quality shearers from NZ and congratulate Nathan and Johnny on their successes during their visit to the UK. It was a long time away from families and friends but it appears they had a good time while away.

## Joel now ready for Tyson

*By Tom Harding*

Stepping into the ring with Tyson had seemed like a good idea at the time. Right up until the first bell that was, when the punches started raining in and that "What the hell have I got myself into here" feeling descended like fog.

That was pretty much how Joel Barton looked and felt during the first run of his attempt to break the British Isles nine-hour lamb shearing record on 4 August 2012 at his uncle's farm, near Ashford in Kent.

The 26 year-old Englishman heroically slugged it out for the full twelve rounds however to successfully set a new record of 537.

With the greatest of respect for the huge record tallies that are regularly posted in New Zealand, it should be remembered that due to the size of farms in the UK, finding enough suitable lambs in one place made the prospect of beating the existing record of 521 more of a challenge than it might initially sound.

Having to source the Romney ewe lambs from two farms just to get enough on which to attempt the record left no room for drafting. He had to shear what was there, and despite being good, well-farmed sheep, they weren't ideal for a tally, especially the mob he started on at 5am. As Welsh open shearer Owen Morgan put it at 3am that morning, "He's a brave man."

"I didn't have a clue what I was getting myself in for – I think no-one does before they do a record," Joel said.

"To be honest that first run was almost a disaster for me – my whole arms started cramping up – so to come back from that I'm really happy I recovered."

New Zealander Chris Brears received a huge applause from the crowd when Joel thanked him for flying over especially to be his right-hand man. Joel also said he was overwhelmed by the support he received from family, friends and the shearing fraternity.

Joel's big day was sponsored by Dave Gillett of Highway Shearing and Heiniger supplied gear and equipment.



*Joel Barton on the way to a new UK lamb record*

# Drinking and not thinking

By Peter Taylor

Enough is enough. Not thinking plus rural roads equals a pointless loss of life. Recent media has highlighted a spate of fatal drink-drive road crashes in rural New Zealand.

The rural roads issue is wider than the shearing industry; industry leaders acknowledge there is a problem and that many shearing employers need to improve the way they manage their staff on the roads.

Farmers also have responsibilities. They need to check that shearing contractors have health and safety systems in their business, and if they hire individual shearers (open shed) they are fully responsible to ensure that Health & Safety systems are set up and working.

Some shearing contractors provide good vehicles that meet legal requirements, have driving policies, ensure that drivers are experienced and correctly licensed, and even provide driver training. A few have gone even further and introduced breathalyser testing.

There are many others that don't have these kinds of systems set up and working. But their shearing teams still have to deal with early starts, icy roads during the cold season and fatigue after long hard days. Add the alcohol culture in the shearing industry, long distances and difficult roads, and you have a recipe for disaster.

Our shearers and woolhandlers are world class and we need to be world class about keeping people safe on rural roads. We therefore challenge everyone who hires a shearing team to:

- Make sure clear policies on vehicles, drivers, alcohol, and host responsibility are set up, and working. They're essential.
- Adopt a zero tolerance to the driver having any alcohol on or after the job. If farmers like to show appreciation for good work please provide non-alcoholic drinks as well, and even some food to go with it.

- Get a copy of the new *Best Practice Guideline for Travel in the New Zealand Wool Harvesting Industry*, and use it.

The New Zealand Shearing Industry Health & Safety Committee, the NZ Shearing Contractors' Association, NZ Police, ACC and the Department of Labour will promote the *Best Practice Guideline for Travel in the New Zealand Wool Harvesting Industry*. The guideline is available online at [www.shearsmart.co.nz](http://www.shearsmart.co.nz).

These groups are also working together within rural communities to find ways to help prevent further accidents.



*Country roads: Who knows what is over the hill or just around the corner? Drive according to what you can see in front of you and stay hard left at all times. If a young driver had complied with those rules on a Taranaki backroad in late February, Toko's Debra Avery would not now be facing a lifetime of rehabilitation from horrendous injuries received when she became the innocent victim of a head on smash, on a road that both she and the other driver knew like the proverbial backs of their hands.*

*Wife of champion shearer/farmer Paul Avery and mother of David, Johanna and Sarah, Debra was on her way to a school gala just a few kilometres from her farm gate when the crash occurred. Drink was not a factor in the late afternoon crash, but the fact Debra lived to tell the tale, with multiple and compound bone fractures including her right thigh broken in seven places, is enough to make one believe in miracles. Country roads. Death traps lurking!*

## Utiku Shearing 2007 Ltd Taihape

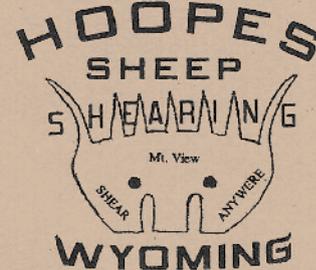


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## New Masters

Two shearers and one woolhandler were accorded Master status at the annual meeting of Shearing Sports New Zealand in Auckland earlier this month. The acclaiming of Dion King and Cam Ferguson takes to 62 the number awarded Master Shearer status since the honour was first bestowed 37 years ago. Keryn Herbert becomes the 21st Master Woolhandler.

The 37-year-old King, from Flaxmere, near Hastings, won both the Golden Shears Open and PGG Wrightson National finals in the biggest night of his career in 2006. An open-class shearer since 2001, his 40 wins include two North Island Shearer of the Year titles, the Otago and Southern Shears titles, and victories in the UK and Canada. He also holds the world nine-hour lamb shearing record with a tally of 866 shorn in January 2007.

Ferguson, from Waipawa and at 29 one of the youngest to achieve the honour, has won just 20 finals since entering the open class in 2004, but they include the Golden Shears Open at Masterton in 2010 and individual and teams titles at the world championships in Wales later that year, and a second teams title this year in Masterton, where he was runner-up in his bids to repeat the treble. He also held the eight-hour lamb record for 12 months, with a tally of 742 shorn in 2011.

Herbert, 33, from Te Awamutu but based in the King Country, has been competing since 1999, claiming 21 wins, including two South Island Circuit titles and one North Island Circuit title. In 2008 she won a world teams title in Wales with individual champion Sheree Alabaster, and she has headed Shearing Sports New Zealand's Open woolhandling rankings for the past two seasons.

Shearing Sports Master status was created by the National Shearing Committee in 1975 when it was conferred on 28 shearers at the Golden Shears in Masterton. They included brother legends Godfrey and Ivan Bowen and six-times Golden Shears champion Brian 'Snow' Quinn.

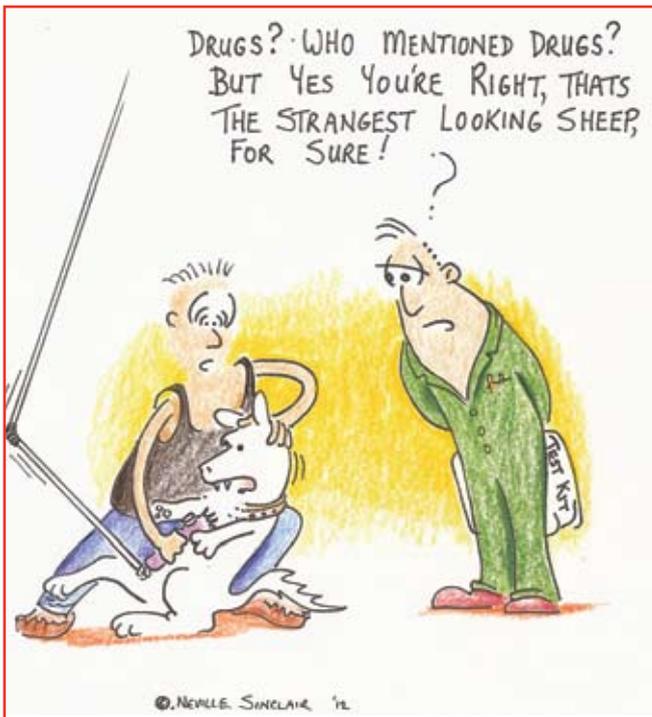
*(Doug Laing)*



Family Affair: Australian woolhandling representative Rachael Hutchison, together with partner Nick Denniss, Australian blade-shearing representative and their two children Conrad and Maverick, spent the month prior to the world championships (held in March) travelling around New Zealand, working and competing in preparation for their respective world events. They also managed to fit in a bit of sightseeing along the way.

Conrad and Maverick were a couple of hard case boys who are now well and truly engrained into the shearing sport family in this country. With their cheeky grins they made many friends and their seemingly endless energy during their visit certainly kept everyone on their toes!

Rachael, who models her competitive style on that of Joanne Kumeroa, has been the Australian wool handling champion for the past three years and is a name to watch out for in the future. *(Barbara Newton)*



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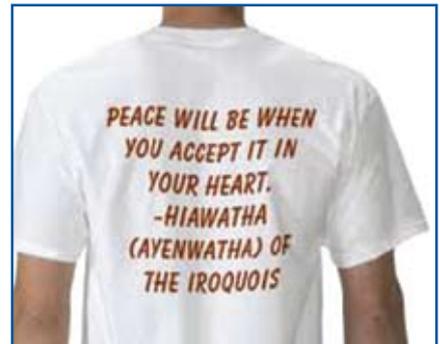
Above: No problems with the toilets at this shed; separate cubicles for his and hers, wash basins, hot-air hand driers. Actually, Pip Edgerton's artwork on the "public conveniences" at Tuatapere, that go-ahead little town in western Southland, near the start of the Hump Ridge Track. Below: resident woolhandlers at Lochearnhead Shears (a go-ahead little place in Scotland); back left: Una Cameron, Shun Oishi, Leanne Bertram, Kirsty Donald (kneeling). Front: Stacey Mundell, Helga Sinclair and Emily Te Kapa.



## Another 20, No Prob!

Ken Pike has probably lost count of the number of times he travelled to the United States for shearing. He made his first trip in 1971, to Idaho, and apart from a couple of seasons in Wyoming and four in Colorado, worked mainly for contractor Vern Fairchild at Buhl, Idaho.

But there was a season when the legal paperwork with passports, work permits and visas wasn't quite in order and Ken, with several others, found himself in the holding cells, a guest of the United States Government.



Interesting quote, but clearly not the same Hiawatha that Ken Pike knew!

"There were about 24 of us in there all together, including six shearers and an American Indian guy the others called 'Hiawatha'. One young guy started moaning and groaning and complaining and said that his Dad was a lawyer, and would play merry hell with officials once he found out about the plight his boy was in.

"Finally, Hiawatha decided he'd had enough of the ranting and raving. He looked the boy in the eye and said, 'Sonny I've just done 20 years for killing a man. I don't mind doing another 20 years!'"

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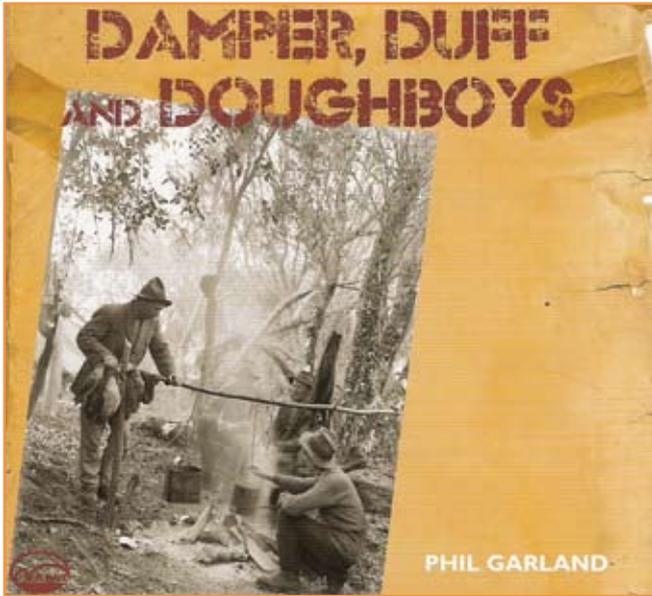
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While our photo opposite takes us back at least as far as 1975, Phil Garland's latest anthology of New Zealand music (*Damper Duff and Doughboys*) recounts stories from 150 years ago, in that inimitable style that makes Phil New Zealand's number one history teacher. And far from the "boring" history that you may recall from your own school days, these stories come alive as the exploits of our pioneers are told in song and rhyme.

*"The majority of these songs refer to that time in our past when the universal catchphrase of "The land beyond the cities is where the real New Zealand lies" was very real and quite commonplace," Phil says.*

*"Almost without exception these songs are rooted in the rural heartland of this country, particularly when miners, shearers, swaggers, musterers, station-hands, stockmen, bullockies, gumdiggers and men of that ilk found relaxation seated around the evening campfire, swapping yarns and stories ..."*

Order online at [www.philgarland.co.nz](http://www.philgarland.co.nz) . Tell Phil you read about it in *Shearing* magazine, he might give you a little discount!



Were you there at Tangihau Station on this day, 29 November 1975? Our historic revisit to "Poronui's Big Day Out" (Eddie Reidy's gang) in the April 2012 edition raised questions from readers about the previous record, where it was set and who was involved. *Shearing* has ascertained that the previous 10-stand tally of 4981 was set at Tangihau Station (Gisborne area) and that Larry Lewis, with 593, led the tally board that day. Is there a reader out there who can tell us more about that day? The above photo records some of the action in the shed and may prompt a few memories. Let us know what you know and we'll piece together a story of an important day in shearing history.

Wide-combing it with ... © Last Side Publishing 2012

*With a name like Ostapchuk she was always going to toss that big metal ball a lot further than Valerie, eh.*

*Oh yeah no, definitely!*

Buck Naked .... and .... Doug Deep

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## Letter to a Mate

Things are kind of different mate I should have wrote before  
It's not that I've forgotten you or stations where we shored  
It's Snowy Peak and Shadow Creek, Pisa and Mt Domett  
Side by side and blow for blow, how could a mate forget?

I heard you laid your handpiece down and gave your stand away  
To work upon a dairy farm down South Otago way  
But I can only give a guess just how your heart was turned  
You always were an easy mark where women were concerned

But I'm still shearing for a cheque out on the tourist track  
I shear a handful twice a day (it's easy on the back)  
The big coaches come gliding in, the tourists come and go  
I'm rouseabout and compere too, a one man shearing show

They come from all around the globe all sorts and types I've met  
The only sheep they've ever seen was on their TV set  
I don't shear rams or wethers though, hard to explain to some  
And all my mobs are well crutched, no dags about the bum

I'm dressed up to the nines of course, no whiskers grease or dust  
Not like the days when we were mates out shearing for a crust  
I talk them through each sheep I shear, put on a good display  
The only thing that's missing is Sheep-O! and Wool-away!

I show them how to pick up fleece – to skirt and roll the wool  
I place it in the For Sale bins ready for the spinner's spool  
They love to feel the warm soft wool straight off the old ewe's hide  
Good Kiwi wool best in the world, I tell them this with pride

There's Yanks, Poms, Tim Dotcoms, you don't know who you'll get  
I'm googled, filmed and twittered mate, across the internet  
There are Aussies from their eastern coast, saltwater in their veins  
Who've never seen a shearing shed out on the western plains

But we knew inland Aussie 'guns', remember Snow and Blue?  
They cut out the shed at Silent Peak along with me and you  
Merino sheep from off the hill, wrinkled and very spry  
That night along Shortcut Road we drank the Speight's pub dry

But now it's time to wash my board and marvel how that I  
Without a Passport or the fare can watch the world pass by  
All cultures and all customs, some rowdy and some shy  
Those curvy little Asian girls are easy on the eye

And so I sharpen up my gear and drink my home made wine  
And from the contents of this note you'll see I'm doing fine  
I toast that there will always be a well heeled tourist mob  
So I won't have to go down south to find myself a job

© Blue Jeans 2012

*Definition: Political correctness is a doctrine fostered by a delusional, illogical minority and rapidly promoted by an unscrupulous mainstream media which holds forth the proposition that it is entirely possible to pick up a piece of shit by the clean end. (Anon)*

## Lister's New Nexus Pro

Visitors to the New Zealand Shearing Champs and Golden Shears this year, would have found it hard not to notice the new Lister Nexus Pro Shearing machines. With their distinctive orange and black colour scheme and impressive work rate, the latest model Nexus has definitely made a positive impression, Lynley Waddell reports.

Especially released for those two prestigious events, they are now available for sale in New Zealand and have all the proven characteristics of the previous Nexus machine plus some great new features.

The overall construction is solid yet lightweight which is perfect for easy transportation. All Nexus Pro machines are supplied with a robust support foot at the bottom of the motor housing, an advantage for those utilising the machine's portability. The foot protects the base of the machine from knocks and wear.

With a new durable 1-horse power motor, the most powerful in its class, the Pro delivers more power than ever and is suitable for all conditions in all types of wool. Additionally, the Nexus Pro is very quiet which reduces shearing shed noise and is a big bonus for shearing competitions.

A new quick-release downtube ensures efficient set-up, takes the guess work out of parts placement and minimises the use of tools.

All Nexus Pro machines are manufactured in England and are supplied complete with an Electronic Current Sensor to protect the user and avoid a lock-up by automatically stopping the machine if the handpiece hits an obstruction in the wool.

The machine is distributed in New Zealand by Acto Agriculture and sold through all leading farm merchandise stores. (See page 37)

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# Australia loses all-time great

By Des Williams and Bernie Walker

Former Golden Shears world champion Mark Conlan died at Bendigo, Victoria, on Sunday 24 June 2012. Widely regarded as one of the greatest shearers Australia has ever produced, Mark won his world title at the Perth Royal Show in 1986. He also won the Australian Golden Shears title in four successive years, from 1981-1984 and the Australian open championship in 1981.

In achieving his win at Perth, Mark had to radically adjust his style, changing from the narrow gear with which he learnt to shear, to the then recently-introduced wide combs. That he was able to do so with such success just underlined his mastery of the handpiece.



*Australian shearing great Mark Conlan competing at Warrnambool in 2002 - still footing it with the best at age 49. Inset: Mark, mid-eighties version when he was at the height of his career. (Bernie Walker photo)*

Former Euroa Shearing Association chairman and Golden Shears World Council life member Bernie Walker, described Mark as the outstanding Australian shearer of the 1980s and almost certainly the best all-round shearer in the world at that time.

“Mark’s competition career was unfortunately disrupted, and his opportunities for further success limited by an Australian Workers’ Union ban imposed on him and other shearers from Eastern states after those world championships at Perth. But Mark was a true champion in every respect. In response to the ban [which also targeted his brother John Conlan and David “Daffy” Ryan, both

Australian champions] Mark just said, ‘They can ban me if they like but they can’t take away my world title.’”

To win his world crown, Mark had to first gain selection for Australia by winning the West Australian championship the previous day. Then in the final he faced a couple of accomplished Kiwis, Rick Pivac and David Fagan; John Davies, George Bayne and Alan Derryman from the UK countries, and a pen of sheep comprising 10 merinos and 10 corriedales. The corriedales were included, Mark recalled a decade later (in *Top Class Woolcutters*), to even up the chances of other competing countries. In the forthright style that defined the champion, Mark clearly disagreed with such a major concession.

*“There shouldn’t have been corriedales in it at any stage. It was done to try and make the final more suitable for other countries competing. It was the first time more than one breed had been used in a final. When you go to New Zealand they give nothing away at all.*

*If I ever had anything to do with running a world championship in Australia, it would be 20 merino wethers and no arguments, because that’s the sort of sheep we have to shear. It’s different for trans-Tasman tests and the like where you are trying to make it fair for both teams – we’re talking about the individual world title.”*

The strength of mind required to win a world championship was further illustrated a year later when Mark, John Conlan and David Ryan defied their “ban” and competed in what would be Australia’s first non-union competition, at Beaufort, Victoria.

The then Beaufort Agricultural Society Shearing Committee Chairman and Victorian Farmers’ Federation member, Peter Oddie, recalls how Mark had indicated a willingness to defy the union ban and the Beaufort committee decided to support him.

“We defied the ban because we felt that requiring all entrants to be union members was wrong because our venue was not a shearing work place and thus the AWU had no right to stop the Conlans and Ryan from shearing. We are proud that our action that day was the start of professional shearing competitions that are run as a sport for the betterment of shearing and woolhandling, without any union interference.” (To page 35)

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(From page 34)

And Mark Conlan in 1996 had spoken of his memories from that day (again, from *Top Class Woolcutters*:

*"We shore under police protection and unionists threw coke cans full of water at the shearers and judges. The situation was bloody frightening, I can tell you. Three Melbourne television stations turned up to film the action and, afterwards, we were escorted out of Beaufort by the police, with about 300 angry shearers behind us. The police took us as far as Ballarat."* [50km].

And that episode, as Mark recalled, was the first step towards what grew to be more than 60 open shearing competitions held annually in Australia (and, ultimately, it led to the formation of Sports Shear Australia).

Mark began competition shearing in 1979 and a year later was representing Australia for the first time in a test match, at Euroa. There (1980) he was able to defeat the reigning world champion Brian 'Snow' Quinn for the best individual score. Mark shore in seven trans-Tasman Tests, alternating between Golden Shears Australia at Euroa and Masterton, achieving the best individual score on three occasions.

His brother John Conlan (the pair represented Australia at the 1984 world championships in England) considered Mark to be all but invincible at this time, recalling that "he'd won about 30 competitions in a row at one stage."

Mark also won the South African open championship in 1990, while his best result in New Zealand came at the New Zealand Merino Shears/world

fine wool championships at Alexandra in September 1993, when he finished second to Mana Te Whata.

Mark and John Conlan for several years ran a successful contract shearing business from Kyneton, employing about 50 people at the seasonal peak. Later, Mark and his wife Joanne bought the 2000-acre "Tumbywood" property at Elmore, and were soon regularly topping the Bendigo markets with prime lambs, and they also produced the heaviest bullock ever weighed at the local meatworks.

Diagnosed with cancer about 18 months ago, Mark is survived by Joanne and their daughters Stacey, Jessica and Sophie. A memorial service for Mark was held at Taradale (Vic) on 30 June 2012.

## Swampy at the helm

National shearing industry training leader and Canterbury businessman Gavin 'Swampy' Rowland of Rakaia is the new chairman of Shearing Sports New Zealand. He replaces John Fagan of Waihi, who has stepped aside after nine years in the role.

Gavin has been in the shearing industry for more than 35 years, from shearer through to owner and director of national training organisation, Tectra. He has been a competition shearer with "some success," representing the South Island and was one of a trio who set a three-stand world record of 1593 ewes in nine hours in 1989. He has also been a shearing competition judge, and for over 20 years has served on the committee of the Canterbury Shears, which stages the New Zealand Corriedale championships at Christchurch.

A major career highlight came in 2008 when he managed the New Zealand team to the 14th Golden Shears world championships Norway, returning with four titles – the individual and teams honours in both machine shearing and woolhandling.

Gavin Rowland said he wants to carry on from the legacy John Fagan had given the sports and the industry, working closely with competitions around the country and encouraging more competitors into the action.

He will be encouraging show committees to provide value for sponsors who contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars to competitions throughout the country on an annual basis. Maintaining strong links with Australia and the United Kingdom will also be a priority. (*Doug Laing*)

### Mike Bool Shearing

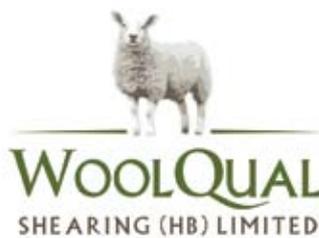
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## Time to start reading ... (Book review)

By Des Williams

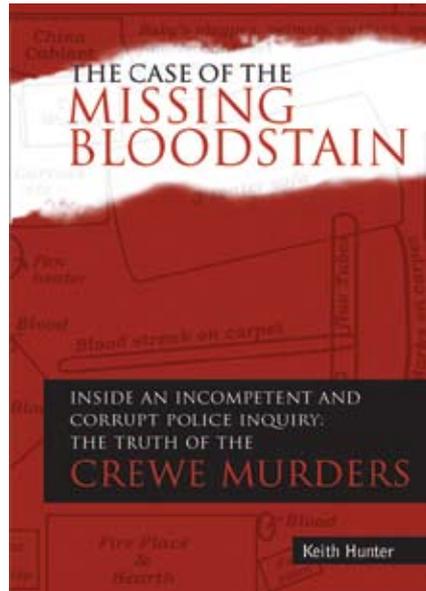
This young bloke was enjoying a country sports day many years ago with his father, when they met an old timer who had spent his whole life on the land, converting bush to pasture and farming sheep.

The father greeted the old timer as good friends do, and then told him his son had recently written a book that he might be interested in reading. The latter's response, somewhat unexpected, was that he had never read a book in his life, and he wasn't about to start now!

Even if you, like that farmer, have never read a book in your life, it's not too late to start and you could do worse than begin with a recent publication entitled *The Case of the Missing Bloodstain*. Especially if you are "old timer" enough to remember the Crewe murders at Pukekawa, during the winter of 1970.

You may well recall the bare facts: farming couple Jeannette and Harvey Crewe murdered in their own home, crime scene discovered five days later, 18-month-old child alive and well in cot, Jeannette's father (Len Demler) the "popular suspect" for weeks until the two bodies were found, four weeks apart, floating in the Waikato River.

Within a short time of the second body discovery, the name Arthur Allan Thomas is added to New Zealand's list of most infamous; two trials, many appeals, several books, Arthur nearly a decade behind bars until a Government-appointed Queen's



Counsel investigation resulted in a pardon for Thomas by the Robert Muldoon government in late 1979.

You may also recall that a subsequent Royal Commission of Inquiry found police officers involved in the investigation guilty of planting a .22 shell case in the Crewe garden, manufactured evidence used against Thomas even though his rifle was merely one that "could not be discounted" from the inquiry. Science later proved the shell had distinctions that meant it could not possibly have contained the lead found in the victims' bodies.

No one else was ever brought to trial. So if Arthur didn't do it, who did? Was it murder/suicide as many believed at first, with Len Demler responsible for removing and disposing of the bodies? Was it Len himself? (He died in 1992.) Or was it maybe the neighbouring lad who had some history of wandering the countryside at night with a .22 rifle?

At least half a dozen well-researched books have been written about this, New Zealand's major unsolved murder mystery. All have made sound arguments in one direction or another, but all have left questions remaining in the minds of discerning readers.

Until now. Auckland author Keith Hunter leaves no boxes unticked in *The Case of the Missing Bloodstain*, published in April 2012. He requires no surmising or false evidence to

reach the conclusions in his book, instead relying on information that has been available right from the start of the police investigations that led them eventually, erroneously and in parts corruptly to the door of Arthur Allan Thomas.

The book reads in parts like a crime novel, but Hunter's investigations and conclusions are compelling. The crime has finally been solved according to evidence that has always been available but incorrectly interpreted and truth really can be stranger than fiction.

This book should be compulsory reading for every New Zealander concerned with truth and justice. There is still one major strike for justice that could be made, even 42 years after the event. But I don't want to spoil your own reading ...

By the way, if you are wondering if this book has anything to do with sheep, shearing and the wool industry, the connections are tenuous. The Crewes were sheep farmers and Hunter jokes that he has been known to wear woollen socks, but the main connection is this: The wool that has been pulled over the eyes of jurors, defence lawyers, Appeal judges and the New Zealand public for the past 42 years can finally be lifted away and the truth revealed.

You should find this book available in "good book stores" or you can obtain copy from the author: ([www.hunterproductions.co.nz](http://www.hunterproductions.co.nz); \$37.99 plus \$4.00 postage).



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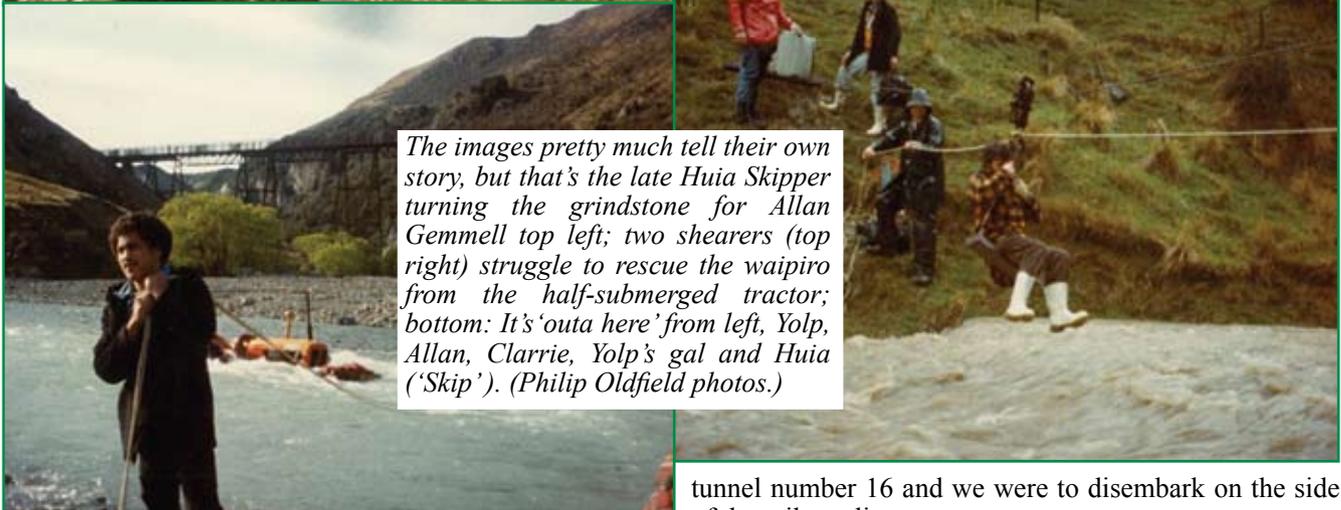
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## Avoca 1983



*The images pretty much tell their own story, but that's the late Huia Skipper turning the grindstone for Allan Gemmell top left; two shearers (top right) struggle to rescue the waipiro from the half-submerged tractor; bottom: It's 'outa here' from left, Yolp, Allan, Clarrie, Yolp's gal and Huia ('Skip'). (Philip Oldfield photos.)*



tunnel number 16 and we were to disembark on the side of the railway lines.

"Then followed a 500-metre walk down a bull-dozed track, through a small stream and across a wire suspension bridge to the shearers' quarters. A generator supplied the electricity to the homestead but lighting in the quarters was by candles and heating was an open fire.

"That year as our gear was being brought across the river, the tractor became stuck and our gear was carried the rest of the way to the bank by hand. Later we managed to pull the tractor to dry land with a wire strainer, but it wouldn't start so was left on the shingle bank.

"Late on the last day it began to rain. The remaining sheep, a few of them with kea damage, were under cover so we shored on and finished them. We were to catch the train out later the next day and were all lying in bed the next morning when the farmer came over and told us to get up. We would need to make a flying fox, he said, as the small stream we had crossed on the way in was now a raging torrent and someone would need to climb up a scrubby ridge and cross the train bridge to the other side to attach a rope.

"Clarrie Gilmore volunteered and the means of escape was constructed. We waved the train down and rode back to Springfield soaking wet, but pleased to be out.

The tractor we had rescued four days earlier was nowhere to be seen and was never recovered, such was the force of the flood."

It's nigh on 30 years ago but Geraldine-based blade shearer Philip Oldfield still has clear memories of shearing at Avoca in 1983. He was accompanied by Allan Gemmell and Clarrie Gilmore with the blades; Huia Skipper from Kaiapoi did the woolhandling and a bloke named Yolp (Phil thinks) classed the clip for the 1000 or so full-wooled merinos on the station.

"Just getting to Avoca was an interesting experience," Phil recalls. "It involved a train trip from Springfield in towards Arthurs Pass. The train driver was told to stop at

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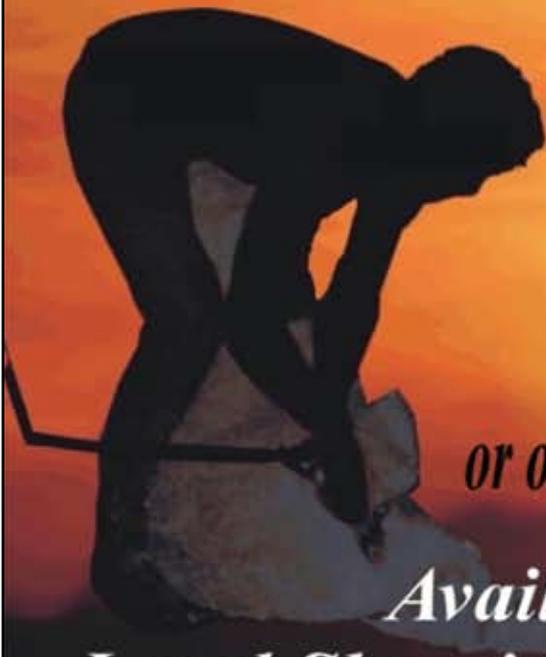
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