Integrity Shearing (Ohai) gang at Greer’s property, Sunnyside, western Southland, January 2015. (See page 3 for names.)
Choice of Champions!

Nathan Stratford
Southland

Aaron Haynes
Manawatu

Gavin Mutch
Taranaki

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Greetings readers, and welcome to the April 2015 edition. What a mad scramble it has been getting this ‘mag’ together, allowing ourselves just one day after the New Zealand championships to get everything finalised. If we do learn by our mistakes, that won't happen again.

All that aside, we hope there is something of interest in our pages for you. We have a few more photos in this edition after getting out and about in some southern sheds, catching up with our people at work.

We also cover Golden Shears and NZ Champs in some depth. A feature at Goldies was the return of open finalists from the 1960s and 1970s, among then 1961 open finalist Ian Harrison. Ian shore in the veterans event, still as clean and pink as in his heyday fifty years ago.

Te Kuiti marked the final farewell by David Fagan. The Shears and the Town and the shearing community produced a combined effort befitting the occasion.

So, happy reading, thanks to all for your continued support of the magazine and we’ll see you again towards the end of August.

Ka kite ano
Des Williams (editor)
Made famous by a song

The Australian folk song ‘Goorianawa’ (extract above) tells of a shearer, known as ‘Whalebone’, who had shorn in many of the tough sheds of New South Wales during the 1880s and ‘90s and never been faulted. But he was sacked (speared) at ‘Goorianawa’ before he’d ‘barbered three’.

As a result of the song, ‘Goorianawa’ became a famous shed on the northern slopes of the Warrumbungle Ranges in Central New South Wales. ‘Whalebone’ was sacked by the owner at the time, Cuthbert Featherstonhaugh, who had a reputation as being very hard on the shearers, hence the reference to ‘knuckle down’ in the chorus of the song.

‘Knuckle down’ in this context meant to keep one’s knuckles close to the sheep to shear it cleanly. But his hostile attitude to the shearers is understandable when some facts are known. Shearing was taking place on the station when the big strike of 1891 was called, and it is recorded that news of the strike reached the shed halfway through the second run. The shearers walked off the board leaving partly shorn sheep to run away.

It was reported that Featherstonhaugh offered to pay them the new rate they were striking for, plus the same new rate for the sheep already shorn, if they would finish the shed. But they refused and he never forgave them for it.

When Featherstonhaugh purchased the station with John Campbell in 1877 it covered 150,000 acres, but by 1995 it had been whittled down to 6,315 acres. In 1894 Featherstonhaugh sold his share to Campbell who, it is thought, rebuilt the old shed in 1906. At this time it was converted from blades to machines, twenty two stands, eleven on each side. Described as looking like puddings hanging on hooks, it is believed the machines would have been Falkiner-Boll units which were the first electric stands, as Wolseley and Lister electric gear was not available until 1910. The electricity for the shed was supplied by a generator driven by a steam engine.

It does appear that ‘Whalebone’, whoever he was, wrote the song some time after 1891. It is not known if he was one of those sacked that year. The song was lost for many years until Duke Tritton, who, as a young boy had been taught the song by a blade shearer uncle, was able to recall the words and the tune. Tritton, a remarkable man, left Sydney aged 19 for the bush and recorded his experiences over the next four years in his book, ‘Time Means Tucker’, while working in the area covered by the song.

The late John Meredith also wrote a biography of Tritton, ‘The Duke of the Outback’, published in 1983. Featherstonhaugh, aged 80, wrote an autobiography of the first thirty-five years of his life entitled ‘After Many Days’, which is considered an Australian classic. (Bernie Walker)

********

Five-Stand Record

Puketiti Station in the heart of the King Country’s limestone farmland provided the venue for New Zealand’s latest record-setting gang.

Piopio contractor Mark Barrowcliffe’s crew of Ringakaha Paewai (618), Willie Hewitson (603), Aiden Copp (586), Jock MacDonald (564) and George Parker (539) combined efforts to produce a new record of 2910. This was comfortably ahead of the previous mark of 2638, set 13 months earlier by a team organised by Sam Welch.

The record day, thanks to social media, was soon news around the world, with more than 9000 followers on a Facebook page set up for the occasion. A French television crew was also in attendance, filming for a documentary. The World Records Society said the shearers had “come close to the edge” quality-wise, but just one official caution had been issued during the day and no sheep were disqualified from the tally.

Puketiti Station is also notable as the site of the Department of Conservation-managed Grand Canyon Caves containing a colony of native long-tailed bats.
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Serious business and happy moments from Golden Shears 2015. Top: Aaron Haynes announced himself onto the international stage with sixth placing in the PGG Wrightson final and second place in the Golden Shears open. Middle: Chiquita Tamepo lands her fleece and first place in the junior woolhandling. Above: Tara Smith and Sarah Moran – Australia’s winning wool processors in the Trans-Tasman test match. Their cup over-floweth!

Top: Three heads better than one – judge Peter McCabe watching shearer Cam Ferguson close-shaving a merino in the PGG Wrightson final. Be careful with that thing, Mr Merino said. Above: Ash Jones adds to the growing list of overseas competitors to win the Golden Shears junior shearing title.
Golden Shears championships 5-7 March 2015:

Golden Shears Open (20 sheep): Gavin Mutch (Scotland) 65.174 1; Aaron Haynes (Feilding) 65.77 2; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 65.979 3; Dain King (Hastings) 66.792 4; Murray Henderson (Feilding) 70.53 5; Troy Pyper (Invercargill) 73.881 6.

PGG Wrightson National Circuit (3 merino, 3 long wool, 3 halfbreds, 3 second-shear, 3 lambs): Tony Coster (Rakai) 77.263 1; Cam Ferguson (Waipawa) 80.937 2; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 81.61 3; Gavin Mutch (Scotland) 82.14 4; David Buick (Pongaroa) 85.444 5; Aaron Haynes (Feilding) 85.444 6.

Golden Shears Senior (12 sheep): Ethan Pankhurst (Masterton) 50.123 1; Cody Beck (Taumarunui) 54.53 2; Bevan Pere (Gisborne) 57.96 3; Robert Mudgegay (Taihape) 59.66 4; Dylan McGruddy (Masterton) 62.148 5; Michael Rolston (Levin) 62.726 6.

Golden Shears Intermediate (8 sheep): Marshall Guy (Kaeo) 45.035 1; Kaleb Foote (Waikaretu) 46.283 2; Michael Herlihy (Matere) 48.992 3; Marley Waihape (Mataura) 51.364pts, 4; Elgan Jones (Wales) 56.631 5; Nick Greaves (England) 58.176 3.

Golden Shears Junior (5 sheep): Ash Jones (Llangollen, Wales) 37.421 1; Robert Hubber (Dipton) 38.153 2; Tui Wilton (Masterton) 38.452 3; Connor Puha (Kimbolton) 40.327pts, 4; Laura Bradley (Woodville) 40.6 5; Emily Te Kapa (Cianlarich, Scotland) 43.121 6.

Golden Shears Novice (2 sheep): Sarah Higgins (Havelock) 32.42 1; T’aiwaihoa Wati (Dargaville) 35.108 2; Ethan Pankhurst (Dargaville) 27.497 3; Richard Pearson (Carterton) 25.93 3; Hugh McCarroll (Whangamata) 30.073 4; Phillip Woodward (Tuakau) 32.326 5; Neil Sidwell (Kaukapakapa) 41.178 6.

Maori-Pakeha Teams Event: Casey Bailey (Masterton) and David Buick (Pongaroa), 73.505 1; Tama Niania (Gisborne) and Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti), 74.783 2; Jimmy Samuels (Masterton) and Doug Smith (Napier) 79.411 3.

Lister Shearing Trans-Tasman Shearing Test (6 merinos, 3 long wool, 3 second-shear): Australia (Shannon Warnest, Damien Boyle, Daniel McIntyre) 260.679pts beat New Zealand (Nathan Stratford, Colin O’Neill, David Buick) 281.845.

Elders Primary Wool Trans-Tasman Woolhandling Test (4 merino fleeces, 4 lambs): Australia (Sarah Moran, Tara Smith) 400.022pts, beat New Zealand (Ronnie Goss, Keryn Herbert) 501.488.

Wooolhandling:

Golden Shears Open (6 long wool, 4 second shear): Joel Henare (Gisborne) 196.466 1; Sheree Alabaster (Taihape) 293.13 2; Ronnie Goss (Mangamahoe Valley) 307.08 3; Anita Phillips (Taumarunui) 388.226 4.

Golden Shears Senior (4 long wool): Stevie Mason-Smallman (Taihape) 152.74 1; Erana Smith (Ruatoria/Hastings) 157.24 2; Adrienne Samuels (Marton) 166.674 3; Ana Braddock (Eketahuna) 170.74 4.

Golden Shears Junior (4 long wool): Chiquita Tamepo (Tikitiki) 117.312 1; Sam Tipene (Eketahuna) 127.946 2; Ash Boyce (Dannevirke) 141.04 3; Peketai Puha (Napier) 157.04 4.

Golden Shears Novice (1 long wool): Claire Wilson (Biggar, Scotland) 99.6 1; Chynna Haney (Eketahuna) 102.0 2; Bianca Hewa (Masterton) 109.0 3; Hazel Wood (Ruawai) 136.0 4.

North Island Circuit Open: Sheree Alabaster (Taihape) 170.366 1; Logan Kamura (Marton) 174.21 2; Keryn Herbert (Te Awamutu) 176.478 3; Emairaina Braddock (Eketahuna) 231.58 4.

Wooolpressing:

Golden Shears Men’s: Jeremy Goodger (Masterton) 37.8 1; Ronnie Eriha (Hastings) 49.8 2.

Golden Shears Women’s: Fiona Healey (Masterton) 50.25 1; Cushla Abraham (Masterton) 64.5 2.

Golden Shears Pairs: Willie Kiloni and Conan Gray (Masterton) 51 1; Vinnie and James Goodger (Masterton) 70.2 2.

Triathlon (shearing, woolhandling, woolpressing): Jonathan Hicks (Marto) 173.18 1; Carmen Smith (Pongaroa) 195.96 2; Cushla Abraham (Masterton) 213.453 3.

YFC Events:

Blue Ribbon Open Shearing (6 sheep): Aaron Haynes (Feilding) 32.417 1; Ethan Pankhurst (Masterton) 33.771 2; Corey Palmer (Dipton) 34.60 3; Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 34.919 4; Lachie Baynes (Wairoa) 36.032 5; Jimmy Samuels (Marton) 36.167 6.

Teams shearing and woolhandling (6 long wool): Tasman (shearers Ethan Pankhurst, Corey Smith; woolhandlers Sarah Higgins, Samantha Gordon) 277.497 1; Southland (shearers Corey Palmer, Linton Palmer, woolhandlers Chiquita Tamepo, Jayden Pattison) 294.977 2; Manawatu (shearers Aaron Haynes, Cam Hicks; woolhandlers Connor Puha, Ngaira Puha) 368.119 3.

Top left: Riki Alabaster (Taihape) and son Reuben (aged 11) arrive at the competitors’ check-in at Golden Shears last month to receive the little band of gold on their wrists that allows them to come and go without further ado for the rest of the weekend. And yes, we mean ‘competitors’. Riki competed in the open (finished down the list a bit) and Reuben took part in the novice event. About 30cm taller than the catching pen door, Reuben was top qualifier (four on the board and five out the back!) but had to settle for fourth place in the final, won by Sarah Higgins of Marlborough. And bottom left, father and son, pretty proud of the young man’s efforts.
Top: The Goodger brothers do their mirror image thing on their way to a surprise second placing in the Golden Shears pairs woolpressing (won by Willie Kilioni and Conan Gray). Above: Popular investment at the TAB for the Golden Shears open final, Murray Henderson of Feilding. Murray was one of three new entrants (with Troy Pyper and Aaron Haynes) in the Open final – that last happened in 1983! Top right: Dion King’s miraculous recovery of errant animal that thought the fadge would be a good place to hide. Above: John Hodder has spent many years organising and judging woolpressing at Golden Shears, but showed in the Veterans event that he still remembers how to get the wool off a sheep in clean and timely fashion. ‘I can even do it standing on one leg,’ he said!

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Shear hard luck

By Des Williams
If you are going to write a comprehensive history on any subject, it’s as certain as death and taxes that you will get some things wrong. Or miss something out! Hazel Riseborough, who wrote Shear Hard Work (Auckland University Press 2010) has forwarded on to Shearing magazine three letters she received from readers with a request that we ‘set the record straight’ for future reference.

Grace Johnson
Gordon Campbell of Stratford wrote about his mother, ‘Grace Johnson’, who was incorrectly named as Mrs Grace Johnson in the AR Mills book, Sheep-O! Grace was the daughter of Freeman (Free) Johnson, a farmer, sawmiller and boatbuilder who worked mostly in the Marlborough Sounds, ‘especially on D’Urville Island, which is where Mum lived from birth to 19 years of age.
‘Free leased farm land at Greville Harbour on the island, and Mum helped him with farm work. She was known for having a very good team of working dogs. She left the island when World War II started and worked around Marlborough and Nelson as a land girl. There is a bit about her in The Land Girls by Dianne Bardsley.’ Gordon Campbell then noted that a reference to “Bill Johnson’s daughter working at Timaru” (Shear Hard Work page 294) was definitely not his mother.

Charlie Oliver
A letter from Walter Smith of Feilding related to the tragic case of Charlie Oliver, who died in January 1955 while attempting to better Ivan Bowen’s world record. Walter challenged Hazel’s statement that Charlie’s death was attributable to Benzedrine tablets that he had taken during the day (lunch time, possibly).
Hazel’s reference was a story by this writer, published in the Golden Shears programme 2003 (Triumph and Tragedy at Opiki). That reference, in turn, quoted the coroner’s report as reported in the Manawatu Evening Standard 25 March 1955: ‘On admission to hospital the deceased was found to have evidence of severe dehydration (loss of water from the blood and tissue fluid) in spite of the fact that he had apparently been drinking adequate quantities of liquid to make up for the loss by sweating.
“It is probable that the absorption of water from the intestine was prevented or seriously reduced by the action of the Benzedrine which has the effect of contracting the blood vessels.’
A Palmerston North pathologist, Dr TH Pullar, had told the Coroner’s Court it was his opinion that Oliver’s death was caused by ‘dehydration and hyperpyrexia, brought on by severe muscular exertion in hot weather, and probably induced by some extent to the effects of Benzedrine.’
The Coroner left out the reference to Benzedrine in his official verdict, but issued a general warning that Benzedrine tablets should be taken only under medical supervision.
Walter Smith suggests in his letter that Charlie had been drinking a lot of saline (salty) water and the salt became crystallized in his kidneys as he became dehydrated, causing kidney failure and death.

Jack Harrison
Walter also noted that Hazel had omitted to mention the legendary Taihape contractor, Jack Harrison, who was ‘every bit as well known as Bill Meech.’ Walter had shorn for Jack and eventually took over his run. ‘Jack Harrison was well known for his fight for better wages. This of course lost us a lot of sheds. He did more for shearers and better accommodation than any other person alive at that time.’
Percy de Malmanche
Bill Sheat of Lower Hutt wrote in regard to Percy de Malmanche. Bill thought Percy’s place in New Zealand shearing history wasn’t adequately covered by the two very brief mentions he received in Hazel’s book.
‘I am concerned that there is very little reference to Percy de Malmanche who held the [world] record from the 1930s until it was broken by the Bowens in the 1950s. The record was set in a shed on a property owned by a Mrs Bell [a Mr Lambie is cited as owner in a contemporary press report from the Taranaki Daily News] on what was then known as the Main South Road (now SH 45) just north of the Oeo Hotel which is on the bank of the Oeo River in South Taranaki.

The record was certified by a local Justice of the Peace, one PS Riley who was the storekeeper and postmaster at the adjoining village of Phama. The sheep used in the record were owned by my father WA Sheat, later an MP for Patea and Egmont from 1943 to 1966. My father used the shed on the Bell property as at that time we did not have our own shearing facilities.’
Bill Sheat relates how Percy lived on a small dairy farm about four kilometres away and continued to shear his father’s sheep when they had their own shed.
‘He used to get up in the morning, milk his cows and be at our place to start shearing at 5.30am. At the end of the day he would return to his farm and milk his cows again.’
Bill says he learned from a later owner of the Lambie property, Jim Barr, that shearing enthusiasts would turn up for years afterwards, wanting to see the shed where the record took place. (For more on Percy, see page 23.)

So, if you have a copy of Shear Hard Work on your bookshelf, you might like to note the ‘feedback’ and corrections noted above.
Disappearing sheep

By Dr Clive Dalton

I was pleased to see that a team of veterinarians at Massey University is going to research the problem of wastage in sheep flocks, and are taking detailed records in some fully recorded flocks to find out why sheep die.

That’s a great idea but I hope they have more luck than many researchers had over the past 40 years, which ended up with few real practical answers.

But I noted that the Massey vets had already noticed that sheep just disappear! Well I am proud to claim that I, and my old MAF Sheep and Wool Instructor, John Dobbie, were the only ones brave enough (or daft enough) to even admit there was such a problem – and to risk trying to get some figures on the issue.

I got up a full head of frustration steam in 1972 at the Whatawhata Hill Country Research Station when I asked John Dobbie what was the story out in the real world. Because I had got so frustrated as our Whatawhata tallies never tallied – even in a closely recorded flock on well-fenced clean hill country. Where did the missing sheep go?

From the farmers who were willing to talk to us about the problem and give us their honest estimates, it was clear that if you had 3% loss you could rejoice, and when it got to 5% and even up to 9%, you kept very quiet, and when asked, you always quoted 2-3%! In Scotland it’s called ‘the black loss’!

Our biggest Whatawhata loss was in weaned lambs from December into the New Year, and among our breeds, the Perendales were the best at turning up at each muster. There were always plenty of reasons suggested for these lost sheep – but they were just guesses. Rustling came up as the final suggestion, but we could never find proof.

Things got so bad that auditors in suits and new gumboots arrived from Head Office in Wellington to count our sheep. The technicians thought this was a real laugh, and I’m sure they just ran the same sheep around the yards for the auditors to keep counting.

Then the proverbial hit the fan big time, and I was called on to the Director’ carpet at Ruakura, because on the cover no less, of the New Zealand Journal of Agriculture for February 1972, the designer made a clever picture of sheep fading away into the distance, with the heading ‘The case for disappearing sheep’.

Unfortunately it was published when Muldoon’s Sheep Retention Scheme was at its zenith – so we were blamed for inferring that farmers were collecting money for phantom sheep. Maybe they were.

But in my undercover enquiries I learned of a solution from Lands & Survey shepherds. To keep the Field Officers off their backs, they always kept extra lambs at docking (their first accurate tally) up their sleeves, to be drip-fed into the tally books to cover up for lambs that disappeared without trace after weaning, as they had to tally sheep every time they moved them.

So our only truly scientific conclusion on disappearing hill country sheep, was that they went into thin air without trace and left the planet. I wish the Massey team better luck than I had at researching the issue.

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Contractors’ annual conference

The New Zealand Shearing Contractors’ Association and Shearing Contractors’ Association of Australia will be holding their joint Conference and Annual General Meetings, Shear Harvest on 13/14/15 May 2015, at Queenstown.

The conference will be held at the beautiful Crowne Plaza Hotel in central Queenstown. The conference will be held over three days, with days one and day three being held for both Australian and New Zealand delegates, and day two set aside for our respective annual meetings.

Day One starting at 8.30 am includes CEO of Primary ITO, Mark Jefferies talking about shearer and woolhandling training; WorkSafe presenting on what the Health & Safety Reform Bill will look like, and what it will mean to us as employers.

Our keynote speaker, Darren Shand will speak to us on what the All Blacks have done to perfect their team environment and how this can be replicated into any business. With this being Rugby World Cup year, Darren’s workload is huge so to get him as a speaker has been fantastic and he is looking forward to presenting to rural based, practical people.

Darren Templeton of Australia will present on what the Australian shearer training system looks like and how it operates in Australia. At the end of the day we will have Dave Maslen present to us on the importance to New Zealand Merino of global brand partners, their entrance into the New Zealand crossbred wool market and the global strength of PETA.

Day Two will be set aside to our AGM only. We will have two EMA representatives, a lawyer and an H&S consultant to present to us the implications of the Health & Safety Reform Bill. This has huge implications to all New Zealand businesses and we are not exempt. If you are not currently Health & Safety compliant, or working towards being compliant, you and your business are exposed to huge risk.

Do you have a Health & Safety plan? Is it actively in place or collecting dust in a filing cabinet? This is a great opportunity to listen to key people explain your basic requirements and responsibilities as employers.

We will present to you how we have restructured Shear NZ, and ask how you feel nationwide shearer and woolhandling training is going? Immigration – how important are overseas staff to your business? Hear what we have been looking into with the help of Federated Farmers to perhaps make it easier to get overseas staff into New Zealand, to work for you.

AGM day is your chance to vote on issues that are important to your business, so get along and have your say.

Day Three will be a presentation from Vikki Gates on a Survey the West Australian Shearing Contractors’ Association did on shearing shed safety and on recruitment and retention of staff. Then there will be a wrap up of the conference by lunchtime.

I really encourage all shearing contractors to consider joining the Association and coming to the conference this year at Queenstown. We have some interesting speakers lined up and I believe that they will add real value to your business. I realise time is a commodity that we are all short of, but really 3-4 days a year can be the difference between sitting back and looking from the outside in at your business and perhaps identifying areas that could be strengthened in the next 12 months. The Conference is a great place to network, discuss and learn. Come along and be part of it and have your say at voting time.

We advise you to arrive into Queenstown on Tuesday 12th as the earliest morning flights in are 9am - 10am and you will miss the start of Day One.

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World’s toughest jobs

Reality programmes are all the rage on television at present and the New Zealand wool harvesting industry is no exception as it got a bit of international exposure in the United Kingdom with the recent screening on BBC3 of an episode in the series “World’s toughest jobs”.

Hundreds of young hard up, unemployed Brits, who needed cash for any number of reasons, applied to become part of a BBC six-part documentary series on extreme occupations, which took them out of the UK in a bid to find something out of the box; to earn some hard cash if they managed to stand the pace, and that may have enabled them to get a job in the future.

The “sheep shearing” episode follows the journey of three hard up young (18-24-year olds) Brits, desperate to sort out their lives and bank balances as they take on one of the world’s toughest jobs for one month, based in Central Otago.

The three who were selected for the New Zealand program were: Tomi Taham, a 24 year old from North Yorkshire who incurred huge weekly fuel bills and debit travelling to pursue his amateur boxing career; Gemma Bale (19) a university student who had never worked fulltime and who had an overdraft just to provide essentials such as food and rent. Her part-time work in a night club was not enough to fund her essentials such as hair extensions, tanning and nails!; and Jack Taylor (19) who, after becoming unemployed, had used up all his savings and run up a large credit card debt.

With no previous experience or knowledge of the wool harvesting industry, or even any rural knowledge of the trio, based with Peter Lyon Shearing in Alexandra Central Otago, began working as “sheepos”, and gradually worked their way to learn the basic skills of crutching, wool handling and shearing, guided by their tutors Colin “Mouse” O’Neill, Adam Lingman and Tui Holmes.

During this time they survived scorching temperatures, Gemma succumbing to heat stroke early on in the piece, and conditions described by them as back-breaking, repetitive and dangerous work.

According to Jack: “I won’t lie, it was the most difficult thing I’ve had to do. Some days were really tough and we’d get told off if we didn’t keep up. We were up at 4am six days a week and often didn’t get back till 8pm. We slept in a barn and the food wasn’t great.

“We were told that you could make good money by shearing 300 sheep a day, but there were some days I only did seven because they were so heavy and hard to control while you sheared them.”

Other extreme occupation programs include, Deep sea fishing in Norway, working on a cattle ranch in Australia, skyscraper window cleaning in Canada, and rock lobster fishing in Australia.
Special guests at Golden Shears 2015 included Open finalists from the first two decades (1960s-1970s) of competition. Former champions Eddie Reidy, Tom Brough, Brian Waterson, Ivan Rosandich, Roger Cox and Brian Quinn mingled with old adversaries Jack Dowd, Barry Kidd, Morrie Lawton, Bob Michie, Dave Wolland and Tony O’Reilly. (You can spot the faces above that go with all those names!)

Sole survivor from 1961, Ian Harrison of Southland was also there, as were notable “invitees” Colin Gibson and Don Morrison, both of whom represented New Zealand in the home and away tests at Masterton and Euroa in the 1970s.

The guests were present to witness the end of the David Fagan era; the appearance of three new open finalists (Murray Henderson, Troy Pyper and Aaron Haynes); (that hasn’t happened since 1983) and the first overseas shearer (Gavin Mutch) to win the coveted purple ribbon.

They were also present to witness (arguably) the strongest Australian shearing team ever to grace the same board in New Zealand – two times world champion Shannon Warnest; five times New Zealand Merino Shears champion Damien Boyle, and Daniel McIntyre, also a multiple winner of the Australian national title. Both Warnest and Boyle have been regular visitors to Alexandra, but only once (2000) appeared in the same final.

On the evidence of the Masterton trans-Tasman test, Warnest emerged as top individual, with his 79.380 penalty points (4.083 on the board) conceded on six merinos, three full wool and three second shear ewes being 7.64 ahead of McIntyre and 8.22 up on New Zealand’s best, Nathan Stratford. Boyle, on this occasion, was 15 points adrift of Warnest but the real margin between the two is surely closer than that. The Australian trio won this encounter by 21.2 points over New Zealand, represented by Stratford, Colin O’Neill and David Buick.

Warnest also qualified third into the Golden Shears Open top 30 but slipped back to 24th in the race for a semi-finals berth.
Marshall Guy of Northland became the third member of his family to win the Golden Shears intermediate title. Brothers Bevan (2009) and Bryce (2012) appear before him on the honours board, while he also joins a growing list of shearers to win more than one division. Marshall was Golden Shears junior champion in 2013 while another brother, Charlie, won the novice event in 2011.

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By Doug Laing

A Scotsman who settled in New Zealand and farms in Taranaki has become the first shearer from overseas to win the Golden Shears Open Shearing Championship. Gavin Mutch, 36-year-old, won the title title on the same stage in Masterton where he won the world championships final in 2012.

The win ushered in a new era of open shearers after legendary Te Kuiti shearer David Fagan was eliminated in the semi-finals, in what was to have been a bid for a 17th and final Golden Shears Open title before retiring next month.

The 2010 winner, Cam Ferguson, of Waipawa, was also ousted in the semi-finals, leaving a unique field comprising just one former winner, Hastings shearer Dion King, and including three newcomers.

It was the first time since 2002 that there had not been at least two former winners, and the number of first-time Golden Shears Open finalists in the six-man field was the most since 1983. Amazingly, the six finalists had won just four competitions between them this season, Mutch winning two of them.

After the elimination of Fagan and Ferguson, the pace in the final was expected to be a battle between Mutch and King, and possibly the unheralded 30-year-old Pyper, who ultimately was to emerge as a serious hope of being the first South Island shearer to win the title since 1989.

The lead see-sawed mainly between King and Pyper on stands one and two. King eventually claimed the ascendancy to finish in 17min 36 sec. He narrowly avoided losing his last sheep into the fadge over the front side of the board instead of through the porthole.

He beat Pyper by 10 seconds, Mutch by 20, and fast-finishing surprise packet Aaron Haynes, of Feilding, who finished in 18min 4 sec and claimed second place overall.

Southland shearer Nathan Stratford had his best result in six Golden Shears Open finals by finishing third, and claiming the honours for best quality points.

King, the 2006 winner and in the final for a 9th time, was 4th, followed by first-time finalists Murray Henderson, of Feilding, and Pyper.

In other major events on the final night, Australia scored a fourth consecutive Trans-Tasman shearing test win over New Zealand, and edged in front at 29-28 in the number of tests won in matches between the two countries since the Trans-Tasman series began in 1974-75.

Rakaia shearer Tony Coster regained his place as New Zealand’s top all-wools shearer by winning the PGG Wrightson National Circuit final, having won three times consecutively from 2009 to 2011, while 23-year-old Joel Henare, of Gisborne, won his third consecutive Golden Shears Open woolhandling title.

The end of the night was chock full of emotion, as Fagan was honoured on stage to a standing ovation marking the end of a Golden Shears career spanning 35 years. He then presented the trophies to the new champion.

(See page 6 for results)
Health and Safety - new laws

Jills Angus Burney and Graeme Reeves
There’s a very good chance that by the end of 2015 our laws will be weighted down by new health and safety legislation. The new Act will be very similar to the recent Australian law, the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

For shearing contractors and for their team leaders or gangers, there is a very important focus in the new law on the role of ‘an officer of the business’ or “a person conducting a business of undertaking (a PCBU)”. A PCBU will have a positive duty to exercise ‘due diligence’ to ensure that the employer complies with its duties or obligations as prescribed in the legislation.

The definition of ‘officers’ includes company directors, trustees, and certain senior executives who come under section 126 of the Companies Act 2003.

We can be informed by our Australian colleagues as they learn the ropes and dodge the bullets.

To assist compliance the Australian government has published ‘Guidance for officers in exercising due diligence’. This document is a valuable starting place for those officers who wish to up skill and actively manage and govern ‘Work Place Health and Safety’ (WHS). This is advisable, not only because of the new and greater personal liability risk but also to ‘secure the health and safety of workers and work places’.

Section 39 of the proposed New Zealand legislation states “if a PCBU has a duty or an obligation under this Act, an officer of the PCBU must exercise due diligence to ensure that the PCBU complies with that duty or obligation”.

Due diligence includes taking reasonable steps:

• To acquire and keep up to date knowledge of work and safety matters;
• Gain an understanding of the nature of the operation;
• To ensure the PCBU has available for use, and uses, appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risks;
• To ensure that the PCBU has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding incidents, hazards, and risks and for responding in a timely way to that information;
• To ensure that the PCBU has, and implements, processes for complying with any duty or obligation under the Act, and to verify that provision and the use of the resources and processes referred to above.

These are not materially different from the same provision in the WHS making the Australian Guidance relevant for New Zealand officers.

The focus of our new law and its reliance on the Australian legislation obviously falls out of the Pike River Royal Commission’s recommendations for a substantial culture change in the New Zealand workplace.

The Act will mandate that being ‘proactive’ is best practice and the required minimum standard. Anything less than that may leave an ‘officer’ exposed to prosecution and personal liability of up to $600,000.

What is required, no surprise is the creation of a “safety culture”. A safety culture is that part of the overall culture that reflects the values, beliefs and practices of the organisation as they relate to health and safety. (To p18.)

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Company director sentenced to home detention for safety failings

The director of a home moving company has been sentenced to four months home detention, and his company fined $60,000, after a house he was transporting brought down a power line.

The power line was left live on the side of the road, killing six lambs, five ewes and two sheep dogs. The shepherd narrowly avoided being electrocuted in the incident.

“Electricity is unforgiving. Leaving a live line on the side of the road and not notifying anybody is unacceptable – the shepherd and others in the vicinity could have been killed”, says Brett Murray, Worksafe NZ General Manager High Hazards and Specialist Services.
According to James Reason, author of “Achieving a safe Culture: Theory and Practice”, Work and Stress (1998), this requires an informed culture, a reporting culture, a ‘no blame’ culture, a flexible culture, and a learning culture. Reason has identified these various elements move a workplace and the people within that workplace from uninformed and passive, to reactive and calculated, to proactive and where the staff have a universal involvement in an integrated day to day safety model.

Each of these elements related to one or more of the availability of sharing information, the promotion of flexibility and innovation, and supporting honesty and transparency through a ‘no blame’ approach.

From the above it is clear that the duties and obligations for directors, trustees and others in the New Zealand shearing industry, in regards to health and safety in the workplace will demand the same level of attention and risk management as those applied to the other aspects of the business. Failure to do so may result in harm being caused the workers and their families, and ‘officers’ being prosecuted and having to bear the cost personally of uninsurable penalties.

Jills Angus Burney is a Wairarapa based Barrister who specialises in employment law, ACC and workplace injury matters.

Graeme Reeves is from Reeves Lawyers Ltd, a Wellington-based firm providing a full range of legal services to private and corporate clients.

MORRELL
12-07-45 – 12-09-14

TIMOTHY THOMAS

Tribute to a Gentleman

God saw you getting tired
And a cure was not to be
So he put his arms around you
And whispered, ‘Come to me.’

With tearful eyes we watched you
And saw you pass away
And although we love you dearly
We could not make you stay

A Golden heart stopped beating
Hard working hands at rest
God broke our hearts to prove to us
He only takes the best

So the Lord above sent down a dove
With a set of clubs and some Speight’s
To help our great friend Timmy
Beyond the Pearly Gates
Ka kite mate, kia kaha

(From ‘The Neighbour from Hell’)
Thirteen essentials in the toolbox for every shearer coming South this winter – a guideline

To guarantee no hold-ups due to your gear breaking down during working hours, invest in a good toolbox. This will be money well spent; it will increase your productivity and therefore your paycheque.

- 2 hand pieces (keep both hand pieces clean)
- 20 cover combs (10 long bevel, 10 medium bevel)
- 60 cutters (new edges)
- 2 counters
- 2 screwdrivers
- 1 oil can
- grease
- 2 needles and 1 thread
- 1 small crescent
- 1 vice grips
- 1 pair of moccasins and an extra pair of socks (wear two pair of socks to keep your feet warm)
- 1 large water bottle (in case the water at the shed is not clean)
- 1 change of warm clothes (preferably at least one top made from merino wool for extra warmth)

Now fill your bag up with your personal items.

Remember to wear warm clothes and a few layers so you can start taking layers off when you get warm and putting them on again during your breaks.

Remember to drink plenty of water even when it is cold.

Treat your body even better than your new hand piece! Your body is your most important tool in this job.

( Courtesy of Dion Morrell Shearing.)

New Zealand Shearing Championships, Te Kuiti, 9-11 April 2015:

Shearing:

New Zealand Open Championship (20 sheep): Dion King (Hastings) 55.7879 1; Rowland Smith (Hastings) 56.684 2; David Fagan (Te Kuiti) 58.515 3; David Buick (Pongarhau) 60.313 4; Dean Ball (Te Kuiti) 61.582 5; James Fagan (Te Kuiti) 62.958 6.

New Zealand Shears Circuit (5 merinos, 5 second-shear, 5 lambs): David Fagan (Te Kuiti) 92.644 1; Tony Coster (Rakaia) 92.993 2; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 96.81 3; Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Whangamomona) 101.217 4; Troy Pyper (Invercargill) 101.227 5; Darin Forde (Winton) 102.692 6.

North Island Shearer of the Year (10 second-shear ewes, 10 lambs): Rowland Smith (Hastings) 59.874 1; Dion King (Hastings) 61.922 2; Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Whangamomona) 63.528 3; Murray Henderson (Feilding) 67.786 4; David Fagan (Te Kuiti) 71.107 5; Mark Grainger (Te Kuiti) 76.442 6.

Trans-Tasman Challenge: NZ Shears Te Kuiti (Aaron Haynes, Dion King, Cody Beck) 256.193 pts beat Warrnambool Show (Evo Hennessy, Roger Mifsud, Nathan Touhey) 276.437.

New Zealand Championship Open Plate (10 sheep): Murray Henderson (Feilding) 39.046 1; Aaron Haynes (Feilding) 39.95 2; Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Whangamomona) 40.302 3; Adam Brausch (Porangahau) 40.378 4; John Kirkpatrick (Napier) 40.837 5; Casey Bailey (Masterton) 42.805 6.

Senior (12 sheep): Floyde Neil (Taumarunui) 49.725 1; Ethan Pankhurst (Masterton) 55.46 2; Whare Whanake (Taumarunui) 55.998 3; Cody Beck (Taumarunui) 56.621 4; Dylan McGruddy (Masterton) 57.311 5; Darren Alexander (Whangamomona) 58.419 6.

Intermediate (8 sheep): Kaleb Foote 43.515 1; Marshall Guy (Kaeo) 43.553 2; Hugh De Lacy (Fernside) 45.775 3; Michael Herlihy (Matiere) 45.842 4; Hemi Lambert (Raupunga) 47.824 5; Josh Balme (Te Kuiti) 54.888 6.

Junior (5 sheep): Ricci Stevens (Gisborne) 37.805 1; Sean Gouk (Hamilton/Eketahuna) 38.207 2; Laura Bradley (Woodville) 39.223 3; Connor Puha (Kimbolton) 42.404 4; Jeremy Morton (Gisborne) 44.128 5; Mitchell Hoare (Te Kuiti) 53.18 6.

Novice (2 sheep): Cody Greig (Levin) 27.494 1; Reuben Alabaster (Tairangi) 32.999 2; Jack Virtue (Taumarunui) 34.928 3; Sarah Reid (Tairangi) 38.562 4; Bailey Rush (Kimbolton) 39.934 5; Rapana Hohepa (Te Kuiti) 40.283 6.

Woolhandling:

New Zealand Open (8 sheep): Joel Henare (Gisborne) 92.42 1; Ngiao Hansen (Eketahuna) 92.762 2; Keryn Herbert (Te Awamutu) 103.4 3; Sheree Alabaster (Tairangi) 116.544 4; Logan Kamura (Masterton) 127.81 5.

Senior: Ana Braddock (Eketahuna) 79.68 1; Tara Chapman (Matiere) 105.87 2; Paige Brausch (Porangahau) 123.93 3; Erica Reti (Balfour) 130.4 4; Ashleigh Aporo (Masterton) 134.88 5.

Junior: Chiquita Tamepo (Tikitiki/Winton) 62.85 1; Jaya Deva Henry (Milton) 98.54 2; Sarah Hall (Piopio) 116.25 3; Monique Mackay (Te Kuiti) 116.72 4.

Shearing and Woolhandling:

Inter-Island Challenge: North Island (shearers David Fagan, Dion King, David Buick; woolhandlers Sheree Alabaster, Keryn Herbert, Logan Kamura) 288.566pts - beat South Island (shearers Nathan Stratford, Darin Forde, Tony Coster, woolhandlers Tia Potae, Joel Henare, Dayna Te Aho) 310.881pts.

Street Philosophy, Te Kuiti, during NZ Champs:

I’m in shape. Round is a shape.

If we are what we eat, why am I not 97% fat-free?
Something fishy in the state of Denmark

By Roger Leslie

Most countries are famous for some-thing whether deserved or not. New Zealand is known as clean and green but one doesn’t have to go far to see evidence on the side of the road that this catchy clique is better suited to its rhyme than truth.

That Australians refer to their dusty continent as the Land of the Free is probably a response to their original European preoccupation with imprisonment. Germany is the land of order, and although this can be seen in their autobahns and civil engineering, it has not permeated far into the sheep industry.

The Danes reputation of horn-helmeted Vikings storming out of their long boats and raising coastal villages to the ground is in stark contrast to modern Danes, who are known, in my view justifiably, as the friendliest people on earth. I was once demonstrating Kiwi wool harvesting at a country fair and asked the teacher who had invited me how she reconciled these two vastly different reputations? She said “Oh, the wikings (her pronunciation) were probably laughing as they ran up the beach!”

The Danes are now more famous for building stackable boxes, Maersk and Lego being two excellent examples.

Denmark is not the land of sheep, but of shepherds. There are around 76,000 sheep but over 8,000 shepherds, with the greater part having 5 or less. Perhaps the most interesting thing for me is the vast variety of things that occupy these weekend farmers during the week and how this filters through to their sheep management.

Two memorable chaps were brothers and fish farmers. When we first met they had 70 Gotland sheep and were milking cows, but the fish were their first love. Their neighbour introduced us and convinced them they needed to bring the sheep over to his place for me to shear. They seemed always to be happy and even when it took them two hours to capture half of the sheep and trailer them over; they remained upbeat and set off cheerily to get the rest.

The nephew they left behind to help was glad not to have to join the transport operation and said they had the trailer parked in the middle of a 30x50 metre loafing barn knee deep in freshly spread straw, and were sprinting around in circles catching the sheep one by one and dragging them to the trailer. They wore gumboots for everything and would turn up at the shearing stand with the sheep in tow, and usually a swath or two of accumulated straw.

The sheep would often have one of her feet in a gumboot too, which made tipping them over a difficult ask. My wool manager would get constantly niggly about this fresh introduction of straw into her wool area every 2 minutes.

When the last few sheep got too hard to catch they returned to what they knew best and used a long handled fish landing net for the job.

The second year we were there we shore at their place and when I saw they were planning to catch in the big loafing shed again, I set up a small pen outside the door. To their great delight, this worked a treat. One of them said “just like fish, you never catch them on the big pool!” Bingo.

The third year we were there they had given up the cows and had the sheep running on the grass between the fish tanks. The tanks were fed with fresh water from the river and aerated with electric paddles (photo). The problem here was that the brothers were so impressed with my ability to plan sheep pens that this was still awaiting my input. When we arrived the sheep were happily running around the verges between the tanks. They were still doing this after our 4th and 5th attempts to pen them up, in a field with a 100 escape routes.

This was further complicated by electric wires set at ankle height around the tanks to deter otters, mink and other fish eating predators. The sheep knew where these were and hopped adroitly over them with each pass, but the tired, clumsy old shearer lacked the home ground advantage and agility for this and occasionally came to grief on them.

It’s bad enough to trip on a low wire while sprinting after an errant Gotland, but to then get a shock while lying on the ground is adding insult to injury and just not in the job description.

I got even one day though, when my shearing machine blew their main power supply and all the aerators fell silent. This caused a certain amount of pandemonium and alarm bells must have been ringing somewhere because several likely lads turned up within minutes, lads who were apparently unavailable to help with the capture of sheep.

Next time you eat trout or salmon from Denmark, it is highly likely there will be the faintest flavour of sheep. Everyone to their own, I say!
King Country Circle: 1986.
King Country Shears, Te Kuiti: 1986 (now NZ Championships).
Mossburn: 1994, 1995, (See also NZ Full Wool Championship).
And then there were the world records and speed shears ...

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Percy was a true gun

By Des Williams
There’s a story at page eight of this edition referring to the late Percy de Malmanche, and how correspondent Bill Sheat wrote to author Hazel Riseborough, suggesting that she did not give Percy due credit in her book, Shear Hard Work (2010).

Be that as it may, the problem with writing about our industry heroes from decades passed is that so much information about them has been lost. Mr Sheat speaks with authority about Percy, however, because of his own family connections with the champion.

We do know that Percy set a nine-hour, ewe shearing world record (409) near Opunake on 18 December 1934, his tally on sheep that were ‘uncructched and untouched’ bettering by three the mark of Bill Higgins, whose 406 had stood for 11 years. An earlier writer, AR Mills gave Percy quite a mention in his book, Sheep-O! (1960).

‘Having several times witnessed Percy de Malmanche in action (and also Raihania and Bill Higgins), I maintain that, while his style was orthodox, his speed of hand and his stamina were amazing. There was at that time in circulation a challenge of 100 pounds for anyone to shear against him. There were no acceptors,’ Mills explained.

‘Later the amount was increased to 500 pounds, and even this challenge was never taken up. So Percy de Malmanche reigned supreme in the shearing world, and rightly so.

‘... In 1935 he [Percy] was offered some bare-pointed Cheviot-Romney-cross sheep on which to make a further attempt, and it was confidently expected that a much higher figure would be attained. Percy inspected the sheep and voted them ‘real flyers’, but he refused to have a go, firstly because he felt it would be unfair to Bill Higgins and secondly because the sheep did not in those days constitute normal shearing sheep. ‘Honour among shearers’ would be the only fitting term applicable to those sentiments.’

This writer also wrote about Percy in the 1996 publication, Top Class Wool Cutters. In that story, reference was made to the fact that Percy had received two Wolseley medals for his shearing feats.

Subsequent research indicates that the two medals were for the same event, as evidence the photo above. A story in this magazine (August 2007) records how the late Ivan Bowen also had two medals, both for his record 457 sheep shorn in 1953.

Shearing surmised back then that perhaps the ‘round’ medal was awarded by Dalgety Ltd as the New Zealand agent for Wolseley gear, while the ‘oblong’ version may have come from the Wolseley Company in England.

We may never know, but the example of two men (Bowen and de Malmanche), both with two medals for the same achievement, over-rides for the moment at least our earlier thoughts of their receiving separate medals for separate events.
Shearing judges at the 2014 Poverty Bay Shears lined up with Joan and Bill Gaskill, for what may be the biggest selfie in shearing history! The Gisborne event marked Bill's retirement from the position of examiner for the Eastern 2 Region, a position he has held since the 1996/97 season. From left we have Bill Hale, Rose Lambert, Craig O’Brien, Ronnie King, Peter Vujcich, Bart Hadfield, Joan Gaskill, Bill Gaskill, Carol Hodge, David Hodge, Steve Manson, Russell Knight and Robin Cooper. Bill and Joan also received a presentation from the Poverty Bay A&P Association to mark the occasion.
Life membership for Raelene

By Darnell Kennedy

Raelene McConachie (nee Howes) can undoubtedly be considered the leading female influence of the Southern Shears. And with her pedigree of being the eldest daughter of life member Ray Howes, it should come as no surprise that the apple has not fallen far from the tree.

Raelene’s affinity for the wool profession was evident at a very young age and recognising this enthusiasm in his hard-working daughter, Ray fostered this passion and provided Raelene with the underpinnings of what would evolve to be an outstanding woolhandling career. After two years, Raelene’s insatiable appetite for greater knowledge saw her leave home at the age of 18 years, bound for the university life of Lincoln.

Unlike the students of today who are notorious for their parties, couch burnings and dressing in toga, Raelene’s stern focus saw her graduate with a Certificate in Wool Technology. But her academic conquests did not stop there. From 1986 to 1987, Raelene went on to gain her Diploma in Wool and Wool Technology from Massey University.

Her academic accolades were just the beginning of her successes. Raelene’s career as both a professional and a competitor in the wool industry are littered with titles. She enhanced her experience with much world travel and this enabled her to obtain a greater skill set which lined an already exceptional portfolio. Raelene, in all her humility though, does not outline in specific detail her achievements but she recalls with fondness her career highlight. This was winning both the New Zealand and World woolhandling titles at Alexandra in 1992 with the reward being a trip to South Africa.

Raelene joined the Southern Shears Committee in 1990 and Keith Munro marks her membership as being a great asset to the committee. Raelene, along with close friend Jeff McKenzie introduced the Woolhandling competitions to the Southern Shears which have now been a mainstay of the show for 25 years. Her expertise in this field have not only ensured the longevity of this particular arm of the Southern Shears, but made her a favourite among the competitors and woolhandling judges alike.

Today, Raelene and her husband Jamie are Shearing Contractors and farmers in Browns, Winton with their two children, Maddie and Anna-Lisa.

We are honoured to present Raelene with a life membership to the Southern Shears Committee and we sincerely thank her for her contribution to the shearing industry but more importantly, the woolhandling industry. She is the first woman to receive this award and will proudly join her father Ray in the life membership hall of fame.

Raelene McConachie, new Life Member at Southern Shears

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We encourage our staff to engage in training,
We should all learn something new every day!
If you want to settle down with good conditions and steady work, shearing or woolhandling, you could find a place in the Paewai Mullins team. We work for some great people and we have some great people working for us. There is always room for one more.

Bill Hillis crew members at their Mataura quarters, January 2015. From left: Nathan Carr (Gore), Robert Henry (Ballynure, Northern Ireland); Shelley-Jane Travis (Mataura) and James Penney (Gleno, Northern Ireland). Sorry Dog, we forgot to ask your name!

“We don’t wake my bro with that camera – he’s been hard out all morning and needs his lunchtime snooze!” Shiloh Edwards watches over Neha Thompson at Greer’s property, Sunnyside (January 2015).

We published an item in the November 2014 edition about the “Short Story in a Book” and a learner shearer course held at Goldie Davidson’s property in the Lill Burn Valley (near Tuatapere) in 1975. We revisited the shed 40 years later to find an experienced crew hard at work shearing (present owner) Brian Hampton’s lambs. Back left: Tania Diack, Fred Wintour and ‘Aussie Bob’. Front: Brian Hampton, Kelly Tahana and Alex Reid (contractor).

Members of a Darin Forde gang working at Grey Wilson’s Eastern Bush property in January 2015. Shearer Garth Muggeridge removes the wool and Julie Merrilees (green top) and Catherine Wilson do the processing.

Spotted on the side of the road near the historic Clifden Bridge (western Southland) in January 2015. This is clearly an early prototype of the modern day 28-wheelers (double-tankers) that cart milk all over our country. This early version carried three cans or 30 gallons (110 litres). Of course, sheep ruled supreme back then. The farmer just carried a few cows to keep the long acre tidy.
Darin Forde gang at Dave McGilivray’s property near Otautau, western Southland, January 2015. Back left: Wiremu Jarrett (Kawhia), Teri Rolleston (Palmerston North), Phillip Horrell (Tuatapere), Guy Fraser (Taumarunui). Front left: Vanessa Reid (Tuatapere), Peter Fox (Gisborne), Wendy Adamson (Orepuki). Below: Max Winders (left) and Josh Clayton (right) were hard out with another Forde gang at Gray Wilson’s property near Feldwick, Eastern Southland, January 2015.

Shearing notes the death of Agnes “Aggie” Blake at Nightcaps on 22 January 2015. Former Nightcaps-based contractor Murray Dowling remembers Aggie as one of the best shearers’ cooks in the business. She was six days short of her 87th birthday. R.I.P Aggie.

Here comes the crowd, there goes the band, here come the sheep. Te Kuiti’s main street during ‘running of the sheep’, popular annual fixture held on the Saturday of the New Zealand shearing championships each year.

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News 4 Ewes

Heiniger “Hats Off”

The Heiniger Team have been busy over summer servicing in-shed as well as sponsoring and attending many Events.

Heiniger was proud to be the major sponsor of the Gore Southern Shears 50th Anniversary Event held in February and congratulate the committee on making this milestone. Upper South Island TSM, Geoff Holmes - pictured below after winning his heat in Gore Open. The Evo Shearing Plant performed faultlessly and was commended by competitors for its superior performance.

Heiniger would like to thank all the competitors who supported the Heiniger brand and product in competitions through 2014/15. We would also like to thank all those Shearers and Farmers who do not attend the competitions, without your support we could not offer the quality product and services that stand us apart.

Congratulations to Gavin Mutch for winning his dream of Golden Shears Champion in 2015 and congratulations also to Aaron Haynes, a rising star, a terrific effort by this young athlete. Also to Nathan Stratford who wore his heart on his sleeve and achieved well on the day. All of these top athletes used Heiniger Icon Cyclone Handpieces and Heiniger Combs & Cutters – The Choice of Champions.

Upper North Island TSM - Kevin Thirkell, during February - played a key part in the training of ten young cadets in Gisborne. The Waipaoa Farm Cadet Training Trust runs a 2 year Agricultural Training Programme on Waipaoa Station with the primary objective of training our future agricultural leaders. Kevin spent the day explaining opportunities in the shearing industry and the importance / value of using the correct shearing gear.

Lower South Island NZ TSM, Brendon Potae - organised the sponsorship of and mentored two young shearers in the “Shear For Life” Marathon carried out at Peter Jolly’s Woolshed at Tarras. Huge congratulations to Cole Wells and James Hill who managed to raise over $46,000 during their 24-hour marathon campaign. Cole Well states “I am passionate about doing what I can to raise as much money as possible for the Cancer Society, particularly for the research and treatment of Prostate cancer.” Well done boys! Brendon is pictured below with Cole Wells and James Hill.

Don’t delay race into your local rural merchant today and increase your $$$$ potential!

Heiniger LG2 Winter Combs

After the resounding success of the first introduction of LG2 (longer groove 2) modification in 2014 – Heiniger have now completed modifying our complete Winter Comb Range - with this new advanced technology. With a choice of widths in Short, Medium and Long Bevel profiles, there is a new LG2 profile that will suit any sheep type from second shear crossbred to dense woolled Merino.
By Tom Harding

Just before mainshear began one season years ago, I remember Lane the contractor giving a very good talk to all the staff in a pre-season meeting at the quarters.

One part in particular that stuck in my memory was the importance of showing respect for the cook(s) and how difficult their job is. Words to the effect of, ‘If you cut a sheep or do a whopping great second-cut; or if you put some oddments into the wrong wool line, the chances are no-one will even notice.

‘But if the cook has a bad day and forgets a frying pan lead or the salt, they often get a dozen angry people coming home moaning and calling them useless behind their backs.’

It’s one of life’s unfortunate facts that in some jobs, a relatively small and easily made mistake is noticed far more than in others, and causes far more grief for the poor unfortunate soul who made it.

Thus in the show shearing world, being responsible for the points scoring of big finals would surely be one of the more stressful jobs to be in, as illustrated by the story on pages 5-6 of November 2014’s Shearing mag about the woolhandling at the New Zealand Merino Shears.

Make one small error, and instead of (worst-case-scenario) a grumpy farmer noticing and giving you a bomb, you have a whole stadium full of people shining the spotlight on it.

The story took me back to 2005, the year I won the Intermediate Welsh Lamb Shearing Circuit final. I couldn’t believe it. This was one of the big ones; shearers who won titles like this went on to achieve big things. I suddenly felt that I was destined to be a gun; one day I’d do huge tallies, make Open finals.

I may have been worse than useless at rugby and I couldn’t catch a cricket ball if my own life depended on it, but shearing was different: if I just worked hard enough I knew now that I would get to the top. It was an amazing feeling.

After making my speech I scanned the front row in the audience for an empty seat and spotted one by my friend and show shearing contemporary, Prys Lewis. He was so pleased for me, and I’ll never forget the exact words I said to him. ‘Prys,’ I said, trying to hold still the red ribbon in my trembling hands, ‘no-one can ever take this away from me!’

Of course, you can see where this is going can’t you? Because around five minutes later, someone did exactly that. A thirty-second error in time recording meant that I was, in fact, third and my prized red ribbon was promptly replaced with a yellow one.

It was life’s little way of putting me back in my place and reminding me that I was after all, destined for nothing more than mediocrity. Thankfully I’m blessed with a personality that allows me to recall the event, and my immortal words, with a large ironic smile.

The moral of the story? Well for what my opinion’s worth, I agree with sentiment of the November article – the way it was handled in Alexandra and by the Welsh Lamb Circuit was absolutely right. Sorting it out at the first opportunity (Option One), as cruel as it was, was much better than leaving it until the next day, away from the crowds (Option Two), which would probably have hurt a lot more in the long term.

Of course, there is also an Option Three open to a show committee: deny any error took place, cover it up and let the wrong result stand. I can’t think of anyone I know in the shearing industry that would be happy with this state of affairs and hopefully it doesn’t happen.

So, if you ever find yourself in the position that I did and that Rocky did at Alexandra, remember, you’ll be able to laugh about it one day. ‘Don’t be too hard on someone for making a mistake as we all make them.

And most of all, don’t be too hard on Cookie if he or she forgets the tea spoons!

If it is a mistake of the head and not of the heart don’t worry about it, that’s the way we learn. (Earl Warren)

Mistakes are a fact of life. It’s the response to the error that counts. (Nikki Giovanni)

Mistakes ... I’ve made a few ... but then again, too few to mention. (Paul Anka)
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Participants in a practical shearing course at Moonlight Woolshed in Whatawatu district (Gisborne) over four days from 9-12 March: Back left: George, Nick, Hamish, Katie, Zac, Mack, Jonah, Peter W, Peter L. Front left: Logan; trainers: James, Bill, and Ailsa: Bruce and Tina (caterers). (Geoff Hornblow photo.)

Participants in a Tectra shearing course at Salvador Station, on East Falkland Island. Back row: Gavin Rowland (trainer), Ross Poole, Joe Clarke, Steven Clarke-Turner, Euan McKinnon, Nathan Lowe, Rob Pitaluga (farm owner). Front left: Paul Ford, Holly Williams, Nick Pitaluga (farm owner).

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Shearing 29
New Zealand shearer Stacey Te Huia set a new nine-hour Merino ewe shearing record at ‘Parkdale’ merino stud, 25km north of Dubbo in central NSW on Friday 20 February. Stacey sheared 530 ewes to break the previous record of 513 set by Dwayne Black near Kojonup WA in 2005. The 2 tooth ‘Parkdale’ ewes cut 3.72kg of wool. The 514th fleece was auctioned the following day and raised $1500 for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Co-holder of the Strongwool ewe 9 hour 2 stand record with Sam Welch, set in January 2012 with a tally of 1341, and holder of the 8 hour Strongwool ewe record with a tally of 603, Stacey has indicated, if suitable sheep can be found, he may attempt the 8 hour Merino ewe record during April. He will also have another crack at the 9 hour Strongwool ewe record of 721, currently held by Rod Sutton, later in the year.

Bob White from Conargo NSW and Beau Guelfi, Gilgandra NSW, attempted to take the 8 hour 2 stand Merino ewe record in the same shed the following day. This record remains unbroken. Set by the Western Australia-based Terry brothers, Michael James and Cartwright, in 2003, Guelfi and White tried hard but retired after three runs when it was clear they wouldn’t reach the required 924 with only the final run ahead. The ewes, which cut an average 4.84kg of wool, and weighed up to 80kg according to owner Don Mudford, were not suitable for a record attempt.

But speaking at the presentation dinner that evening, Stacey urged Bob and Beau not to give up. “There is no shame in failing to break a record, I’ve had a couple, but you learn something each time, so don’t give up. Have another try.”

Photo opposite: Stacey Te Huia about to send another ewe down the chute closely watched by his father Dean (left), Digger Balme (centre) and woolhandler Shireen Monds. (Rachael Webb photo.)

Major world records:
- Strong wool lambs, 9 hr., single stand: Dion King, 866 on 10 January 2007.
- Strong wool lambs, 9hr., single stand women: Emily Welch, 648 on 27 November 2007.
- Merino ewes, 9hr., single stand: Stacey Te Huia, 530 on 20 February 2015.
- Merino wethers, 9 hr., single stand: Grant Smith, 418 on 4 November 1999.
It could be one of those pub quiz questions where you’d bet your last dollar on being correct: What surname appears most often on the Golden Shears honours boards? ‘Fagan’ I hear you say. John, David and James feature 27 times between them. But wrong - ‘Goodger’ features 36 times, with the brothers’ exploits in woolpressing singles and pairs all tallied up. A case of ‘Believe it… or Not!’ Above: Judge Richard Pearson checks another Goodger bale. 179.99kg!


Trans-Tasman rivals on the boards all those years ago and good buddies still: Former New Zealand representatives Colin Gibson (left) and Roger Cox (right) met up with 1974-79 Australian representative Jim Walker at Golden Shears. The trio all took part in the Euroa - Masterton test matches in the 1970s.

Alex Reid’s gang at Nigel McLellan’s Clifden property, January 2015. Back left: Alex Reid, Sam Garrett, Ngawaka West and Wayne Black. Front: Aroha Wharakura (with Deefer) and Casey McKenzie.

Shear NZ

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GET THE EDGE, MAKE THE CUT
The Call
The call came through this morning
It was just to let me know,
The call we all must answer
The call of ‘Way-Le-Go’.

I remember how you took me
When I was green as grass,
And you taught me how to muster
On a Run called Snowy Pass.

How to train strong-eyed heading dogs
The cream of any pack,
And how to mould the hunt-aways,
With their big barks tan and black.

How to bring the mobs in
To shearing sheds and yards.
And now I’m here beside you
To give my last regards.

The old days now have vanished
Since the dozer cleared the tracks.
The four-wheel drives and quad bikes
Then became the hillmens’ hacks.

And some muster with the chopper
And they are finished before five.
And they clear a block in one day,
Where it used to take us five.

So let me clasp your hand, mate,
This will be our last night,
And we will not meet again mate
This side of human sight.

But memories will linger
For mateship never dies,
And we knew grit and glory
Underneath those southern skies.

The call came through this morning
And now my hand grips yours,
A hand roughened by weather
From years spent out of doors.

So soft and light your pressure
Though I know you know it’s me,
As we see dogs and horses
That no one else can see.

And I swear I hear a whistle
So faint and far away,
As your hand slips out of my hand
And God yards another stray.

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Would you like Shearing mag delivered to your post box or letterbox? It’s quite easy – check the "Publisher" details box on page 3.

An overflow crowd packed the Murray Downs woolshed at Shear Outback, Hay, New South Wales, on Easter Sunday for the induction of another five icons to the Shearers Hall of Fame.

Those inducted by the Hon. Sussan Ley MP (local member of Federal Parliament) were Mark Conlan (dec), Dick Duggan, Kevin Gellatly, Ian Elkins and Maurie Doyle (dec). Mark was represented by his widow Joanne and daughters Stacey and Jessica, and Maurie Doyle by his sons Grant and Brad. There are now thirty-three members of this elite group.

All the inductees were accompanied by large groups of supporters. The 2015 intake was selected from thirty-one nominations by the Inductee Selection Panel chaired by Roly Desailly, and included two from Western Australia (Maurie Doyle was born in Victoria, but died and is buried in WA); two from Victoria and one from New South Wales.

Once again, as part of the Induction Ceremony, Bernie Walker read and presented each of the inductees with a framed copy of the tribute poem ‘The Men Who have Been Selected’ he had been invited to write for the occasion. They were also presented with engraved and mounted sets of blades to mark the occasion.

In a brief address, Sussan Ley said she had a keen understanding of the shearing industry, having begun her working career with Grazcos in Queensland, first as a shed hand, then three years as a shearers’ cook. Sussan congratulated all the inductees as she presented them with their certificates.

Several of the inductees, notably Kevin Gellatly, were quite emotional as they responded. It is a rewarding experience to see how much becoming a member of the Hall of Fame means to these masters of the industry. The election of Maurie Doyle sees all six of the original Tally-Hi instructors recruited by the late Les Batten, now members. The other five are Kevin Sarre, Viv Parkes, Fred Jarvis, (all deceased), Bimby Martin and John Harris, the latter two both present.

Many other well-known shearers were in the audience for the occasion including former Australian captain Jim Walker, Brian Morrison, John Conlan, Bill Kimber, Des DeBelle, George Grant, as well as David Lawrence and Hall of Fame member Ron Niven, both from WA.

Other highlights of a busy weekend in Hay were sheep dog trials, a very successful and interesting writers’ forum which featured authors of shearing related books, and a very enjoyable Festival of the Blades Dinner. Monday morning saw a most interesting tour of four local woolsheds including the famous 100-stand ‘Toganmain’ shed, now sadly falling into an advanced state of disrepair. The other sheds visited were ‘Burrabogie’, ‘Howlong’ and ‘Cobran’.

Chairman of Shear Outback, Ian Auldist, and a loyal group of supporters deserve warm congratulations on a well organised, successful and very enjoyable weekend.

Have you checked the pressure in your car or van tyres this week?
New Age Technology: Mobile App as a Training Tool

There has never been a bigger force for change than technology. It changes everything, and we are not immune. Did you know:

- More than 2.4 billion people use the Internet.
- There are 100 billion searches on Google every month.
- More than 174 million users are connected to Facebook each moment.
- 50 billion devices will be connected to the Internet by 2020.

Scary but true, and even in our industry where we spend a lot of our time working in rural areas, outside of coverage, a scan through the shearing shed identifies 60% of people as owners of a smartphone. So we fight it or we try to use it for good.

Wool Systems and Primary ITO have developed the first ever mobile application (app) for wool harvest training. Designed to deliver information in a visual manner using the best technologies, available 24/7 on your device, updateable and interactive. Free to download and a great first step into this world of technology for fun learning and useful modules. More modules will be added on a regular basis – this is just the start! Watch a shearer shear a sheep, choosing angles to observe footwork and pressure points; video yourself and using a split screen compare your positioning; pit your woolhandling skills against the clock in a fun woolhandling game and use the daily work log to record farm tallies/hours and learnings. We recognize learners will adapt what they see to match their own physique and abilities, but a cool way to start. So, another tool to add to your learning toolkit. We hope you enjoy this first step.

Wool Systems is a training entity delivering wool harvest training in the North Island with generations of experience from the New Zealand Wool Board and down through all its name changes. Always respectful of the past, but with a very firm eye to the future.

Symbolic of the New Zealand championships; one Fagan (right) coming, one Fagan (left) going.

The next generation of shearers at the Aria Sports on 6 February 2015, from left: Shaun Fagan, Topia Barrowcliffe, Cory Barrowcliffe and Reuben Alabaster.

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The icon has left the building ...

I don’t want to spoil the party so I’ll go
I would hate my disappointment to show
There’s nothing for me here so I will disappear ...

Dion King wasn’t even a distant twinkle in his parents’ eyes when The Beatles sang that old number back in 1964. David Fagan was three, and likely still singing Mary had a little lamb (or Baa baa black sheep!)!

Fast forward to the New Zealand championships of 2015. Dion King did not disappear. He stayed and he did spoil the party. But if David Fagan was disappointed, he did not let it show. In the end, there was plenty for both of them.

Such a magnificent ending to a magnificent career. Fagan’s third placing behind King and Rowland Smith in the New Zealand open final was as close as it got to the fairytale ending, but he did win the New Zealand Shears Circuit final (having last done so in 2007) to round out his career with 639 titles from around the world.

King described his own win as a major tick beside the items on his bucket list. He had, on this stage, won the North Island Shearer of the Year title in 2006 and 2012, and the Circuit final in 2011, but they don’t add up to a New Zealand championship, especially when you’ve beaten the legend in his own home town in order to claim it.

Dion had been in nine previous open finals since 2003, finishing second to Fagan in 2006 (the same year he’d cleaned up all and sundry at Golden Shears). David Buick and two ‘surprise finalists’ James Fagan and Dean Ball rounded out the top six. Neither had shorn at a competition during the season but entered just to be part of the farewell celebrations.

There was hype, there was colour, there was hope and speculation, there were people packed to the rafters, sheep running in the streets, kids climbing the wall and much more besides as Te Kuiti’s community gathered in style to farewell their icon. The Fagan retirement had been announced well in advance, giving organisers time to prepare for the occasion.

The quality of the shearing in the major events more than matched the occasion. Fagan won the Ringer’s Cup for fastest finisher in the open (20 sheep in 14 minutes 59.8 seconds) and that, together with the Circuit crown and the Godfrey Bowen trophy for top-ranked Shearing Sports open shearer for 2014/2015 ensured he left the stage for the last time suitably rewarded.

Seeing his son Jack win the open challenger final earlier in the evening was also a source of pride for the retiree, having just ‘fessed up’ that he’d borrowed one of Jack’s fine wool combs to use on the five merinos during the successful circuit final.

Full results from the New Zealand championships are found at page 19, while we summarise Fagan’s 639 titles at page 20.
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Further information from Lynmarie Edwards
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Happy faces at the New Zealand championship. Top left: Keryn Herbert with her Aunty Ging – the woman who taught her [Keryn] everything she knows about woolhandling! Centre. It’s a toss-up who is happier – Floyd Neil for winning the NZ senior final, or Dad Roger Neil for his youngster’s success. Dead heat at the finish line, we reckon! Opposite: Joel Henare with his second NZ open woolhandling title, adding to the Golden Shears title he won in March. Above right: Door team and committee members at Te Kuiti. From left: Jean Herbert, Rob Gordon, Sally Stuart, Erana Stevens (secretary) and Carol Eales. Above: Ngaio Hanson up close and personal with the wonder fibre during the NZ open woolhandling final. She finished in second place.
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Richie is about to shear a sheep
By the down tube, breathing deep
The rousie gives the board a sweep
Waiting for the belly

Through crutch and undermine
Richie McShearer’s doing fine
Blows he’s taken, eight or nine
The same as David Fagan

Top knot off and up the neck
Comb’s bottom tooth on deck
The wool is melting off, by heck
Been watching Rowland Smith?

First front shoulder, dropping down
On the long blow, going to town
Undressing the woollen gown
Chasing Darin Forde

Now last front shoulder, in full stride
Fast blows down the money side
We’ve been taken for a ride
He’s mates with Andrew Hore!

Last few blows now turning for home
Swathes of wool gathered in the comb
A little sweat but not much foam
Grabs the greasy cord

Sheep drops to the count-out pen
Richie says he could do it again
Cocky says two out of ten
‘Don’t give up your day job!’

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Godfrey no Rotter(ton)!

Geraldine’s Phil Oldfield had Irishman Godfrey Potterton as guest in February and did his best to provide a snapshot of New Zealand shearing life for his visitor. During a visit to Surrey Hills Godfrey got to shear a couple of sheep while the resident machine guns (!) Rod Sutton and Co. also briefly swapped handpieces for blades. Godfrey then went to Reefton to take part in the blades competition, finishing fourth (despite appearing on the results sheet as Godfrey Rotterton!). Phil says ‘After all that we took Godfrey up to Lord of the Rings country for a drink!’
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