

Shearing

Promoting our industry, sport and people

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Bay of Plenty shearer Tony Hodge (left) had a special thrill during the UK season when he met England's cricket captain, Alastair Cook. The left-handed bat used the 'right' hand to remove the wool from this sheep but will probably not be changing his 'sport' any time soon! See Cover story page 5.



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Shearing

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UNDER COVER STORY

Welcome to this third and last edition of our magazine for 2012, completing our 28th year of publication. Perhaps one of the real highlights of the passing year came earlier this month with the visit to New Zealand by the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall (aka Charles and Camilla).

While a Royal visit would not normally spike so high on the radar of a shearing publication, let me remind you that HRH Prince Charles is Patron of the Campaign for Wool. In that context, the importance of his visit must not be under-estimated. What price could you put on having a world renown and instantly recognisable figure proudly wearing his suit made from pure New Zealand wool?

New Zealand Shearing Contractors' Association president Barry Pullin was among a select group of about 20 wool industry leaders who met with Prince Charles at the Shear Brilliance showcase in Auckland (see story page 22). Even in just a few minutes of one-on-one conversation, the Prince's knowledge of wool and its importance as a sustainable, renewable and natural fibre became clearly evident, Barry says.

"You could tell by his body language, animation and passion that he is taking his role as Patron of the Campaign for Wool very seriously indeed. I don't mind admitting that I was just blown away by the depth of his knowledge and by the questions he was asking. The Campaign will prosper as long as he is involved."

Best wishes all, see you in 2013, wearing wool!

Ka kite ano

Des Williams (editor)

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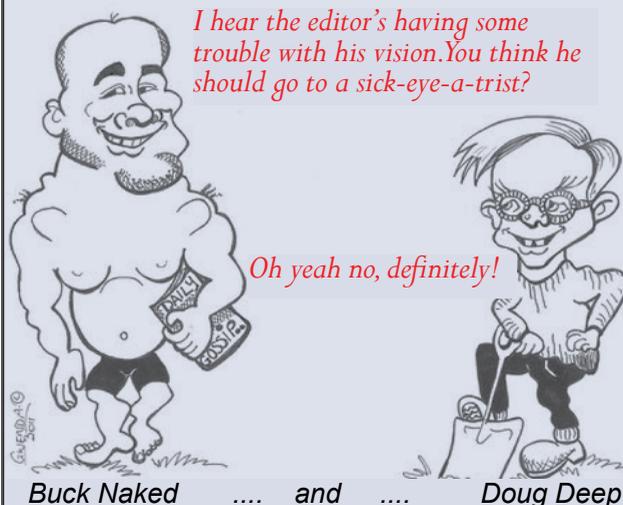
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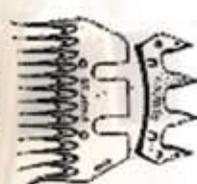


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Aussie Boyle wins Alex again

By Doug Laing (Shearing Sports NZ)
Australian Damien Boyle won the New Zealand Merino Fine Wool shearing championship for the third year in a row as the Shearing Sports New Zealand season opened in Alexandra on Saturday 6 October.

He beat runner-up Chris Vickers of Palmerston by almost seven points, with another seven points back to third place-getter, Tony Coster of Rakaia. Charlie O'Neill, who was first to finish, had to settle for fifth place overall. He shored his 12 sheep in 24min 26.05sec, heading next-man-off Boyle by over five seconds, but it was almost a minute-and-a-half slower than Boyle's time last year.

Fourth was Mossburn contractor Mana Te Whata, the most successful shearer in the 51 years of the event with six wins (1987-90, 1993 and 1995), and sixth was Invercargill shearer Nathan Stratford, whose 2009 win was the last by a New Zealander.

The result for Vickers was probably the best of his career, winning him a black singlet for the first test in the home-and-away trans-tasman series during the Romney Shears at Warrnambool (end of October).

World woolhandling champion Joel Henare, of Gisborne and back in the country after a stint in Australia, won his first New Zealand Fine Wool open title, after finishing second twice



Matura-based senior shearer Brett Roberts added the New Zealand Fine Wool title to his growing collection.

previously, and Cushla Abraham, of Masterton, was runner-up in her first open-class competition.

Abraham's success was part of a unique weekend for Wairarapa competitors, with third-placed former event winner Tina Rimene third and another open-class newcomer Sharnie Graham, fourth, both also from Masterton.

Kodi Hawkins, from Martinborough, won the senior woolhandling final, while the senior shearing final also featured first-time seniors David Gordon and Ethan Pankhurst, also

both from Masterton. Beefy Matura shearer Brett Roberts started off what will probably be his last season before tackling the big guns of the open class, winning the senior final in which he was first off the board in 18min 1sec, beating second-man-off Gordon by 16 seconds. But second-place, a remarkable 19pts adrift, ultimately went to Tamehana Karauria, originally from Gisborne. The junior woolhandling final was won by Raylene Johnstone.

A New Zealand team of Stratford, Tony Coster and hometown merino king Colin O'Neill won the trans-Tasman challenge against the Perth Show team of Boyle and his brother Brendon, plus Todd Wegner.

Cover story: Shearing cricket fan meets England's captain

Tony Hodge of Matata spent the New Zealand winter in England, shearing for Andrew and Emma Deverall at Brackley. Andrew is the son of Tauranga shearing identities, Robert and Jan Deverall.

A keen cricket fan, Tony was stoked to meet the England cricket captain, Alastair Cook, who happened to be staying at his girlfriend's place while the boys were shearing. Naturally, the captain was persuaded to "have a go" with the handpiece.

Tony had been working for Dean Boros and Steve Brough at Koromiko

Grazing Co. for a couple of years and with their encouragement, did a little bit of crutching and shearing when he could. This year he decided to do his OE and become a shearer full time.

He started with Andrew in April but the wet weather in the UK made it a long, drawn out season. A chance to talk cricket with "the skipper" provided some welcome compensation.

For the record, Cook (at time of writing), a left-handed batsman, had scored more than 6500 test runs. with 20 centuries and a highest score of 294. Useful, you might say.

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Perfect 10 for Shannon

By *Bernie Walker*

Australia's dual world champion shearer, Shannon Warnest, won his 10th Australian national title at Warrnambool's Romney Shears on 27 October. He then emerged from the trans-Tasman test match ten points clear of the next competitor, John Kirkpatrick. The Australians won their third test in a row following wins at Masterton and Perth in 2011. They also won the similar event at Christchurch last year, which was relocated from Masterton because of the world championships.

But it was still a close result with South Australians Warnest and Nathan Meaney, and West Aussie Mark Buscomb holding off the Kiwis (Kirkpatrick, Angus Moore and Chris Vickers) by just 1.5 points.

Shannon Warnest was awarded the inaugural Mark Conlan Medal for the leading Australian in the trans-Tasman Test. It was presented by Mark's widow, Joanne, and Mark's close friend David 'Daffy' Ryan, now retired to the coast in Queensland.

But the indomitable Johnny Kirkpatrick bounced back yet again (he's never down for long – remember Masterton this year?) to win the Lister-sponsored Romney Shears Open by seven points from PGG Wrightson national champion, Angus Moore. Doug Smith finished ahead of brother Rowland, followed by Jason Win and Kelvin Walker to complete an all Kiwi final.

The woolhandling test was another great win for Western Australia's Aroha Garvin (2000 world champion) and her brother Joe. The Garvins were up against 2008 world champion Sheree Alabaster and Dannevirke's Rocky Hape-Taite. The Aussies were victorious by 4.5 points.

New Zealanders Brian Thomson and Tim Hogg won the blades test by an easy 40 points over Peter Artridge and John Dalla, who won the national blade shearing final.

In the Sports Shear Australia national final, Warnest won by three points from fellow South Australian Justin Dolphin, with Tasmania's Robbie Glover in third place. The other finalists in finishing order were Wayne Hosie and Daniel McIntyre from New South Wales and Victorian veteran Roger Mifsud. It will be Dolphin's second appearance in the Australian team, but the first time in the trans-Tasman for Glover. Don't be fooled if he wears his big cowboy hat and high-heeled boots – this fellow can shear! He and Jason Wingfield defeated David Fagan and

Paul Avery at Calgary Stampede in Canada in 2006.

In the national woolhandling final, Kayla Garner from Hay NSW won her first Australian title from Angela Wakely (Yeoval, NSW) who will appear for the second time. They will form the Australian team to Masterton 2013. South Australia won the national teams' final from NSW by four points, with Tasmania third. Australian judges selected to officiate at Masterton 2013 are both Tasmanians, Ted Groves from St. Marys (shearing) and Craig Blake from Longford (woolhandling).



South Australians at Warrnambool last month for the Romney Shears and National championships, from left: Shannon Warnest, Nathan Meaney, Darryl Green (manager), Lisa Nosworthy and Matt Stasinowsky.



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Above: Open woolhanding finalists at the Warrnambool Romney Shears, from left: Mel Morris (Tasmania), Fi Pattison (Victoria), Rocky Hape-Taite (New Zealand, winner) and Matt Stasinowsky (South Australia). Below, competitors in the Jim Davidson Memorial teams event: Back left: Nathan Fidler, Roger Mifsud, Dion King, Rowland Smith, Kelvin Walker, Doug Smith. Front: Sarah Moran, Fi Pattison, Rocky Hape-Taite, Sheree Alabaster, Matt Stasinowsky, Mel Morris.



Changes at top for Sports Shear Australia

There were some significant changes made to the administration of Sports Shear Australia at the AGM held prior to the National Championships at Warrnambool, Vic, on October 25-27.

Among the new faces, Michael Nancarrow from Bollon, (Qld) replaces Garry Griffin as chairman. Bruce Lines from Roma (Qld) takes over as secretary (incumbent Deidre Garner did not seek re-election), and Kendell Byrnes, Hamilton (Vic.) takes over as Treasurer.

A new management structure will be created following the adoption of a new Constitution, with a new executive committee comprising one appointed representative from each State, creating an executive of nine, plus the immediate past-chairman in a non-voting role.

It was also decided that business consultants Luminous Biz will be retained to provide project management on behalf of SSAA. They will also assist to negotiate and finalise future contracts as required.



Mick Nancarrow, new chairman of Sports Shear Australia.

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Scene: Old shearers, chilling out at the beach, downing a few cold Rieslings and reminiscing about places, faces and times gone by.

Remember the time Frog Potaie told that English shearer that he (Frog) could eat more sheep than the Pom could shear!

“Yeah, funny as. Stu Baker, the bloke’s name was. About 30 years ago, he’d just arrived in New Zealand and it was his first day working for Potaie at Milton. Stu was a bit late out of bed that first morning, a bit late getting to breakfast and Frog already had the rest of the crew in the van and the motor running.”

“Where the hell’s this Stu Baker bloke,” Frog said to George. “If he’s not here in three seconds we’ll be going without him.”

“Calm down Frog, he’ll be here,” George said. “I’m not bloody paid to calm down, I’m paid to shear sheep,” Frog responded.

And then, as Stu would later relate his own story: *“I got to the shed and got set up on my stand, we were shearing lambs. I pulled out my first lamb, aimed a blow down the brisket and belly and next thing the lamb slides out of position on me. I turned off my machine to get settled again and next thing, ‘bang’, I hear Frog’s pen door slam.*

“‘Are we just crutching these things today?’ I thought to myself, and then had a quick look down the board. Holy hell, Frog’s half way through shearing his second lamb and I’m thinking, this will be a tough day!”

“At the end of the day Frog was looking at the tallies the boys had shorn and then informed Stu he could eat more sheep than that!”

But Stu wasn’t perturbed about his own tally and he didn’t forget those ‘motivational’ first-day words of his ganger. Towards the end of the season he did his first three hundred. He proudly took the tally book to Frog and said, *“Here Frog, eat these fockers!”*



Welsh shearer (and *Shearing* magazine contributor) Tom Harding (Newport) wonders if he might have the smallest international shearing run in the world.

Tom explains: *I have my own run in Austria. If you’re wondering why I’ve never mentioned this before, it consists of three ‘sheds’ with a grand total of ten sheep. Four for my sister’s boss (she works in a big hotel); four for a friend of his and two for another chap that he knows.*

Payment is good though – a five-course meal in the owner’s four-star hotel for two nights plus free use of the hotel’s fitness resort. The village is called Brand and is located in Vorarlberg, west Austria.

And while a lot of the land in Austria looks good sheep country, there aren’t that many, Tom says, with most farms carrying dairy cows.

(Read Tom’s latest story at page 31 of this edition. And perhaps he could also get a job at that famous Australian station called Wunghnu (“one-ewe”). Cut out in a day!)

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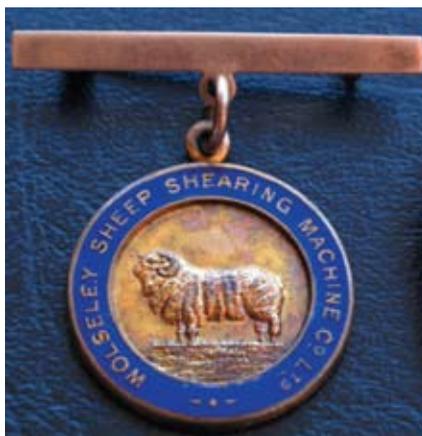
Another Wolseley Medal

By *Bernie Walker*

Reports of the (previously unknown) presentation of a Wolseley medallion to Queensland shearer Tony Ogden have been discovered in Australia. Shearing history researcher Des DeBelle of Canberra found the reports in May 1932 editions of *The Western Champion* at Barcaldine and *The Longreach Leader*.

According to those newspapers, following the cut-out at Euroлие station near Barcaldine on 27 April 1932, Harry Livingstone of the Wolseley Sheep Shearing Company presented Mr Ogden with a Wolseley medallion and handpiece to commemorate the record he set at 'Leichardt Farms' at Aramac, Queensland, during October 1931. The presentation was made to recognise Ogden having shorn tallies of 293 and 295 on consecutive days in a week during which he shored 1400 sheep with Wolseley gear. It was also reported that, 'But for a breakdown of machinery Mr. Ogden's record would have been higher'. The contractor was Mr J J Moran.

The medal is described as being of gilt and enamel with a sheep in relief, and the words Wolseley Sheep Shearing Co. Ltd. on the obverse side. On the reverse is the inscription *Shearing record with Wolseley machines. Tony Ogden shored 588 heavy woolled sheep in 2 days, November 1931*. This description indicates that Ogden received a 25mm diameter medallion similar to that presented to Alf Merritt and several New Zealand guns, as reported in *Shearing*, August 2009 edition.



Further research by Des DeBelle indicates that Alf Merritt was a left handed aboriginal shearer from Yass, NSW, but he has not yet been able to find out Merritt's tally. Des now believes Merritt's record was set in the Corrowang shed at Delegate, down in the Snowy Mountains near the Victorian border.

Harry Livingstone, the Wolseley representative, was himself one of the greatest shearers Queensland ever produced. Whenever gun shearers of the early 20th century are discussed, he is invariably one of those mentioned. By 1932 he had retired from shearing and was a representative of Dalgety and Company in Emerald, Queensland, agents for the Wolseley company.

Collective research in recent years indicates that only 10 Wolseley medals were ever presented, to shearers who produced outstanding shed tallies with Wolseley shearing gear. Our story in the August 2009 edition relates how

a Sydney medal collector named Les Carlisle had ascertained that the medals were produced in that city by a company named Amor Medallists, and that the "die" for the medals had been produced about 1930.

Verified recipients of the medal illustrated opposite are New Zealanders Bill Richards (1934), Percy de Malmanche (1934), Keith Holloway (1934), Bill Higgins (date unknown) and Ivan Bowen (1953), together with Australians Alf Merritt and Tony Ogden (both 1932). Godfrey Bowen is another "maybe" on the list for his 1950s exploits. It has been recorded that the great Maori shearer Bob Tutaki was awarded a medal as early as 1913, but if Mr Carlisle is right with his information about the date origin of the 10 medals, Mr Tutaki's medal may have been of a different style, such as those awarded to Jacky Howe years earlier.

That Bill Higgins was a Wolseley medal recipient is confirmed by Les Thomsen in his booklet, *The Discovery and Developments of Shearing Techniques*, published in 1971. Bill's great exploits with the handpiece took place in the 1920s, (372 in 8hrs 30min 1921 and first to do 400, in 1923) suggesting that, if the medals do date from c1930, he may have received the award in retrospect. Higgins worked as an agent for Wolseley shearing machines in the 1920s and '30s.

Again, we invite readers with any knowledge of the "Wolseley medals" to contact *Shearing*.

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Wool in Wairoa display at Wairoa Museum / Kopututanga Taonga O Te Wairoa featuring the Culshaw / Pahauwera Shearing whanau. Below: Cayde Culshaw, fifth generation family member in the industry.

The agricultural wealth of Wairoa started well behind other areas of New Zealand. The terrain, bush covered and hilly, made access difficult. Everything coming into Wairoa in the mid-1800s came by sea or coastal track.

Early farming, due to isolation, the enormous task of clearing land establishing grass and getting stock, put many an aspiring farmer off coming to the East Coast. However, as land became more expensive in Hawke's Bay, farmers spread along the coast northwards.

The first sheep to come to the Wairoa area arrived in the early 1850s, coming up the coast with Mr Joe Carrol who had been settled in the district for some years. The first sheep were Merino, but these did not flourish and other breeds were introduced including Leicestershires and Romneys, which were more suited to cope with the wet underfoot conditions. (There are approximately 96 registered breeds of sheep at present in New Zealand).

Burning the bush and planting grass was fine for a few years, but the quality did not last and topdressing

became necessary. This was a lengthy chore with the fertilizer coming in by boat and eventually being spread on the hills by hand. Aerial topdressing which started in the Wairoa County after World War II would have been unheard of in those early years.

Fencing the hills helped to contain the stock, particularly if the neighbour didn't dip his lousy sheep. Dipping began in the 1850s and became law in

the early 1900s. Sheep could not be sold at the sale yards unless they were lice-free.

Dogs were well-trained and expensive but a great help and friend of their master. Dog trialling became an enjoyable pastime and started in Mohaka in 1896 and in Wairoa County as the Collie Club in 1903.

As numbers of sheep increased, the population grew as the need to have assistance on the farm grew. Small towns sprung up, schools opened, churches built. With the increase of sheep numbers, the need to get the wool off their backs and to market became the next problem. Shearing in the Wairoa County started with the use of blade shears, but by the early 1920s, along with the rest of New Zealand, mechanisation was introduced.

There has been a long-standing shearing association with Maori families in this area. The Culshaw-Pahauwera family are now into their fifth generation! In the exhibition, we have honoured this tradition. There is a display of handpieces collected by the Culshaw family on loan – the earliest being from about 1900-1930, spanning one hundred years. (to p11)



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The transport of wool from the back country farms was tracked out by horses in small bales and eventually re-packed into larger bales. Coastal ships standing off-shore with small boats (lighters) taking wool out to them made for many a wet bale – not a good saleable item. The advent of roads, rail and trucks has made easier work of this task.

Once the stock was shifted on the hoof by drovers, but now by truck. A modern truck can carry 500 lambs or 400 ewes or approximately 120 bales of wool. We have an excellent display of photos on transport in the exhibition from shipping to modern trucks.

Stock and station agents are unique to Australia and New Zealand – their special place in the development of rural areas cannot be underestimated. Wairoa has had a number of these in the past, but like other areas of New Zealand now have only two with PGG Wrightsons and the newer firm Farmlands. Independent stock agents work separately now. Sadly, sheep numbers have declined in the Wairoa district; pine trees are being planted, schools closed and shops are empty in the small towns.

Wairoa Wool Week featured in our exhibition was first started in 1968 by Colin Southey of the Department of Agriculture with the spinners and kiwi knitters running a festival. To get the nation's attention, the Wool Week

Committee organized the first world record attempt of a fleece-to-garment man's jersey. Ivan Bowen and a local shearer shored the sheep in the town centre on the back of a truck. This festival became so popular that the small town had to concede to a National Club being formed. The Spinners and Weavers and Woolcraft Society, who divided New Zealand into 14 regions, hold annual competitions with the next being at Porirua, in April.

The original trophies of a mere for the Kiwi Knitting and a silver spinning wheel for the Spinners were made locally and are in our display.

The museum is adding to its archive of photographs of woolsheds from the Wairoa District. So far we have well over 50 images. People are invited to look through the albums of woolsheds, add notes and if they know of a missing woolshed bring in a photo to be scanned to be added to the collection.

The exhibition officially opened at the Wairoa Museum on 12 October 2012 and concludes on 26th January 2013.

(NB: Information and images supplied by Wairoa Museum (Jenny Roper), with minor adaptations to this version of text by *Shearing* magazine. Ed)

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Harold Gloag obituary

It would be no surprise to many that Southern judge and referee, Harold Cloag ordered a window in his coffin. His role in the shearing industry as a farmer, sheep breeder, shearer, wool classer then judge, referee, administrator and overseer required attention to detail. He naturally assumed the role of quality controller of the NZ Merino Shears and at many other events on the shearing calendar.

In spite of illness the past two years he cast a sharp eye over NZ Merino Shears proceedings, missed very little going on and took immense pleasure during last season's 50th celebration. Laughter rocked his funeral with the knowledge that Harold wanted a window in his coffin so that he could both 'see who was at his funeral and 'keep an eye on proceedings'.

Harold's introduction to shearing began 60 years ago as a Roxburgh High school boy when neighbours taught him how to crutch and shear. He quickly picked up the skills and was encouraged to leave school to 'go shearing'. For seven years he shored in a two stand gang for shearing contractor, Bill Adams around the districts of Millers Flat, Roxburgh and up the Moa Flat. He was soon hooked on shearing and wool classing and as typical of his era, went shearing to earn money to go farming. In 1979 Harold qualified as a registered classer and was awarded his wool classers Kiwi

stencil, working mainly with local Otago blade gangs.

Later when farming merinos on his large high country 'run' he employed the formidable team of Snow Quinn and Jim Keenan as shearers. This mateship along with his friendship with neighbour and former world lamb record shearer, John Ferguson, drew him into supporting the then 'Golden Fleece Fine Wool Shearing Finals' (now the NZ Merino Shears).

Graeme Bell tells the story how Harold was originally lined up by the wool classers to specialise as a wool judge. Harold was to disappoint Bell and woolhandling referee, Alistair Eckhoff. Rather than following his younger brother Buck as woolhandling judge, they believe Fergie persuaded Harold to focus on shearing.

Harold was a popular and reliable judge at all the major South Island shows—Alexandra, Oamaru, Waimate, Christchurch, Invercargill, Tapanui, Lawrence, Riversdale, Mossburn, Lumsden, Winton, Balclutha and at the South Island Championships at Gore. He visited the North Island for the NZ Shearing Championships in Te Kuiti and made several trips as part of the South Island merino specialist team that judged international events at the Golden Shears in Masterton.

Harold was selected as Manager of the NZ Team in the 1990s for the Trans-Tasman test series in Armidale,

New South Wales and for the return leg at Masterton. His team management was notable when, for the first time, the NZ Shearing team defeated the Australian team in Australia. Harold had devised a cunning plan on how to beat the Australians at Armidale. He knew no matter how good his shearers Colin King, Barry Taylor and David Fagan were, to shear that under Australian competition quality standards was tough. His plan was simple; based on judging experience and his utter commitment to quality. The Kiwis listened, shored to Harold's plan and cleaned up the boards and for the first time won on Aussie soil.

It was just a formality for the team at Masterton to complete the series, won with a clear margin to give NZ the first entire trans-Tasman title. None was prouder than Harold leading that historic NZ team to victory.

Harold refereed for 29 of the years he was a judge. Like John Ferguson, his knowledge of merino stock brought an added expertise to his judging skills. This expertise became his mission. 'Harold's Mission' meant quality first, then speed. His dislike for rough shearing often resulted in those within earshot hearing Harold firmly declare he would 'get those rough swines!'

His judging experience led to an examiners role, which proved equally as rewarding for Harold as it was for his judging mates. (page 13)

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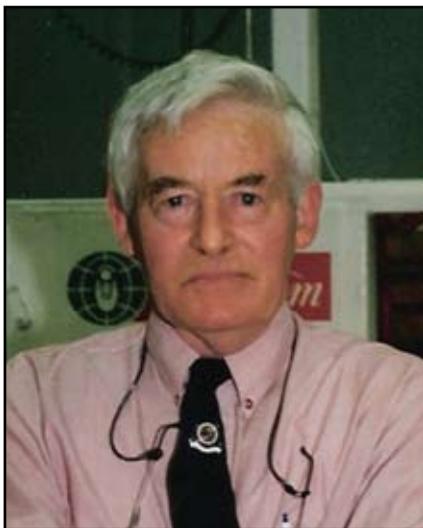
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He got a lot of satisfaction teaching the next generation such as Bruce Walker and Ken Payne. He was proud to see them both judging in the finals of the 2012 world championships.

Harold was not just a judge but an astute administrator. He volunteered onto the Fine Wool Shearing Committee in 1979, became indispensable and later graduated to President. He held the chair for 5 years, including 1993 when Alexandra hosted the World Fine Wool Shearing Championships. His attention to detail, competition knowledge and organising skills resulted in the smooth running of countless competitions over 30 successive years. Current President, Graeme Bell says Harold certainly kept the NZ Merino Shears Committee members on their toes not only at meetings but with attention to matters during the running of the show.

Last year at the 50th Merino shearing champs Harold was labelled by a newspaper feature writer as the 'stalwart of the show' but declared "really I haven't done much because I delegated it all".

"I've selected the judges and referee,



The late Harold Gloag, staunch supporter of high quality standards in the merino shearing and wool industry.

organised some accommodation, and apart from that I just get in the road. I'm not doing a hell of a lot."

This wasn't quite true. Harold's eye on proceedings never wavered. In recognition that the NZ Merino Shearing Society was a big part of Harold's life, the Society honoured him in 2010 with Life Membership.

Gwen Cloag told all at his funeral that right up to his last minutes (at Dunedin Hospital before his unsuccessful operation), Harold was instructing his wife to 'bring down his 'satchel' (in which he carried around his lists for the judges, their accommodation and duties) so he could 'get sorted for the Show' (the 2012 Shears).

His was a notable absence at this year's NZ Merino Shears at Alexandra. The retired Millers Flat farmer had passed away during surgery just two months earlier, on 4 August.

Right to the end, Harold was a very valuable and respected Life Member of the NZ Merino Shearing Society and will be sadly missed by the NZ Shearing Sports, the shearing and woolhandling judges fraternity and many industry friends. He was a good son of the shearing industry in Central Otago.

(Compiled by Jills Angus Burney, Graeme Bell and Alastair Eckhoff.)

Note: Harold's wife, Gwen Cloag, passed away less than two weeks after Harold and they are survived by daughters Jillian and Lynda.

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Old dogs and new tricks

By Roger Leslie

The science of shearing is never better illustrated than in the having and maintaining of good gear.

Few things have the ability to upset, quite like gear that's not cutting and the upset spreads like ripples on a pond affecting all in close proximity, man and beast. The only people likely to derive (secret) enjoyment from this sad state of affairs are the other shearers.

Having gear that runs smoothly and cuts effectively all day can be as unpredictable as volcanology and equally as devastating to those caught in the blast zone during an eruption.

It's not always the fault of the practitioner and most shearers can remember their worst gear experience as if it were yesterday. For some it was shearing hoggets off the swedes and others the pumice country of the central NI. For me it was shearing sheep wintered on the banks of the Rhine with its peculiar brand of iron sands. During a single morning I shored 50 (large) sheep, used 25 combs, 50 cutters and ruined a set of papers. This event was probably the origin of my not infrequent psychotic episodes.

The world as we know it has been shaped by people with sharp things and those who knew how to keep them the sharpest usually won the day. Shearing is an excellent example of this and as I have travelled with my handpiece, I've also taken with me the advantages of good gear management passed on by some very clever people. I have often smiled to myself (with secret smugness) as I've watched the shearers of other nations sharpening their gear. But, I hasten to point out, this smugness wasn't always based on fact.

I shored in Australia in the mid 1970s and I wasn't allowed to grind my own gear as there was an 'expert' for this task. The expert was a hardy individual but wasn't, and had never been, a shearer. He had attended 'expert' school. All complaints of gear not cutting were addressed immediately by even worse efforts. To be fair that certainly reduced the complaints.

A friend in Denmark gets his gear sharpened by an engineer. Danish Engineers are great at building bridges, wind turbines and Lego, but grinding shearing gear? No!

In Germany I watched with intrigue, gear being ground on plates attached to the bottom of down-tubes. They held the combs and cutters on the grinding surface with their fingers. This required a level of dexterity and bravery that I didn't possess. I surmised that this grinding system was the leading cause of the need for foreign shearers.

To most hobby shearers in Germany, keeping the gear sharp is the trial that tips the balance and has them calling for a *profi* (professional). One of them relayed this story.

"I bought 10 sheep to keep the grass down in my 1 Ha block. I saw someone shearing once and thought, that looks easy, I could do that. I bought a shearing machine which came with a handpiece, a comb and two cutters.

For an extra \$10 I could get another cutter but decided I didn't need that. I thought the shearing would be a festive occasion so I invited a few friends and neighbours along for a party. It took an hour to shear the first sheep and



Old dogs learning new tricks

while the spectators enjoyed the show immensely, the sheep and my wife and I all got pretty upset.

I decided to leave the other 9 until another day. The gear didn't cut the wool properly, just chewed it off, and the handpiece got very hot. A friend came and helped me shear the others and I asked him how he shored his? He said a Kiwi guy did it and if we asked nicely he might do ours too."

With a few minor variations, this story would fit most of my clients, particularly the reference to domestic disharmony. (to p15)

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(From page 14)

One chap called Karl tried to get sharp gear off me every year. I would shear his 60 odd mongrels and he would in turn shear the little lots in his area for highly inflated prices. He's a good businessman.

The only problem was grinding his gear. Finally driven by frustration he purchased a flat plate grinder off e-bay and wanted me to teach him how to use it. This was surely the incompetent leading the ignorant.

I had never used one before and had only observed this dicey operation. I, using the occasion as research for this article, showed him what I knew and did a comb and three cutters of my own (photo) to see how they would go. I was pretty sure how this would turn out and I was wrong.

That set of gear went as well as anything I had in my box, perhaps better. It ran quietly and continued to cut well beyond my normal expectations.

I relayed this to an experienced German shearer and he was delighted. He had progressed to a double end grinder but used to use a flat top. He lent this to me for my research and I used it for a month. I'm sold.

You can teach an old dog new tricks and (this is the amazing part, according to my wife) even get him to admit he's wrong!

New Challenge for Young Shearers

Intermediate and senior shearers from the North Canterbury region will have extra incentives to get out and do the competitions this season. A new "North Canterbury Development Circuit" will feature in those grades at the Duvachelle (12 Jan), Amuri (2 Mar), Cheviot (9 Mar) and Kowai-Sefton (10 Mar) shows, with the latter being compulsory and competitors required to compete in at least three of the events.

The prize for each grade winner will be an all-expenses-paid trip to Te Kuiti for the New Zealand Championships, 3-7 April 2013. The circuit is being financed by major sponsor H Dawson Wool Buyer, with support from Heiniger (intermediate), Lister (senior), and seven local contractors – Moriarty Shearing, Nesbit Shearing, Price Shearing, Phelps Shearing, Taylor Shearing, Pullin Shearing and Phil Bremner Shearing.

Organising committee spokesman Greg Moriarty says the objectives for the new circuit are to encourage local shearers into competing and improving their skills, and to provide the opportunity to observe and be inspired by the champions they will see in action at Te Kuiti.

"The competition is based on the PGG Wrightson circuit for open class shearers and will be scored on the same basis, with the winner of each show receiving 12 points, 11

for second etc, plus others receiving one point for entry at each show. The Kowai-Sefton show will be the final, so attendance there is compulsory."

Greg Moriarty says the winners will be able to gain a wider appreciation of their industry away from their home base, with all expenses met for travel, accommodation, vehicle hire and meals.

"The winners will have the support of a manager from the time of their winning through to completion of the New Zealand Championships."

The circuit is being run as a not-for-profit enterprise and is planned to become an annual addition to the Shearing sports competition circuit.



Intermediate shearer Lyall Windleburn of Waiau, seen here competing at the 150th Canterbury A&P Show earlier this month, should be well placed to take advantage of the new North Canterbury Development Circuit being introduced this season.

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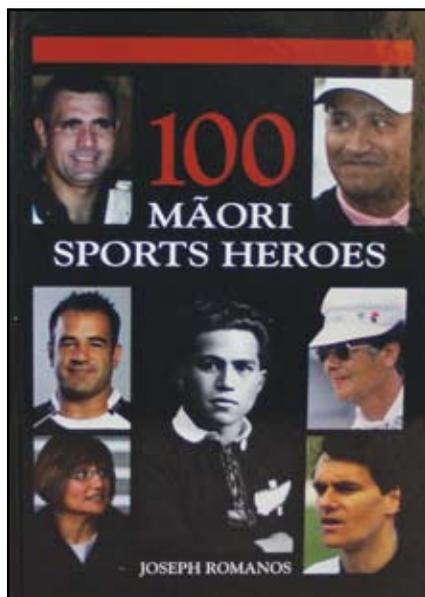
Book review

Bu Des Williams

Wellington author Joseph Romanos doesn't do things by halves. In recent times he's been doing things by the hundreds. In 2005 he produced *New Zealand's Top 100 History-makers*, followed by *Top 100 Sports History-makers* with David Fagan included among the Halbergs, Todds, Snells and Hillarys of sporting legend. A couple of years later he produced *Our Olympic Century*; he done *100 Cricket Portraits* and now he's recently written *100 Maori Sports Heroes*. (Trio Books, 2012.)

This latest effort includes profiles of John Kirkpatrick, Joanne Kumeroa and Ike Robin (1886-1968), each of whom links closely with the shearing and wool industry.

The two "JKs" need no introduction to present day readers, but Ike Robin – now he might prompt a few head scratches. Even this reviewer (who fancies himself as a bit of a shearing historian) had only ever read a few lines about Ike – those contained in that 1960 book by AR Mills, entitled *Sheep-O!* In reference to shearing at Te Awaiti in 1940, Mills records: *Ike Robin was one of the best ... his highest tally being 343. In his hey-day Ike was a man of great athletic repute. He once won almost every athletic event from tossing the caber to the high jump and the 100 yards at a Caledonian meeting in his home town of Hastings, and was a world class wrestler as well.*



Romanos tells us more about Ike's career as a wrestler, back when it was a serious sport in New Zealand. After winning a North Island championship at Taihape in 1924 at the age of 37, he decided to become a professional. One fight against an Indian champion drew 12,000 spectators and earned him £1400 (\$130,000 in today's terms – serious enough?).

Bouts back then had no time limit and often lasted several hours. Ike continued fighting until nearly 50 years-of-age. "Robin developed such a following that a wire-strainer for fencing, the 'Ike Grip' was named after him," Romanos writes.

Of Ngati Raukawa and Ngati

Kahungunu affiliations, Ike spent all his life at Kohupatiki, near Clive. At the age of 15 he left school and after first trying his hand as a chauffeur and as a mechanic, it wasn't long before he decided to follow in his fathers shearing footsteps. Ike eventually ended up with his his own gangs, employing up to 100 people at the height of each season, often providing work and accommodation for homeless young Maori.

This is a superb book of sporting profiles, capturing champions of many disciplines from rugby legend George Nepia; wood-chopping's Jason Wynyard; Mervyn Church of rodeo fame; Neti Traill (table tennis); Grant Barriball (waka ama) and Daniel Kereopa, the champion surfer, to name just a few.

And who knows very much about David Dixon, the 160kg, 1.96m tall Pukekohe boy who enjoyed a 13-season career in American grid-iron football? He'd been spotted in 1988 by an American talent scout, wandering down Auckland's Queen Street and asked if he'd be interested in a career in American football! Starting with the New England Patriots in 1992, he progressed to a \$NZ10.3 million contract with the Minnesota Vikings in 2000, and retired in 2004 after 152 games in the NFL.

Dixon's story and many more like it will keep you entertained for hours. Copies available in all good bookshops!

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St. Helens 1933

John Russell of West Melton sent us this photo of the shearing gang at St Helen's Station near Hanmer Springs in 1933, recently rediscovered among his late mother's possessions. John's father, Matthew (Matt) Russell from Waikuku is seated extreme right.

"My father was 20 when the photo was taken, having taken up blade shearing as a teenager. He shored at St Helen's for many seasons before ending his shearing career in 1951."

As John points out in his letter, St Helen's was taken over by the Government in 1949 as part of the rabbit-infested Molesworth complex.

First taken up in 1858, St Helen's had something of a troubled history during its 90 years of private ownership. During the later 19th century it was owned by WA Low (of Galloway fame) who held vast tracts of land.

By the time the above photo was taken the property had been in the Savill family name for some years.

Author Peter Newton notes in his *High Country Journey* (AH & AW Reed, 1980): "All open, clean shingle country, somewhat similar to Molesworth, it is grand mustering and the St Helen's gang was noted for the fact that it usually included men from

the four corners of the island. In its hey-day, it ran a straight merino flock. Until the drastic winter of 1940 it shored in the vicinity of 45,000 sheep, and was one of the great merino flocks of the country." Newton noted that the property also carried up to 2000 head of cattle.

And apart from the severe snows and the onslaught of rabbits that were already signalling the eventual end of the great station, there came another threat, as Lance McCaskill records in *Molesworth* (Reed, 1970):

"In 1933 St Helen's had to fight off another threat to one of its most important areas when the Prime Minister [George Forbes, a local farmer!] was urged to set aside 12,000 acres, including Mt Charm and Mt Isobel, as a national park. The prime movers appeared to be people concerned with furthering the interests of the company owning the local tourist hotel.

"A public meeting adjourned in uproar but on being reconvened supported the proposal by a big majority. The Government wisely decided 'to allow the proposal to stand over'."

By the time the property was surrendered to the Crown in 1949, the sheep numbers had dropped to 18,000, McCaskill noted.

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Letter to Editor

Dear Editor

I read with interest your article in the August 2012 edition, 'Is shearing sports a real sport, Sport?' I believe, without a doubt, it is a sport. However, there is one anomaly that is occurring on both sides of the Tasman. It is the use of shearing harnesses, back supports or slings or whatever else you want to call them. In no other sport that I know of is a mechanical device allowed to be used that aids a competitor's physical attributes (other than by disabled athletes).

The most common reason given for allowing the use of such devices is OH&S. If shearing is a sport then OCCUPATIONAL Health and Safety doesn't come into it as competition shearing is not an occupation, it is a sport. The most common excuse (as I see it) is that everyone can use one if they want to. The life of anyone competing in any sport normally begins with that person starting off young, fit, strong and flexible, but with quite limited experience. As they go through their sporting life they gain more and more experience and for a certain period can gain fitness and strength as well.

However, as time passes they begin to lose their fitness, strength and flexibility (it's called the aging process). They still gain experience all the time. Sport to me is to be played/battled on an even playing field. On that field you will have a range of competitors from young, fit and strong but inexperienced through to older, more experienced but less fit competitors. Allowing a mechanical aid for older competitors tips the natural sporting balance, as strong fit competitors get no benefit from a sling. You can't buy and hang experience from the headboard!

If shearing is indeed a sport then it needs to be contested on a level playing field.

Regards

Nick Endacott

Nick Endacott (Armidale, NSW) is a former world record holder and Australian open champion who represented his country in several trans-Tasman shearing contests over the past decade, both in Australia and New Zealand. (Ed.)



Comment:

Tony Chamberlain of Waimate (seen above competing in the Waimate Shears open plate final last month) is one of the few shearers in New Zealand known to wear a "sling", but it's not for any of the reasons suggested by Nick Endacott in his letter. Tony wears the sling in the sheds every day and has done so at Waimate Shears (which is pretty much the only competition he attends) for the past 22 years.

Tony was paralysed for a brief period back in 1989 and was told by a doctor he would never shear again. Not one to give in that easily, Tony sought a second opinion and that medic, supported by OSH, said he could shear again as long as he used a sling.

"As far as I'm aware I was one of the first to use the sling in New Zealand – I started using it in 1991 and I've been in it ever since.

"In my view it doesn't give me any advantage at all, in fact I calculate it costs me at least a couple of seconds per sheep and sometimes more if it's not where it should be when you come out of the pen with your next sheep. It could be compared with the left hander who has to turn his sheep around if there is no left hand stand on the board.

"I believe it could be possible to get in and out of the pen without getting out of the sling, especially if the sheep are being held at the door for you. But I've never been game to risk that in case I got swung back out onto the board without the sheep!

Tony [thoroughbred build] suggests too that the sling actually takes the pressure off his hips rather than off his back, though "heavier" shearers may also gain back support.

"I've never had any other shearers suggest I'm getting an unfair advantage, even though I'm always on stand six at Waimate. If we are drawing for stands the others invariably say, 'Well Tony's on six so let us draw for the other stands.' They don't have to do that but it's just never been an issue in all the time I've been competing there."

And Tony recalls with humour the conversation he had with OSH when they were saying he couldn't shear again and asked if he would like retraining into another occupation.

"I suggested I'd like to be an airline pilot and they were a bit slow to catch on, noting that was quite far removed from what I had been doing. 'Well as long as you are going to pay for it I'm ready to start right away.' I think my shearing in a sling suddenly seemed like a good idea to them and so they agreed with that second doctor."

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Why Southland took so long to win Olympic Gold

- Growing trees parallel to the ground is not an Olympic sport, otherwise Orepuki would have won the teams event every year since 1896.
- Old blokes making old bikes go fast is not an Olympic sport, otherwise Burt Munro would have won eight gold medals between 1940 and 1968.
- Writing the biggest selling song is not an Olympic sport, otherwise Dorothy Sherriff would have been "Sitting on top of the world looking down on creation" in 1972 (with a gold medal around her neck).
- Rugby was not an Olympic sport in 1978 when Brian McKechnie strode out onto Cardiff Arms Park.
- Oyster opening was not an Olympic sport in 1997, otherwise Mike Racz would have won gold, silver and bronze that year. (Sadly, a non-Olympic year.)
- Events involving fast horses has never been an Olympic sport, otherwise Cardigan Bay would have the same number of gold medals as Peter Snell.
- Making the best sausages in the world has never been an Olympic sport, otherwise Leo Henderson would have more gold medals than Peter Snell and Cardigan Bay combined.
- Keeping your mouth shut through an entire footy match has never been an Olympic sport, otherwise Jimmy Cowan would be the "Michael Phelps" of New Zealand's gold medallists.
- If brewing special purge enjoyed in great hotels

throughout Southland (and the rest of the world) was an Olympic sport, – hey step to the top of the dais, Sir James!

- If doing clever arrangements with words was an Olympic sport, Dan Davin would have joined with Jack Lovelock in giving Hitler the 'up yours' at the 1936 Berlin Games.
- If crashing into Irish power poles and living to tell the story was an Olympic sport, Tom Scully would already be on our list, two years ahead of Nathan Cohen (our golden boy of London 2012).
- If rugby had been an Olympic sport in 1905, JW Stead would have more than just a little Invercargill street named after him.
- If doing animal impersonations was an Olympic sport, that bloke under the Stag's head would be a gold medallist (oh yeah no, definitely).
- If blowing whistles was an Olympic sport, Paddy O'Brien would have more than just a shiny head on his pillow.
- (This one will get you!) If doing multiple fouettes was an Olympic sport, it would have been Peter Snell, Murray Halberg AND Rowena Jackson in that golden hour of Rome 1960.
- If piling snow on top of the stadium roof was ... no, that's not funny.
- And finally (you thought I'd forgotten didn't you?) if growing swedes was an Olympic sport, there would be more 18-carat gold medals around the central town of Winton than the total of shearers, rousies and knobs of genuine Romney sheep shit combined.

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Quinton Thompson.

MACHINE SHEARING XB JUNIOR

Aaron Follet, Clinton Parkinson, Dean Haitana, Duncan Foord, Helen Kershaw, Jonathan Archer, Kane Nicho, Kenneth Birch, Kodiey Wilson, Mark Wallace, Peter Boyle, Rangipa Chase, Thomas Campbell, Tuhoe Fuller, William Condon.

MACHINE SHEARING XB LEVEL 3

Aaron Kahukura, Kenneth Smyth, Levi Edmonds, Nelson Hari, Roland Waru, Whati Hill.

MACHINE SHEARING XB LEVEL 4

Cain Kahukura, Daniel Newell, Patrick Duncan, Phillip Kakahi.

WOOL HANDLING XB LEARNER

Agnes Mason, Lawrence Maraku, Shane Marshall, Winipera Ropiha.

WOOL HANDLING XB LEVEL 2

Kelly Austin, Milica Hill, Alison Tarry.

WOOL HANDLING XB LEVEL 3

Edna Reihana, Joanne Yardley, Leanne McGinnis, Nicola Peddie, Penelope-Rose Whale.

WOOL HANDLING FW LEVEL 3

Erana Smith.



Partners in Wool Harvesting Training



TECTRA TRAINING COURSES SCHEDULE 2012/2103

North Island: Shearing 2012

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 3-7 Dec | Central Hawkes Bay | Learner Shearing |
| 3-6 Dec | Taumarunui | Advanced Shearing |
| 10-14 Dec | Feilding | Learner Shearing |

2013

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 7-11 Jan | Masterton | Learner Shearing |
| 21-25 Jan | Dannevirke | Learner Shearing |
| 21-25 Jan | Rangatira | Learner Shearing |
| 28 Jan-1 Feb | Hunterville | Learner Shearing |
| 11-15 Feb | Masterton | Learner Shearing |
| 18-22 Feb | Hastings | Learner Shearing |
| 25-26 Feb | Palmerston North | Pre-Shears competition course |
| 4-8 Mar | Waipaoa | Learner - Level 2 Shearing |
| 4-8 Mar | Piopio | Learner Shearing |
| 11-14 Mar | Taumarunui | Advanced Shearing |
| 11-15 Mar | Raetihi | Learner Shearing |
| 18-21 Mar | Ngaruawahia | Learner Shearing |
| 18-21 Mar | Central Hawkes Bay | Advanced Shearing |
| 18-21 Mar | Palmerston North | Advanced Shearing |
| 25-29 Mar | Taihape | Learner Shearing |

North Island: Wool Handling & Pressing

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| 4-6 Mar | Tolaga Bay | Wool Handling L2 |
| 11-14 Mar | Wanganui | Wool Handling L2 & L3 |
| 18-21 Mar | Gisborne | Wool Handling L2 & L3 |
| 8-11 Apr | Masterton | Wool Handling L2 |
| 15-17 Apr | Wanganui | Wool Handling L2 & L3 |

South Island: Shearing 2012

| | | |
|---------|--------------|------------------|
| 3-6 Dec | Tapanui | Learner Shearing |
| 3-7 Dec | Invercargill | Learner Shearing |
| 3-7 Dec | Washdyke | Learner Shearing |

2013

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 7-11 Jan | Alexandra | Learner Shearing |
| 14-18 Jan | Mossburn | Learner Shearing |
| 11-14 Mar | Roxburgh | Advanced Shearing |
| 25-29 Mar | Roxburgh | Learner Shearing |
| 8-12 Apr | Te Anau | Advanced Shearing |
| 15-18 Apr | Omakau | Advanced Shearing (Fine wool) |

South Island: Wool Handling 2012

| | | |
|---------|--------|-----------------------|
| 3-6 Dec | Gore | Wool Handling L2 & L3 |
| 4-7 Dec | Timaru | Wool Handling L2 & L3 |

2013

| | | |
|----------|----------|-----------------------|
| 9-12 Apr | Mossburn | Wool Handling L2 & L3 |
|----------|----------|-----------------------|

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The Certificate in Wool Technology is an extramural tertiary-level course for people interested in the production, harvesting and preparation of wool. This two-year programme develops the knowledge and skills needed to supervise clip preparation in the shearing shed and to class wool in the shed or store.

Who should do the course?: Anyone wanting to understand wool and the wool industry in New Zealand will find the Certificate in Wool Technology extremely valuable. Students come from a wide array of backgrounds - leading wool handlers, farmers, wool brokers and people working in the wool marketing and processing industries have completed this internationally recognized qualification.

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What's new?: In response to industry demand, we have developed a Wool Classing Module that will allow leading wool handlers to focus their programme on wool classing. This has a strong practical component that involves trainees working alongside mentors in live-classing situations. This allows you to learn the business alongside industry professionals.

Aligned to equivalent Australian qualification: An added benefit for people graduating with the Wool Technology classing qualification is the opportunity to have your classing stencil endorsed in Australia. This requires a short bridging course to get you qualified to class wool in Australia.

Registration: Applications for enrolment are open now so don't delay!

Funding: Ministry of Social Development student loans are available. Contact StudyLink on 0800 889 900 to discuss your entitlement. You may be entitled to a training incentive allowance from Work and Income New Zealand. Contact your Case Manager to discuss your entitlement.

HRH leads Campaign for Wool

New Zealand's shearers and wool handlers welcomed the opportunity to join Prince Charles in Auckland earlier this month at Shear Brilliance, a showcase celebrating the Campaign for Wool.

As patron of the campaign since its inception in 2010, Prince Charles has supported the industry's efforts to raise awareness of wool's virtues. While in Auckland for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations he visited the 'Cloud' to inspect a wool showcase staged by the industry.

New Zealand Shearing Contractors' Association President Barry Pullin said Royal patronage at Shear Brilliance was an opportunity for the industry to state its fundamental principle that more successful farmers will sustain a more successful wool industry.

"The art of shearing is alive and well, but with over two decades of depressed wool prices this challenging but wonderful industry is at risk," Mr Pullin said.

"We all let standards slip sometimes when times are tough but the ShearNZ programme can take our industry into the future where standards are king and we can all exceed the expectations of the market place. Short cuts in the shearing shed cost everyone and it's costing the wool industry dearly."

Mr Pullin said shearing businesses that invest in good processes make a difference to the bottom line.

"Along with our wonderful natural product come risks, unless we can give assurance of traceability and social and environmental sustainability, we are putting ourselves at risk in the international market place."

The ShearNZ programme was established by the Shearing Contractors' Association with the help of Beef + Lamb New Zealand to provide farmers, through their shearing business, a programme that certifies operators and recognises them as having met some sound standards.

"It's a programme that is easy to work through and helps set up processes that ensure better communications between farmers, the shearing team and the wool industry,"



Campaign for Wool chairman Stephen Fookes (left) with HRH The Prince of Wales (resplendent in his New Zealand wool suit!) at the Shear Brilliance Showcase in Auckland's waterfront 'Cloud' earlier this month.

he said. "But most importantly, it's about providing the whole industry with confidence that we can assure our key audience – the export market, that we have pride in our people and our product, the wool we harvest and the animals we work with."

ShearNZ spokesman Peter Taylor said the Auckland showcase had provided shearing and woolhandling with a priceless opportunity to be seen as an integral part of the wider wool industry, with prominent competitors John Kirkpatrick, Sam Welch, Ronnie Goss and Conor Puhā representing their professions at the Cloud.

In addition, Shearing Contractors' president Barry Pullin was included among a select group of about 20 industry representatives who had met with Prince Charles after the public function.

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Silver and gold, fifty years apart. Murray McSkimming compares the gold he received for winning the New Zealand fine wool shearing championship in 1962, with grandson Blair Tuke's silver medal for yachting at the 2012 London Olympic Games. "They are a million miles apart but they do not come easy, whatever the competition involves, you have to earn it," Murray says. Very hard earned, both of those medals, we would suggest.



Northern Ireland's Net-Tex Colate shearing circuit junior champion Russell Smyth (Coleraine) receives his prize, a new handpiece, from NISSA chairman, William Jones. (Jayne Harkness photo.)



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The burden of driver responsibility

By Des Williams

A magazine subscriber took the time to contact *Shearing* and express his disappointment at the behaviour of the bloke captured in the Under Cover Story headline in our August edition. Remember – the bloke who drove a car after consuming 24 stubbies of beer.

Such action, our reader suggested, is typical of people who have an attitude or frame of mind known as ‘Optimism Bias’. It’s the attitude of ‘it might happen to others, but it won’t happen to me. My neighbour might die of cancer, but that won’t happen to me. The house down the street might get burgled, but that won’t happen to me. Others may crash their car by driving with a skin full, or get pulled over by the cops and go for a skate before the judge, but I won’t crash and I won’t get caught.’

There are many reasons why people adopt this ‘bias’ towards their own invincibility that need not be presented by lecture here though, as often as not, it’s the consumption of booze or drugs that gives people the notion they are ten feet tall and could stop an exocet missile.

But what was going through the mind of the young Taranaki shearer last February when, on the wrong side of the road, he smashed into Debra Avery and took her to within a whisker of eternity? We know there was no booze involved, no ‘yahoo mates’ in the car urging him on, just a typical country road that demanded, as a driver, care and attention and extreme responsibility for others that might be using that same narrow stretch of tarseal.

The extent of injuries that Debra received when that driver, in broad daylight smashed into her vehicle, reads more like the aftermath of a car bomb in Pakistan or Kabul. Right leg (femur) broken in seven places; left leg (femur) compound fracture; left kneecap smashed and removed; eight ribs broken, right lung punctured; hip injuries; severe head injuries including broken nose, teeth through bottom lip and teeth broken, eyes swollen shut.

Let’s not forget the lower back pain, memory loss, inability to concentrate, but let’s spare the fine detail on other internal injuries Debra received while driving on her side of the road, obeying the law and the speed limit, on her way to assist at the local school’s fund-raising gala.

Thanks to the Taranaki rescue helicopter service and local emergency services, Debra was cut free from the wreck and whisked away to Taranaki Base Hospital, where the intensive care specialists set about saving her life.



Debra Avery - innocent victim of near-death experience

As badly smashed as she was, it clearly was not Debra’s time to leave this earth. Nine months on from the smash, the mother of David, Johanna and Sarah and wife of Paul faces fresh and painful challenges daily, on the long road to rehabilitation and recovery.

Those who know Debra know also that she isn’t one to dwell on her misfortune – though she allowed herself a moment to observe that the guilty party emerged unscathed and “was able to go and start a new life for himself in Australia” [after being found guilty of ‘careless driving’, would you believe, by the Courts]. She, meanwhile, faces years of rehabilitation and will certainly never again enjoy the quality of life she had prior to the accident.

Again, those who know Debra realise she will fight whatever adversity that tragic day in February may place before her in the months and years ahead.

There’s a memorable ending in the classic movie *The Last Waltz* when Robbie Robertson of The Band reflects on how ‘the road’ has taken many of the great ones in the music industry. ‘The road’ being Robertson’s metaphoric description for the booze, drugs, never-ending travel, heavy gig schedule and the ‘goddam impossible way of life’ that for so many has ended in crash and burn. Hank Williams, Buddy Holly, Elvis, Otis, Hendrix, Joplin ...

‘The road’, be it sealed or gravelled, four-lane highway or country back lane, has also taken a great many people from our industry and, like those musicians, booze, drugs and ‘goddam impossible way of life’ has contributed to many an unnecessary crash and burn.

Are you guilty of drug or booze-injected ‘optimism bias’ when you get behind the wheel of your car? Do you believe those newspaper reports about people dying because ‘cars fail to take a corner’ or when ‘a car leaves the road’?

That’s absolute bullshit. People drive cars off roads and into trees, telegraph poles, bridges and over banks and into ditches. People do that, cars don’t do it. People crash into other vehicles and people cause death. Accidents? Huh!

There is no reason whatsoever to be overly ‘optimistic’ when it’s your hands on the steering wheel and every reason to be careful. Your own life and, more particularly the lives of others, depends on it. Even one more needless death of a shearer, woolhandler, presser or innocent smashed up victim like Debra Avery will be one too many.



A thousand words, anyone?



Like most shearing competitions, there's much work done behind the scenes and Hawke's Bay's Great Raihania Shears is no exception. Colin Watson-Paul reports a team of 30, including a couple of farmers, turned up at Waitara Station to prepare the sheep required for that show. "We crunched over 6000 ewes and hoggets and the guys knocked off at 3.30pm after their 7.00am start. It was a big boost for the show. None of the people who did this work actually compete at the shows so it was pretty special that they all came along to help in this way." Inset right is Maunsell Edwards; at left Maunsell's son, Paraki, with "local cockie" Andy Walsh out there in the yards. Great work team!

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With assistance from the government's Primary Growth Partnership (PGP), the New Zealand Merino Company (NZM) is investing in production science initiatives to unlock the potential of this perfect sheep, which will thrive across a range of geographic areas and combine great quality meat and wool traits in the same animal.

Leading this transformation is Dr Mark Ferguson, a respected geneticist who has moved to Christchurch from Western Australia to join NZM.

"Merino have been managed and selected mostly to produce wool for the last two centuries and therefore remain relatively unselected for meat and reproduction traits," Dr Ferguson said. "There is enormous scope to bring more balanced selection and more strategic nutrition into the merino industry to unlock its potential."

Dr Ferguson will drive a range of initiatives including extending the geographic range of fine wool sheep,



Dr Mark Ferguson

facilitating the uptake of estimated breeding values, providing robustness including solutions to footrot, and facilitating the development of the sheep that combines the optimum traits for productivity and returns.

"We will be using the latest molecular genetics technologies to build a new footrot genetic test and, importantly, this test will also check the animal's genotype for all production and health traits," said Dr Ferguson.

"This technology means that a drop of blood collected from a lamb's ear at birth could be used to predict the likelihood of that lamb contracting footrot, how much and what quality wool it will cut as an adult, how fast

it will grow, its likelihood of getting a worm burden, and dozens of other traits including what the consumer's eating experience will be when that lamb hits the plate," explained Dr Ferguson.

John Brakenridge, CEO of NZM, said the desire to provide farmers with an easy care and market-led sheep marks the beginning of a new era in New Zealand's sheep industry.

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(Limited entries)

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Oz/Kiwi Shearer training exchange

By *Bernie Walker*

A new reciprocal arrangement has been forged between the Merriman Shearing School at Brewarrina in western New South Wales and the Tectra training organisation in New Zealand. Two young indigenous shearers will be selected to travel to New Zealand for a Tectra shearing course later this year. In exchange, Tectra will send two young Kiwi graduates from one of their courses to Brewarrina for experience in Australian conditions.

Australian Wool Innovation, through Programme manager Ian Evans, will provide the Australians' air fares and the expenses associated with the Tectra course, with the support of Russell Patterson, former Employment and Training Director of the Indigenous Land Council. Bateman Shearing will outfit the young shearers with jackets, singlets and polo shirts.

Eight of the students from the Merriman Shearing School got their first taste of competition shearing at the recent Jackie Howe Festival of the Golden Shears at Jondaryan Woolshed. Accompanied by head trainer at Merriman, Laurie Bateman from Bollon (Qld) (co-holder of the world eight-hour two-stand merino wether record), the youngsters were there for experience. They saw some of Australia's best shearers in action, as well as competing themselves. Phillip Colliss and Jake Woods placed third and fourth respectively in the Jondaryan Woolshed novice shearing event. As Mark Phelps quoted Laurie Bateman in *Queensland Country Life*, "We teach them the skills and they just grow in confidence as they learn. They are building the skills they need to have a great career in the shearing industry." Phelps described the Merriman School as "one of the real success stories of rural training."

The school is a collaborative arrangement between the Indigenous Land Corporation, Fletchers International (Australia's largest sheep meat exporter), the Bateman family, Ian, Laurie and Kath; shearing contractors and trainers from Bollon, who are employed by Access Group Training, and the Federal Department of Education and Training. Over a 15-week course the school teaches

young indigenous men and women the skills required by the shearing and woolhandling industry. It is held on 'Merriman' station, a 17,000 hectare property on the Barwon River, where Fletchers agist 20,000 sheep each year, and which are shorn by the students.

Russell Patterson of Fletchers told Mark Phelps the goal was to have the students shearing up to 80 sheep a day by the end of the school. "It's a self-funding training model where Fletchers pay to have the sheep shorn, which goes on to fund the school." Ian Bateman said the aim is to have a twice-yearly intake of 20 students. After a two-week assessment and testing course, 15 students are selected for the 13 week intensive training course and are then paid a wage, he said. They are also taught a range of shearing related subjects and complete a first aid course. The students are awarded a Certificate II in Agriculture on completion of the school.

Jackson Coventry, 18, Burnie Tasmania, said he had never picked up a handpiece before he arrived at Merriman. "It's physical – there is heaps of knowledge and respect in doing this work. Corey Stanton, 20, Goodooga NSW, said he was keen to learn how to shear after working as a rouseabout. He said, "When you get the good instruction and learn the positions, shearing gets a lot easier."



Laurie Bateman (blue singlet) with young shearers.



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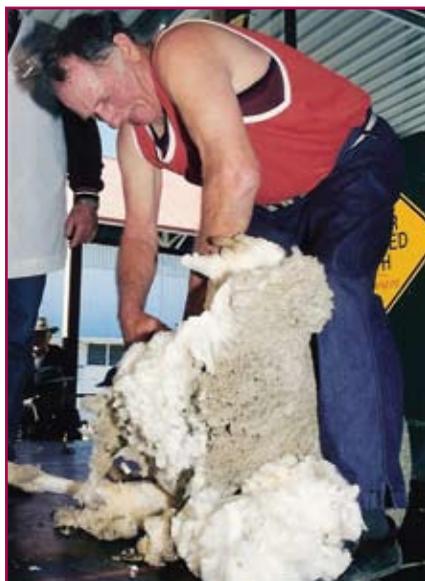
By Bernie Walker

Sports Shear Australia lost one of its keenest supporters when Trevor Roy Hollitt died on 9 May 2012. 'Avachat', as he was known, was also given the nom-de-plume of 'Yap-yap' by Shirley, his wife of 58 years. He had been a resident of a Tenterfield NSW nursing home for almost a year, but his health had only begun to decline about six months ago.

Trevor, born in 1930, was raised on the family farm at Wirrabara, south of the Flinders Ranges in South Australia's mid-north. After he left school, he began shearing and driving big horse teams, the largest being a 16-horse ploughing team.

In 1952, Trevor and his two brothers bought their father's share of the family farm plus 700 acres at Penola. Their neighbour there was the late Ron Bennier, then a leading competition shearer in South Australia. Ron, five times South Australian Open winner, taught Trevor many of the finer points of competition shearing.

Trevor was banned from competing and judging by the Australian Workers Union and the Shearing Competition



Trevor Hollitt was equally adept at shearing with blades and machines. His contribution to shearing over many years earned him life membership of Sports Shear Australia.

Federation of Australia in 1962, but it never dimmed his enthusiasm for shearing competitions in either role.

In 1983 Trevor and his family

moved to Queensland to a 6000-acre property near Stanthorpe, and 1989 he resumed his participation in the sport, both blade and machine shearing.

The advent of Sports Shear in 1995 gave Trevor the opportunity to once again become fully involved, particularly as a judge. He spent an enormous amount of his time promoting and developing wider interest in competitions, throughout Queensland and in New South Wales.

Trevor pioneered 'one sheep, one shearer' events as a forerunner of the present-day 'speed shears', with the objective of enticing shearers to 'have a go'. He would involve celebrities and by-standers to either try shearing or provide the power for someone else on his bike-powered shearing devices. Trevor was also a member of the organising committee for the Golden Shears World Championships at Toowoomba in 2005.

Trevor continued judging until 2009 when he achieved fifty years as a shearing judge, an achievement of which he was justifiably proud. He was honoured with life membership of Sports Shear Australia in 2003.

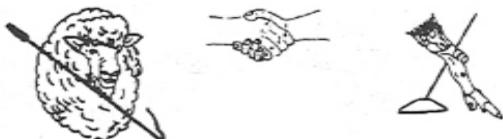


Shearing Sports New Zealand delegates at the August annual meeting in Auckland. Back left: Warren Parker, Kelvyn Scott, John Hough, Bill Gaskill, Alastair Eckhoff, Philip Morrison, Paul Grainger, David Fagan, Michael Hogan, Tom Wilson. Front: Rose Puha, Gail Carr, John Fagan (out-going chairman), Gavin Rowland (chairman elect), Hugh McCarroll and Colin Gibbs.



Winner of the second annual Omarama pool competition between a team of machine shearers (formerly Allan Scott's gang, now Joel Foster Shearing) and a team of Mike Bool's blade shearers was ... the blade shearers! Pictured back left: Tony Bool, Rosina Muraahi, Steve Bool, Georgina Howe, Justin Perniskie, Grant Anderson, Fern Ormond, Angie Rowlands, Stretch Doran, Ross Kelman, Wirimu Kihi, Jody Brogden, Matt Parsons and (front) Wendy Patterson and Gordon the Irishman. Ross Kelman says the competition started last year when the machine team was at Omarama Station (Richard and Annabelle Subtil) and the blade team was at nearby Dunstan Peaks (Patterson property). Station staff and associates were also eligible for the teams and the trophy (pictured) will be hotly contested in years to come.

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Jondaryan's Jacky Howe festival

By *Bernie Walker*

Well promoted through south-east Queensland, the inaugural Jackie Howe Festival of the Golden Shears attracted 15,000 visitors to the 150 year old woolshed at Jondaryan, 45kms west of Toowoomba. Held over three days, there was a full programme of heritage events and shearing. Such was the success of the Festival it appears certain to become an iconic annual feature event.

Much of the programme revolved around a heritage theme with working sheep dogs, great country music and camp oven cooking, supporting the Sports Shear Australia Queensland team selection finals and the new Jackie Howe events. In a unique partnership the woolshed provided a venue, while SSAQ organised the shearing and woolhandling. More than 500 caravans and campervans were on site and at least 60 tents were erected to provide additional accommodation.

On Friday more than 1200 sheep were shorn before 3000 visitors. Two steam engines powered the overhead shafting gear, nine stands each side on the two shearing boards in the shed. Everyone was welcome to shear as many as they wished. A novel feature was a walkway created above the pens to allow visitors to watch the shearing without getting in the way of the busy rouseabouts.

The Festival was officially opened by Toowoomba Regional Council Mayor Paul Antonio, who praised the management team at Jondaryan and the Howe family for their commitment to the project. He confirmed the support of Council in future years.

A Grand Banquet held in the woolshed on Friday evening was a highlight of the weekend and brought together the business community and the public to celebrate the cultural diversity of the Darling Downs Region. It also



Prizes on offer at the inaugural Jacky Howe Festival

demonstrated the suitability of the woolshed as a venue with superb catering served with true Queensland hospitality. EMU Australia presented their New York fashion parade during the evening.

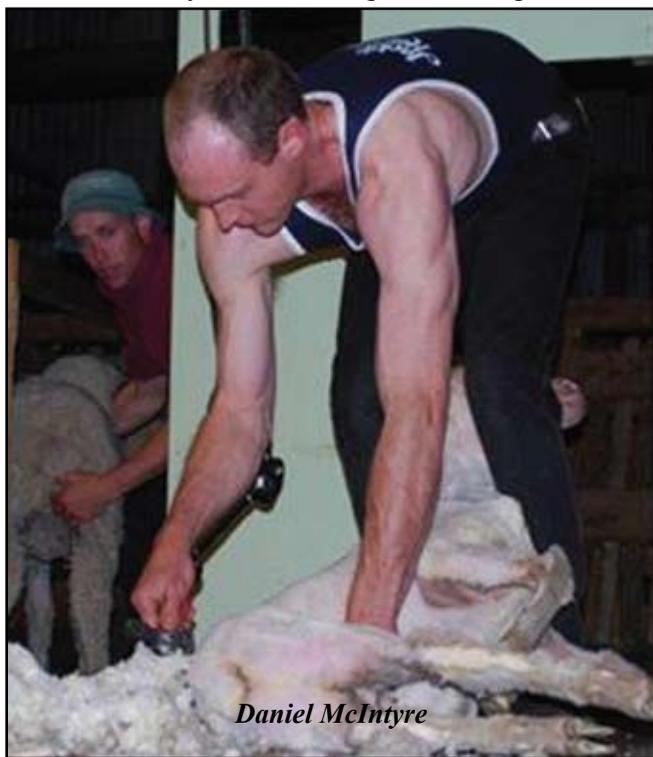
Saturday saw keen competition in all classes of the SSAQ shearing and woolhandling events. Daniel McIntyre from Glen Innes (NSW) won both the Jondaryan Open and the new Jackie Howe Championship, whilst Rachael Hutchinson, Gilgandra (NSW), did likewise in the woolhandling. Michelle Walker, Carrick (Tasmania), placed second in each woolhandling event.

Ross Thompson, Swan Vale (NSW), was second in the Open shearing and Mick Nancarrow, Bollon (Qld), was second in the Jackie Howe. The championships were well supported by large contingents from Tasmania and the New England area of NSW. There was disappointing lack of support from Victoria, South Australia and other areas for such a prestigious event.

Mary Rich, granddaughter of Jack Howe, designed and made a special trophy and medals for the Jackie Howe events. 7000 people were present on the day, which concluded with a special Shearers Feast and live band in the woolshed.

Sunday was listed as the 'Cut-out', peoples day, when another 5000 visitors enjoyed the perfect weather. It began with the shearers' breakfast – brunch in the shed. The leftover sheep were shorn by steam power, the utility (yard) sheep dog trials continued to fascinate all ages, there were whipcracking demos and other activities including more country music. Another highlight was the family reunion held by the Howe family. It was an honour to meet the descendants of the great man. Sunday was a very pleasant and enjoyable conclusion to a great weekend. Several families commented on how much they enjoyed the weekend, and that there was something of interest for all ages.

Congratulations on the success of the Festival must go to Jondaryan Woolshed general manager Lisa Raklander, her staff and the Woolshed Board who combined with Sports Shear Queensland to stage a truly memorable Festival. No doubt 2013 will be even better.



Daniel McIntyre

Here it is, mate, on a silver plate

A new television show coming to our screens soon will select and train the champion shearers of the future. *The Ewe-Factor* will see thousands of wannabes battle it out for the top spot by demonstrating their shearing skills (or innate lack of) in front of a studio audience and panel of four celebrity judges.

The show will follow the tried-and-tested formula created by its 'musically' oriented parent. Once the audience has made up its mind that it likes one of the hopefuls, it becomes a brainless mob of cretins, cheering in unison at every compliment given by the judges – even if the performance was actually crap, and vehemently booing every criticism, regardless of whether or not it was justified.

The judges, with egos rivalled in size only by their aptitude for making clichéd, stupid and irritatingly banal comments, will whittle the contestants down to ten or twelve or so, leaving viewers to vote for the final champion shearer in a series of live shows ...

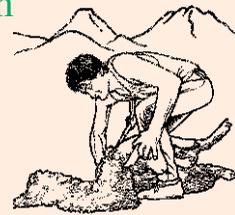
Yeah, right! Thankfully the wool industry is one game where it is safe to say success and fame don't come overnight, as this magazine's readership knows all too well.

In the 1975 Australian film *Sunday Too Far Away*, when learner Jim states (although falsely) that he's shorn five thousand sheep, he is met with the reply: "Well, when you've shorn another five thousand, you'll be able to call yourself a shearer. Is that right?"

Why doesn't anyone these days want to metaphorically shear the ten thousand sheep anymore? Why do aspiring young singers expect it to all be given to them on a plate by a reality TV show instead of working their backsides off for years singing in pubs and clubs, working their way up the ladder the way it should be?

A lot of these 'stars' will be forgotten about just as quickly as they were created. Anyone who makes it in their chosen profession the real way though will never forget the years of hard work and sacrifice, the ups and downs, the blood, sweat and tears, that lay the foundations that make their achievements feel like they actually mean something. (*Tom Harding*)

Great crew last season: thanks to all who were part of it. You proved our system works!



- Shearing rates up to \$1.45
- Cover comb gear allowance of 12 cents
- Top cover comb rate is \$1.55
- Top woolhandling rate is \$20.00
- Top pressing rate is \$20.00

(Rates include statutory and annual holidays, and gear allowance.)

And that's not all:

You get breakfast, two smokos, lunch AND dinner! That's worth at least \$45/day. And you don't have to do anything (no shopping, no cooking, no dishes ... no stress ...) That's the same as an after-tax rate of:

- 15 cents/sheep for a shearer doing 300 sheep a day
- \$5.63/hour for a woolhandler or presser doing 8-hour days

No vehicle expenses:

You get taken to work each day in recent model vans, all towing covered trailers for your gear. No fuel, tyres, registration, maintenance. No capital to buy a vehicle in the first place. That's saving you at least \$20 a day, after tax:

- 6 cents/sheep for a shearer
- \$2.50/hour for a woolhandler/presser

Why would you want to work for anyone else when ...

- We have accommodation bases at both Taumarunui and Taihape. They are both FLASH (especially by industry standards!). Heaps cheaper than a backpackers or boarding or sharing a house with others.
- We pay first week ACC, sick leave and bereavement leave (all contractors should be, by law).
- Our health and safety system has been going ten years.
- Our injury rates are LOW. ACC agrees and has awarded us tertiary accreditation.
- We have plenty of sheep for you to shear.
- You go away with a pocket full of money and have had a bloody good, safe time.

So what do we ask in return?

You need to sign an Employment Agreement (you and I both need that by law) and work under the terms and conditions of our Team Operations Manual (same rules for ALL).

Mackintosh Shearing has been contracting for 20 years and we've heard heaps of times that "Mackintosh Shearing has too many rules for me". Fine by me: If you want to

- Graffiti anywhere you like
- Smoke weed at work and on farmers' properties
- Physically abuse your partner or workmate
- Smash up our quarters if you feel like it or when you're drunk
- Turn the vans into rubbish heaps

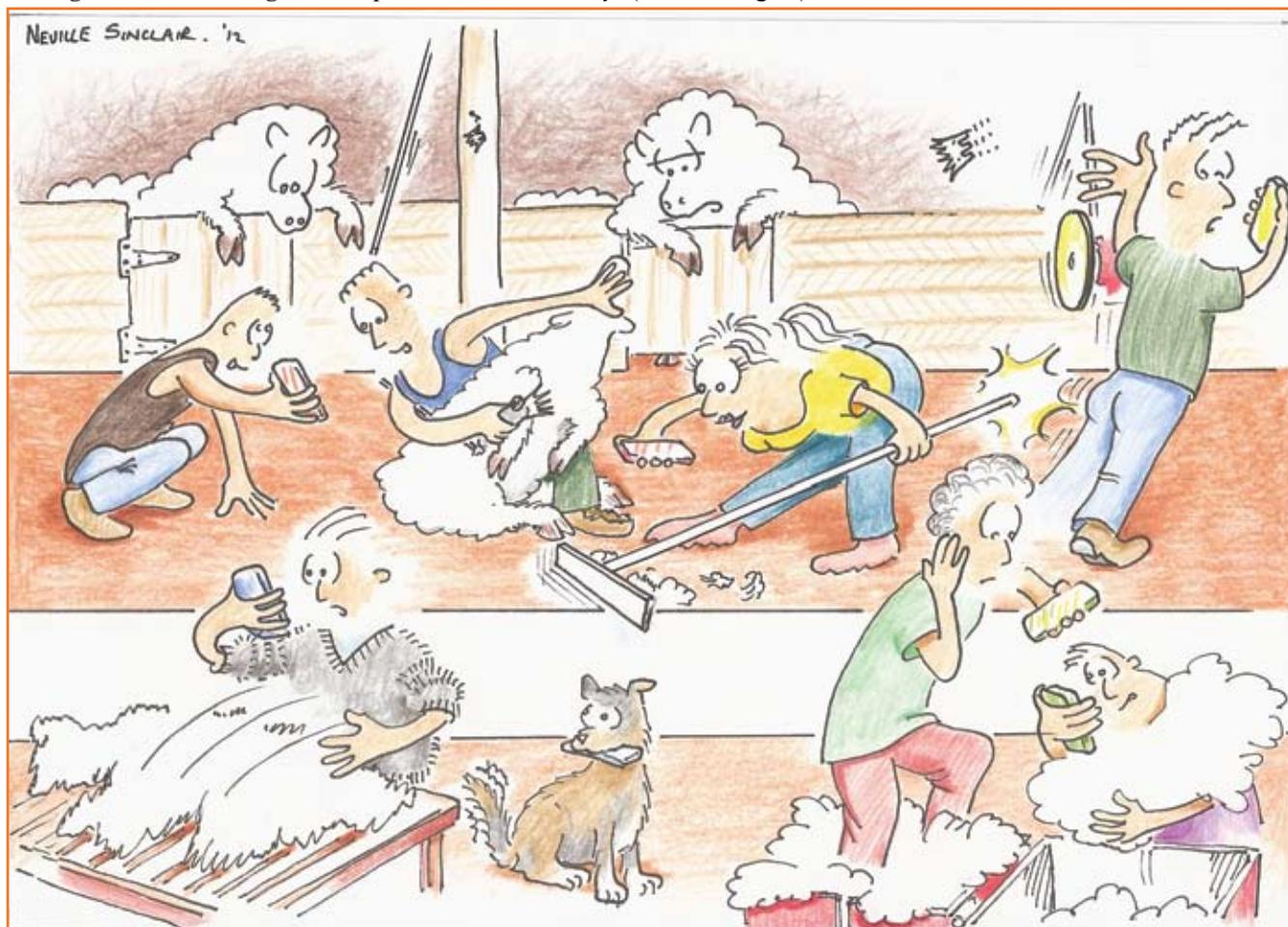
Then you probably should stay away. 'Cos our workers aren't going to be too impressed with you. But if you want to get stuck into some work, make some money and have some decent standards, then please give me a ring:

Charlie Burton
For Mackintosh Shearing
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Shearing



Blade shearer Noel Handley (Christchurch) and machine shearer Mark Gillgren (Northland) brought their tools of trade to Whangarei's CBD earlier this year as part of a promotion to advertise the 150 years of settlement in Hikurangi township (a few kms north of the city) being celebrated the following day. On-lookers became spell-bound at the craftsmanship on display. And Hikurangi had much to celebrate, being a small ex-coal-mining town that used to have its own dairy factory as a primary farming district for probably most of the last century. A Fonterra dairy factory is now situated between Hikurangi and Whangarei. Sheep farming has also been an important industry in the wider region. Hikurangi used to be the social hub of the area too, with movie theatres, tennis, bowls, rugby, several shops, a large pub, a primary school, a post office with telephone service and about 30 staff; a train station (with freight being very important), as well as medical and veterinary services. Although some people now commute from Hikurangi to work in Whangarei, it has managed to keep its own individuality. (Janice Gillgren)



“Jerome down on stand four has just posted a note on Facebook and Twitter - he’s now three ahead of you.”

WHEN HANDY RETURNS

The shortest day was drawing near, 'twas not a week away
When Handy Andy Anderson -Top-Hand - was heard to say,
'I'll camp tonight at Peg-leg Creek, the old tin hut will do
From there I'll check the snow-line fence, the winter storms are due.
I've got snow heels on my horse's shoes, I've nailed them on real tight
So Black won't slip or slide about and we will be alright.
I'll ride along the snow line track, I do it every year
And where the fence crosses each creek I'll lift it high and clear.
So when the thaw comes in the spring and every creek's in flood
There'll be no tangled fence to fix among the rocks and mud.'
Now Andy was a character, Otago born and bred
And if he got a knock or cut it was Otago blood he bled.
He loved to be high on the hill up where the kea flew
And stories rich and false and fair old Handy Andy knew.
The barking of the hunt-a-way, the bawl of cows and steers
The crack of stockwhips at the yard, all music to his ears.
And when he had a horse to break the station boys would grin
He'd buckle down his old Skuthorpe, mount quick, and settle in.
They would stand and watch and wonder the glory of the ride
Old Handy was their hero and they spoke his name with pride.
One night while drinking whisky neat down at the local bar
A stranger asked of Andy why he'd never travelled far.
He looked the stranger up and down and gave it to him straight
'I've not explored Otago yet, the outside world can wait.'
And thus, close to the shortest day he rode off on old Black
To make secure the snow-line fence along the snow-line track.
And somewhere past the old tin hut and out by Peg-leg Creek
A sudden early storm came through and raged on for a week.
The snow fell fast and drifted deep, the icy cold winds blew
And it was many weeks before a search party got through.
There was no swag wrap in the hut, no tracks left in the snow
The fences though were tied up high but Andy didn't show.
And stories grew as stories do when there's a mystery
And when the moon was on high beam a shadow some could see.
Against the backdrop of the snow and moving forth and back
They said it's Andy Anderson, looking for the snow-line track.
But the station boys on Friday nights in the Old Pack Horse Hotel
When the Speight's is flowing freely, had a different tale to tell.
'Old Handy isn't dead you know he isn't dead for sure
Otago is his kingdom and he's gone off to explore.
The sunset on the mountain range and the sunrise on the plain
A story up each gully and a lyric down each lane.
He could be up the Dingleburn or out past Temple Peak
So many hidden trails and vales for him to search and seek.
There are musters here and round ups there and droving to and fro
And camp fires in the lone tin huts out where the hill men go.
There are shearing sheds and shanty towns along each country mile
It's plain to see old Handy won't be back here for a while.
Until he does we'll keep bar space where he liked to drape himself
Where a bottle of the best whisky awaits him on the shelf.'

© Blue Jeans 2012

Overheard Conversation

'What's it like living at Kennedy Bay?'

"Oh, it's okay, except for meal times. Then we have to decide whether we're having crayfish, paua, kina, mussels, snapper or wild pork for dinner. It's just so damned difficult to decide."

'You could write all the options on bits of paper and draw them out of a hat and decide that way.'

"Yeah, but it could be hard to find a pen or pencil at Kennedy Bay. In the end we usually just say 'stuff it, we'll have a little bit of everything,' just to avoid the stress of having to make such a tough decision."

But it was even worse (better?) on this occasion, with wild venison from the Lake Wakatipu region also on the menu, thanks to a southern sharp-shooter named Gozz. Thanks Gozz!



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Daddy's Drysdales

By Clive Dalton

In the heyday of Drysdale sheep in the 1970s and 80s, if I'd predicted that within two decades they'd be classed as a 'rare breed' and all but disappeared, I would have been laughed out of our Whatawhata Research Station woolshed. Their future was bright back then. Their wonderful white carpet wool could be dyed pastel shades, it saved overseas exchange to buy Scottish Blackface wool with all its black fibres and heather contaminants, and Dr Francis William Henry (Daddy) Dry was very much alive and active to give advice on what was basically a very simple breeding programme. He got the nickname 'Daddy' as when anyone phoned him and Mrs. Dry answered – she'd always say 'Oh I'll go and get Daddy'! He of course spoke of her to other folk as 'Mammy'.

The inheritance of the hairy gene Daddy found on Neilson's farm in the Manawatu was very simple, and Daddy wrote up his findings in endless papers. One famous paper was in the *Indian Journal of Genetics* – as they were very much into hairy sheep too.

We had a flock of Drysdales at Whatawhata in a breed comparison, and Daddy was a frequent visitor, always keen to go wool sampling to the yards in his pommie Burberry raincoat, a dozen brown envelopes secured with an elastic band, and a pair of surgical scissors in the large inside pocket. The other essential bit of his kit was a small square of black velvet to put over a knee to show up the different classes of fibre which he had classified and named.

Most of our staff at the Station had been to Massey, and Daddy had lectured to them in genetics. They all had hilarious tales to tell of his absent-minded professor escapades, like him arriving at the college one morning carrying the dustbin, which he had forgotten to leave at the gate. He had three bikes around the campus, as he was never sure where he'd left one. He always took a stuffed chook into his genetics lectures as a visual aid, but never got round to using it. Despite his daft ways, everyone loved and highly respected him. Many stayed on during the vacations to help with his hairy fibre work.

Daddy and I (we called each other Dalton and Dry) had a Pommie link as he and Mammy kept a house in Leeds for



Dr Dry sampling a Drysdale at Whatawhata. Shepherd Ian McMillan holds the ram and Dr Murray Bigham takes notes.

when they went back on University sabbaticals. He used to hole up in at the Textile Dept and everyone did a runner when they saw him coming, as they knew he would be on the cadge. When I left Leeds in 1968 he took over my office – an old decrepit terraced house I occupied for eight years, as I never qualified for a room in the main Ag building.

But the most intriguing story is about what happened after the scientific rewards of his genetic discovery and the naming of the N gene (after Neilson). He established a wee flock at Massey and somebody (I think the farm manager) got sick of them, and was putting a keen edge on his Green River knife. Poor Daddy had to find friends to graze his diminished genetic nucleus on their lawns around Palmerston North.

If anyone at Massey had understood that Daddy was born into the Yorkshire East Riding tribe where the freezing East wind blew non stop from the Urals on to the Yorkshire Wolds, they would have understood that there was no way such a lad would be for giving up!

UEB saved Daddy's hairy Romneys, which were by then named after him, and initially UEB owned the rams and leased them out to farmers, buying all the wool back for carpets. It didn't take long to get into a full hairy flock as

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long as you knew which alleles the rams were carrying. They needed to be Homozygous with a double copy of hairy allele (NN), and not a Heterozygous with only one copy of dominant N allele (Nn). Daddy had sorted all this out, so farmers hopefully only got NN rams from UEB. This allowed the fastest grading up from Romney to purebred Drysdale. Once all the sheep were all NN, then change could race along. Soon after this, it became a free market and Drysdale stud breeders could supply rams to anyone. UEB bought the wool.

New Zealand should be grateful for Daddy's work. It was a classical bit of pure science, which turned out to be of great commercial use. Daddy could never have done this work in today's climate. It would have been killed by a posse of accountants demanding a PRR (predicted rate of return), and a snake pit of lawyers demanding protection of IP (intellectual property).

Read more about Daddy Dry and many other subjects on Clive Dalton's Blog: <http://woolshed1.blogspot.com>



*This gang shearing sheep at Waikawau Bay (northern Coromandel Peninsula) earlier this month obligingly stopped long enough for the photo when *Shearing* magazine's photographer happened to be passing by. From left: Simon Ward, Paul Denton (farmer), Lu Denton, Damon Macdonald and Colin Stanaway. And above the shearing board in this shed is a constant reminder (photo below) that sheep numbers on the Peninsula aren't what they used to be and there's plenty of time for shearers and others to pursue other interests. Under the mounted head is the inscription 'Hunting is not just a matter of life and death. It is far more serious than that.' A lot like golf, some would suggest.*



"So Mort really did catch this 8lb snapper all by himself then?" 'Oh yeah no, definitely.'



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New electrolyte drink inspired by shearers

R-Line Electrolyte Drink was launched onto the New Zealand market in June 2011 and has since created quite a buzz in the sports industry. At a fraction of the price of big brand sports drinks, R-Line also tastes great and is getting results on and off the field. Much of the success comes down to the convenience; a liquid concentrate is a lot easier to mix up in bulk for a whole team than powdered concentrates.

But it's their latest product that is expected to get results in shearing sheds this summer. The new R-Line Activity Drink is specifically designed through one of New Zealand's leading universities to match the requirements of New Zealand's hardest workers.

"We visited some A&P shows and shearing competitions last year and I was quite staggered how hard the job was. When the shearers started buying R-Line in large quantities we saw an opportunity," says Phill Dromgool, the owner of the company.

"R-Line Activity Drink has plenty of electrolytes for improved hydration, but a lot less calories than a typical sports drink, so it matches a typical shearer's energy requirements much closer than the big brand products. We've also found that Kiwis don't like their energy drinks to be overly sweet so we've really toned down the sweetness too."



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Our industry is full of stories about people starting work early in the sheds - many of them keen to follow in the hard-working footsteps of family and friends. Young Ledeane Smith of Gisborne is among them, already looking a dab hand on the board while mother Leonora (in the background) takes the wool off another lamb.

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Respective open champions at the 150th Canterbury A&P Show held earlier this month. Above, Jason Win (formerly Ikamatua, now Australia-based) and below, Taiwha Nelson adds the woolhandling title to the several New Zealand Fine Wool titles she's won at Alexandra over the years.



Do something drastic - throw away the plastic!



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- Quick-release downtube



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- Blasta 3100
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CUTTERS

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- Quattro
- Quattro Sprint
- Sabre Sprint
- Arrow
- Bullet



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Images from the 45th Waimate Shears in October, courtesy Tania Anderson Photography. Clockwise from top left: Open blades finalists Tim Hogg, Bill Michelle, Richard Watson, Chris Russell, Ross Kelman, Tom Rarere; Tim Hogg; senior brothers Cory and Linton Palmer; Darin Forde; open finalists (sponsor), Darin Forde; Tony Coster, Grant Smith, Andy Mainland, Shaun Mathieson, Ant Frew; intermediate finalist Shun Oishi (Japan) and Ross Kelman, open woolhandling finalist Rocky Hape-Taite.

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