

# Shearing

*Promoting our industry, sport and people*

Number 101: Vol 35, No 3, November 2019  
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*Flashback to the world championships at Gorey, 1998. A demonstration of older styles by former Irish blade shearing champion, Patrick Corrigan (left) with his son, Paddy. Something to work on for Scotland 2022, Allan Oldfield?*

**Inside:**  
NZ Merino Shears  
Finding Michelle Harrex  
Hilary Gietzen's big project  
New Zealand Woolclassers' Association



**Last Side Publishing**  
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**Tom Bryant profile**  
**British shearing records**  
**Tahi Ngātahi In-shed safety**  
**Employment law and holidays**  
**Women's four-stand record preview**

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## UNDER COVER STORY

Greetings readers and welcome to the first edition of the second century of *Shearing* magazine. Our thanks to those who offered their congratulations on our reaching the milestone of 100 issues in just 35 years, and who offered best wishes for the next 100. (Hmmm, probably won't be around to see that one!)

While compiling our previous edition gave us the chance to look back at days gone by, we send this edition off to many destinations around New Zealand and other countries around the world with a positive feeling about the future of our industry. We have people chasing world records in the next few weeks; Golden Shears is about to celebrate its 60th birthday (first weekend in March), young people are coming in and researchers seek new opportunities for wool.

The recent fire in an inner-city Auckland building under construction was bad news for its owner/s, but the fact that straw used as under-roof insulation added fuel to the flames brought disbelief from some astute observers and offered the chance to ask, 'Ever think about using wool for insulation instead of straw?'

For certain the answer in that case was 'No', but at least the option of doing so may now be in the minds of a few architects, builders and designers.

As one who avoided Facebook for the first decade of its New Zealand existence, I have to now concede it has definite advantages for reaching mass audiences with speed. Equally, it demonstrates the array of opinions that people hold on all manner of subjects. Leaving out politics, religion and sport, sites like *Shearingworldwide* provide a forum for obtaining fast answers to pressing problems and issues.

Unfortunately it also reveals the tolerance that many still have for issues of workplace safety (see our Tahī Ngātahi story page 5) and lack of basic amenities in shearing sheds – toilets and clean water, in particular. 'Just shut up and get on with it or someone else will take the shed and take the cockie's money.' Well that's one attitude. 'Let those who continue to provide dodgy workplaces shear their own sheep!' might be another.

Happy restive season, people. See you in April.

*Ka kite ano*

*Des Williams (editor)*



**Next edition due 7 April 2020.  
Deadline for all material two weeks prior.**

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## In-shed safety: raising the game

New health and safety initiative Tahī Ngātahi aims to cut workplace injuries in wool harvesting by 30%. Over the past year, more than 800 contractors, shearers and farmers have signed up. The online learning platform uses video clips to pass on skills and safety tips so they can run a safe and productive wool harvest.

People can use their mobile phones or laptops to upskill themselves whenever and wherever they want. For a mobile workforce like shearers, it's a game-breaker.

Keeping workers injury-free in a physically demanding occupation is a big issue. The wool producing sector currently has an ACC work account of over \$25 million in new claims liability. In 2017, there were 755 work-related injuries in wool harvesting, resulting in 9,300 working days lost to the industry.



One of Tahī Ngātahi's architects is Otago shearing contractor Jock Martin. 'Behind these stats are people,' says Jock. 'If someone gets sidelined by injury in the shed that has a huge impact on their family. Many of the injuries that are happening are preventable but farmers, contractors and crews need to work together for things to change.'

'It's about making wellbeing and safety just another part of running a good, profitable business and shifting away from that old compliance mindset.'

Shearing contractor Angus Moore from Seddon is one of many on board. 'Let's face it, our bodies are the tool that make us our money. If I can't look after my body, if I don't go to the mechanics and get a tune up every so often and just look after things, then it's not going to work for very long.'

'The videos are really pertinent because they are specifically about the things we have injuries with most, e.g., wrists, backs, hips. If you blow your wrist you might be out for three weeks – and that might be the busiest time of year when you're out. So if you just spent half an hour watching these videos and doing a bit of research on it and doing these exercises, you might just save yourself three weeks off work and make yourself a bit stronger.'



Farmers can use the platform's new online 'Warrant of Fitness' checklist to ensure their equipment and sheds are up to specifications.

It's a great way for contractors to work with farmers to improve conditions in the shed, says Chris Brears [pictured above], shearing ganger at McSkimming Shearing, Taumarunui. 'I think it's great we're raising awareness about health and safety in the sheds. You can't just turn up and go through the motions and say nothing or things will never improve. It's not about jumping on the bandwagon and pointing the finger at farmers or work colleagues – it's just about identifying there is a problem and working together as a team to sort it out and make it better for the future.'

Tahī Ngātahi's a joint initiative between the New Zealand Shearing Contractors' Association (NZSCA), Federated Farmers, WorkSafe NZ and ACC. You can sign up at [www.tahingatahi.co.nz](http://www.tahingatahi.co.nz) and the Tahī Ngātahi Facebook page to keep up with the latest news.



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## NZ WOOL CLASSERS ASSOCIATION

In recent months it has come to the attention of the industry that there is an increasing amount of non-scourable 'brands' turning up at the wool scour in consignments of wool. Despite claims to the contrary some raddle and markers cannot be washed out. End of story.



### The problem

The colour from the spray markers is transferring through the wool grease into the fleece. This is not removed in the scour process, and the contaminated wool is then spread through consignments of wool rendering entire lines virtually worthless. Bleaching does not remove it. The problem is worse in the North Island, with the central North Island the main culprit.

In order to maintain the purity of our national clip wool growers must be aware of the consequences of using non-scourable raddle on their sheep. It causes processing problems throughout the chain that effectively implicate financially on wool growers, exporters and processors. Most importantly if this is not sorted quickly the tainted wool will compromise New Zealand's reputation for producing the world's best wool. This is a very serious issue for the wool industry and investigations are underway to try and pinpoint the actual product or products, supposedly scourable, responsible for the dramatic rise in non-scourable branded wool.

### Consequences

Some contaminated lines of wool put up in recent auctions with visible brands in the sample are not attracting any bids. The problem is creating a huge headache for brokers, merchant and scourers with consignments of wool contaminated with brands further down the processing lines resulting in rejection and claims.



At present, any wool contaminated by non-scourable brands is being rejected at the scour and is then of little or no monetary value. Whole farm lots are being ejected from packages to be exported, resulting in write downs in value, delays in shipments and added costs for exporters. Eg: 900 bales of wool rejected for scouring in one day - full value \$600,000.

### What can we do about it?

Farmers need to be aware that some products are non-scourable and should not be used at all. A change in how the markers are applied must change. The same goes for scanners and anyone else who may be marking the sheep for any reason. Marking should only be applied on top of the animals head, nose or ears, where it will cause minimal damage and loss of value. It should not be applied on the back or any body wool.

Please take every care when applying any coloured product, use sparingly, and have all affected coloured wool removed at point of harvest.

Note: There is no way of knowing if a piece of wool with a brand that is pulled out with a grab sample is scourable or not - so it is valued at the lowest common denominator.

### Wool harvesters

You have a very important part to play in this. The industry urges wool handling staff to do all they can to minimise the very serious downstream impact of this problem by removing all colour marking at the point of shearing. This wool should be kept separate altogether, not put with the dags, and noted on the specification form.

Treat all coloured brands as non-scourable. This should always be the norm despite what the grower may believe.

We CAN make a difference.

Ref: PGGWrightson, CP Wools, Segard Masurel New Zealand, and the National Council of Wool Interests.

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### Field Days

There were 28 attendees, including shed staff, young farmers and classers at the recent field day held at Michael Norcote Farm, Waiau, Canterbury. There will another field day held in Lumsden on Thursday 5th December at Lowther Downs wool shed. The day is planned to cater for wool handlers, pressers and anyone with an interest in the wool harvesting industry.



*Nicola Peddie (NZM) (black top, centre right) explaining skirting levels required in the preparation of merino wool and identification of oddments and fleece wool that need to be removed on the table for the different processing and contract requirements.*



*Above and Below: Participants taking part in the Identification exercises designed to educate, refresh and keep everyone on the same page.*



*Rob Lynskey of PGG Wrightson Wool talking through the process of transferring bale information from the bale book onto the specification form, once again emphasising the need for accuracy and the need for clear branding of bales, numbers and legible line descriptions for EVERY bale. No descriptions, incorrect descriptions, and bale number double up cause huge disruptions to the processing of clips in the store. The responsibility is on you, the classer, or head wool handler to ensure this vital paperwork is accurate for every shed you work in. Get yourself a routine.*



*Above and Below: Ireland's Sheep Shearing Association secretary Eileen Coffey held a sponsored shearing event on 9 November in aid of two cancer care facilities. Ireland's representative at the 1996 world championships in New Zealand, Joe Healey proved he still has what it takes by shearing 69 sheep in one hour. These day Joe is better known as president of the Irish Farmers Association. Also taking part was 1984 Irish Queen of the Shears, Mary Rose Dunne.*



# Tom Bryant profile

By Barbara Newton

Many younger people find approaching the age of 60 a scary prospect, but not so for Tom Bryant who is nearing his 60th year of continuous active shed classing. A truly momentous milestone for the oldest member of the NZWCA!

The Bryant family had no previous connections to wool at all. His father was a builder who had an interest in horses, and with Tom being shorter in stature, had his future marked as a jockey. His mother however (a rabbit fur grader in Wellington) wasn't having a bar of it.

So after a stint working at Wright Stephenson's Wellington wool store, Tom (aged 18) was duly enrolled in the wool course at Massey Agriculture College, Palmerston North and thus began his career as a classer in the wool harvesting industry.

After completing the course he began work, initially for Allan Lambert of Masterton and later with Bill Meech, based in the Wairarapa/Hawkes Bay regions where he worked for 15 years.

Tom classed his first clip of 1200 hoggets in 1962, at 'Pigeon Bush Farm', part of the run known as the 'Riddiford Run', one of a number of properties owned by Richard Riddiford, in those days the largest landowner in New Zealand. The properties at the time stretched from Wellington to Martinborough, and included White Rock and Orongorongo Stations. He classed at Orongorongo for 16

years, a nine-stand overhead board, where they ran a wide range of stock: goats, romneys, perendales. Included was a flock of 3,000 merino wethers that were driven along the beach between Martinborough and Wainuiomata.

He also classed at properties such as Brancepeth Station in the Wairarapa, Oruri in Wairoa, Erewhon in Taihape, with 90% of the wool he classed sold via London Wool Brokers.

There were 42 in his class at Massey, among them Dave Anderson (A2) with whom he was to develop a close lifetime relationship. For six years in the off-season they worked together at the Seaview Works (where Bruce Abbott was assistant works manager at the time) and JJ Burkes Wool Scours in Lower Hutt, sorting and blending wool.

In 1970 he was encouraged by Dave to come to the South Island, and from 1973 he began working for Snow Quinn & George Potae Enterprises in Milton. During this period with Potae Shearing, he worked alongside some legendary shearers such as Des Downs, Danny Holland, Eddie Reidy and Monty Searanke.

Much of his classing in Otago was around Millers Flat, classing at Beaumont Station for nine seasons, in Middlemarch, Moonlight and East Otago where Potae had all the sheds in the Pig Root. This included Shag Valley Station where he met his now wife, Margaret who was cooking there at the time.

After his marriage he shifted permanently with his wife to Milton, although still travelling to the North Island for the run up there for a few more years, and apart from a couple of stints with John Stringer in Ranfurly, remained working for Potae Shearing until the business was sold in 2011.

These days his sole classing job is for the Tucker family, at 'Springburn Station', situated in Becks, and with whom he has a long association. Not for the faint-hearted, they shear 25,000 fine woolled, quarter-and-half-bred sheep in a modern well-appointed shed; 10 shearers shearing 2100 a day, fleeces prepared over three tables, classed into five contracted lines and pressing 13 bales a run.



*Tom Bryant, getting his priorities right!*



*Wool classers classing wool!*

In recent years Tom's daughter Liana has accompanied him while he is away, lending a helping hand and being responsible for writing up all the bale label descriptions, and ensuring the specifications are accurate.

Tom believes the doom of our national crossbred clip, of which we have the best in the world, and its down-fall can be blamed on Landcorp who introduced composite sires, resulting in more medullated and pigmented fibre throughout the New Zealand clip.

During his career there have been a number of innovations, according to Tom, that have stood out and made a big difference to the shearing industry:

1) The biggest innovation were covered-in yards, enabling a more continuous supply of sheep at any one shed to keep everyone working for decent periods of time in the inclement climate of the south. George Potae used to give a 2% discount for those growers who had covered in yards.

2) The replacement of the heavy straw brooms with the plastic blades in the 1970s that are used nowadays by the wool handlers, and

3) the hydraulic, no tramp press.

However he is not quite yet ready to embrace electronic specifications!

Not surprisingly the one thing that annoyed Tom most in the shed was forty years of Sam starts! During his career he has only ever attempted to shear one sheep, and where the fleece ended up as locks!

Despite a bit of a hiccup four years ago when diagnosed with prostate cancer, and after 38 visits to the hospital for radiotherapy treatment, he has since been given a clean bill of health and is looking forward to the 2020 season.

His doctor told him the reason for the high prevalence of prostate cancer in New Zealand was attributable to all the beer that New Zealanders drink, and in particular the yeast that is used here in the brewing process – food for thought. As a consequence Tom has given up drinking beer and replaced it with an occasional cider.

Tom's interests revolve around family (they have two children, six grandchildren and five great grand-children – none of whom are involved in the wool industry), visiting a daughter in Tauranga and partaking in a bit of surf casting.

As a first five-eighth he played rugby for Wellington in the lower grades (while at Massey he marked Murray Ball, of Footrot Flats fame, in the wool v dairy game, where he scored three tries), and still has a close interest in the local



*Tom Bryant giving a little instruction on skirting levels rugby scene as a keen Highlanders supporter.*

There is always a bit of gardening to undertake and of course he follows a lot of slow race horses!

The 2020 season will mark two milestones for Tom; the first the most significant is the incredible milestone of active classing for 60 years, and the second is 20 seasons of classing for the Tucker family.

Fit and in good health, the rising 79-year-old doesn't look like ringing the bell on his classing career anytime soon.

Enjoy your cider and durry Tom, you deserve it.

\* \* \* \* \*



*Smoko time at Loch Linnhe. Peter Lyon Shearing gang.*



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# Damien Boyle - This one's for the family

By Doug Laing

West Australian shearer Damien Boyle made the best of a holiday with the family in New Zealand by winning the New Zealand Merino Shears Open shearing title at Alexandra – for the eighth time in ten years. Now 42, Boyle had previously won New Zealand's only fine wool shearing event six times in a row from 2010-2015, and then again in 2017.

With Perth Royal Show West Australian teammate Luke Harding, Boyle also completed back-to-back international merino wins over the New Zealand Merino Shears pairing of Grant Smith and Stacey Te Huia, having also won a week earlier in Perth.

There to see Damien's latest wins were wife Kirsty, 13-year-old daughter Abby and eight-year-old son Zac, and Boyle said: "That made it extra special, to be able to do it in front of the family."

Despite the demands of holidaymaking in New Zealand, which included the interisland ferry on the way south from the North Island and skiing at Queenstown to come, Boyle still managed to shear possibly more sheep in New Zealand in preparation for Alexandra than in any of his past ventures.

In the spirit of the competition he found his way out to Earnscleugh Station on Thursday and shored more than 50 merinos for contractor Peter Lyons.

He might not have needed them, for Boyle had crossed the Tasman earlier in the week after winning his 23rd Perth show Open title in 24 years.

Runner-up last night was Canterbury-based Southland shearer Troy Pyper, while third was defending champion and multiple New Zealand representative Nathan Stratford, of Invercargill.

Last night in Alexandra, Stratford had to settle for third place as Canterbury-based Southland shearer Troy Pyper won a place in the New Zealand team for the 2019-2020 transtasman series, opening with the first leg during the Australian national championships in Dubbo, NSW, at the end of next month.

Hometown hero Pagan Karauria, in her first competition since winning the World woolhandling teams title in France in July, successfully defended the NZ Merino Shears Open woolhandling title, claiming victory in the event for a fourth time. She showed her class throughout, as top qualifier from the heats and the semi-final. Runner-up was Amy Lee

Ferguson, in her first finals placing since 3rd at Alexandra three years ago.

Both Karauria and Pyper secured places in the New Zealand team for the 2019-2020 home-and-away trans-Tasman series, the first tests of which will be at the Australian national championships in Dubbo, NSW, at the end of next month.

## Results: NZ Merino Shears, Alexandra, 4-5 Oct. 2019 Shearing:

**International Merino Test (8 sheep):** Royal Perth Show 222.4475 (Damien Boyle, 98.7065; Luke Harding 123.741) beat NZ Merino Shears 223.7345 (Stacey Te Huia 109.3845; Grant Smith, 114.35) by 1.287pts.

**Transtasman Invitation International (4 sheep):** New Zealand 190.43 (Dion Morrell, 60.1425; Nathan Stratford, 61.8345; Stacey Te Huia, 68.444) beat Australia 228.385 (Damien Boyle, 55.2905; Luke Harding, 85.4905; Lee Harris, 87.6045) by 37.955pts.

**Open final (12 sheep):** Damien Boyle (Tambellup, WA), 101.3907, 1; Troy Pyper (Invercargill), 104.1273, 2; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill), 106.8723, 83; Brett Roberts (Mataura), 107.9621, 4; Dion Morrell (Alexandra), 120.7432, 5; Stacey Te Huia (Te Kuiti), 138.2313, 6.

**Senior final (4 sheep):** Duncan Higgins (Havelock), 80.1204, 1; Ruka Braddick (Eketahuna), 81.0405, 2; Duncan Leslie (Owaka), 81.372, 3; Hori Rata (Raglan), 83.5875, 4; Stacey Whitu (Roxburgh), 83.697, 5; Mitchell Menzies (Ranfurly), 83.8485, 6.

## Woolhandling:

**Open final:** Pagan Karauria (Alexandra) 110.106, 1; Amy Lee Ferguson (Alexandra) 163.95, 2; Candy Hiri (Gore) 173.388, 3; Chelsea Collier (Gore) 221.208, 4.

**Senior final:** Aiesha Thompson (Napier) 132.97, 1; Destiny Paikea (Heriot) 182.82, 2; Whati Mikaere Turipa (Tolaga Bay) 216.438, 3; Darryl Harrison (Dannevirke) 243.944, 4.

**Junior final:** Cheyenne Howden (Feilding) 145.044, 1; Sunnie Te Whare (Ohai) 163.292, 2; Amber Poihipi (Ohai) 181.88, 3; Pricilla Albert (Rotoiti) 200.2, 4.

**Novice:** Shahni Whitu (-) 102.16, 1; Pukemarama Hau (-) 111.706, 2; Tamihana Karauria (Alexandra) 119.644, 3; Hori Rata (Raglan) 127.75, 4.

**Shearing and Woolhandling Teams:** Mouse O'Neill (Mouse O'Neill, Stacey Te Huia, Janine O'Neill, Atiria Te Huia), 236.275, 1; Mahi Life (Mike Ferguson, Cam Ferguson, Amy Ferguson, Kahlo Tuuta) 292.828, 2; Perfect Rhythm (Dion Morrell, John Kirkpatrick, Pagan Karauria, Foonie Waihape), 315.028, 3.



Molly Tapuke competing in the senior woolhandling



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Action from Alexandra: left descending: Aiesha Thompson, senior woolhandler; Amy Ferguson and Cam Ferguson competing in the teams event; junior woolhandling finalists Cheyenne Howden, Sunnie Te Whare, Amber Poihipi, Priscilla Albert; Teams event winners Atiria Te Huia, Janine O'Neill, Stacey Te Huia, Colin 'Mouse' O'Neill. Right descending: Damien Boyle (open champion) and family; Duncan Higgins, senior champion; senior woolhandlers Alastair Eckhoff (esteemed mentor), Aiesha Thompson, Destiny Paikea, Whati Mikaere, Darryl Harrison and Daryl Croad (CP Wools, sponsor).

# Hilary Gietzen's big project in Peru

By Hilary Gietzen

My project started in 2005. Although I had made it to several continents shearing sheep, I really had never seen poverty. I had always wanted to do some charity work, and when an opportunity came, I was there.

I was recommended by a Priest from Fargo, North Dakota, to go to northern Peru, to the city of Chimbote where there was a mission he was familiar with. I wanted to make a donation, and fund a project, but wanted to see more before I did that. I had worked and travelled to several countries where English was not the primary language, and I got along fine.

But later when I arrived Lima, Peru I was very surprised. Wow. It was difficult, and perhaps somewhat dangerous considering I had a significant amount of cash on me. I made it to a hotel and on the bus in the morning. Upon arriving at the town of Chimbote, I was very happy to see someone speaking English at the mission. It was an eye-opening experience, and hard for me to comprehend what I was seeing. Not only a different culture, but also the poverty. When I saw the houses, I thought, thank God they do not have winter. Although these people did not have money, I still saw hope and happiness in their eyes.

I have always believed the saying, "Feed someone a fish, and they have fish for a day. Teach someone to fish, and they have fish every day." My desire was to help the young people get an education, so they can later help themselves. My first project was on a school. I did work in bathrooms, a cement floor in some classrooms, and paid for some textbooks.

Although there was plenty of labor with their high unemployment, I not only funded the projects, but worked with them. After a fire, I also funded and helped build some houses, or what I would call a straw shack. After five weeks passed, I was heading home. After all the working trips I have taken, this one was the most different, and the one that would change my life forever.

After arriving home, never did a day go by without thoughts of my experience. I was planning a second trip the next year. Close to the time of departure, I had decided to build a cafeteria. I felt the children would not learn as well if they were hungry.



*Hilary Gietzen with Diana Carolina Cadenillas Regaldo and her happy family. "This is the day I made the commitment to enrol Diana for higher education. It is common for several families to pool resources and to live in the same household. When I look closely at this photo, I see happiness in everyone except Diana. She knows she has accepted a lot of responsibility."*

Working with the mission, we had it set up so that anyone could eat there, but the able-bodied people needed to either pay or do some work for the mission in exchange for food. This trip I did not stay as long, and the cafeteria was still under construction when I left.

I also started to sponsor a student, Diana Carolina Cadenillas Regaldo, at the local university. I chose Diana because, although unemployment was high, she was able to find a job, and would always be working. Two years had passed until I returned as a newly-wed, with my wife Sara to see how everything was going, and to visit my student. I was pleasantly surprised with the cafeteria after completion, and with the progress of my student. Diana was working towards a law degree.

With Sara fluent in Spanish, it was a very good trip. I was able to see more and visit with more people. We gained confidence in our student, Diana, and began to sponsor her without going through the mission. We continued frequent communication with Diana for the next five years, and planned to return for graduation.

In August of 2013, Sara and I returned to watch Diana receive her degree. She was a good student, and never let us down. As a student, she worked for an attorney and later worked as an attorney.

My intention was to find another student to sponsor, but Diana, who is now working, asked if she could get help to get her masters degree. She said she could come up with about 50% of the funds from her job, and wanted me to help with the rest. I was happy to accept her offer.

If she is willing to work, and put her own money into education, I feel she will continue to be a reliable student.

It is gratifying to see this person, who was willing to work for any wage, now have a degree as an attorney, and be making eight times the wage of when I first started to sponsor her.

To page 13.



*The Welcome mat, Chimbote (Peru) style, for Hilary and Sara Gietzen.*

She has asked several times, how she could repay me for what I have done, and I was firm when I told her it is now her responsibility to help her younger siblings get an education, and look after her mother and grandmother.

I still keep in contact with Diana. She has never let me down. She, as well as her family, have been very grateful for what I did for her. As for me, I am happy with the end result, and will do another project another time.

*Footnote: Hilary Gietzen is an American shearer from Minot, North Dakota. In 1992 he and two other Americans, Randy Helmes and Mike McWilliam (RIP) joined a group of New Zealand shearers for an expedition to Mexico, Led by NZ Wool Board instructor Alan Barker; the purpose of the trip (later described as 'an ordeal') was to shear 35,000 sheep on a feedlot. When asked some years ago if he remembered the trip, Hilary laughed and said, 'Remember! I'm still trying to forget it!'*



*He didn't see this coming*, that we can vouch for. *Shearing* magazine's editor was sitting directly in front of former Golden Shears president Edwin O'Hara (above) when he (Edwin) was called to the stage to receive the Alistair Simpson Memorial Trophy. (There's a silver-plated Wolseley handpiece inside the box.) Edwin was totally surprised when his name was announced as the 2019 recipient of the prestigious award. He joins some distinguished names on the trophy. Past winners: 1986 John Ferguson; 1987 Lance Kana; 1988 Fred McKinstry; 1989 Not awarded?; 1990 George Judd; 1991 Harry Wells; 1992 Not awarded?; 1993 Tom Brough; 1994 Vince Nesdale; 1995 Keith Sutherland; 1996 Hugh McCarroll; 1997 Ian (Scottie) Stewart; 1998 Wally Billett; 1999 Dave MacPherson; 2000 Colin Gibson; 2001 Selwyn Tomlin; 2002 Jeff Crengle; 2003 Phillip Morrison; 2004 Tom Martyn; 2005 Graeme Checkley; 2006 Alan Pretious; 2007 Graham McNae; 2008 Phil O'Shaughnessy; 2009 Ray Alabaster; 2010 Laurie Keats; 2011 Bill Gaskill; 2012 Willy Buick; 2013 Murray Tomlin; 2014 Peter Lewer; 2015 Kevin Aplin; 2016 Alan Paterson; 2017 Gavin Tankersley; 2018 Darryl Hart; 2019 Edwin O'Hara.



*Above: Sara (left) and Hilary Gietzen with Diana and earlier certificates of academic achievement. Below: Diana, the Masters graduate.*



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*And we suspect Mark Bryson didn't see this coming from Hamish Manson. Photo from archives, year uncertain.*

# Sheds no place for bash artists

By Angus Moore

In recent years there has been some extremely negative media coverage around the shearing industry. Usually, groups with a political agenda are the source of the photographs and videos.

These groups are already holding a fixed view, so painting the agricultural sector in a bad light as a whole comes naturally. They even tell lies about the realities of the shearing process and use graphic content to back up those lies. Does any one remember the photo of the man holding up a lamb that had been 'shorn'? Half of the skin of the poor thing had been pulled from its body and the image was confronting. It turned out that the animal had some sort of nasty skin disease and had never been through the woolshed at all.

However there are some things that I feel we as an industry need to get hold of, in particular, the tendency to turn a blind eye when there is aggressive behaviour towards the animal.

As a shearer, I will be the first to admit that I have, in my early learning days, been aggressive toward sheep. However, I look back now and realise that I mirrored some of the negatives that I saw in my first few years working all around the country. The behaviour of one or two workers was tolerated by the rest of the crew and nothing was said, so it continued.

I have a saying that goes 'What you choose to tolerate you have accepted as okay by you.'



I fully understand that working in the shearing sheds is a very physically and mentally demanding occupation. The job can be frustrating at times and almost impossible at others. Anyone who has had to pen up big, strong stubborn ewes in a poorly designed shed, or had to shear them when they are not in the mood for cooperating will no doubt agree.

I also feel that it is up to us as people who care about our industry to look after it. We as workers at the coal face can have the most influence over what happens in our workplace. Mostly it starts with ourselves.

I have developed a few things in my time as a shearer that definitely help me to keep relaxed, whatever the situation but the biggest was this: I come to work voluntarily every day. I chose to be a shearer and I want to be here. Every time I pull the cord and place

my hand-piece on the floor there is a moment before I enter the pen when I can decide if I want to do that again. Today, tomorrow or ever. If the sheep are damp or daggy and it is making me grumpy, I can choose. If the sheep are full and hard to handle, I can choose. If my technique is poor and I can't quite get flow, then that is on me. It is up to me to work on technique, speak to the ganger, farmer or the contractor about their low standard of sheep presentation.

Up to me to get more sleep or sort out my grinding. I am not trapped and there is no one holding a gun to my head. I could go anywhere, be anything, do anything. The same is true for any one reading this. Understand that you have a choice and you always will.

Not so for the sheep. The sheep is farmed by the farmer. Most farmers love and care for their sheep well, but the sheep are still forced as pretty much wild animals to be shorn for their own good and health. They don't understand that they will in time likely die if not shorn. They are forced to be there, but I am not.

In summing up, the idea is simple. If you are having a hard time keeping calm at work, either decide that you want to be there, sort it out in a positive manner and stay, or decide you don't and go find another job. The job has been the same for a while and will be that way for the foreseeable future so, either way, now is the best time to decide.

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# Shearing record for Grace

By Tom Harding

The tragic loss of a young child is one of the most devastating trials life can throw at a couple, and none of us can possibly know how we would cope with or respond to it until it happens. For many certainly, the grief will be so overwhelming that it is hard to even function properly anymore, and there is no shame in that whatsoever.

But others deal with this cruel curveball by devoting their lives to helping other people who might be going through the same ordeal, and they determine to make the most of every opportunity available to them in this world while they can.

This was how it was for Stuart and Kira Connor when they lost their 3-year-old little girl, Grace, in April 2018. She had apparently been perfectly healthy until March that year when she was first taken ill, but tests showed that she had mitochondrial disease – a rare and incurable condition caused by a mutation to the parts of our cells that provide energy.

Stuart first began shearing at home in England around the Banbury area in 2003. A colleague from New Zealand then offered him a stand in Taihape later that year. Although not particularly interested in the shows in his earlier years, Stuart's rise as a shearer in the sheds was pretty close to meteoric, achieving a tally of 909 lambs in nine hours just six years later.

Fast-forward to 2017, and a family day out at Three Counties Show saw Stuart competing in the open shearing. Although not placed that day, he got the 'bug' – he knew that he could have done so much better, and little Grace loved watching her Daddy shearing up on the stage.

December of that year saw Grace's little brother Elliot born, then in January 2018 Stuart returned to New Zealand after nine years away, to shear for a couple of months to work on his fitness and show technique.

It was just weeks after his return to the United Kingdom that Grace was taken ill, and then died. Speaking to the British Wool Marketing Board's Newscip, Stuart said, 'At this point, I was ready to jack it all in, but after many hard conversations with Kira I planned to carry on with the shows and compete for the England team as planned. Kira and I met through shearing; it had got us to where we were, and more importantly, Grace loved sheep and watching me shear – especially at shows.'

At the most difficult time of his life, Stuart managed to complete – and win – the English Open Circuit, and earned his place in the England team for Le Dorat, France in 2019.

Having shown what he was capable of in the shed ten years earlier in New Zealand, Stuart – now 36, planned an official 9-hour lamb record for 21st September 2019 at Fernhill Farm in Somerset.

Although all the necessary steps had been taken to make an attempt at Ivan Scott's world record, a huge unforeseen drop in temperature on the morning meant the cold lambs ruled out any chance of this succeeding. Instead, Stuart had to muster all the grit and determination he had to attempt Gareth Daniel's British record of 781.

'I think on the morning the temperature dropped eight to ten degrees in less than three hours – it just plummeted,' record team member Huw Condron said. 'The lambs went cold which was very unfortunate but Stuart overcame a massive deficit after the first two runs – I think he was eighteen down [on the British record] after the second run.'

In what Huw described as a 'superhuman effort' however, Stuart came back and shored 785, putting four on the record.

With characteristic humility, Stuart credited his team of helpers with the final success: 'It didn't go completely to plan and the sheep weren't going to let me get close to the world record. But to get the British record with such tough conditions was a credit to Matt Smith, Matt Luxton, Antz Bryant, Andy Wear, Kira my wife and all of the rest of my incredibly talented team – wool handlers, pen men and everyone involved at Fernhill Farm that kept me going.

'Of course this would not have happened without all the amazing sponsors that supported the event,' Stuart added, 'and most importantly the people that donated to TeamGrace – because when the going got tough it was that and my little girl that kept me going till the end.'

The emotion in the shed was indescribable for the last quarter of the last run, as a photo of Grace was held on the stand for Stuart, and after he finished his speech there wasn't a dry eye in sight, by all accounts.

TeamGrace, set up by Stuart and Kira, has raised awareness of mitochondrial disease since Grace's death, and has raised an amazing £60,000 to date for the Lily Foundation. Speaking to the charity, Stuart said, 'I really wanted to make Grace proud, to be her hero – but as it turned out, she became mine.'

To make a donation to TeamGrace, search 'Team Grace Lily Foundation' on the JustGiving site.



Top: congratulations all round for Stuart Connor and team. Above: Grace Connor, died of mitochondrial disease at three-years-of-age in 2018.

## Bimby John Martin, RIP

By *Bernie Walker*

It came as quite a shock to his many shearing industry friends when they learnt of the sudden death of Bimby John Martin on 10th September 2019.

Bimby was born at Queanbeyan near Canberra, ACT in January 1938, the son of a sheep dealer and drover. By the age of 14 he was accepting mustering and droving jobs, breaking in horses and competing in rodeos until, in his own words, 'I got tired of being chucked off.'

In 1954 Bimby took a job pressing for a six-stand team on a three month run in the Riverina but he didn't take up shearing until he was 18. He quickly adapted to it and shored his first 200 in his first season.

Much of his life was associated with sheep, from full time shearing in Queensland and New South Wales to research and development work with Sunbeam Rural Division.

Bimby's easy distinctive shearing style, developed as he recovered from tetanus in Queensland, caught the eye of the late Les Batten, head of shearer training with the Australian Wool Board, which led to Bimby becoming one of the original six instructors who



*Bimby John Martin 1938-2019*

introduced the Tally-Hi method to the industry. Throughout Bimby's time with the Wool Board he took regular two week stints in sheds to maintain his skills and fitness.

In 1973 Bimby was the first Australian shearing instructor seconded to the International Wool Secretariat to establish a new shearer training program in Uruguay.

He joined Sunbeam in 1974 to assist Euroa Apex Club introduce Golden Shears to Australia, and acted

as Australian team manager in New Zealand in 1975.

The ergonomic 'Supergrip' handpiece and a full range of shearing combs were developed as he travelled Australia, trialling and promoting the Sunbeam range. In 1976 Bimby became General Manager of the Sydney Agrodome and selected and trained the rams and dogs for the show. He also provided the commentary.

He and his wife Gwen went into business in 1980, and were very successful, buying a large Bega NSW motel in 1990 which they ran for 13 years before retiring to Cootamundra NSW. Their two sons, Rick and Brett, followed Bimby into the shearing industry although they have since left the woolsheds. Rick now owns and operates the Billabong Jerky factory, producing the dried meat product in Cootamundra where Brett also now lives and works.

In 2013 Bimby was inducted into the Australian Shearers Hall of Fame in recognition of his shearing ability and his contribution to the shearing industry. He maintained regular contact with the many friends he made when the name of Bimby Martin was synonymous with all that is good in shearing.

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# Five training laws for work

By Gabriela Schmidt-Morrell

A few months ago, I was practicing karate with my 18-year-old son out in our shed. It was a relatively cold Sunday morning, and we were just meant to play around a bit ... yeah, right.

Stupidly enough I tried to match his youthlike speed and intensity and the result was a clean snapped cruciate ligament, months of physio, recurring injury and, eventually, an operation, complete reconstruction of the ligament, weeks of rehabilitation. I am lucky to have an administrative job and my kids are old enough to help, otherwise I would have been in all sorts of trouble.

Naturally, I learned a lot from this.

First, I need to warm up before I get into the ring with an 18-year-old. The older you get the more emphasis you need to put on warming up your muscles before physical activity.

In terms of shearing, I guess that means warm clothes to start with, moving your body a bit after the trip in the van to loosen up, and then start in a relaxed way to give your body a chance to warm up, ramp it up a bit later.

Secondly, focus on correct technique and keep your head on an even keel. Don't get carried away trying to nail your son just that one time... Back off a little as soon as you are beginning to feel tired, weak or frustrated.

Translating this to the shed situation, racing someone that has youth or skill on their side may not be the best idea long term. Injury follows. Stay within your ability. Sure, having a bit of a competition with your shearing mates is a good thing, but shearing outside your level of safe, is another. Focus on technique and keep evolving it, because as your body gets older, you need to adjust the way you shear. Stay calm always.

Thirdly, being injured is a nuisance: you lose your fitness, it really is painful and costly and drags on and on.

With the physical job of shearing, it doesn't take a big injury to stop you from earning your living. Avoid it!

In karate we have five laws of training, they apply perfectly to our workplace, just replace 'Train' with 'Work'.



Morrell Shearing gang at Matakani Station, September 2019. From top row, left to right: Bill Chase, Lee Harris, Jude Gamble, Jackie Paku, Foonie Waihape, Amber Poihipi, Potahi TeRata, Tati Henare, Jasmaree Hogg, Sunnii Te Whare, Dave Gower, Korey Cashell, Corentin Plancon, Eugene Ratana, Hori Terata-Taituha.

## 5 TRAINING LAWS

1. Train SAFE
2. Train STRONG
3. Train WITH PURPOSE
- 4 Train WITH FOCUS
5. ALWAYS EVOLVE

True Conversation (two southern men)  
*I love flying but I always book a seat at the rear of the plane.  
Oh yeah, why's that, then?  
Well, you never heard of any aeroplane backing into a mountain!*

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When Irish shearing judge Godfrey Potterton was in Invercargill for the 2017 world championships, he became interested in romney sheep. He then went home and started changing over to romney breeding stock on his own place: 'Wool will have its day again, it ticks all the green boxes – wool is good, plastic is bad for our environment ... no need for me to tell you that!' (We can never hear it often enough, Godfrey!) Photo shows the 2019 clip of romney wool being collected from Godfrey's farm at Carbury, County Kildare. Godfrey adds that some of the sheep were shorn with blades. Excellent ShearSharp blades! From Geraldine, New Zealand. (That's for you Phil Oldfield, no extra charge!)

## Huntermville's Shepherds' Shemozzle

Huntermville shearing contractor Connie Cook reports on the 'Shepherds' Shemozzle' which has been held in Huntermville for more than 20 years:

*'The local 'Shepherds' Shemozzle' is a huge event held here in Huntermville every year (usually end of Oct or early Nov) where the main event involves shepherds and their dogs racing through our town and up an enormous hill, enduring a number of obstacles on the way back, including eating something foul and dogs in wheel barrows, etc.*

*'It attracts a few thousand people for the day; kids compete with a slightly smaller hill (9-12-year-olds) and teens (13-17, must be in high school). The prize money and prizes are quite significant so quite strict rules apply. It is VERY popular and entries sell out quickly. We have a dedicated Shemozzle committee that spends all year raising sponsorship for it that runs into \$125,000.*

*'At the end of the day a Speed Shear is held in the main marquee for local shearing contractors to compete - this year there were five teams. It was our [Huntermville Shearing Ltd's] first year competing and having the whole community and visitors watch and cheer all teams on is an awesome feeling and a chance for the local lads to 'show off' their skills. And there are some awesome shearers in there. It is a particular favourite event for the crowd and the cheering and support is deafening but bloody awesome. We were very proud to come second this year.'*

Results were:

- 1st Scott Bailey Shearing from Feilding
- 2nd Huntermville Shearing from Huntermville
- 3rd Ratima Shearing from Huntermville
- 4th Rewa Shearing From Huntermville/Taihape
- 5th Harding Shearing from Huntermville

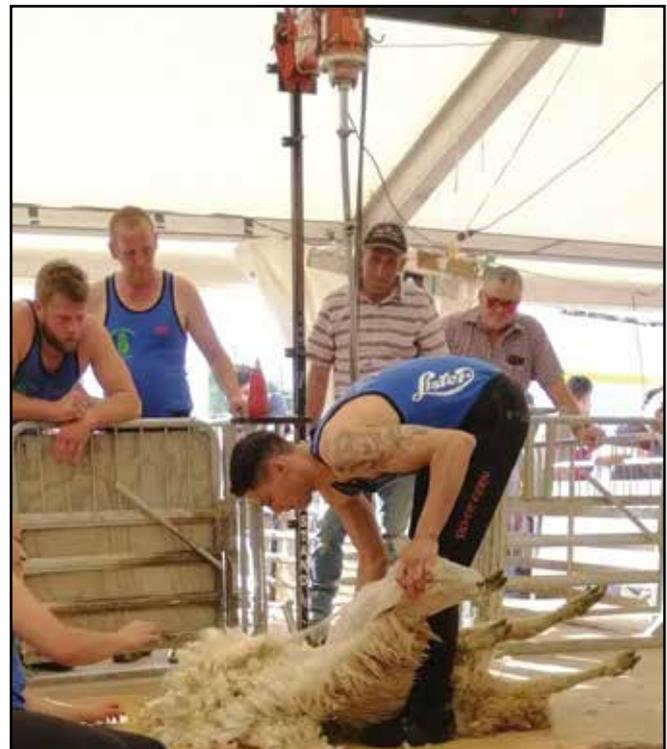


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*Shepherds' Shemozzle shearers: Willy Condon shearing with audience comprising from left, Brett Woodward and Peter Cook, with local farmers Jack Baker (stripes) and Boy Manunui (expert judge for the evening).*

## *He maemae aroha* **Koropiko Tumatahi Mullins 1954 – 2019**

Koro Mullins was born from Hinetau Tumatahi Wahanui Hemara but nurtured by her eldest sister TeHei Manahi on the shores of Lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti. His father, Paul Mullins, a proud Irishman from Portlaw County, Waterford, Ireland. Perhaps that whakapapa (geneology) in itself defined Koro Mullins, the man.

Staunchly Ngati Pikiao of the Te Arawa waka, blended with the charm, wit, cheekiness and luck of the Irish. An enigma really, private and shy but with confidence and turn of phrase that could bring laughter and joy, amusement and sometime ire from those around him.

Koro was described by many as having no eye for class or reputation; everyone deserved respect whether wearing a patch or a suit and tie, be they youthful or full of life experiences. The shearing world was his main-stay, his university of life and he used that to then enable others to gain confidence, skills, acknowledgement and reward.

Lew Willoughby provided an insight into the Koro we came to know ...

*Tuhia ki te rangi*

*Tuhia ki te whenua*

*Tuhia ki te ngakau o te tangata*

*Ko te mea nui?*

*Ko te aroha*

The literal translation is:

*Write it in the heavens*

*Write it on the land*

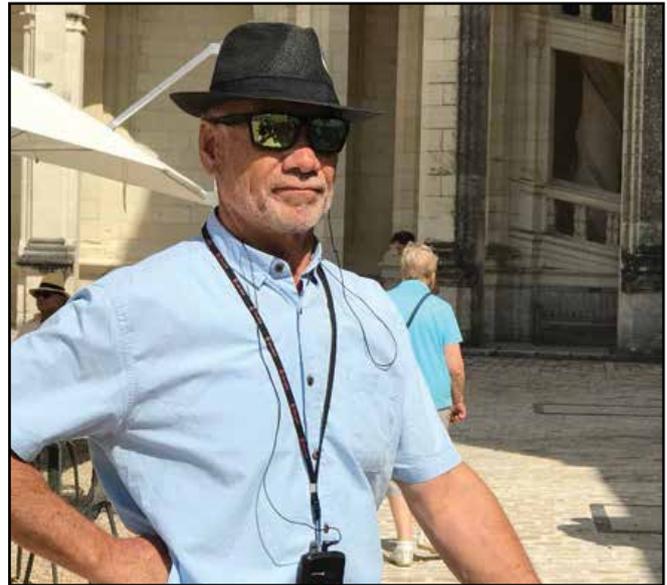
*Write it on the hearts of the people*

*What is the greatest thing? It is love. YES LOVE*

However, we often use other terms, after all it is not that easy to say you love another man. We say things like 'we respect him', 'we admire his skills', 'we think highly of him'. Even give him the ultimate accolade and say 'he's a good bastard'.

But that doesn't cut it really. The reality is we loved him. For each of us, we loved a different Koro!

The most important Koro is – Koro the loving husband and father. Koro the number one man with his moko's. For the rest of us it is – Koro the tough boss who taught us to work hard. Koro the soft boss who helped us out with our own personal issues. Koro the businessman. Koro the councillor. Koro the shearer. Koro the comedian. Koro the student. Koro



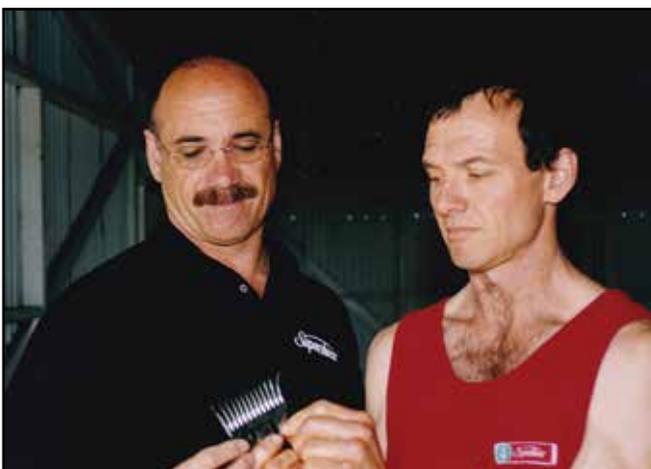
*Koro the businessman/tourist*

the shearing judge. Koro the hardcase woolhandler. Koro the farmer. Koro the fantastic commentator. Koro the rugby expert. Koro the 'you name it and he knows about it'. Yes, we all knew and loved a different Koro. Koro you will be missed in many, many ways. *Haere ra ehoa, haere ra.*

Koro is survived by wife Mavis, children Tumatahi, Korina, Aria and Punga and of course all of those precious 14 mokopuna. The family wishes to sincerely thank all those who came, sent messages and koha, and those who sent silent thoughts of wellbeing and love. (*Korero from whanau*)



*Koro the hardcase woolhandler*



*Koro the 'you name it he knows about it' expert*



*Koro the comedian ('find a way to make that protein edible!')*

# Finding Michelle Harrex

By Des Williams

Twenty-one years ago Michelle Harrex featured on the cover of *Shearing* magazine. She was photographed shearing a fairly wrinkly-looking merino wether and, on evidence available, was doing a great job. Just a small scratch on the bottom of the neck if you were looking for some minor 'imperfection'.

By that stage of her career, Michelle was well recognised among the top-flight of fine wool shearers in New Zealand – three times a finalist in the New Zealand Fine Wool championships at Alexandra. And (just quietly) there were more than a few 'blokes' shearing sheep around Central at the time who were 'relieved' to find Michelle in some other gang as they set off to work each morning.)

In March 1998 Michelle had been named in the New Zealand Merino Shearing Society's team that went to contest the South African championships at Bloemfontein, an annual fixture stretching back several years. From a field of 50 shearers she won the Open, joining other Kiwi shearers Jim Keenan, Peter Lyon, Kevin Walsh, John Emslie and Murray Christie (all members of previous teams) on the Honours Board of South African shearing.

Preparing for that contest was not without difficulty – being held in the New Zealand off-season meant that actually shearing sheep had to be substituted with gym and swimming pool work in order to achieve and maintain the required level of fitness. And thankfully, a few extra days practice in South Africa leading up to the competition were enough to see her qualify fifth into the semis and second into the final, by which time she realised that winning was a distinct possibility. She thus became the first woman to win a national open shearing championship.

Later in 1998 Michelle would make the Alexandra final for the fourth and last time, claiming third place behind Barry Taylor and Dion Morrell.

It was a teen-aged Michelle Anderson's love of horses



*Barry and Michelle Harrex, Southland dairy farmers.*

that led to her becoming a fine wool shearer of international class. At age 17 (1980) she was living at Kaikohe, where her parents owned a farm and she had been showing distinct promise as an equestrian – a sporting pastime that would soon become more widely known in New Zealand, thanks to the exploits of Mark Todd and others at Badminton, Olympic Games and other notable venues.

But perhaps more than other forms of recreation, her chosen sport was proving to be a costly business with travel, care and maintenance of horses and equipment. When looking at ways to get some ready money, Michelle took inspiration from her brother Eric, who had learned to shear sheep while at Lincoln College (University).

'So, I thought that might work for me, if I learned to shear sheep and make some good money I would be able to keep

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financing my interest in horses and competitions. I enrolled for a two-week course with the New Zealand Wool Board at Palmerston North. I travelled by bus and train to Linton Camp where the participants were being accommodated.

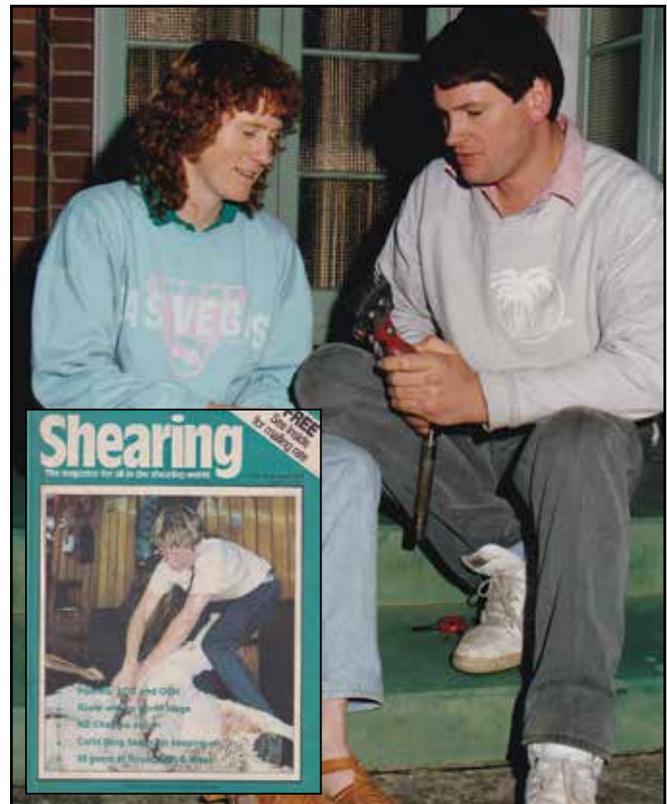
'I remember getting in quite late and when I fronted up at the army mess for breakfast next morning (having slept in just a little) I had this bloke in a uniform tell me to go and get a haircut! That shattered me for a moment and I felt like going straight home again. But things got better once I got started on the course, which was being run by instructors Alan Barker and Koro Mullins.

Some of the participants who lived closer to Palmerston North were able to go home for the weekend but that wasn't an option for me and one other participant so Alan Barker organised some work for us with a gang near Levin. Then, after the course, and again with some help from Alan, I managed to go straight onto a stand with Charlie Slack's gang at Ashhurst.

'Within a short time I had decided to sell the horses and become a full time shearer. I then spent the next five seasons working in the Wairarapa, first for Chris Burton at Palmerston North and later with Bill Morrison at Eketahuna. I also had a taste of competition shearing about this time. When others in the gang went off to North Island shows at the weekend I went too, travelling with Cath Thompson from Masterton and competing as a senior. Back then we were competing against the likes of Alan Maxwell and Digger Balme and others who went on to become well known open shearers. We shored our sheep and then partied up large and really had a lot of fun.'

Included in Michelle's 'fun' was the womens invitation event at Golden Shears each year. She won that event in 1984, 1986 and 1988 and was second to Sue Muir in 1985.

And when others were going overseas for the New Zealand off-season Michelle (the shy, farmer's daughter from Northland) thought she might as well do that too. She first did a season in Wales and the following year went to England. With further encouragement from Bill Morrison, Michelle then went south to Central Otago for her first experience of pre-lamb, working for Fred Wybrow. And that, combined with work in the USA, became her routine for the next four seasons.



*Michelle and Barry – fine wool shearers c1990*

'Someone had said to me, if you can shear fine wool sheep in New Zealand, you'll be able to shear any other breed of sheep anywhere else in the world. That idea appealed to me – the thought of being able to shear anywhere in the world.

Before doing my first pre-lamb season I'd asked James Braddick (my ganger) what sort of gear I would need. James did up a comb for me and I prepared one of my own by copying the one James had given me. I then showed mine to Bill Morrison and asked him what he thought. He put his glasses on, had a real long look without saying anything. Finally, after about half an hour he said, 'Oh, yeah, that should be okay!'

Wide-combing it with ...

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*I see Golden Shears is celebrating its 60th anniversary next year. You would have been there in 1961 when Ivan won?*

*Oh yeah nah, definitely!*



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

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While with Fred Wybrow, Michelle also found herself 'loaned out' to another Central Otago contractor, Vic Harrex, who was short of staff for two or three weeks. She soon progressed from crutching to shearing. There were several very helpful people in Wybrow's gang at that time, Michelle recalls, including the likes of Peter Lyon, Rick Pivac and Kelly Hokianga. 'They were all very generous with their time and offers to help me with gear preparation and shearing techniques generally. Rick would often invite me to watch him shear his last sheep for the day or run and go over things that I might have been having trouble with.

'I think it was at the end of that season when Peter took over Fred Wybrow's run and I asked if he would have a stand available for me. I was expecting him to say 'No' because it was only a small business at that stage. But he said yes, and from then on, I



*New Zealand Merino Shears team in South Africa 1998. From left: Phil Oldfield, Allan Gemmell, Michelle and Barry Harrex. (Phil Oldfield photo)*

was also shearing the wethers. That first season working for Peter really made it for me.

'My first chance to shear in America had come when a number of other New Zealand 'regulars' got caught up in some immigration hitches, so I put my hand up and said I was willing to give it a try. That then became my regular programme – pre-lamb in New Zealand and a season in the USA. Over there we were shearing mainly Rambouillet fine wool sheep with 'blowout combs' that had only nine teeth, with a fair gap between each tooth.'

Towards the end of the 1980s Michelle had established a keen relationship with Barry Harrex (Vic's son), also a fine wool shearer of some class. The couple were married in 1990 and soon enough were raising sons Andrew (now 26) and Mark (now 24). The resultant family responsibilities brought Michelle's twelve-year shearing career to a halt. Barry, meantime, had taken over his fathers run and would continue in that business for the next decade (1989-1999).

For the past (nearly) twenty years Michelle and Barry have moved around the country, trying various farming options at different locations. During that time they were block managers on a bull beef property at Huntly, in the Waikato; then returned south to a 1200-hectare/5000su sheep property at Tapanui, then introduced themselves to dairy farming at Rangitata Island, in Canterbury. For the past five years they have been sharemilking on a 350-hectare/1100 cow dairy property at Croydon, in the shadow of the Hokonui

Hills, where sheep and shearing play little or no part in their lives.

Away from the farm they enjoy watching the boys play rugby, water skiing at Wanaka, where they have a holiday house and Barry likes to get out hunting or deerstalking whenever he can.

Michelle ('Mitch' to some) is still very much the shy and unassuming person she was in younger days and if you didn't know her, you'd never guess just how good she was at shearing merino sheep. In those four finals at Alexandra (and two at Omarama) she was matching blows with the likes of Mana Te Whata, Peter Lyon, Barry Taylor, Dion Morrell, Grant Smith and Aussie champion, Ian Wratten.

All of them fine wool shearing legends and Michelle Harrex belongs firmly in their company.

**Michelle's major open class results:**

- 1989: 6th NZ Merino Shears
- 1991: 6th NZ Merino Shears
- 1994: 5th NZ Merino Shears
- 1998: 1st South African Open
- 1998: 3rd NZ Merino Shears
- 1998: 2nd Omarama Shears
- 1999: 1st Omarama Shears
- 1999: 4th World championships trial

Epilogue: Blade shearers Phil Oldfield and Allan Gemmell accompanied Michelle and Barry Harrex to South Africa in 1998. Phil recalls the 'tourists' were looked after very well by Izak Klopper during the three-week trip. 'The competition was held early on and we spent the rest of the time travelling through the Homelands and doing shearing demonstrations in small villages and agricultural colleges.'

**Cath Thompson Remembers:**

Long-time Golden Shears identity Cath Thompson of Masterton recalls travelling to competitions with Michelle during the early 1980s: 'We never worked together in the sheds but quite often travelled together at weekends. We would go as far afield as the Western Shears at Raglan, and to all the shows closer to home – Rangiwahia, Taihape, Hawke's Bay ...

'Michelle was a pretty exceptional shearer almost right from the start and she had the competition standard 'off pat' while I remained more of a shed shearer. She enjoyed some success as a crossbred shearer before going south and becoming a fine wool champion.'

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# Shearing contractors review findings

By *Rena Dudman (Labour Standards Officer, Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment)*

In 2016 while auditing a Taumarunui shearing contractor, I discovered that it seemed to be an industry standard to pay 8% holiday pay on a 'pay as you go' basis – even if the employees were full time. At the same time I found that an additional rate of 4.24% was also included, which was to cover all the other entitlements under the Holidays Act 2003 – public holidays, sick and bereavement leave. Although these figures seemed to be fairly widespread in their use, they were not and are not in compliance with relevant employment legislation.

Following this discovery, audits of other contractors (randomly chosen) revealed further shortcomings relating to the lack of individual employment agreements (IEA's) and a total of 19 infringement notices were served upon the relevant contract businesses.

The matter of the inclusive 8% rate and the 4.24% being paid was then taken to the New Zealand Shearing Contractors' Association (NZSCA) which was very pro-active in putting the information out to its members as to the requirements of the legislation and the possible ramifications of non-compliance.

Members were advised to ensure their employees were put on the correct IEAs, which reflect whether they are casual, permanent or fixed term employees. It also would see, depending on the status of the employee their entitlement to annual holidays, sick and bereavement leave.

Since those initial audits, the Ministry

has followed up with further discussions with the NZSCA, some of whose members had concerns about being undercut by non-compliant contractors and those who do 'Open shearing' (where the employees, shearers and shed hands are employed and paid directly by the farmer, who in turn pays them a cheaper rate as he has no overheads to pay to the contractor. Generally, the 'open' work being done was paid at lower wage rates, with very few other minimum standards entitlements and no individual employment agreements.

In respect to public holidays, it was reported that a large number of contractors had a clause in the individual employment agreement advising the employee that if they didn't work four days prior to the public holiday they were not entitled to payment for it. The employer would stop work 20/21 December and therefore, according to the IEA; no public holidays were required to be paid over the Christmas-New Year period.

In May 2018 I attended and spoke at the NZSCA conference in Wellington.

Most of the comments expressed were around the uneven playing field due to compliant contractors being undercut by those who were non-compliant.

While the Ministry is continuing to work through these issues with the NZSCA, I am in the meantime providing the following information from the **Employment Relations Act 2000** and the **Holidays Act 2003** on the three main issues that became evident during the audits:

## 1. Individual Employment Agreements

The agreements should reflect the arrangements you have engaged the employee on. As a guide,

- Fixed term agreements are provided by section 66 of the Employment Relations Act. You may employ someone on a fixed term agreement, in which it is agreed that the employment will end at a specified time, as long as the reasons are clearly specified in writing. This will likely apply to your employees who only work the main shear.
- Permanent – covering your full time and part time workers.
- Casual – for those employees who work intermittently and as required, i.e. your floaters and ring-ins.

## 2. Wage, time and holiday records

Ensure all employee records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the **Employment Relations Act 2000** and **Section 81 Holidays Act 2003**.

### 130 Wages and time record

1. Every employer must at all times keep a record (called the wages and time record) showing, in the case of each employee employed by that employer –
  - (a) the name of the employee;
  - (b) the employee's age, if under 20 years;
  - (c) the employee's postal address;
  - (d) the kind of work on which the employee is usually employed;
  - (e) whether the employee is employed under an individual employment agreement or a collective agreement;
  - (f) in the case of an employee employed under a collective agreement, the title and expiry date of the agreement, and the employee's classification under it;
  - (g) the number of hours worked each day in a pay period and the pay for those hours;
  - (h) the wages paid to the employee each pay period and the method of calculation;
  - (i) details of any employment relations education leave taken under Part 7:



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(j) such other particulars as may be prescribed.

**(1A) The wages and time record must be kept –**

- (a) in written form; or
- (b) in a form or in a manner that allows the information in the record to be easily accessed and converted into written form.

**(1B) If an employee's number of hours worked each day in a pay period and the pay for those hours are agreed and the employee works those hours (the usual hours), it is sufficient compliance with subsection (1)(g) if those usual hours and pay are stated in –**

- (a) the wages and time record; or
- (b) the employment agreement; or
- (c) a roster or any other document or record used in the normal course of the employee's employment.

**(1C) In subsection (1B), the usual hours of an employee who is remunerated by way of salary include any additional hours worked by the employee in accordance with the employee's employment agreement.**

**(1D) Despite subsection (1C), the employer must record any additional hours worked that need to be recorded to enable the employer to comply with the employer's general obligation under section 4B(1).**

(2) Every employer must, upon request by an employee or by a person authorised under section 236 to represent an employee, provide that employee or person immediately with access to, or a copy of, or an extract from any part or all of the wages and time record relating to the employment of the employee by the employer at any time in the preceding six years at which the employer was obliged to keep such a record.

(3)[Repealed]

(4) Every employer who fails to comply with any requirement of this section

is liable to a penalty imposed by the Authority.

(5) An action to recover a penalty under subsection (4) may also be brought by a Labour Inspector.

**Section 81 Holiday and leave record**

(1) [Repealed]

**(2) An employer must at all times keep a holiday and leave record showing, in the case of each employee employed by the employer, the following information:**

- (a) the name of the employee;
- (b) the date on which the employee's employment commenced;
- (c) the number of hours worked each day in a pay period and the pay for those hours;
- (d) the employee's current entitlement to annual holidays;
- (e) the date on which the employee last became entitled to annual holidays;
- (f) the employee's current entitlement to sick leave;
- (g) the dates on which any annual holiday, sick leave, bereavement leave, or family violence leave has been taken;
- (h) the amount of payment for any annual holiday, sick leave, bereavement leave, or family violence leave that has been taken;
- (ha) the portion of any annual holidays that have been paid out in each entitlement year (if applicable);
- (hb) the date and amount of payment, in each entitlement year, for any annual holidays paid out under section 28B (if applicable);
- (i) the dates of, and payments for, any public holiday on which the employee worked;
- (j) the number of hours that the employee worked on any public holiday;
- (ja) the day or part of any public holiday specified in section 44(1) agreed to be transferred under section 44A or 44B and the calendar day or period of 24 hours to which it has been transferred (if applicable);
- (k) the date on which the employee became entitled to any alternative holiday;

(l) the details of the dates of, and payments for, any public holiday or alternative holiday on which the employee did not work, but for which the employee had an entitlement to holiday pay;

(m) the cash value of any board or lodgings, as agreed or determined under section 10;

(n) the details of any payment to which the employee is entitled under section 61(3) (which relates to payment in exchange for an alternative holiday);

(o) the date of the termination of the employee's employment (if applicable);

(p) the amount paid to the employee as holiday pay upon the termination of the employee's employment (if applicable);

(q) any other particulars that may be prescribed.

**(3) The holiday and leave record must be kept –**

- (a) in written form; or
- (b) in a form or in a manner that allows the information in the record to be easily accessed and converted into written form.

**(3A) If an employee's number of hours worked each day in a pay period and the pay for those hours are agreed and the employee works those hours (the usual hours), it is sufficient compliance with subsection (2)(c) if those usual hours and pay are stated in –**

- (a) the employee's wages and time record kept under section 130 of the Employment Relations Act 2000; or
- (b) the employee's employment agreement; or
- (c) a roster or any other document or record used in the normal course of the employee's employment.

**(3B) In subsection (3A), the usual hours of an employee who is remunerated by way of salary include any additional hours worked by the employee in accordance with the employee's employment agreement.**

*(To page 26)*

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**(3C) Despite subsection (3B), the employer must record any additional hours worked that need to be recorded to enable the employer to comply with the employer's general obligation under section 4B(1) of the Employment Relations Act 2000.**

(4) Information entered in the holiday and leave record must be kept for not less than six years after the date on which the information is entered.

(5) The holiday and leave record may be kept so as to form part of the wages and time record required to be kept under section 130 of the Employment Relations Act 2000.

**3: Public Holidays - In relation to the public holidays NOT worked and transferred public holidays please see the information I have posted below.**

#### **44B Transferring whole of public holiday**

(1) An employer and employee may agree in writing (whether in an employment agreement or otherwise) –

(a) that a public holiday specified in section 44(1) is to be observed by the employee on another calendar day or during a period of 24 hours (a transfer), if the criteria in subsection (2) are met; and

(b) the calendar day or period of 24 hours to which the public holiday is transferred is to be treated as the employee's public holiday for the purposes of this subpart.

(2) The criteria are that—

(a) the public holiday specified in section 44(1) to be transferred—

(i) is identified; and

(ii) would otherwise be a working day for the employee; and

(b) the calendar day or period of 24 hours to which the public holiday is to be transferred—

(i) is identified or identifiable; and

(ii) would otherwise be a working day for the employee; and

(iii) is not another public holiday or part of a public holiday; and

(c) the purpose of the transfer is not to avoid the employee's entitlements under sections 50 and 56 for working on a public holiday, although the transfer may have that effect.

(3) Where an agreement to transfer a public holiday applies, the employee's entitlements under sections 50 and 56 apply only if the employee works on the identified or identifiable calendar day or period of 24 hours to which the public holiday has been transferred.

(4) To avoid doubt, an agreement under this section—

(a) may be made in relation to 1 or more of the public holidays specified in section 44(1); but

(b) must not reduce the total number of paid public holidays that the employee is otherwise entitled to in any year.

**Section 44B makes provision for an employer and employee to agree (in writing) to the transfer of one of the public holidays mentioned in section 44(1), to another calendar day or 24 hour period which would otherwise be a working day, and that new calendar day or 24 hour period is to be treated as the employee's public holiday.**

There are benefits to both the employer and employee in making provision for the transference of public holidays. They can be transferred to suit both the operational needs of the employer, and the individual needs of the employee, provided both parties reach a mutual agreement in regards to the transference.

Such an agreement cannot reduce the number of public holidays to which an employee is entitled to. An employee is entitled to a paid day off on the day the public holiday is transferred to. The employee should be paid their relevant daily pay or average daily pay for the day.

#### **49 Payment if employee does not work on public holiday (Holidays Act 2003)**

If an employee does not work on a public holiday and the day would otherwise

be a working day for the employee, the employer must pay the employee not less than the employee's relevant daily pay or average daily pay for that day.

#### **Key points to note:**

1. In relation to paying the public holiday NOT worked, always refer to section 12 of the Holidays Act 2003 which prescribes what constitutes an otherwise working day.

2. In relation to the industry practice of NOT paying for an unworked public holiday if the day concerned and/or the days preceding the public holiday it has rained resulting in wet sheep that are not able to be shorn, it is our view that in these circumstances the day would not be an otherwise working day.

3. In relation to the practice of not paying the public holiday based on the fact the farm owner has not provided any sheep to be shorn – it is our view that the day is still an otherwise working day. If you refer section 12, the reason no sheep were provided was because the day was a public holiday; if it had not been a public holiday, especially during main shear, there WOULD BE WORK. (i.e. an otherwise working day).

4. All factors need to be taken into account in determining if any public holiday is an otherwise working day. This can change from employee to employee – depending on the individual employment agreement they have – Permanent/Part-time, Fixed Term and Casual.

It can also depend on the time of year – main shear/off season, and, of course, the circumstances on the day itself.

*(Further information available from [rena.dudman@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:rena.dudman@mbie.govt.nz))*

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## Shearing and 'hooning'

Peter Lintott of Feilding (pictured below) won the Golden Shears senior title in 1967 and earned himself a trip to England with the open champion Brian 'Snow Quinn. The then 26-year-old was a stockman and farm shepherd and had been shearing for six years with a best nine-hour tally of 300. He was also present at the first Golden Shears in 1961, finishing second to Palmerston North's Melville McConachy in the junior final.

'I qualified top in the junior that first year but thought my comb might be a bit thin so I borrowed a thicker one. The



sheep were Lincoln 2-tooths with very strong wool. Then in 1967 I was fortunate enough to win the senior Golden Shears. I was very lucky to travel to the UK with the great Snow Quinn. We were sponsored by Merck, Sharp and Dohme, who wanted their name and product (Thibenzole drench) publicised. We spent two months touring and doing demonstrations three times a week in England, Scotland and Wales. It was an amazing experience.'

Peter recalls he had actually spent several months of the previous year (1966) shearing in the United Kingdom and had competed at several competitions, including Bath & West.

He was also a keen moto-cross competitor and brought a 500cc twin-cylinder Triumph Metisse motor-cycle home with him.

'Shearing was very good to me. When farming, I shored my own sheep and then finally, feeling really 'shearing-fit', I spent a fair while when it suited, shearing for some other gangs.

'With 5.00am starts there were some long days averaging 300-350 ewes daily. I met a lot of wonderful people through shearing, motor-cycle sport [Peter reckons he's still an 'old hoon', though not in town] and rugby.'



Above: Woolhandling judge Amber Casserly (Kaitangata) and friend Emily Warrender (Kaka Point) at New Zealand Championships, April 2019. Southern gals up to mischief by the looks of things. (But we didn't ask!)

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## Tom the Drover

By Bernie Walker

The drovers of Australia were, and are, tough remarkable people who plied their chosen profession with great pride and a wonderful sense of responsibility to their mob regardless of the prevailing weather and season.

They have a well-established place in the folklore, bush ballads and songs of the vast pastoral areas of Australia. Drovers were a most important link which enabled the development of the great Australian sheep and wool industry as they moved huge mobs of sheep, perhaps 5000 head or more, along the stock routes, sometimes to be delivered hundreds of kilometres away, sometimes for survival during a drought when the station owner threw wide the gate and said, 'Take 'em walkabout'. They could be on the road for many months, even years.



This photo (above) is of the droving plant of Tom Wilson Snr of Warren, 130kms north-west of Dubbo in the Central West of New South Wales. It was taken during the early 1940's (WW2). The vehicle was created from a Buick Straight Eight tourer (the motor had 8 cylinders in a straight line).

Neighbours of my family at this time who were sinking tanks and dams with six-and eight-horse teams had a Buick coupe (single seater) model similar to that pictured which they started on petrol, then switched to power kerosene, the same as the early tractors before diesel motors took over.

Note the two dogs on the running board (foot step) which was a feature of the early model cars. That was where the dogs always rode and they very rarely came off. The horses standing quietly on their trailer have obviously done it before. They would be fresh and ready for work when they reached their pick up point for the next mob.



Tom Wilson Jnr, aged 70 (above), also lives in Warren and is still droving when required. When there were no droving jobs available he would go shearing with his three brothers. On one occasion they were joined by the legendary Dick Duggan at a shed at Mt Hart. He says his father ranged from Guyra in the New England region down to Deniliquin in the Riverina. When droving sheep they needed big mobs to make the job more profitable. Mobs of less than about 2000 were not very profitable at the prevailing rates. When his Dad was not on the road with sheep or up to 2000 head of cattle, he would be flat out rabbit trapping. Tom Jnr says he has seen many truckloads of paired rabbits in Warren (no pun intended) on their way to the processors. He reckons the young Wilsons ate so many rabbits that if a dog barked, they would dive under a bed.

This poetic tribute to Tom Jnr was written by a friend and framed for his 70th birthday, but could equally apply to his father. It describes well the conditions the drover could face taking stock 'walkabout'.

### *TOM THE DROVER*

*The fingers of drought crept across the plains, and shrivelled the grass in its path.  
The fearsome heat turned the earth to dust, and all was dry and parched.  
Not a drop of rain from the skies above had fallen for months on end.  
And bleak despair crossed the drover's face making camp by the river bend.  
Two thousand head left the station yard in advance of the Drought King's path.  
But he overtook them and mowed them down 'til all that was left was half.  
So from camp to camp on the Western Plains they travel the country over.  
The muffled tread of a thousand head, and behind them Tom the Drover.*

Original words by B.L. Flynn. 28/11/1986. Written especially for Tommy Wilson of Warren. Photo credits – Margaret Hillian.

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## Luckless Record

Martin Howlett and Jonny Roberts became the first British shearers to set a world record on United Kingdom soil on 24 September 2019 when they broke the world 8-hour two-stand ewe record at Bigley Farm, in Wiltshire.

Martin, 27, from Wiltshire shore 539, while 29 year-old Jonny from Devon did 536, giving the pair a two-stand tally of 1,075 – breaking the record by seven. In the process, Martin also broke the British 8-hour individual ewe record.

Most people who set records or win big shows will admit that a certain amount of luck on the day was one of many ingredients that contributed to their success. It is fair to say, however, that luck is one thing that Martin and Jonny didn't enjoy in their bid to write their names in the record books!

Seven weeks before the original record date of 24 August, Jonny broke a bone in his arm and it's to his enormous credit that the record went ahead at all. Then on the big day – with people including Rowland Smith and Selwyn Williams having flown from the other side of the world – the ewes disastrously failed to make the required wool weights.

Still determined, they postponed the attempt for a month later, and a horrendous belt of persistent rain saw the ewes kept dry by the skin of their teeth. The night-pen had to fill the area where spectators should have sat to watch, but they were in dry, and met the wool weights this time.

Battling through pain, cramps and very tough conditions both mentally and physically, in the end 'a lot of mental strength, determination and bloody-mindedness put them over the line,' as Huw Condron put it.

Martin later expressed thanks and debt of gratitude to the team. 'With such a huge amount of friends and family involved it's not possible to name them all, but the day would not have been the success it was without them. Special thanks to Matt and Pippa Smith for everything you guys did on the day and right back to the early days of organising the record. Also huge thanks to Ian Lovett-Chapman for helping organise the paperwork side of things as well as, of course, all our sponsors for the financial support and to Perin and Sonja Dineley of Stonehill Romneys for providing the sheep and housing an army of helpers.

'The record will stick with us as one of those days you won't forget in a hurry. It has given me new definition to grit, pain and gratitude to all those that made it happen.'

(Tom Harding)

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### MY OVERLY OVERT JEALOUSY

There are some who crave to strike it rich  
With money, they'd buy a flash new place  
And traverse the tropics on a super-yacht  
I'd settle for a Southland breeze in my face

With the mansion there'd be European cars  
And many friends with whom to touch base  
Meeting for coffee in designer-brand clothes  
I'd settle for a Southland breeze in my face

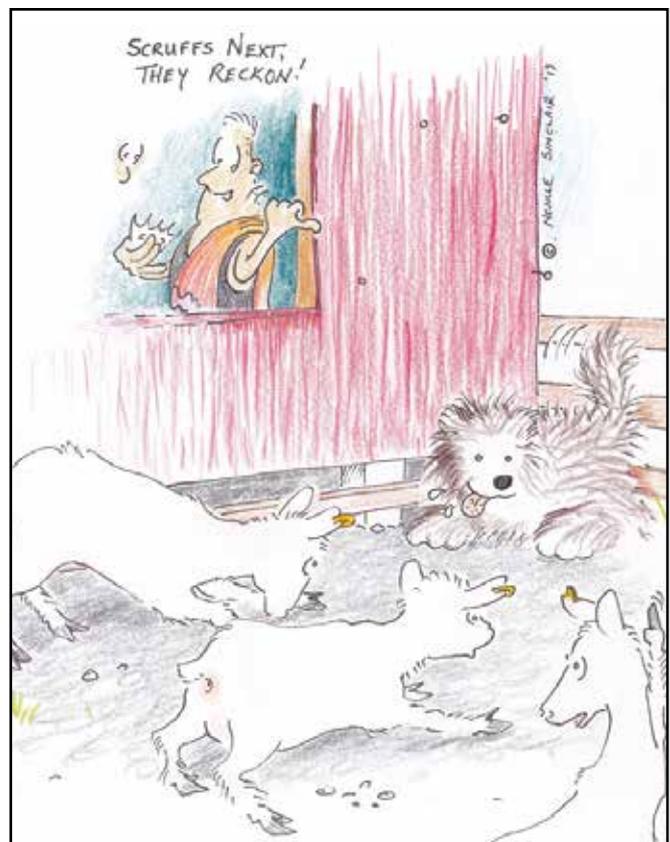
Of course, there would be no need to work  
On social media they'd be setting the pace  
Posting new 'selfies' on their public display  
I'd settle for a Southland breeze in my face

At shows or ballet, they would be front row  
'Look at me displaying my style and grace  
It's important that *nouveau* support the arts'  
I'd settle for a Southland breeze in my face

The life of leisure would be a constant chore  
Mingling with the in-crowd a perpetual race  
High class restaurants to frequent each week  
I'd settle for a Southland breeze in my face

I'll take the coast down at Gemstone Beach  
Rain drops in the air (just the faintest trace)  
Weather coming in from off the South Pole  
What I call a 'Southland breeze' in my face

*desperado 2019. (When the Lotto jackpot reached \$38 million the balladeer allowed himself 25 seconds to dream ... and then reality took its mandatory bite!)*



## '40 over 400': Women's four-stand nine-hour world lamb shearing record

It is almost 50 years since the first women's team world shearing record. On 10 January 1972 five women shearers shored a full day on ewes. The previous month, on 18 December 1971, Pam Warren from Awakino had shorn the first women's solo shearing record of 344 lambs in nine hours.

It is now 40 years since one of those original five shearers, Ata Mond of Bennydale, King Country shored the first ever 400 in her nine-hour world record on lambs at Bennydale. Since then there have been four women's solo records, one two-stand women's record and one three-stand ewe shearing record. Only one of those, the Bayne's two-stand lamb record in 2009 was convened under the World Sheep Shearing Records Society (WSSR).

Compare that with the men's worlds' records where more than fifteen multi-shearer (three or more) attempts have occurred around the world since the WSSR was convened in 1985.

With hindsight and in this history, the first hurdle is that fewer women shearers present fewer opportunities. While an increasing number of women shearers are prevalent, there remain few shearing teams that sport more than one women shearer, and even then, fewer are ranked in the higher senior grades with skill and speed.

I would argue that opportunity for a women's team record only comes once a generation which is why I applied for an exemption from Rule 2, not a

rule change. The reasoning behind the application is that there are simply not enough women shearers to meet the 21-day test. In recent seasons where there have been multiple women shearing for contractors, those stands were filled with junior and intermediate shearers, and they are far below the necessary competence for a team record, if the men's efforts are to set the standard.

Regrettably, it is too late for the generation led by the current world solo lamb record holder, Emily Welch (648, Nov 2007) or for her contemporaries, Jo Kumeroa, Una Cameron, Rozzi Pethy and their cohort. For reasons unknown their application for a six-stand record was turned down based on the exemption in 2012.

The second reason as it stands, WSSR Shearer's Rule 2, 'the 21-day test' was an unobtainable goal: *All members of any gang, (i.e. three stands or more) attempting a record must have worked for the one employer for at least 21 days directly prior to the attempt.*

While the rule and its history are clearly designed to prevent 'stacking' a team unfairly, history shows it has simply not been viable for a substantive women's world record team to emerge from one single contractor. Excluding the Baynes' mother and daughter two-stand in 2009, there have been no multi-stand team records since 1983. For whatever reason, the rule hasn't worked for women shearers.

For that reason, I was proud to front a successful application to the WSSR in July 2019 for a limited exemption from Rule 2, so that our emerging highly talented women shearers are supported

in their desire to establish a women's multi-stand nine-hour world lamb record in New Zealand in January 2020.

The record attempt is well supported by Taumarunui shearing contractor, Roger Neil of Central Shearing Ltd and the trustee owners and the farm management at Waihi-Pukawa Station, Turangi, site of the four-stand men's nine-hour world lamb record in 2007.

Creating the opportunity has come from the support, vision and encouragement of current world record holders, Emily Welch and Matt Smith and a number of former record holders, including Roger Neil, Digger Balme and Mark Barrowcliffe to fine tune and assist our preparation.

We have four senior class shearers, each well accomplished in their careers and each on the verge of realising their potential. Each has considerable shearing, show and overseas experience – Sarah Higgins (Blenheim, 27), Natalya Rangiawha (Pio Pio, 27); Megan Whitehead (Gore, 23) and Amy Silcock (32, Tiraumea).

These women have all shorn their way into the senior class based on their stellar performances and impressive shed tallies. Each comes from the very fabric of rural society, is reliable, determined and dedicated to agricultural excellence and success. They each desire to team up for this record and deserve the opportunity that is presented to them by Waihi Pukawa Station and our event team. Interestingly, Megan is the daughter of two accomplished Taranaki shearers from their era, Tina McColl who herself shored over 500 on lambs in the early 1990s, and Quentin Whitehead. Natalya is the niece of former record shearer, Rei Rangiawha and granddaughter of Manu Rangiawha.

We anticipate a large crowd gathering in the wool shed from 5am on 23 January 2020 and with many others to view the livestream of this event from the bottom of Lake Taupo to the world.

We will be fundraising on the day so that any additional funds raised at the shed door will be offered to the South Island Girls in Sport charity, 'Forward Foundation' and we acknowledge the local Kuratau Primary School will be fundraising their BBQ food stall for the audience.

If you have any questions or require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me by email at: [angusburney@gmail.com](mailto:angusburney@gmail.com) or by cell: 027 591 0066. (*Jills Angus Burney*)




40/400




**WORLD WOMEN'S SHEARING RECORD EVENT**

**Megan Whitehead - Gore**  
**Sarah Higgins - Blenheim**  
**Amy Silcock - Tiraumea**  
**Natalya Rangiawha - Pio Pio**

**Waihi Pukawa Station**  
**Omori, State Highway 41, Turangi**

**23 January 2020**




Contact - Jills Angus Burney | [angusburney@gmail.com](mailto:angusburney@gmail.com) | 0275910066



Helloworld Travel Agency Te Kuiti's Lorrene Te Kanawa (third left) with her tour group to the world championships at Le Dorat, France, earlier this year. They are pictured against the backdrop of Chateau de Chenonceau, an historic monument in the Loire Valley, dating from the early 1500s. Koro Mullins (RIP) centre back row.



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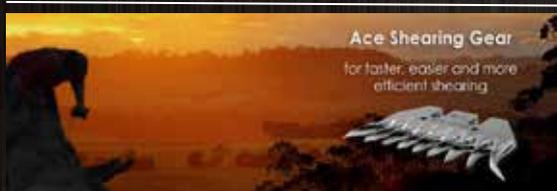
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*Then there was the time when five shearers decided they were ready for their baths (having downed their beers) and the rousies hadn't finished. Well, that wasn't good enough, so we decided to show them how five shearers could all have a bath within five minutes. We lined up, clothes off, and 'ready, set, go!' The first guy jumped in, down under the water, grabbed the soap and did it like a shearing operation. Down the belly, down the first leg, up round the crutch, one over the topknot, sluice down, and out. The next guy was in one end as the clean shearer, smelling like roses, was climbing out the other end. We all got through, under the five minutes and thought we'd done a pretty good job of cleaning ourselves.*

(Morry Lawton, *Top Class Wool Cutters*, 1996.)

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# The champion reflects ...

By Allan Oldfield

The world shearing and woolhandling championships started in Le Dorat, France on Thursday 4 July 2019. It was a hot day and everyone was feeling the heat in the large shearing marquee.

The all nations blade heats were on in the afternoon and we soon realised that competition was going to be tough as we were shearing texel ewes that had lambed. There were 53 blade shearers in the all nations and after the heats it was cut down to 12 for semi finals. A big cut when we only shored two sheep that weren't particularly even.

Luckily, I made it through in 5th position but unfortunately Tony and my father missed the cut at 13th and 17th respectively. I realised then I had some serious work ahead of me to get around these sheep.

Friday was a day off for me with the only blades event being the french championship. I went with Yana, Thomas and my father on a bit of a tour and spent a lot of time thinking about how I could improve over the following days. We visited a town that had been destroyed during world war 2 and got cooked by the heat of the day.

On the Friday night was the World Championship Gala dinner. There was a little confusion on arrival as nobody seemed quite sure where it was so all teams waited in the square until someone told us where we were going.

The dinner was supposed to have started at 8pm but it wasn't until after 9 that the doors were opened and we made our way into the hall for the dinner. By the time everyone was seated and the first course started coming out it was nearly 10pm. The main course was served around 11pm and soon after most blade shearers left as we had to shear at 7am the next morning. It was quite disappointing as I had paid 50euros for Yana to come and my father and brother had also paid and we had to leave only half way through. I later heard that dessert wasn't served until around midnight.

On Saturday morning we were on our way to the shearing at

6am. It was the first round of the world championship blade competition and everyone was there early to get ready. We had three sheep to shear which were texel mules that had also lambed. It was good to have an extra sheep as it helps to even the field since the sheep weren't very even. The pressure was on more now as this was the first round of the main event. I wasn't completely happy with how I shored but it was enough to put me on top of the leader board for the first round.

On the Saturday afternoon were the semi finals and final of the all nations blades. In the semi finals we had four sheep and this gave me a chance to test my pace a little. I qualified second into the final behind Mayenseke Shweni from South Africa but with a large point margin. Unfortunately, the sheep didn't improve for the all nations final and out of the six sheep in the final I only had one sheep that shored well, which was my last one. I managed to hold pace with Mayenseke but couldn't keep my quality over the difficult sheep.

I ended up third in the all nations behind Mayenseke and Bonile, the other South African. I was a little disappointed as I knew I hadn't had the best draw of sheep but also that I wasn't able to shear the sheep better myself. I didn't get a lot of sleep that night thinking about the day ahead.

Sunday was the big day of competition. This was when all the world championship events were on. We started the morning with the second round of the world championships blades again first thing in the morning. It was tough being up first in the morning two days in a row especially since I wasn't getting a lot of sleep at night due to nerves and the heat. The score from this was combined with the round one



Champions both – Tony Dobbs and Allan Oldfield.

## Things looking a bit Grey? Where to get help

*Lifeline* (open 24/7) – 0800 543 354

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

*Healthline* (open 24/7) – 0800 611 116

*Samaritans* (open 24/7) – 0800 726 666

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

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

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

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

Your local Rural Support Trust – 0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP)

*Alcohol Drug Helpline* (open 24/7) – 0800 787 797. You can also text 8691 for free.

For further information, contact the Mental Health Foundation's free Resource and Information Service (09 623 4812).

scores to get the 12 semi-finalists from the 32 competitors. This also gave us the six countries to compete in the blade teams final later in the day.

In the world championships semi finals the sheep finally improved a little and were more even. Although the sheep were a little better I got a rough edge on my shears on the first sheep and didn't have the best shear but still qualified 4th into the final. At least I knew I could shear better and hoped my shears would run smoother after this.

Next was the world team blade final. Tony and I decided that I would shear first and he would shear second. I planned to build a lead and then Tony would hold it but it ended up that I struggled to get into a good rhythm until the last of my three sheep and then Tony shored extremely well over his three sheep. We finished with a one minute lead over the South African team and had a good feeling we had done what was needed. It put us in a really good headspace as we both went into the individual world blade final shortly after.

In the individual world blade final we had three texel ewes and three suffolk lambs to shear. I chose to shear the worst of my texels first and didn't do the best job on her but as I got into my second sheep, which was better, I got into a rhythm and started to build my pace. I was pushing so hard that I could feel my focus felt like a physical tension, like it was a muscle pushing me forward. I had my father in my pen cheering me on which really helped as I got to the half way point.

By the time I finished my third sheep I had nearly half a sheep lead over the field. I could occasionally hear the commentators mention when other shearers went for their next sheep and I knew after my fifth sheep I had a full sheep lead on the field and was able to relax and shear my last sheep really cleanly. As I hit the time button I had a massive surge of adrenaline as I realised what had just happened. It was great to look up and see my father right there in my pen and then to see Yana and Thomas out in the crowd cheering.

Prize giving was on Sunday night. We had a lengthy wait as there were a lot of performances in between the last final and the start of prize giving. This was when I really started to feel nervous as there was nothing I could do but wait. There was a lot of tension down behind the stage as we waited for the first blade shearing result which was for the teams.

As each team was called my anticipation grew. When the South Africans were called up as second and Tony and I realised we had really done what we came to do. It was an

incredible feeling. This was the first time New Zealand had won the teams event since 1992 before South Africa started competing. I had been so nervous waiting before the prize giving that I hadn't really thought of what I would say as we received our awards and I felt a little awkward giving a short speech and handed the microphone to Tony. We also didn't realise that as we came off stage there would be a TV crew waiting to interview us. It turned out it was all being screened live on a local TV channel.

Having won the team event it started to sink in that there was a real chance that I might have won the individual event. I was far more excited at the back of the stage waiting for the individual results. This is something that really adds to the thrill of shearing as a sport, because it is scored on both time and quality you can't say who has won until the prize giving, until then you can only guess.

When it was announced that I had won there was an amazing feeling of both excitement and also relief that all of my training had paid off. It was so great to look out into the crowd and see my family and all of my friends and supporters cheering. I was so proud to have been able to win for myself, my family and New Zealand. Again this was the first time anyone from outside of South Africa had won the title since 1992. Included in the prizes was a gift from the French President Emmanuel Macron which was a huge surprise. I think my father was more delighted than anyone, which I think is fair as he has spent years coaching me.

Unfortunately I had only had a banana to eat since breakfast and there were huge lines for any food at the show so we didn't stay to celebrate for long. It was a shame not to have a few drinks and a chat with all the competitors that night but I was exhausted from all the competition with very little food.

After the championships I went to Wales with Yana to relax for a bit and let the wins sink in. I received so many messages from family and friends back on New Zealand as well as from all over the world. My father and brother somehow managed to fit all of the trophies and prizes in their luggage to go back to New Zealand.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped me get to this point in my career including my partner Yana, my family, friends and those who have helped me with sponsorship. I'm looking forward to having another go at the next world championships in Scotland in 2022.

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## So, who won .....

Roger Federer played Novak Djokovic in the Wimbledon final: Who won? Djokovic.

The All Blacks played Australia for the Bledisloe Cup. Who won? The All Blacks.

More than 160 cyclists took part in the Tour de France: Who won? Egan Bernal from Colombia.

Ten nations took part in the Cricket World Cup: Who won? England. (Well, sort of ...)

Canberra Raiders played the Sydney Roosters in the NRL grand final: Who won? The Roosters.

The Melbourne Cup was run earlier this month: Who won? Vow and Declare.

The world shearing championship was held in France: Who won? Well, in sixth place we had Jack Robinson from Northern Ireland.

Yes, but who won? Well in fifth place was Calum Shaw from Scotland.

Yes, but who won? Well, fourth was Ivan Scott from Ireland.

Yes, BUT WHO WON?

Well, in third place was Cam Ferguson from New Zealand.

So, any thoughts on who won? Yes, in second place was Rowland Smith from New Zealand.

Then, does that mean Richard Jones from Wales won? Well, he's standing there all by himself so it must be him.

**Sacre bleu!** Doesn't it make more sense to announce the winners first?

*(Editor's rant, 18,000 kilometres away from Le Dorat after staying up all night to find out who won!)*

## The Regional Trophy

Waimate's Eileen Smith has been investigating the whereabouts of the Regional Trophy. *'It was spotted at the Royal Easter show in Auckland. It is now a trophy for a competition between the top two North Island Shearers that don't make the Golden Shears final versus the top two South Island Shearers that don't make the Golden Shears final. It's just good to know where it is and that it's being competed for.'* Indeed, Eileen.



### And further from Waimate:

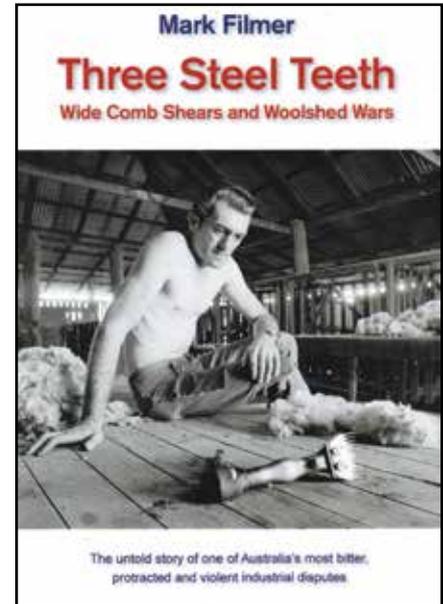
Next year Waimate will host the final of the South Island Woolhandling circuits previously run by Otago Shears at Balclutha. As we are still finalising sponsorship we are extending the closing date for entries to 17 Jan 2020 (Northern Southland Championships in Lumsden). Points will be backdated to include Christchurch 2019 with the final in Waimate and include Waimate 2020 points. Entries to Waimate Shears direct credit bank account 02 0892 0042969 000 with name and grade (Open, Senior, Junior) as reference. Entry fees: Open \$30, Senior \$25, Junior \$20. Only paid entries will be in the final Semi-finals dependent on entry numbers.

## Straight Talk

'Competitors might like to know the physiotherapist is back in the hall so if you have any aches and pains that need straightening out, you will find her up on the mezzanine floor.'

'A few of those judges up on the board at present could also do with some straightening out, but not by a physiotherapist.'

*(The creative verbal genius of commentator, Norm Harraway at New Zealand Merino Shears, Alexandra)*



New book on the 1980s 'Wide Comb' dispute. Thoroughly researched, referenced and very well written.

**Contact author Mark Filmer:**  
[mfilmer62@gmail.com](mailto:mfilmer62@gmail.com)

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- We have recently taken over Integrity Shearing in Ohai and will have continuity of work through most of the year.
- We have also taken on a full-time Manager Chas Tohiariki with 15 years experience in the Training sector and many more as a shearer. We see this as a win win for our clients and our staff and will be able to offer training and support on daily basis.
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Any questions or queries, message or phone us  
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## Norway's road to world champs 2019

Norway has had representatives in a long row of Golden Shears shearing and woolhandling world championships. All the way back to 1980 in Masterton, New Zealand with only 1986 in Australia missed since then.

In 2019 we had a new team on the move. Machine shearers Åsmund Kringeland and Anne Lise Humstad. Woolhandling with Anne Lise again together with Jonathan Haakull. Manager Sven Arne Lislegard joined up with judges Ahenata Leira and Sven Reiersen. The build-up started with the Norwegian Nationals in October 2018. After shearing through the autumn and then again second shear in spring before lambing it was time for competitions again to come in the right mode before France in July. Most of the Norwegian team headed for UK in late May. Since we live far apart from each other and had not met since Norwegian Nationals, half a year earlier it was time for a good catch up and to build good relations.

Our first show in the UK was at Northumberland. Åsmund had entry in open machine shearing and got a touch of what level he could meet later in the week and at Golden Shears world champs in France. Anne Lise started in senior shearing and junior woolhandling. Jonathan had a go in open woolhandling and qualified for the final.

Next morning it was time for a scenic drive through the Lake District and to visit Highway Shearing. It came clear it is easy to spend money on shearing gear and hopefully David Gillett



*Team Norway 2019, from left: Sven Arne Lislegard, manager; Jonathan Haakull, woolhandler; Anne Lise Humstad, shearer and woolhandler; Osmund Kringeland, shearer, and Sven Reiersen, shearing judge. Below: Jonathan Haakull competing at Northumberland.*

was happy with our stop. The following day the team had entries in the Staffordshire Show. Again it was a test against some of the best shearers and woolhandlers in UK. And again it was hard to find the way around the sheep with same speed and quality as the more experienced competitors from UK. Then it was the Golden Shears Bath and West show. And same story again. Tough competition, warm welcome from all; organisers, competitors, judges and friends from all over shearing world.

Training week in UK was over and we headed home to Norway for final preparations for Monde de Tonte Mondial-France 2019. On 1 July Team Norway arrived in Le Dorat, France to a warm week packed with world class shearing and woolhandling. Le Dorat, France and the local organisation gave us all a great experience in hospitality, friendship and spectacular shearing and woolhandling. As expected Team Norway did its very best both in shearing and woolhandling, but competition is hard and our competitors ended just on the better side of the final result list. And we are already looking forward to 2022 in Edinburgh, Scotland. (Sven Reiersen)



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National Secretary: Suzanne Kennedy, PO Box 5185, Terrace End, Palmerston North 4414.

Tel 027 263 7634: E-mail [contactus@nzshearing.co.nz](mailto:contactus@nzshearing.co.nz)

## Wage theft

Wage theft is running rampant in New Zealand today. Bosses all over the country are paying their workers less than their legal rate or the industry rate, and pocketing the difference. In shearing that is easily done as many farmers don't know the rates being paid to the shearers or the shed staff, let alone that the individual shearing staff don't know what they should be getting.

In shearing this happens where the recommended rate, say, for shearing crossbreds is \$2/head including tax-free allowance, but there are many shearers still getting around \$1.60 a sheep. The problem is that the contractors aren't charging the farmers so much as \$0.40 or fifty cents less a sheep, so these contractors are tendering low and also ripping their workers off at the same time,

Up to \$2.3 billion dollars' worth of annual leave has been cheated from hundreds of thousands of workers in New Zealand. This happens because many employers and their payroll providers calculate leave incorrectly and deny workers their legal entitlement.

The leave was often calculated incorrectly because payroll systems were set up a certain way and it was easier not to change the system, rather than a mistake or confusion about the law, as many employers now claim. Other examples include where employers fudge or mislead when an entitlement to statutory pay or public holiday pay is not paid out during the working season.

New Zealanders have been shocked about the stories of multinationals like McDonalds and some service stations allowing their operators to steal from their workers. And the recent MBIE audits of shearing employers shows that there are still a large number of shearing bosses constantly violating the holiday and public holidays rules.

Since October 2016 MBIE has offered numerous resources to ensure shearing employers have the tools they need to understand their responsibilities and to comply with employment law, such as business coaching, presentations to the New Zealand Contractors' Conference, and there are online videos, confidential calls, or in-person visits to contractors offices that have helped.

Research shows that wage theft is especially prevalent for workers already receiving the minimum wage – that's just \$17.70 per hour for full-time or part-time permanent workers. These workers are already our lowest paid and then face being ripped off by greedy bosses!

It may be through dodgy cash-in-hand jobs.

- Are you required to get an IRD number for your job?
- Are you technically an 'Independent Contractor' except everything feels like a normal job, but you're not getting super, sick leave or annual leave and probably won't be eligible for ACC either?
- Do you get paid but then your boss says you have to pay back some of your wages?
- If you believe you are entitled to penalty rates, but they are not being paid?
- Does your boss fail to provide you with a proper payslip showing kiwi-saver and tax?

All these can be signs that your boss is failing to pay your legal entitlements. The Fair Pay campaign by First Union wants to help workers claim the money they are legally owed. Right now, we have a Government wanting to bring in a Fair Pay Commission so they can reverse the millions stolen from workers every year. *(Jills Angus Burney)*



*Two characters captured in the Carrick woolshed at Bannockburn in early September for merino ewe shearing. Don Clark, former All Black, has long been a friend and supporter of the wool harvesting industry, stalwart of the New Zealand Merino Shearing competition and always genuinely interested in the Lyon shearing gang members who pass through his shed.*

*And Marcel Perrin, an English/French backpacker who'd never been in a shearing shed until May this year (did second shear for Sam and Emily Welch) but by pre-lamb, working for Peter and Elsie Lyon, Marcel was pressing like a boss. Marcel had an astonishing work rate, with a wise and unfailingly happy approach to what is arguably the most important and pivotal role in a fine wool shed. (Marg Forde)*

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### Ohinewairua Revisited

We featured a story in the August 2018 edition about the day in January 1956 when a ten-strong team of shearers led by Godfrey Bowen shored 3156 sheep at Ohinewairua Station, near Taihape. Since then, three other photos taken that day and featured here have been produced to *Shearing* magazine by Moira Haddrell of Tamahere, whose grandfather, Taihape JP Charlie McCarthy was an official time keeper. Photos above show Godfrey Bowen (and we think, Bob Reed in background) shearing and woolhandlers aplenty round the skirting table (recognise any faces?). Opposite, Charlie McCarthy discussing progress with shearers Bob Pratt and Red Fleming (sitting on floor).

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The Heiniger logo is located in the top right corner, featuring the brand name in white text on a red rectangular background.

Heiniger

A detailed image of the Heiniger FX handpiece is shown diagonally across the center. It has a red and black ergonomic handle, a silver-colored metal barrel with a knurled adjustment knob, and a silver-colored metal headpiece with multiple sharp teeth. A black drill bit is inserted into the top of the handpiece.

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