

Shearing

Promoting our industry, sport and people

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The Ratima-Maguire whanau at Te Kuiti for the New Zealand Shearing Championships, April 2016. (See p. 3)



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**Next edition due 17 August 2016.
Deadline for all material two weeks prior.**

UNDER COVER STORY

Greetings readers and welcome to this April 2016 edition of the magazine. April already! And while time is speeding by, there's been a lot happening – so much in fact that I've had to leave several pages of material in the holding paddock until August, including regular contributors. So this 'under cover story' is brevity itself.

I guess the year started in spectacular style with the announcement of a knighthood for Sir David Fagan, bringing reflected honour to our industry as well as the obvious personal recognition that Sir David's exploits and achievements over the past 35 years deserve.

The Big Day Out at Napier on 4 January turned into the Big Wet Day Out and organisers' aspirations of raising \$50,000 for the Cancer Society were not realised – the \$30,500 raised from in-shed activity was, never-the-less, a fantastic achievement involving staunch commitment from many people. Our 'centre-fold' this edition pays tribute to both the concept and the contribution.

This month [4 April] heralded the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, replacing the old Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992. NZ Shearing Contractors' Association chairman Jamie McConachie (at page 32) outlines some of the features of the new Act. I suggest everyone in our industry needs to 'get up to speed' with this new law. The Worksafe NZ website might be a good place to start.

Best wishes meantime, see you in August.

Ka kite ano

Des Williams (editor)

Cover photo: From left, Jason Ratima, Regan Maguire-Ratima, Debbie Maguire, Richie Maguire-Ratima, Daryl-Maree Reiri, LaShara Anderson and Richie Maguire. LaShara was fifth in the junior woolhandling final, while Brandon Maguire-Ratima (not in photo) matched his second placing in the junior final at Golden Shears with second at the New Zealand championships.

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Smith keeps ROWLN' on

By Des Williams

It's been said many times over the past fifty years and it's still true – 'funny things happen at Golden Shears.' But in the sense the comment is offered, those 'funny things' are more likely to make you cry than make you laugh. (Like Jack Dowd, dropping his spare cutter into the catching pen grating, and Colin King, with no oil on his spare cutter, and no oil can on his stand.)

So when the present world champion fills 18th place into the Top 30, having been all but unbeatable all season, some start to wonder if it's going to be another 'one of those years' at Masterton. But once the Top 30 have sorted themselves into the Top 12, you find that Rowland Smith has regained his place at the head of the table and instead, a couple of other funny things have happened – the defending champion is gone from contention and for the first time in Lorde knows how long, there's not a King Country shearer left on the list. And it's still only Friday night!

Late afternoon Saturday is semi-finals time, and this is where nervous tension, adrenalin, whiffs of gun smoke and high expectation hang heavy in the War Memorial Stadium. Who is going to get a shot at the purple ribbon and who is going home? If only those reality TV shows could capture this moment, maybe they'd be worth watching.

Twelve have to whittle themselves down to six. Smith, King and Kirkpatrick – been there, done that, done everything; Haynes and Pyper, first time finalists last year; Stratford, Buick and Brausch, all previous finalists, joined by four newcomers, Paerata Abraham, Tama Niania, Casey Bailey and Sam Welch.



It was said of the tall and slender Brian 'Snow' Quinn back in the 1960s that 'he was everything a good shearer shouldn't be, except the best in the world.' (The utterance of a Prime Minister; no less.) The even taller and just as slender Rowland Smith may also be the best in the world, if judged on his exploits of the past three years.



Paerata Abraham's Knight to Remember – being fitted with Sir David Fagan's blazer for the Open final presentations. Filling the blazer is one thing, but filling the shoes is quite another; John Kirkpatrick and David Buick (plus Dion King and Troy Pyper, out of picture) might be thinking.

The only way to sort out such a line up of known ability and unlimited potential is to give them each a couple of handpieces and a pen of 10 sheep and tell them to sort it out themselves. It's cruel and it's ruthless but it works and results in those three past champions lining up against Buick, Pyper and Paerata Abraham, something of a speedshear specialist. (And who becomes, incidentally, the 73rd shearer to make the Golden Shears open final in 56 years.)

Moving right along to 9pm on Saturday night – Smith takes his place on stand one, Buick is at the other end and Kirkpatrick, Pyper, Abraham and King spread themselves out between the two.

All seems quite straight forward for five or six sheep – frenetic pace, minor lead changes, Smith and Kirkpatrick starting well, up with the pace and low board points on the overhead screens. And then what happens – was it that comment from the microphone man warning Paerata about the importance of keeping up with the pace? Next minute the newcomer moves into overdrive, not only keeping up with the pace but now setting the pace and caution, you might say, has well and truly gone out the window.

First 'Pae' puts a sheep around Pyper, and then he's done the same to King, and to Kirkpatrick, and sets his sights on Buick and Smith. The Stadium, meantime is in uproar because Abraham now calls Masterton home and Buick's screen says he's from Pongaroa, but everyone knows he's really a Masterton lad. So here two chances for home town hero status.

But here's the thing about shearing competitions. Many are they who can go fast and furious, and many are they who can go a bit slower and keep the job squeaky clean. Not many are they who can go fast and furious and squeaky clean all at the same time. Smith can do that and he knows if he can stay within a sheep or so of Abraham while keeping his own quality below double figures, those judges out the back are going to find enough wool left on the sheep of

Buick and Abraham to rule them out of the reckoning.

It's an exhilarating spectacle, Paerata switches off in 15 minutes 50 seconds – among the top three or four times in Shears history, according to 'subject matter experts' when questioned. Buick and the fast-finishing Smith close to within a minute; Johnny's work is done at 17.14 and King buttons off 30 seconds later. That leaves Pyper shearing his last sheep by himself, total time taken 18.32 but not disgraced.

And so Rowland Smith wins his third open championship in four years (having elected not to compete last year), with Kirkpatrick second and Pyper, clean clean Pyper, elevated to third overall. And to put that speed and quality equation into perspective, Paerata would need to have finished more than six minutes ahead of Smith to claim victory. Instead he had to settle for sixth but, as they say, he did not die wondering.

But still, young Mr Abraham gave the crowd a night to remember. Then, at presentation time, he assembled on the stage in dressy blue shirt with five other finalists all wearing New Zealand representative blazers. A thoughtful Sir David Fagan from the third row of the spectator seats takes off his own blazer and passes it forward to the odd man out. With help from 'Rowly', Paerata is soon standing dressed among equals, with a Knight to remember!

The trans-Tasman trophy returns

As noted above, Troy Pyper found the pace of the Open final a little too hot to handle. At least part of the reason for that lay in the fact that he had given everything he had and a little more to New Zealand's cause in the trans-



They were giving away plenty in terms of international experience against the Australian trio, but Troy Pyper and Aaron Haynes (with old hand Tony Coster) made up for it with their audacity and will to win.

Tasman test. (And not forgetting a similar effort in the PGG Wrightson final at the start of the evening.). It's been a year or four since the Walker-Keats Cup has required a home on this side of the ditch, because in Warnest and McIntyre you have two of the most accomplished fine wool shearers in Australian history. That's not to belittle the merits of Justin Dolphin, who is also a force to reckon with at this level.

Tony Coster enjoys a reputation as one of New Zealand's best all-rounders, at home in any class or company. But Pyper and Aaron Haynes – good boys unproven at international level you might say in a charitable assessment.

But put the silver fern on their chest and all the rest counts for nothing. Warnest led the contest through six merinos and was well into his crossbred mix when the audience suddenly twigged to the fact that Pyper was in the act of hunting him down. Coster wasn't far behind and the crowd began to realise, if Troy could take fastest time and Coster and Haynes edged ahead of McIntyre, those extra

minutes slipping away on Dolphin's stand could make this a very close contest indeed. In other words, 'Hey, the Kiwis could win this!'

By more than 12 points, the Kiwis won the test. Warnest was still good enough to take individuals honours (and the Joe Paewai Memorial Trophy) for the umpteenth time since 2004 but all three New Zealanders were better than the other two Australians, making for a memorable victory.

PGG Wrightson

Tony Coster won the McSkimming Memorial trophy for the fifth time in eight years, and with it the title of champion all-rounder. After three on the trot from 2009, the tag nestled briefly on the shoulders of Angus Moore, John Kirkpatrick and Nathan Stratford. The Rakaia man then came back to win again last year, comfortably ahead of Cam Ferguson. This time he was two points clear of Troy Pyper, who really has come of age in the major leagues.



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SAFETY

Results: Golden Shears 2016

International:

Lister Shearing Trans-Tasman Trophy Shearing test (12 sheep – 6 merino, 3 longwool, 3 second-shear): New Zealand (Tony Coster, Aaron Haynes and Troy Pyper) 249.918 pts beat Australia (Shannon Warnest, Daniel McIntyre and Justin Dolphin) 262.502.

CP Wool Trans-Tasman Woolhandling test (8 fleeces per team – 4 merino, 4 longwool): New Zealand (Joel Henare and Sheree Alabaster) 298.17 pts, beat Australia (Racheal Hutchison and Angela Wakely) 396.61 pts.

Shearing:

Golden Shears Open (20 sheep): Rowland Smith (Hastings) 59.836 1; John Kirkpatrick (Napier) 62.01 2; Troy Pyper (Winton) 67.737 3; Dion King (Alfredton) 70.869 4; David Buick (Pongaroa) 72.497 5; Paerata Abraham (Masterton) 75.912 6.

PGG Wrightson National Circuit (15 sheep – 3 merino, 3 corriedale, 3 long wool, 3 second-shear, 3 lambs): Tony Coster (Rakaia) 79.301 1; Troy Pyper (Winton) 81.311 2; David Buick (Pongaroa) 82.697 3; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 83.087 4; John Kirkpatrick (Napier) 83.223 5; Angus Moore (Kaitangata) 84.804 6.

Golden Shears Senior (12 sheep): Guy Fraser (Taumarunui) 53.605 1; Whanake Whare (Taumarunui) 55.772 2; Aaron Bell (Waipawa) 57.826 3; Dylan McGruddy (Masterton) 58.265 4; Kaleb Foote (Waikaretu) 59.389 5; Darren Alexander (Whangamomona) 61.294 6.

Golden Shears Intermediate (8 sheep): Tegwyn Bradley (Woodville) 44.493 1; Lionel Taumata (Gore) 47.09 2; Paraki Puna (Napier) 47.232 3; Jaycob Brunton (Levin) 47.703 4; Ricci Stevens (Gisborne) 50.075 5; James McKenzie (Wales) 51.579 6.

Golden Shears Junior (5 sheep): Sam Davison (Masterton) 40.555 1; Brandon Maguire-Ratima (Winton) 43.017 2; Cody Greig (Levin) 43.538 3; Connor Puha (Kimbolton) 44.181 4; Rhys Douglas (Wales) 48.253 5; Gwydion Davies (Wales) 48.909 6.

Golden Shears Novice final (2 sheep): Darren Bryant (Levin) 36.076 1; Joseph Gordon (Masterton) 46.319 2; Sarah Jane Reid (Taihape) 46.835 3; Leam Pritchard (Pongaroa) 49.748 4; Mark Baxter (Pongaroa) 52.407 5; Nathan Handy (Whangamata) 59.611 6.

Maori-Pakeha Teams (5 sheep each): Jimmy Samuels (Marton) and Murray Henderson (Feilding) 78.225 1; Hemi Braddick (Eketahuna) and Mark Garinger (Te Kuiti) 80.75 2; Shelford Wilcox (Gisborne) and Andy Mainland (Invercargill) 88.629 3.

Tui Encouragement (6 sheep): Brett Roberts (Mataura) 28.311 1; Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 30.898 2; Peter Jackson (Palmerston North) 33.516 3; Turi Edmonds (Raetihi) 34.769 4; Matene Mason (Masterton) 35.856 5; Ethan Pankhurst (Masterton) 38.664 6.

Woolhandling:

Golden Shears Open (10 fleeces – 6 longwool, 4 second-shear): Joel Henare (Gisborne) 219.468 1; Sheree Alabaster (Taihape) 248.22 2; Ronnie Goss (Mangamahu Valley) 253.958 3; Keryn Herbert (Waimiha) 262.22 4.

North Island Circuit Open (6 fleeces – 3 longwool, 3 second-shear): Joel Henare (Gisborne) 116.512 1; Sheree Alabaster (Taihape) 159.694 2; Maryanne Baty (Gisborne) 182.22 3; Keryn Herbert (Waimiha) 205.694 4.

Golden Shears Senior (4 fleeces): Denise Murray (Alexandra) 187.474 1; Ebony Turipa (Gore) 212.99 2; Brittany Tibble (Gisborne) 215.51 3; Hannah Speirs (Eketahuna) 267.04 4.

Golden Shears Junior (4 fleeces): Nya Kerekere (Gisborne) 190.102 1; Bianca Hawea (Masterton) 191.892 2; Kiriana Brown (Martinborough) 202.304 3; Samantha Jo Tipene (Pahiatua) 205.632 4.

Golden Shears Novice (1 fleece): Dayna Rutene (Gisborne) 76.148 1; Cheyenne Walker (Masterton) 77.572 2; Catherine Mullooly (Matawai) 89.426 3; Chiara Kirikiri (Masterton) 91.918 4.

Woolpressing:

Men's Final: Jeremy Goodger (Masterton) 57.25 1; James Goodger (Masterton) 57.9 2.

Women's Final: Awhina Namana (Masterton) 76.15 1; Cushla Abraham (Masterton) 123.1 2.

Pairs Final: Jeremy and Vinnie Goodger (Masterton) 40.25 1; Cameron and Jono Hicks (Marton) 109.1 2.

Triathlon (shearing, woolhandling, woolpressing):

Vinnie Goodger (Masterton) 162.602 1; Carmen Smith (Pongaroa) 199.717 2; Linton Palmer (Dipton) 230.325 3; Catherine Mullooly (Matawai) 230.976 4; Jeremy Goodger (Masterton) 234.018 5; Ronald Eriha (Hastings) 246.98 6.

Young Farmers Clubs

YFC Bue Ribbon shearing (6 sheep): Aaron Haynes (Taranaki/Manawatu) 32.052 1; Mark Grainger (Waikato/BOP) 32.763 2; Jack Fagan (Waikato/BOP) 34.351 3; Kaleb Foote (Waikato/BOP) 34.827 4; Jimmy Samuels (Taranaki/Manawatu) 36.728 5; Guy Fraser (Waikato/BOP) 37.393 6.

NZ Young Farmers Teams event: Southland (shearers Corey Palmer/Linton Palmer, woolhandlers Joel Henare/Jayden Pattison) 221.027 1; Tasman (shearers Aaron Bell/Ethan Pankhurst, woolhandlers Sarah Higgins/Samantha Gordon) 261.84 2; Taranaki/Manawatu (shearers Cameron Hicks/Aaron Haynes, woolhandlers Jimmy Samuels/Connor Puha) 290.225 3.

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More Golden Shears action, (clockwise from top left: Junior woolhandling champion Nya Kerekere; Novice woolhandlers Catherine Mullooly, Dayna Rutene, Cheyenne Walker and Chiara Kirikiri; The pressing Hicks boys, Cameron and Jono – no disgrace in finishing second to the good, good, Goodgers; Carl Cox and Peter Cox discussing the finer points of wool pressing with Koro Mullins; Joel Henare, open woolhandling champion for the fourth time in succession, receiving the spoils of victory from Shears guest, American Ambassador, Mark Gilbert.

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New Year Honour for Bernie Walker

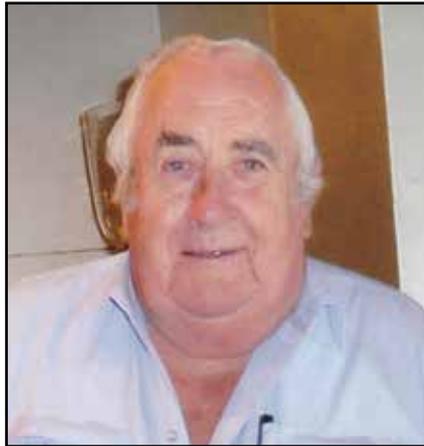
While New Zealand was waking up to the news that David Fagan had become 'Sir David' in the New Year Honours, Australia's Bernie Walker was also receiving significant recognition on the other side of the Tasman. He's now BK Walker, OAM (a recipient of the Order of Australia Medal).

Bernie was born at, and still lives at Euroa in Central Victoria. He began shearing in 1955, aged 16. Bernie married Margaret Tehan in 1965 and they have four children – David, John, Helen and Cath and 11 grandchildren.

Bernie took over the family property *Avondale* in 1964 and produced prime lambs, cattle and grain until he and Margaret sold the property in 2005 and retired to Euroa. He had retired from full time shearing in 1968. 'By then, I was too busy to go shearing.'

Bernie joined Euroa's Apex Club in April 1961, served as President in 1963-64 and was awarded Life Membership in 1979. He had become involved assisting with shearing competitions at the Euroa Show in 1970. In 1972 Bernie supported Brian Morrison in his successful world shearing record attempt in Euroa's RSL Hall.

In 1973, the Euroa Apex Club with support from Sunbeam's Rural Division and Brian Morrison initiated the Forlonge Invitation Shearing Championship, introducing a new concept of competition to Australia. This brought Australia into line with competitions worldwide and led directly to establishment of the Golden Shears at Euroa in 1974.



Bernie Walker, OAM

From 1970 until 2007 Bernie was chairman of the Apex committee which became Euroa Shearing Association. Golden Shears became the most successful competition in Australia, but was discontinued after the 1984 event for reasons beyond the control of the organising committee, including a ban by the Australian Workers Union.

From 1974, Bernie enjoyed a close relationship with Golden Shears Masterton and with the late Godfrey and Ivan Bowen, and the staff of the New Zealand Wool Board Field Service.

In 1977, Bernie was nominated to the Victorian Wool Producing Industry Training Committee, and successfully introduced the concept of Regional Shearer and Shedhand Training to the industry. That same year Bernie initiated a Wool Week in Euroa, which continues to this day.

In October 1980, he was a member of the group which established the

Golden Shears World Council in Euroa and was the Australian representative until 2007, receiving Life Membership in 1992.

Bernie has attended seven world shearing championships and has introduced innovations to competition shearing now being used world-wide.

In April 1980, he assisted the Diamond Shears Committee to set up their championships at Longreach in Queensland. He continues to support competitions, judging at many of them. He has judged Shearing Competition Federation of Australia (SCFA) and Sports Shear Australia Association (SSAA) competitions in all States for more than 40 years, including 10 National Championships. In 1995, Sports Shear Australia Association Inc was formed at his suggestion and continues today as the national organisation. Bernie was appointed Patron in 1997.

He became a World Sheep Shearing Records Society Referee in 1998 and has officiated at six world record attempts in Australia plus four more in New Zealand.

Bernie collects good bush poetry and writes some, mostly shearing related. He also enjoys Australian bush ballad music, and the challenge of researching and writing/recording interesting facts about shearing subjects for *Shearing* magazine, trying to record as much of this information before it is lost forever.

I'm sure all readers will join with the magazine and express congratulations to Bernie Walker OAM for his contribution to our industry.

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NZ WOOL CLASSERS ASSOCIATION

There is an old saying, 'Houston, we have a problem.' For as long as I can remember (that is a long time now) there has been a continuing problem with poorly filled out Wool Specifications. Incorrect or insufficient documentation causes difficulty and expense to the receiver of the clip.

One job for the person in charge of the clip is to oversee that the correct details are put into the press book in a legible manner and on the bale. If that is done correctly it's only a matter of transferring those details onto the specification. Providing correct documentation will help the flow of wool through the wool chain, so please take your time in filling out the specification in a legible manner.

This not always the responsibility of the person in charge at shearing time, many farmers also complete these specifications and they also need to ensure they are completed in a correct and legible manner.

Bale Weights

Just a reminder to people in charge during shearing, particularly pressers, bale weights are not to exceed 200 kilos. Over weight bales put pressure on the wool system throughout the chain, from truck driver, wool store, wool scour and wool dumpers. Please put yourself in the position of handling these very heavy bales (some have been up to 20 to 40 kg over weight). They not only affect the people who have to move these bales but can do

damage to coring machines and high density dumps plus there is a danger factor of the wire bands breaking on the high density bales.

Stencil holders overseeing a clip preparation.

At times the information from a stencil holder overseeing a clip is not being handled in the correct manner. The stencil number should be put onto the bale in the space provided on the label (use a Vivid) and most importantly be included on the Wool Specification with the stencil holder's name (e.g., Q 1984 - Mary James).

Providing the stencil holder fills out the wool specification, it is their job to fill in those details. If it the farmer is filling out the specification the stencil holder must advise the farmer of their details and request they be added to the specification.

NZWCA operates a Merit award system. Well prepared and classed clips are nominated by Wool Brokers/Merchants. If the details of stencil holder are not on the specification these clips could miss out on a nomination. In order to use the New Zealand Wool Classers Association Stencil Number you must be a financial member of the Association.

Field Days and AGM

The AGM is being held at Timaru on 10 May 2016 May and in conjunction we will be holding a field day. The programme includes a tour of Canterbury Wool Scour, speakers on Health & Safety requirements, Specification and documentation, requirements for the coming season and contracts, a farmer and shearing contractor view and an update of the wool training programme at Lincoln/Telford. This day is primarily for our members but others are welcome at a small cost.

Also arranged in conjunction with the Central Otago Shearing Contactors are two days at Omakau (16th June – Cross bred & Halfbred, 8th August – fine wool). The programme consists of a tour through a local Wool Buyer showing pressing, grab and coring of bales and wool preparation. The following speakers have been arranged, senior wool handler, farmer, shearing

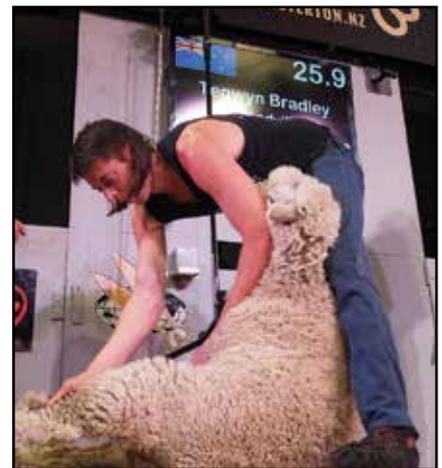


contractor, broker and a speaker on professionalism.

A field day has been arranged with PGG Wrightson at Christchurch on the 2nd June which will include a visit to a wool sale and some of the content from above. A further field day will be held in conjunction with CP Wool at Invercargill in November, date and content to be confirmed.

After the very successful day last year at Napier we are going to hold a field day again at Napier on the 31st May 2016. If these field days are in your area keep it free so you can attend. Programme details for all these field days will be on our web site (www.woolclassers.co.nz) and Facebook (Nzwca) late April.

If you want to know more about the Association check us out on our Web site www.woolclassers.co.nz or contact the Executive Officer/Registrar Bruce Abbott email eo@woolclassers.co.nz or phone 027 2280868.



We mention in our story at page 23 how Robin Cooper and John Fagan won titles at Golden Shears, and then had sons follow in their footsteps by doing likewise. Now 2016 intermediate shearing champion Tegwyn Bradley of Woodville (above) adds a new twist to the generational links, following his mother Helen Bradley onto the Goldies Honours Board. Helen was junior woolhandling champion in 1995.

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Wool classers in action, clockwise from top left: Ian Shaw classing at Mt Pisa; Trainee classer Robin O'Donnell at Walter Peak Station; Rose Barnett at Moutere Station; Pagan Rimene at The Gorge, with farmer Jock McNally taking close interest; Murray Ross at Beaumont Station. (Photos from Bruce Abbott.)

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GET THE EDGE, MAKE THE CUT

Joe Ferguson - third category bloke

By Des Williams

There's an unpublished thesis that contends there are only three types of 'blokes'. They are, in ascending order, blokes, good blokes and really good blokes. The findings of this study by an esteemed Maori gentleman, the result of a lifetime of observing humanity, have been handed down over the years in the best oral history traditions.

Now before you go delving through the respected recorded opinions of Dr Ranginui Walker, Pita Sharples, Winston Peters and other academics in search of further information, let me tell you the 'author' of this work was himself a shearer – the late Mac Potae of Kennedy Bay.

The findings of Mac's relatively unpublicised study are especially relevant to the central figure of this story, however, because Joe Ferguson shore with and against at least three Potae brothers back in the 1960s when all were at the height of their considerable powers. So when you meet these legends from the past for the first time it's natural to wonder which of Mac's three categories they might be in.

A couple of years ago (first meeting) one found himself watching and waiting while 'Joe Fergie' finished off mowing a lawn and clearing under a hedge with a weed-eater. When the machine finally stopped the cheeky observer said he hoped the operator wasn't making any second cuts with that thing. Instant response – 'Nobody here would know what a second cut is, anyway!'



Joe Ferguson (third left) never won the Golden Shears but he had some 'really good blokes' to contend with. Open finalists 1968, from left: Brian 'Snow' Quinn, Tom Brough, Joe Ferguson, Brian Waterson, Allan Williamson, Ron Stuart.

More recently, a longer-than-expected interview extends into that awkward period when dinner time is approaching, and you're in the act of deciding whether to 'wrap it up' and get on your way to avoid further imposing on their time.

But Joe's partner Pauline just beats you to it – 'Would you like to stay for dinner?' she calls from the kitchen.

With indecent haste you accept – 'I'd love to, but only if it's not any trouble.' Joe adds to the conversation – 'We've only got nine baked beans and one slice of bread, so that's three beans each and we'll try and divide the bread evenly so we don't have to fight over it.'

At that precise moment the Potae thesis comes back to mind: 'Joe Ferguson, really good bastard.' (sorry,

I mean bloke – really good bloke!) And you find the feeling is mutual – Joe reckons Mac was a top class sort of bloke himself. But as he starts reflecting back through the years Joe admits to a couple of times in his life when he wasn't quite so nice.

He'd spent his early years on a farm at Tatanui near Morrinsville, but his father died very young, when Joe himself was only about five. His mother ('a wonderful woman') had to battle on, doing the best she could on the farm while raising the family. For starters, Joe's older brother had to leave school and find work for himself.

Without Dad around, Joe found himself getting into trouble, specialising in fights with other boys at school (against his mother's pleadings)

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and he was always getting offside with one of his teachers. Tough times on the farm were eased ever so slightly when Joe was able to earn his own money by mowing lawns for the local factory manager and shop keeper. He saved enough to buy himself a bike and a slug pistol.

‘So yeah, I was a bit of a rascal for quite a while after Dad died. I remember one wet day I took the pistol to school. This kid came riding past on a bike and he was wearing a large raincoat. I jumped out and yelled “bang, you’re dead” as I fired a slug at him.

‘It wasn’t a really powerful weapon and there was no damage done but that teacher caught me, gave me 20 of the ‘cuts’ [the old leather strap on the arm trick!], gave me ‘thirty thousand lines’ to write over the weekend and sent me to see the headmaster. But I had just turned 15 and it was a Friday, so I left school instead. That teacher might still be waiting for his 30,000 lines!’

That same night, the ‘newly graduated’ Joe went to the movies at Morrinsville and got talking to another young man who told him he was learning to shear.

‘I said, ‘what’s that?’ He said, “shearing sheep, stupid!”

‘So I asked him if there was any chance of me getting a job there too because I’d never really wanted to work on the farm.’

And so the young Fergie found himself working for Ian Hutchings and Jack Woodcock. Rousieing at first, in the time honoured tradition, before graduating to finishing last sides and shearing a couple at smoko.



Joe Ferguson, 1960s speedster

‘Ian and Jack shored the old fashioned way, coming up the neck and out the side of the face rather than under the chin. When it came to the last side you just had a narrow strip left to do above the shoulder.

‘Then I went to a Godfrey Bowen/Wool Board shearing course at Palmerston North, where Vince Nesdale was the instructor. I was still doing the old style neck but Vince reckoned you were liable to make more second cuts that way so I agreed it was time I changed to their way of doing it. Vince was a very good teacher and all the Nesdale boys had great reputations around the Manawatu area.’

After that stint of tertiary education Joe came back to Morrinsville and his job with Ian Hutchings, who he describes as ‘a one-in-a-million’ bloke. (A category that seems to be missing

from the Potae theory.) But then Joe got the idea that he wanted to go and shear in Australia.

‘I wanted to go over and try that narrow gear. I reasoned that if I could learn to fill the narrow comb it would help me to improve my shearing much more quickly. So I was able to organise a job with Grazcos through my local stock agent. I went with a bloke named Peter Baldwin and we worked for a season around Longreach, Blackall and Charleville.’

Joe remembers an interesting discussion about the width of combs on that 1957 trip. Despite the desire to ‘fill those narrow combs’, when he found a blow torch in a shed he couldn’t resist the temptation to make one of his combs a little bit wider. But the comb soon ‘went missing’ and he had no idea where it might have gone.

‘Then I walked into the pub one night and one of the Aussie shearers I’d been working with took me aside, held out the comb and said, ‘Is this yours?’ I told him it was. He said, “Well, we were going to give you a hiding, but I like your honesty so you get rid of it and we’ll say no more.” It was obvious one of the rouseabouts had taken it off my stand and given it to the shearer, but I took his advice anyway and they said no more.’

Joe remembers another ‘Say no more’ on that trip: ‘Someone gave me a bottle of Bundy rum. It was a Friday night, Pete and I drank the bottle between us and we didn’t wake up again until Sunday night. I haven’t touched the stuff since!’

(To page 14)



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Back in New Zealand at the end of that Aussie season, Joe then got the idea that he wanted to get some experience 'working in a Maori gang', so he and Pete Baldwin headed for the Hawke's Bay. At Te Aute they met up with a contractor named Tutu Waretini, who had been a pilot during WWII.

'We walked into this shed and I immediately saw a shearer in the gang that I'd met somewhere before. He called out to Tutu, 'Don't give that bloke a job – he's bloody hopeless!' But Tutu watched Pete and I shear a few sheep each and then he took us aside and said he had work for both of us.' Joe's theory worked too – after that Australian sojourn he very quickly got up to 300 a day on ewes and 400 on lambs, making full use of the wider gear.

'Then Tutu told me he was taking me up to shear at the Hamilton Show. I told him there's no way I was going up there to shear against the likes of Bowen or Manu Rangiawha. But he took me anyway and I shore in a heat against both of those guns.

Both finished a whole sheep ahead of me – Godfrey walked off the stage as soon as he had finished but Manu stayed beside me, offering encouragement all the while. He told me that I would eventually make the grade – 'In another couple of years, or even sooner – you just wait and see.'

'I was very embarrassed about being so slow but Manu's kindly manner made me feel much better. He was a magnificent man and that gesture has stuck with me all my life.'

Joe finished that stint with Tutu Waretini at Christmas and returned to the Waikato, where he worked the next main shear for Colin Terry. 'I only worked for the main shear and then I would get stuck into fencing during the off-season. Ian Hutchings had taught me to shear and he also taught me how to fence – he was expert at both.'

As Manu Rangiawha prophesised, Joe indeed made it to the big time within a couple of years. At the Auckland Royal Show in 1961 it was Joe's turn to put a sheep around Godfrey in the final and be crowned the Open champion (aided a little by Bing Macdonald's mishap in nicking a teat).

Then came the first Golden Shears in 1961 at Masterton. Joe had qualified in sixth place behind Godfrey, Bing Macdonald, Ivan Bowen, Harry Hughes and Mate Simon. In the semis (just top 12 qualifiers back then) it was Joe's turn to nick the teat and he missed a place in the final. (Won by Ivan Bowen, with the afore-mentioned philosopher, Mac Potae in fourth place.)

Joe made amends the following year (1962) by finishing second to Macdonald – just 16 seconds behind on the clock

but nearly five points adrift overall. That's as close as Joe got to winning the Golden Shears Open championship at Masterton, while he finished third in 1965 and again in 1968.

'For some reason I could never ever get relaxed at Golden Shears – everywhere else I was good as gold but down there was always a bit different, somehow.'

Getting enough good combs together and at the right time for the shows was also a problem for Joe. He'd learned how Bing had kept about six from the first Golden Shears and he had them all running pretty well.

'Bing gave me one to try one time when we were out at a shed practising. It went very well and I asked him if I could use it at the show. 'You must be joking,' he said, 'You're not bloody using my own combs against me!'

But probably the most famous story involving Macdonald and Ferguson is the incident involving Bing's cracked collarbone just before the first Golden Shears. Joe and Bing and a group of other shearers were having a few beers by the side of the road (in a cattle yard!) after the Otorohanga Show. A bit of horse play developed between the two and Joe was able to put Bing on the ground.

'I grabbed hold of him and meant to fall down too, but I lost my grip and he fell quite heavily by himself and his shoulder landed on a stone. He was obviously hurt quite badly and I felt really terrible about that, but he got it right just in time to shear at Masterton. You can see the white bandaging and strapping on his shoulder in that famous photo of the first six open finalists. [Note: This version of events pretty closely resembles Bing Macdonald's version, recorded more than 25 years ago in *Last Side to Glory!*]

On the competition stage, Joe's biggest moment came in 1973 when he won the inaugural McSkimming Memorial National Championship. His other major titles included the Western Shears at Raglan in 1971, the New Zealand Spring Shears at Waimate in 1972 and the National Lamb Shears at Raglan in 1972 and 1974. He can mention a few other places where he shore very well, but not well enough to impress local judges. But he was a great fan and supporter of Danny Holland, who shore well wherever he went. (The 'ma-shine', Joe called him.)

By 1974 Joe reckoned he was done with shearing in New Zealand and made what was going to be a permanent move to Australia. He worked for a time at Mount Isa, but then John Harrison at Taihape asked him to come back and help out for the season, which he did. But he returned to Australia in 1975, started shearing again and this time the stay was more permanent. It was there he met his partner Pauline (a Kiwi) and they have worked together just about every day for the 40 years that have passed since then.

The 'permanent move' lasted nearly 20 years before Joe and Pauline moved back to New Zealand and settled at Whangarei (Pauline hails from Te Kao in the Far North). Joe started up his lawn-mowing business (careful all the while not to make any second cuts on the grass!) and still loves the life-style. It's a good occupation – like shearing, wet days generally mean a day off, and when you are well into your 70s, days off are welcome.

And Joe Ferguson, shearing legend and really good bloke, is also a bit of a philosopher, if not quite revealing himself to be in the Mac Potae class: 'Life changes around you and you just have to keep adjusting to it.'

'I went South to work for George Potae and wanted to shear in the sheds with Snow Quinn. But Snow reckoned the job was hard enough as it is without having to race me all day.'



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Crouch, touch, pause, engage! Or something like that. Former ABs hooker Andrew Hore knows this game, too.

Golden Shears Outstanding

Queenslander Barry Hammonds was full of praise for the organisation and professionalism evident last month at Golden Shears. Although he's been judging at shearing competitions in Australia for many years, 2016 was the first opportunity Barry has had to visit Masterton.

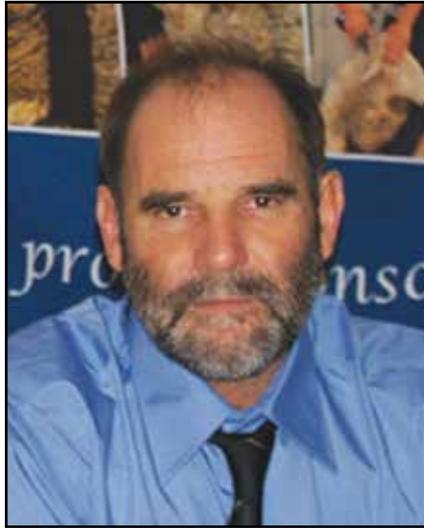
A former shearing contractor based at Charleville, Barry says he started judging at 'rebel competitions' several years before the advent of Sports Shear Australia in 1995.

'I was fortunate in that I had learned the basics of judging at a New Zealand shearing school years ago and so I had to train up all our judges to the New Zealand way because most of them had never been to that type of competition before. I was able to teach them all as much as I knew and we just took it from there.'

'I kept judging for quite a few years while I was contracting and then when I gave that away I started competing again myself. There used to be three million sheep in the Charleville and surrounding districts. Now there's less than 300,000 because of droughts and dingoes and the country districts are really suffering because of the lack of money coming in.'

The lack of sheep and vast distances to travel meant Barry judged at only one Queensland competition last season, compared to his usual half dozen or so.

'That was the State selection competition, but I was able to arrive in New Zealand a week before Golden Shears and I judged at both the Apiti and Pahiatua competitions, leading



Barry Hammonds, Australian shearing judge at Golden Shears 2016.

up to Golden Shears. I also attended the two-day pre-shears course at Palmerston North – another invaluable learning experience.

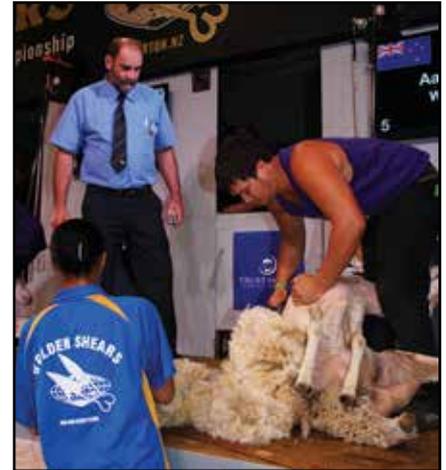
'Even I learned quite a lot at the course and it's evident in the young shearers on display here [Masterton], especially the juniors and intermediates – you can pretty much tell the ones who have done the course and those who haven't so I would recommend it to anyone. Plus the organisation here is just outstanding as far as I'm concerned, it all just seems to run like clockwork.'

Barry says the marked improvements from modern training methods are also evident in Australia, with shearers much more advanced in technique and attitude from what they were 20 years ago. He says he holds the Australian Workers' Union responsible

for wasting several generations of shearer training in Australia, by holding back development, restricting the use of gear, not allowing shearers to grind their own gear and being too judgmental about style.

'I know they were trying to protect what their grandfathers had fought for and that might have been okay 100 years ago but times change and you have to change with them. You had to have a union ticket if you wanted to shear three sheep at a competition on Saturday. I just couldn't do it!

'The change to Sports Shear Australia has been great for the industry at home and the organisation is building a better financial base. But it's not like New Zealand where you can travel to different competitions at a weekend. But we will always have those challenges to overcome so we have to work around the things we can't change.' (*Des Williams*)



Barry Hammonds judging on the board; shearer Aaron Bell of Waipawa.

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Keen spectators at The Big Day Out (Waitara Station, Napier, 4 January 2016) – Bob Timmins and Eddie Parkinson. There was no shearing at Taumarunui that day so the pair decided they would come across country and spend their day watching some back-bending instead.



In June 2016 Dori McLay will mark up 60 years of working in the shearing industry. Originally from Taumarunui, the 73-year-old has spent the past 45 years in and around the town of Lawrence, South Otago. Dori says she moved about the country during her first years in the industry, before deciding to 'stay still' for a while. She's been with a number of different contractors – starting out with Bill Aspinall and then working for Sam Boynton. She then had a stint with Johnny Bright, and enjoyed four years with Jimmy Barnett's blade gangs at Roxburgh. She's been with Robertson Shearing for the past 20 years. Dori comes from a family of 'cooks and rousies' and always enjoys meeting and working with the many interesting people who come together in shearing gangs. Jude Gamble describes Dori as 'amazing and staunch as. We all love her to bits!'



'Oh no, am I going to be in *Shearing* magazine again?' Spotted in the crowd at the Big Day Out – Josef Martin Schindler of Switzerland – last seen at Golden Shears (April 2011 mag) with Shane Rawlinson. Welcome back, Josef!

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Mystery lamb losses

By Clive Dalton

Lambing percentage has always been the key to sheep farming profits, and ever since the start of sheep recording in the 1970s, selection for fertility has always been the main driver to identify the best sheep. It was always fertility, then growth (hogget weight) and then fleece weight that made up the main Selection Index.

Many farmers don't want any more fertility with more triplets and even quads these days – which are really not wanted on hill country with minimal shepherding. And there's certainly no profit in rearing lambs on milk powder that end up as 'rats and mice' at weaning for little profit.

Low fertility has been solved by genetics, and this is confirmed every year by scanning results. So in theory, what you see on the scanner is what you should expect in the paddock at docking – or near enough.

Not true. There's a major problem that sheep researchers (when we had some) really didn't want to talk about when first seen. This is loss between scanning and birth – a time when you would think everything should be stable after getting this far in pregnancy. They blamed poor scanning techniques.

Well it's not, and losses can average around 20% – big enough you would think for a massive research programme to find out why. It didn't happen and now there are no researchers left to study it. So much for progress!

Lamb losses over the first four days after birth are well known though many farmers don't (can't) count dead lambs. It was only in the days of skin collections that the shock hit home with an average loss of around another 20%. There are few losses between birth and docking/weaning.

We boffins chased this lamb mortality problem for years and all we ever achieved was to measure the size of the problem and the causes by post-morteming thousands of lambs. The main reasons were dystocia (lambs too big), twins, low birth weights and hypothermia – but we could never come up with ways to avoid all that lot. You couldn't control birth weight very much other than feeding ewes better if they were carrying multiples, and then lamb on flat



paddocks with shelter, which was not possible on steep hill country. So this problem remains, again with nobody left to find practical solutions.

Sheep seem to have an ability to absorb foetuses right up to birth, with no ill effect on their health. Cattle don't have this ability and abort and it probably goes back to the primitive origins of sheep in hot deserts and hard cold winters living on heather and tussock.

But farmers are now noticing another major problem – barren two-tooths. These are sheep in top condition that took the ram but never lambed. What's the problem?

The answer lies in the massive complex field of fungal toxins. Researchers at Ruakura and farmers solved the Facial Eczema problem which was a major issue, and were about to start on a much more complex toxin called *Zearalenone*, produced by a common fungus called *Fusarium*. This is around all year and lives inside the plant, peaking in autumn in the seed head after which it starts all over again after dropping off into the soil.

Zearalenone kills embryos and is a well-known hazard in pig and poultry feeds. Years ago it was identified by Ruakura scientists as a killer of sheep embryos. They were about to extend their work on it but the AgResearch bureaucracy closed their unit. So here's another identified problem left to waste the potential of the hard-done sheep farmer.



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Big day out tears from Heaven

By Hog

We had one run under our belt but no end in sight for the rain. You would think that in today's world of cutting edge technology they would at least be able to get the weather forecast right! Not so! The night before BDO's start the committee thought the weather had broken and the forecast for light showers the next day would be manageable. Who knew at 11.45 pm that night it would start raining again and not stop until 5.00 pm the following day? Sleep was not an option for me. I was up and down all night looking out the sliding door, watching the rain come down and keeping the other people in my cabin awake as well.

But cometh the hour, we all got up and went to work. It was one of the most impressive sights you would see in wool shed, when the team started at 5.00 am. They shored like men possessed with a goal in mind. The karakia at 4.45 am set the tone and the photo board set in the middle of the eight stands reminded us all why we were there.

As daylight came, however, it became clear we had problems. What do we do? My gut feeling was to stop and avoid any injuries that could occur in the shearing of wet sheep. In an event like this though there are a lot of personal feelings and emotions to consider, so at breakfast there was a meeting called with the committee and the shearers.

There were two options given: the first being to stop shearing and the other to continue shearing. If, however, anyone slipped or fell it would be stopped immediately! There was no pressure put upon anyone and at the beginning of the second run, five shearers took the stand and shored a full run. The woolhandlers and pen seconds took control of the situation. The woolhandlers, without being asked, dried the stand for each shearer, going above and beyond. In Dayna Te Aho's words, 'it's just what we did back in the day down in Pongaroa.' The pen seconds made the sheep available for their man by having them next to the rail – to be clear – they did not turn the sheep over.

So the day continued and the rain kept falling. There were several moments throughout that I thought the rain was going to break – only in the next breath it seemed to rain harder!! It was a big disappointment for the committee who had organised a family day out with all sorts of outside activities planned. The local dog trial club stuck to their task however, along with the 60 campervans hunkered down as well. The Fulton Hogan boys did a great job on the road to the Station and this helped all who drove up to Waitara.

Lloyd and Sonya Holloway, their family and staff were devastated. The amount of man hours and organising they had put into this day was monumental.

The run after morning smoko saw seven shearers take the stand and after lunch we had a full board of eight shearers until knock off at 5.00 pm. In total they shored nine hours, and while the sheep never improved all day this is probably something you will never see again.



There were many little things that touched and humbled me all day:

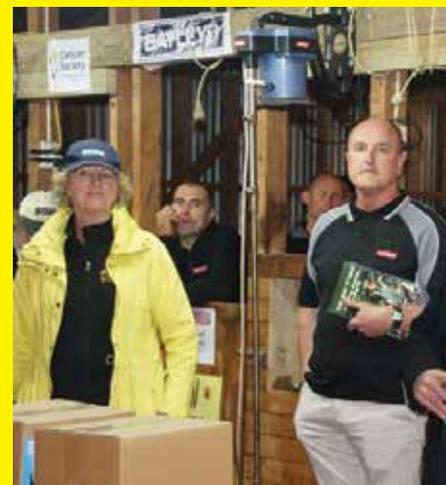
- Darryl, who had been driven all the way from Masterton that morning and was undergoing chemotherapy only three days before. He didn't feel very well, but he sat there for a whole run and thoroughly enjoyed it
- There were the older people from our industry, Tom Brough from Te Kuiti and Arthur and Gilbert James from Coromandel (all in their 70s) who had got up and drove all that morning to be there.
- Justin Bell's son Hayden was his Dad's pen second, just a youngster who, only days before, had buried his grandad who had died of cancer.
- The moment Rowly was presented with his taonga and spoke of his mother.
- Leon Samuels shaking my hand and thanking me for a 9 hour day and telling me his father had died of cancer.
- We had three personal bests shored on the day. We shored 4116 on the day, including the warm up sheep to be donated to the Cancer Society as well as the donations, raffles and auctions that took place on the day.
- On behalf of the committee I would like to thank all the sponsors that were involved. I would also like to thank the crew. I hope it will be a day you never forget and be proud of what you accomplished.
- My own taonga stands proudly in my lounge next to my team photos of Dion Morrell's world record of 716 and Darin Forde's world record of 720 full woolled ewes.
- I have my own idea about the rain. I believe they were crying up there heaven and were proud of what we were trying to achieve.

Thank you everybody. Amount raised: \$30,554.73.

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News 4 Ewes



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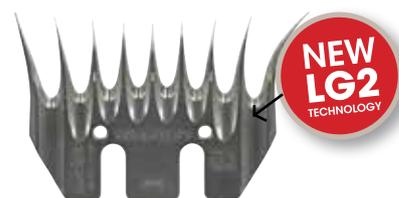
This hole is for the sole purpose of oiling the cup & post. This can only be achieved when the tension is off the handpiece so that there is space between the cup and the post for the oil to fill too. Handpiece should be tipped upside down to enable fork to drop away from center post. Without constant lubrication between the post and cup steel to steel contact will cause excessive friction which will lead to heat and premature wear. In addition handpiece will cut incorrectly and vibrate. Hereunder is a center post & cup that is no more than 10 months old, the result of no oil. Note the wear through the back of the center post cup and into the back of the fork. *Note also the diff in Posts



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We have our Sales Team heading into the sheds in April and May and we are keen to catch up with you. If you would like to see any of our Team and try out the new LG2 Heiniger Winter Comb range, let us know. Text your **name** and **town** to **0272528282** and we will let you know when we are in your area.

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'The Choice of Champions'

Hall of memories for Robin

By Des Williams

As Robin Cooper sat with good friend Bill Gaskill watching the senior final at Golden Shears last month, he could be excused if he'd let his mind quietly slip back to the year of 1972, when he won that same event in the War Memorial Stadium. As well as putting his name on the Honours Board as senior champion, Robin also earned himself a five-week trip to England with Open champion, Brian 'Snow' Quinn.

Robin remembers that he wasn't first to finish, but he had the tidiest shorn sheep and he also won the RE O'Hara Memorial Cup for best quality in all finals. In fact Robin (15 minutes 12 sec) was last of the six to stop the clock, behind speedsters David Sharpe (Kaponga, 14.24); Colin Gibson (Oamaru, 14.32) and Richard Bibby (Ashhurst, 14.42), with John Henson (Carterton, 15.7) and Hugh McCarroll (Tauranga, 15.11) also slightly more sedate in their work.

Robin's winning margin was 0.1185 – remember the scoring was 'plus points' back then, with speed and quality split 50/50. (The fastest man gained 50 points for speed and points were deducted at the rate of one per 10 seconds, so Robin, 85.1735 points overall and 48 seconds behind Sharpe, would have gained 45.2 points for time and the balance 39.9735 for quality. (The scoring method changed to penalty points in 1983.)

That 1972 senior final was notable for two other things – Cooper and Richard Bibby were both left handers, and Bibby and John Henson dead-heated for second place. It is recorded in that fine book *Last Side to Glory* how Robin donated his prize money back to the Golden Shears Society to be used in adapting the number six stand for left-handed use (a feature Colin King would later appreciate!)

Robin recalls he and Brian Quinn covered most of England while they were there, giving demonstrations at a variety of venues such as A&P shows, sale yards and even at hotels.

'They would just put up shearing machines wherever they were required, we would do our demonstrations and then have an afternoon tea and socialise with the locals.

'Our wives Lyn [Quinn] and Marie would run sweepstakes on how long it was going to take us to shear our sheep. At one place a woman (land-girl type, maybe) thought she would be able to shear a sheep almost as quickly as we were doing them, but in fact it took her close to half an hour!



Bill Gaskill (left) and Robin Cooper enjoying the action at Golden Shears 2016. Both are long-serving shearing sports judges from the Opotiki region and Bill is a former Shearing Sports North Island committee chairman.

'We were virtually allowed to go where we wanted as long as we weren't back-tracking, but we managed to get away and watch the bullfights in Spain. We had to pay for that excursion ourselves but apart from that, all other costs were sponsored as part of the prize. That senior title was a big event in those days and I really appreciated the opportunity to travel with 'Snow' because he had been there before and knew his way around England.'

Robin had shorn at the first Golden Shears in 1961 and went for 20 years without missing. Someone then pointed out that he was one of very few to achieve that feat, so he told himself he would carry on and shear for 30 years, which he did, through to 1990. He's missed a few since then, but keeps coming back whenever he can, enjoying the chance to catch up with friends and opponents from the past.

There's another reason why the War Memorial Stadium will forever be a Hall of Memories for Robin Cooper. His sons, Steven (1976) and Bryan (1978) (another leftie!) both followed his footsteps to win Golden Shears Junior titles, an honour unmatched until 1997, when James Fagan (son of 1984 open champion John Fagan) won the Senior title.



More 'next generation' shearers: Atawhai and Ariana Hadfield of Wairoa answer some searching questions from commentator Koro Mullins after shearing side by side in the Novice event at the New Zealand Championships. They are son and daughter of present-day judge and former well-performed open class shearer, Barton Hadfield.

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Robertson Shearing from Lawrence: 'All the old boys shearing at Paul Eason's at Beaumont. Bob Timmins, Lloyd Smith, Bernie Kingi and young stager, Max Marsden. Also shearing in the middle stand is Morgan France. Girls are Nyree Fenton, Kasey Robertson, Kirsty Harkerss, Opal Rata and Brooke Cameron. Presser, Aaron Tupara. Great gang this year. Awesome people, awesome times,' says Jude Gamble. (And it was Jude who called them 'old boys!')



Action featuring the Clarke Shearing gang near Woodville, working through a mob of Texels. Opposite: Tracey Henderson looks for faults in the wool while (above) Alana Clarke prepares to pick up the fleece from Bill Hale's stand. A long hot day ended with a swim at the local school pool.

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Davos, Switzerland – home of the world's richest, most famous and most powerful sheep. Like this ram – a former high-flying city trader he told me – who, when not involved in high profile Ovine Economic Forum meetings, spends his time skiing, gambling and partying. He was particularly keen to point out his designer leather head-gear, which he boasted cost more than most people spend on a car.

'Oh don't listen to him, he's full of scheiße!', his human owners later told me. He was just one of the stock rams in their flock of two-hundred milk sheep. Milk from the flock is used to make specialist cheese. The flock spends winter indoors at the farm in Davos, then heads up to the alpine pastures for summer.

And the designer head-gear? This ram has a nasty habit of head-butting humans and the ingenious (and not-so-expensive!) garment solves the problem by restricting him to side vision only. (Tom Harding) (He read it on Facebook so it must be true!)



Chris Lawlor from Clarke Shearing – he too was shearing Texels and swimming, with Tracey and Bill (see page 30.)



Big Day Out, Wet Day Out, Hard Day Out – this trio wasn't going to let the shitty weather distract them from the noble cause of raising money for the Cancer Society: Julian Toheriri (left), Petarina Hume and Gary Murray grab a snack and a rest from the mahi at Waitara Station. Below, Dion Skipper and T Pekapo with Certificates of Appreciation from the BDO Organisers and Cancer Society.



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New Zealand championships



Top: Dylan McGruddy (left) and Kaleb Foote battle it out for the honour of meeting Senior event sponsor, Matt Ward (above) from Ballance Agri-nutrients. Dylan won!



'Mate, there's not a grey hair on your head. You could keep going for years yet!' Darin Forde and Dion King await the 'Instant' result of the NZ Shears Open Plate final. (Forde won.)

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Results: NZ Shearing Championships, 31 Mar - 2 Apr 2016:

Shearing: Open (20 sheep): Rowland Smith (Hastings) 58.42 1; John Kirkpatrick (Napier) 58.831 2; Gavin Mutch (Whangamomona and Scotland) 60.65 3; David Buick (Pongaroa) 60.792 4; Mark Grainger (Te Kuiti) 61.806 5; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 65.435 6.

New Zealand Shears Circuit (15 sheep – 5 merino, 5 second-shear, 5 lambs): Tony Coster (Rakaia) 90.918 1; John Kirkpatrick (Napier) 92.317 2; Troy Pyper (Winton) 94.136 3; Dion King (Alfredton) 98.505 4; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 98.52 5; Paerata Abraham (Masterton) 99.772 6.

North Island Shearer of the Year (20 sheep): John Kirkpatrick (Napier) 58.02 1; Rowland Smith (Hastings) 60.037 2; Dion King (Alfredton) 62.625 3; Mark Grainger (Te Kuiti) 65.315 4; Aaron Haynes (Feilding) 67.724 5; Digger Balme (Te Kuiti) 75.551 6.

Open Plate (10 sheep): Daren Forde (Winton) 40.777 1; Dion King (Alfredton) 40.924 2; Brett Roberts (Mataura) 41.238 3; Floyd Neil (Taumarunui) 43.15 4; Hemi Braddick (Eketahuna) 44.21 5; Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 45.123 6.

Open Challenger (10 sheep): Paerata Abraham (Masterton) 42.688 1; Sheldford Wilcox (Gisborne) 42.731 2; Delwyn Jones (Te Kuiti) 45.881 3; Andy Mainland (Kapuka) 50.153 4; Corey Mifsud (Australia) 50.272 5; Shaun Ward (Te Karaka) 50.295 6.

Senior (12 sheep): Dylan McGruddy (Masterton) 53.409 1; Whanake Whare (Taumarunui) 54.029 2; Bevan Pere (Gisborne) 55.13 3; Guy Fraser (Taumarunui) 55.711 4; Kaleb Foote (Waikaretu) 60.749 5; Darren Alexander (Whangamomona) 62.317 6.

Intermediate (8 sheep): Paraki Puna (Napier) 42.765 1; Lionel Taumata (Gore) 43.225 2; Ricci Stevens (Napier) 45.112 3; Tegwyn Bradley (Woodville) 45.942 4; Joel Richards (Oamaru) 46.038 5; Anaru Wakefield (Porangahau) 46.918 6.

Junior (5 sheep): Connor Puha (Kimbolton) 39.091 1; Brandon Maguire Ratima (Winton) 41.271 2; Josh Harding (Hunterville) 43.12 3; Jordan Hart (Blenheim) 43.549 4; Sam Davison (Masterton) 44.496 5; Sam Murphy (Otorohanga) 49.096 6.

Novice (2 sheep): Darren Bryant (Levin) 30.786 1; Sarah Jane Reid (Taihape) 41.433 2; Topia Barrowcliffe (Piopio) 45.311 3; Atawhai Hadfield (Wairoa) 46.384 4; Ray Hohepa (Napier) 46.609 5; Ariana Hadfield (Wairoa) 49.06 6.

Trans-Tasman Shearing Challenge (8 sheep): Te Kuiti New Zealand Shears (James Fagan, David Buick, Whanake Whare) 275.083 pts beat Warmambool Romney Shears Australia (Roger Mifsud, Corey Mifsud, Brett Caldwell) 275.49pts.

Woolhanding: Open: Joel Henare (Gisborne) 76.688 1; Pagan Rimene (Alexandra) 87.75 2; Sheree Alabaster (Taihape) 89.97 3; Tia Potae (Milton) 96.07 4; Sue Turner (Taumarunui) 130.87 5.

Senior: Brittany Tibble (Gisborne) 63.824 1; Erica Henare (Balfour) 84.85 2; Wilz Marshall (Taumarunui) 90.59 3; Hannah Speirs (Eketahuna) 99.69 4; Ash Boyce (Dannevirke) 202.97 5.

Junior: Angela Kirkpatrick (Napier) 49.53 1; Azureddee Paku (Masterton) 57.37 2; Samantha Tipene (Eketahuna) 69.81 3; Bianca Hawea (Masterton) 72.81 4; LaShara Anderson (Christchurch) 88.694 5.

Shearing and Woolhanding: Inter-Island Shearing and Woolhanding Challenge: North Island (shearers Rowland Smith, Dion King, Murray Henderson; woolhandlers Ngaio Herbert, Keryn Herbert, Sheree Alabaster) 300.04 pts, beat South Island (shearers Darin Forde, Angus Moore, Nathan Stratford; woolhandlers Tia Potae, Pagan Rimene, Joel Henare) 307.107pts.

Shearing Sports New Zealand No 1 Rankings for 2015-2016:

Shearing: Open, John Kirkpatrick (Napier); senior, Kaleb Foote (Waikaretu); intermediate, Ricci Stevens (Napier); junior, Connor Puha (Kimbolton).

Woolhanding: Open, Joel Henare (Gisborne); senior, Erica Henare (Gisborne); junior, Angela Kirkpatrick (Napier).



Top: Six world champions had a friendly joust at Te Kuiti – another of the innovative events held at NZ Championships over the years. From left: Tom Wilson (1984), Alan MacDonald (1994), Sir David Fagan (1988, 1992, 1996, 1998, 2003), Gavin Mutch (2012), Rowland Smith (2014) and Paul Avery (2008). John Fagan (centre, world teams champion 1984) was successful bidder for the souvenir singlet, raising funds for a local charity. Above: John McBride listening to Lance Waddell tell him why he's about to receive the Waddell Shield for services to shearing.

Top: Tony Coster, NZ Shears multi-breeds circuit winner for the second time (previously 2013). Above: John Kirkpatrick (with judge Ronnie King), North Island Shearer of the Year winner for the second time (previously 2008).

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Tom Wilson – world champs organiser

By Des Williams

Tom Wilson probably knows as much about world shearing championships as anyone else on Planet Earth. He's been on a forty-year journey from spectator at Royal Bath and West in 1977 to chairman of the New Zealand Shearing Foundation charged with organising the 2017 Worlds at Invercargill next February. Oh, and he's competed at quite a few and won the world Crown in 1984.

Born and raised at Heriot in the Scottish borders district south of Edinburgh, Tom realised at a young age that if he wanted to make the grade as a sheep shearer he would have to come to New Zealand, where there were plenty of big mobs and tallies to be shorn. Still a teenager, he found himself in the 1973-74 season at a little village in Southland named Heriot (yep!), working for local contractor, Toby Smith.

The journeyings back and forth would continue for many years. By now establishing himself (along with Geordie Bayne) as one of Scotland's leading exponents of the handpiece, Tom came away from that 1977 visit to Bath and West having seen Roger Cox crowned world champion, and quietly set himself the goal of someday achieving similar honours.

In 1980, Tom and Geordie were Scotland's representatives at the second world championships at



The modern-day Tom Wilson, chairman of the 2017 world championships committee (NZ Shearing Foundation).

Masterton. Brian Quinn beat fellow New Zealander Martin Ngataki by half a point for the world title; Wilson finished third and Bayne fifth, with Peter Nitz (a Kiwi representing Austria) and John Conlan of Australia fourth and sixth respectively.

Back in New Zealand for the 1982 season, Tom was part of a four-stand gang that set a world record at Greenvale Station, near Waikaka. His contribution to the tally of 2519 full wool Perendales was 576, with Alan Donaldson (659), Stephen Dodds (654) and Rick Pivac (634). The record did not last long in the record books, being

victim to the 'clean slate' decision of the Godfrey Bowen-led world records committee. (That's another story, for another time.)

By now, however, Tom Wilson knew exactly what he had to do to gain selection for Scotland in 1984 – win the Royal Highland Show at Edinburgh.

'These days the Scotland team is chosen after a circuit of events but back then it was quite simple – first and second at the Royal Highland would be representing Scotland in the world championships at Royal Bath and West in the third week of May.

'So I won the Show and Geordie was second, but at that time of year there wasn't a lot of shearing being done where we came from so we had to find other things to do to maintain our fitness. That meant running and hill walking and travelling quite some distance to find sheep to shear. Geordie and I weren't exactly working together as a team at that stage but we were in contact with each other just to make things as easy as possible.

'Once we got to the championships however things started to work in our favour. The sheep for the world final were what we call Scottish half-breeds – a Border Leicester / Cheviot cross – quite a long leggy breed and we were quite used to shearing them back in the Borders country.'

Tom says he was quite fortunate to make the final, and then quite fortunate to win the final over 12 sheep. (To p29)

'Things went better than expected actually, my sheep seemed to sit quite nicely for me and I could tell from the commentary and things going on around me that others were having a bit of trouble.

'About half way through I thought to myself that I just had to keep relaxed and calm, keep shearing and keep the quality right. I was eventually announced as the winner, two points ahead of John Fagan, with the other finalists (in finishing order) Robert Bull of England, Colin King (New Zealand), Geordie Bayne and Peter Nitz.'

Tom recalls there wasn't any sort of 'after-match' function organized for the competitors. 'All the committee members and organisers went off to their own dinner but we were left to entertain ourselves. (To p29)

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ShearNZ meets NZ Merino

By Danette Moriarty

As part of the requirements for ShearNZ members, the first of their three meetings for 2015-16 was held at Christchurch last October. The group was fortunate to be hosted by New Zealand Merino Co. Ltd, who also spoke on their take of the current wool industry.

This included a brief on the upcoming project looking at coarse wool market and product development with consideration to meeting the demands of the whole supply chain, not just one particular party. As well, the Company gave an enlightening overview of all interests of New Zealand Merino.

The 'thinkering' room was particularly appealing to the group as a casual forum to grow 'out of the box' ideas. In all, the New Zealand Merino team was extremely welcoming and open with sharing of initiatives, particularly ideas from their involvement with an international mentoring organisation based in the United States. Of course, an outlook over the back straight of Addington Raceway was also appreciated as green space in the middle of Christchurch – Cup week would have been even better!

Inspired by the surroundings the ShearNZ group got down to business, welcoming new members and running through the group's expectations and goals from being a part of this industry group. Top of the list for all was to value and have recognised the work that goes into being a compliant and responsible contractor. The strategic goal is to be recognised as a preferred supplier and employer within the wool industry.



The NZM 'Thinkering Room' – every home should have one!

To move along this path agreement and actions assigned to embed the external auditing process to ensure integrity and transparency in the programme. To date it is recommended by New Zealand Merino to use a ShearNZ contractor for merino wool harvest.

Acknowledging the current Health and Safety climate, brainstorming by the group will allow development of a useable client contact tool for contractors to engage with their clients.

The group plans to meet in the North Island in the new year. Information is available at www.ShearNZ.co.nz.

Tom Wilson: 'We commandeered the caravan that had been used for 'doing the points'. I bought a bottle of whisky, John Fagan bought a bottle of rum and we ended up having a helluva good night. There are some parts of it that I can't now remember!

Tom established an enviable record at world championships – as well as the 1984 title, he was second to David Fagan at Edinburgh in 2003. He was third again in 1992 (Bath and West) and 1996 (Masterton) and sixth at Builth Wells, Wales in 1994. He and Geordie Bayne won the world teams' final in 1996.

'Winning the world championship was good for my career in a lot of ways. I guess it helped elevate me in peoples' perceptions as to my ability, but I also had to back it up by winning some other competitions. In that respect, finishing second to David Fagan at Edinburgh (2003) was very pleasing because I was pretty much at the end of my competitive career by that stage. Being world champion also helped me get a job as a shearing instructor with the British Wool Board!'



The 1984 version of Tom Wilson – 'quite fortunate to make the world final and quite fortunate to win it!'

Now Tom Wilson is leading the team [New Zealand Shearing Foundation] responsible for organising the Golden Shears World Championships at Invercargill, to be held 9-11 February 2017. Southland's ILT Stadium will be as fine a venue as ever used for the world championships, and a recent

Government grant of \$260,000 ensures a sound financial base from which to build regional and national support for the event.

Tom Wilson says the world shearing championships has grown visibly in its 40-year history. 'There were small increments at first but growth has been quite perceptible in more recent years. We are hopeful of bringing at least 30 countries to Invercargill, including a couple for the first time. There were 28 countries at Gorey in 2014 so matching or bettering that support would ensure a very successful shearing and woolhandling championships.'

The switch from competitor to organiser will not be difficult for Tom – he was part of the 2003 Scotland organising committee and is a past chairman of the British Sheep Shearing Competition Association (now BISCA). He's also deputy chair of the Shearing Sports South Island Committee and a former Tectra shearing instructor. By day, Tom (since 2010) is the South Island territory manager for Acto Agriculture, agents for Lister and Supershear equipment.

Our Kaumatua

Looking at our staff, we have them all and sundry: the young ones, the experienced ones, the locals, the blow-ins, the every-now-and-then-ones, the learners, the mouthy ones, the calm ones, the racers and the cruisers, the talented ones, the just-here-for-the-money-ones.

We have the good looking ones, the more weathered ones, brown, white, Kiwis, from overseas, the ones with goals, the ones just living from one day to the next and of course, the old ones, the nearly past their use-by date ones, the Kaumatua.

This article is about one of our Kaumatua. In his day, as they say, he was fast and wild and a good shearer. Now he has a broken this and a bit of a broken that, is pretty slow and can't hear the banter talk any more.

HOWEVER. How come, he is invaluable to our business and we really hope that he will grow very old and stay working for us for many years to come? Here is why:

He can work. When he goes to work, he does not stop. He just keeps walking up to any size or breed and just keeps chipping away at it, he starts on time, he finishes on time.

So the young and the cruisers, they can't exactly be beaten by this old fella, right? So they have no choice but to keep walking up to them as well.

He is always on time and always available. Any day there is work for him, he takes it and is always 5 minutes early and ready. He makes the forever late ones look pretty bad.

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He gives a shit. He shears a clean sheep and handles his sheep with kindness. He drives sober, puts his seatbelt on and does not allow smoking in the van.

He keeps his van clean and his bedroom as well, he picks up his rubbish and he greets anyone at any time.

He is not too good to do anything. He cleans vans, he sprays the garden, he picks up mutton and drops off forgotten tucker boxes, he removes the rubbish and mows the lawn. He fixes broken things without having to be asked.

He works things out himself. He crutches, he shears, he presses, he wool handles, he pens up, he picks up people from the airport, he helps in the kitchen, he does dishes, he stacks the wood. He sees the work, he does it, he offers. (And he plays a mean guitar)

He keeps an eye on everyone. He makes sure everybody is safe. He is respected by everybody, most of all by us. We very much know the true value of him.

Many of our young ones could easily take a few pointers from him, but then, he does not talk much. He just does it.

The odd time we get him to have a coffee and a scone with us, he never declines, comes in, drinks his coffee, chews away on his scone. No sooner has he swallowed that last bite and sip, does he say: 'Righty-o', and up he gets with a grunt and back to work he goes.

That gets me every time.

Good on you, we need another 10 of you!

(By Gabriela Schmidt-Morrell, for Dion Morrell Shearing)

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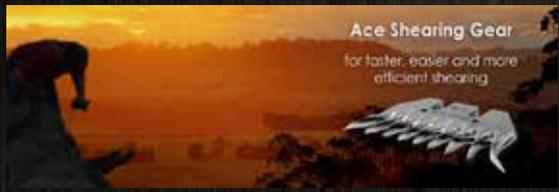
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I log onto sites like CNN or Stuff
There is news to read on these
But when I'm out I sit alone
Then I start feeling ill at ease
I head for some dark corner
And assume my best vacant look
Hoping no one will come and ask
If I have signed on to Facebook

I surround myself in nervous hush
Cold sweat comes and goes
I start to drum my fingertips
And pretend to blow my nose
Waiting for the moment
When they tell me of their friends
And where they went on holiday
And the latest airhead trends

If my confidence was higher
To think of each trivial thing
I'd tell them of my hobbies
And the songs I used to sing
Or perhaps how I stubbed my toe
(Such an earth-shattering event)
And the new book I bought today
Or the Christmas cards I've sent

But by being such a stay-at-home
For ridicule, I'm a sitter
I'm just too far behind the times
Lorde, I'm not even on that Twitter
Social media is lost on me
I don't have real friends to greet
I couldn't hack that cryptic talk
I would struggle with every tweet

I can see that you have many friends
And that's how you stay in touch
But while I know a lot of people
Many I don't even like that much
When I'm seeking out-of-print titles
I go to Amazon or perhaps Abe Books
But in my whole vast library
There are none about Face chooks

*I'm almost a social outcast now
For no matter where I go
Someone in the crowd around me
Will have selfies they want to show
But I'm prepared, there's no bad dream
My goose, I'll not let them cook
'Cos next time I'll be saying out loud
NO! I am not on F-F-F- Facebook!*

© *desperado*. Based on *I Haven't Read Gone with the Wind*, by Louis L'Amour.

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Walkers, Talkers and Doers

There are many names that have long been synonymous with Golden Shears – Fagan, Quinn, Goodger, Kumeroa among competitors; Keats, O'Hara, Tankersley, Stewart, Tomlin among administrators, to name just a handful. But if I add the name Nikolaison to my list you may well look at me quizzically and say, 'who'?

Masterton-based professional photographer Pete Nikolaison (pictured) has been recording the Shears in high class images for the past 22 years. His father, George (aka 'Ted') Nikolaison was the official Shears photographer for the first decade or so, starting in 1961. That's back in the days when people like Tom Brough sported 'toothbrush haircuts' (an Ivan Bowen description), shearers wore trousers with more wool in them than your average 'Shrek fleece' (and they weighed about the same) and the moccasins were made from the tops of jute wool packs. And everything was recorded in monochrome (black and white) film, of course.

So, Nikolaisons have been taking images at the War Memorial Stadium for at least 32 of the 56 years that have elapsed since 1961. Quite an easy job, you think? Just aim that lens, fill the frame with exciting action and push the button! Not much physical exertion involved, you'd imagine.

Quite wrong. Aided by one of those app things, Pete was able to record a couple of years ago that on 'Shears Saturday' he'd walked 16 kilometres



Goldies photographer Pete Nikolaison

inside the stadium in the course of taking his photos. The media room was in the far left hand corner of the stadium (looking from the stage) so it was maximum distance that year. But he calculates that in any year he covers about 40 kilometres over the three days. (Did I mention than camera on its strap hanging around your neck gets a little heavier with each passing hour?)

Not as hard as shearing of course, or putting down a bale, but a tiring day's work nevertheless.

So, when Pete Nikolaison walks past you at Golden Shears next year on his way to take yet another great photo (check out his work on Facebook) just spare a thought for the bloke who's walking a marathon in the course of his three days work! (*Des Williams*)

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Contractors tackling health and safety

The New Zealand Shearing Contractors Association is holding its Conference and Annual General Meeting at Auckland on 18/19 May at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The business environment we have to operate in currently has never been more stringent in regard to health and safety and employment compliance.

The NZSCA executive has been working on key issues we feel are extremely important to our industry at present. These are health and safety, immigration, training and employment contracts.

The big one for 2016 has to be the change to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. As from 4 April 2016, health and safety can no longer be ignored. For the first time, a failure to get it right could see your business closed down and, at worst, see you doing prison time. Not what you and I want, but the Association is going to help you get it right. There's going to be some work involved and yes, there may be more paper work and engagement with your clients and staff – but it can't be helped.

While doing a good job of your health and safety should be all about keeping everyone safe and in one piece, it is important to understand that there are some tough realities. Pike River was the catalyst that made everyone aware that health and safety hasn't been working too well. We recognised that New Zealand's record of work-place fatalities and injuries is one of the worst in the western world.

The Health and Safety at Work Act brings New Zealand into line with Australia's health and safety legislation. One of the key aims of the new legislation is to reduce New Zealand's workplace fatalities rate by 25% by 2020. This Act brings lots of changes; and the key points are:

Company officers (directors, partner, trustee, CEO or senior manager) have a personal responsibility to ensure that their business is managing health and safety effectively. A failure to achieve this can lead to:

- A fine of up to \$600,000 and/or
- Up to 5 years' imprisonment
- Increased fines against companies with a maximum fine of \$3 million

New regulations are being introduced, with the first group coming into effect at the same time as the Act. The HSE Act talked about 'employers'; this is replaced by a new term – A Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU). This is much broader term and therefore includes a wide range of people that didn't previously have duties.

PCBU duties include an obligation to consult, coordinate and cooperate with other PCBU's with which it shares a duty, for example shearing contractor and farmer share a duty to keep the shearing gang safe.

You can't contract out of your duties and nor can you insure against fines (this applies to both PCBU and company officers).

The term 'worker' means any person

who is doing work which contributes to your business, and this is much broader than the old term of 'employee'. This is critical as businesses will now only want to deal with companies they can trust to do a good job of health and safety.

New upstream duties which include manufacturers, suppliers and installers. Greater emphasis on health issues.

Greater emphasis on worker engagement and participation.

Despite all this, don't panic – the answer is to get it right and do a better job of managing your health and safety. To support members, we have engaged the services of a Dunedin company called Avid Plus. It is run by Rob McColl and Robyn Bennett who are health and safety professionals with years of experience in this field, and have been ACC auditors for the WSMP scheme. Rob McColl was originally involved in writing our original Health & Safety manual and has a good understanding of our industry.

We will be launching this at the Conference in May and they will be presenting this and will be available to talk with you throughout conference if you need any advice. They are also working with us to develop a Health and Safety Governance manual specifically aimed at company officers – being you the company owner – as the due diligence around this is critical.

We feel this is the biggest change that New Zealand's businesses have encountered for many years and the time is up to give Health & Safety lip service. If you put a strong value on YOUR business, I'm picking you will take this seriously. I have already had calls from contractor members concerned as their farmer clients are putting pressure on them to get their health and safety systems in place.

I encourage you to book and make the effort to come along to Auckland on 18-19 May and network with fellow business owners. You'll be able to relax and, at the same time, learn some valuable business tools that will put your business into a better position for the future.

Please call me if you wish to know anything more about the conference or the impending changes in legislation.

(Jamie McConachie)



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The recent, well-publicised 'balcony collapse' during a street party and concert in Dunedin resulted in serious injuries to two students with shearing industry connections. Bailey Unahi of Winton, who worked for both Grant Moore and McConachie Shearing last season, is in Burwood Hospital, facing a long road to recovery from spinal injuries. George Karameana, son of well-performed open woolhandler Sara Kara, suffered many broken bones. Both were underneath the balcony when it collapsed on top of them. McConachie Shearing and friends (pictured above) got together and spent a day in the shed to raise money for the unfortunate victims. Speedy recovery to Bailey and George!



He's a regular contributor to *Shearing* magazine with tales of shearing exploits in Germany, but Roger Leslie (pictured right with Tuatapere's Hump Ridge Track Charitable Trust chairman Don Brown) can also 'hoof it' better than most. Roger recently won the sixth annual 'Stump the Hump' walk, covering the 62km journey in 10 hours and seven minutes – a whole hour faster than his winning time the previous year. Roger beat 100 other entrants who came from as far afield as Germany, France, Iceland, Ireland, Australia and Russia, as well as many parts of New Zealand. The event is an annual fund-raiser, with all profits going toward maintaining the Hump Ridge Track. Roger also tackles the popular Kepler Challenge – just for fun, of course.



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Obituary: Pete Collins of Kurow

Editor's note

Pete Collins of Kurow rang Shearing magazine at the end of April 2015 and told the editor he would like to tell his story and thank a few people he'd worked with over the years. Nothing too unusual about that, you might say.

But then Pete adds that he's pretty close to death and he would like to put a few things down on paper before he goes. What do you say in reply to that? 'Mate, go for it!' Pete promises to send his story very soon. But a couple of months go by and nothing arrives from Pete. (You're hoping to yourself he's still with us ...)

Two more months, so you ring a friend at Kurow and make some enquiries. Sadly you learn that Pete died on 25 June, two months after our talk. So did he get anywhere with the writing of his story? Thanks to his good mate Dan Warwick, a note book eventually arrives in the magazine mail. This is Pete's story – a partly self-written obituary, you might say, finished by another mate. We don't see many of these ...

Having worked in the wool industry in many roles over most of my lifetime, and in several countries, I believe I have worked in an industry second to none for the skill, dedication and enjoyment of people and places – the wool industry. Thanks for the opportunity to thank the many people I have worked with and alongside, it has been a privilege and an honour. Also, this is my way to reach out to many people who I've lost touch with over the years, as you do, and thank them for the memories.

I was born at Kurow, North Otago, in March 1959. My connection with wool from this small town goes back several generations of large and small landowners and hoteliers. Both important! The Munros, merinos and matagouri – I've been linked to all three.

My first introduction to wool was via my father, Mike Collins, who had been contacted by local shearing contractor, Rowan Breen. This was in 1972 and I was 13. 'Would I like to work in the sheds for a day or two?' At \$1.50 an hour I jumped at the chance to be a wealthy schoolboy!

Archie Grant's (Otekaieke) was the first shed I ever worked in. Archie gave me a quick rundown on how to find the back



Pete Collins, shearing in England, 1988

leg of a fleece by throwing down a sack and tucking one corner under it. 'You will always find the back leg of the fleece tucked under there.'

And that held true all my life, mostly. There was minimum wool preparation in those days – bellies, first pieces, neck, back, lox/second pieces and dags. That was pretty much the standard.

Several years of school holidays passed, working with local contractors such as Rowan, Kevin Wall and Ron Hill. The money was good, plenty of work, odd bottles of beer and lots of stories to listen to from the likes of George Adams, John and Barney McCone, Bill and Alan Shepherd and Kevin Sinclair, to name a few. (To page 35)



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I was lucky to have been around when many farmers and contractors who had been ex-World War 2 soldiers, such as Ron Hill, Bill Fraser, Bill Ross and Jim McCaw were alive. And to listen to them and the banter over a cold beer on a frosty day in August after our 7.30am - 5.30pm day was always interesting. The world of grown men and schoolboys!

There were no women in the sheds in those days except the farmers' wives and daughters (June Taylor, Julie Kelly, Jill McCone, Fay McAughtrie and others) bringing in huge smokes. Times have changed and for the better with the workforce much more evenly split. And though the traditional smoko/lunch etc from the cockies have mostly long since gone, the full contract shed meals have ranged from adequate to exceptional.

The school holidays spent rousieing, penning up, pressing and shearing the odd last side ended in 1976. Upon leaving school, my local contractor Bill Shepherd didn't have full-time work available until pre-lamb in July/August, so I gained employment at the Waitaki Supply Stores. It was a great job with great people but eventually pre-lamb arrived so I handed in my notice and started work with Bill.

The gang members were all locals – Bill and Alan, Kevin Wall, Keith Cleave, Barney McCone occasionally, and the next generation with blokes such as Stephen Cochrane, John Linwood, Dave Parker and Neil Gard.

In Ken Emslie's gang, Ken, along with Sam, John and eventually Doug and Alistair Emslie formed the nucleus of Ken's Hakataramea gang. Brian Trembath had also started in the area, having worked with Rowan Breen and Kevin Wall after coming down from the North Island.

That first year was a lot of work, especially pressing. No hydraulics in those days, all manuals and crank-downs, sharp needles and hard jute packs. But learn you did, the tips and tricks and shortcuts to become a good presser, and fierce competition when it came to sewing up the bales. You got very fit, very competitive and along with other rousies got to understand the woolshed dynamics and flow.

With no chance of getting a stand where I was, I went searching for some experience with a handpiece in Southland, with John Schimanski mostly and Ray Howes occasionally. It was a different environment from North Otago, bigger sheep numbers and many stayout sheds in the Te Anau – Manapouri Basin such as Mount York and Kepler. There was plenty of work, great adventures and I met many new and interesting people. Among them Mike Direen (from Duntroon, North Otago) and Ian Hercus, who had shorn overseas. (That set a thought in my mind!) Eventually I gained more and more experience in crutching, dagging, flanking, half belly full crutch etc., big sheep and good money.

Then, in 1978 I got a job back with Bill Shepherd for pre-lamb and a longer term plan formed – get some good shearing experience and then head overseas. I enjoyed three great seasons, sheep numbers were up in most areas and Bill had a long season, shearing hoggets, merino ewes, wethers, lambs – it was a big run, all year with several gangs. We ranged from Duntroon in the east, Main Divide to Lake Ohau Station and south to Forest Range – a huge area with lots of sheep and different breeds.

A few of the characters I'd met up to this stage included the noted wool rollers Stanley Watson and Fraser Kerr (father of James, Sam and Bruce Kerr – all shearers); Peter



Pete Collins, proud of his life in the wool industry

Grant (one of Archie Grant's sons) – the best presser I've worked with or seen; great competitor, total woolshed team man, quick, strong and clever and always presented tidy bales of wool.

Cockies locally included Lands and Survey block owners such as Bill Hare, Alec Bell, Mike Thorp and established farmers such as the Hayes, Cochranes, Frasers, McCones, Crofts, Munros and McCaws. I had a great few years gaining experience shearing all breeds of sheep. I also did the North Island trip to Golden Shears with others such as Alf and Colin Rapsey, Mike Direen and others.

But shearing overseas was still very much on my mind. I started writing to the New Zealand Wool Board, seeking names and addresses for contractors in the UK, USA. That was helpful to a point but in that era before computers and email, making contacts wasn't easy. Then my sister got to know a shearer who knew his way around overseas and by picking his brains (long story short!) I landed a job in the UK for Spring 1982. I was off!

After organising passport, travel tickets and all the necessary arrangements I got Mike Direen to take me to Oamaru Station. There we shook hands and I said I would see him in 12 months. (Three years ...?)

Dan Warwick takes up the story:

Unfortunately that's as far as Pete got with writing his own obituary. He lost his battle with pancreatic cancer on 25 June 2015. Friends and family and people he'd worked with over the years gathered at the Kurow Memorial Hall on 1 July 2015 to celebrate his life and Fred Hill spoke of his and Pete's shearing adventures overseas. This from Fred's notes:

'I first met Pete in 1982. My good mate John Tull and I had decided to travel on our Big OE and ended up with jobs for Dave Parkinson, an ex-pat Kiwi who had a shearing and fencing run at Looe, in Cornwall. We all ended up going to the local and after a while I thought to myself Pete was okay because he spoke highly of my uncle, Ron Hill. He had also attended St Kevin's College at Oamaru, so like me was a good 'Doolan'. (To page 36)

'We needed a car. John and I and the local mechanic had stumbled upon a cheap Peugeot 304 Station wagon, which would later become known as "The Porsche". I think he wanted about 250 pounds for it, which would have been a good deal if we'd had another 80 quid. Unfortunately we had left most of our money in pubs and bars around London.

But lucky for us, Pete asked if he could have a third share in it and we agreed. I don't know what happened to the car in the end but it never missed a beat while we had it and it always got us home from the various pubs around Looe. (Though it was left balancing on the top of a stone wall after a night out in Torquay – 'Parky' was not amused.)

'We went down to the running of the bulls at Pamplona – that was a great trip and we met other kiwi shearers there who ended up being great mates to this very day.

'For Hill, Tull and Collins, this began a relationship with Vikings of London [bus company] that would include four bus trips – Running of the bulls, to watch the Maori All Blacks in Cardiff, the Oktoberfest and a two-week ski trip to Austria. The relationship turned sour on the return trip from Austria and Hill, Tull and bloody Collins would be black-listed from any future trips with the company. That proved ironic because Vikings of London went bust shortly after.

'Pete and I would end up shearing many seasons in Germany for Roly Ellis at Newbury and in 1989 we were presented with silver tankards for long service to the company.

'I rang a good mate named Andy Smith (a legend at Roly's) just to inform him that our mate Pete Collins was not well. Andy reckoned when we were shearing at Roly's a few of us non-guns like Pete and myself were referred to as soldiers – we were there every day, no matter how tough the sheep, and the day always ended with a session at the Oak Pub.

I told Andy we were like a Band of Brothers and he agreed. We would shear flat out for six weeks for Roly – up at 5am, travel all over southern England, work all day (well, that's what Roly thought) and home late at night, ready and willing to do it all again the next day.

'Pete continued to travel the world, including many trips to the USA. Pete shore for Kelly Nunley in Utah from 1985-1990. Then in 1993 he went back over to the States, working with Neil

Gard, Lance Small and Barry Taylor for Randy Lister, shearing there each year until 1998.

'Pete was also a wool classer so when he fell off the roof of a car and injured his ankle, he was lucky the resident classer could shear a bit so they swapped jobs for a while. He worked for James Kerr Shearing at Kurow from the mid-1990s onwards until he [Pete] thought it was time to retire from the shearing industry. He then became a digger operator.

'While working for James Kerr, Pete was a wool handler, classer, presser and could still jump on a stand if he had to. He always kept the gang amused with his shenanigans, especially at the annual end of year season cut-out, where he would present the 'Pete Collins Awards' to recognise various blunders people had made during the season. He put a lot of time and effort into his annual presentations.

'Pete possessed a wealth of knowledge and he used to demonstrate that at local general knowledge quiz nights where he was generally on the winning team. Pete will be remembered as a hard-working, kind, charismatic individual who kept us all entertained over the years. RIP Old Mate!

* * * *



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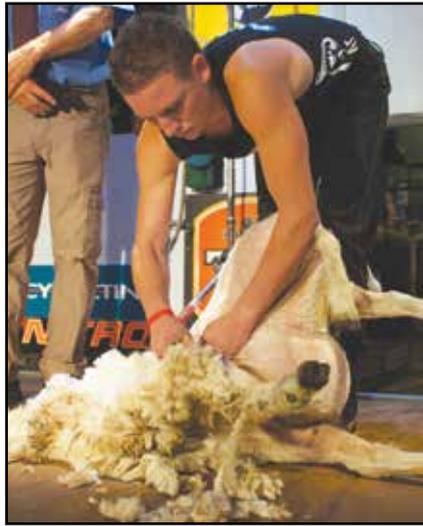
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Recent Deaths



Desi Downs of Rata, died at his home on 26 July 2015, having clocked up more than 50 years shearing all around the world. Desi was described by contractor Shane Ratima as 'the most loyal employee anyone could ever ask for; never talked down to anyone, never complained about anything.' (See story about Desi in *Shearing* August 2013.)



Michael Jeremy Herlihy of Whangamomona. Died on 16 January 2016, aged 20. Michael was the youngest of six brothers who were training to set an eight-hour lamb shearing record together at a Gisborne shed. Michael was ranked second among Shearing Sports New Zealand intermediate competitors for the 2014-15 season.



Joannes (John) Belt of Alexandra was a life member of the New Zealand Merino Shears Society. Not from a shearing background but worked for many years behind the scenes in catering and other important roles including organiser of the Miss Wool competition. John died at Alexandra on 4 December 2015, aged 88.



Leonard Te Hiko Tamihana (aka Tami Thompson) passed away peacefully on 16 December 2015. His daughter, Ness Thompson says 'the big C and age got him in the end at 81 years, which ain't bad for the life he had ... lasted longer than nearly all of his old mates. He was born at Taihape but came from everywhere if you knew him. Dad had a shearing contract business based in Ashburton for many years. He is buried at Timaru Cemetery, to the left of Collins St entrance. We haven't a date for unveiling but when we do, we will get the word out and it would be great to meet, hear and share some laughs about the old bugga.'



A Neil Fagan gang, hard out in the heart of the King Country (Todd Oliver's property, near Aria) on 16 January. From left: Michael Hegglin, Gavin Potae, Haki Rata, Sion Lewis (Wales), Jack Fagan, Horian Huriwai and Charlotte Gaudin. Below: Golden Shears champion 1996 and 2000 – Oti Mason still knows how!



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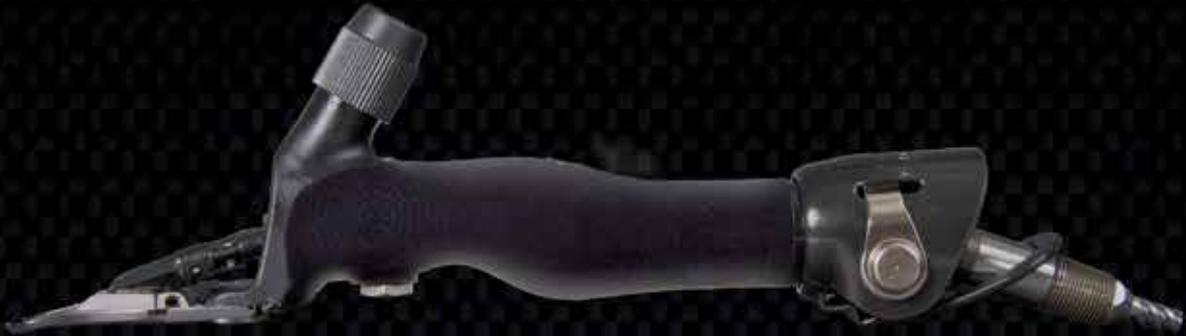
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