Congratulations, Phil Morrison - October 28, 2015

Golden Shears president Philip Morrison was named Official of the Year at the Tararua Sports Awards on October 16.

Struck down with a heavy cold, he was unable to be present for the ceremony in Dannevirke, which is at the northern end of Tararua District which extends south to Eketahuna.

But on hand to receive the accolades was the able First Lady, wife Ana, who has been involved with much of his work in the backbone of the shearing competition scene.

Mr Morrison, who farms Lovat Flats, east of Pahiatua, has been involved in competitions for almost 50 years, initially as a YFC shearing and woolhandling team member.

He reached four consecutive Golden Shears shearing finals, being fourth in the Junior events won by Samson Te Whata and Alan Bolstad in 1972 and 1973 respectively, and was third in the 1974 Intermediate final won Peter Lyon and runner-up the following year to fellow-Wairarapa shearer Graham Checkley.

In 1975 he was also in a team which won the YFC Senior shearing and woolhandling teams event during the Golden Shears.

The YFC involvement shaped his career, and, going to competitions with judge Phil Olsen and Open shearer David Wolland, he soon found there was more to it than just competing and waiting to see if he would go home with a ribbon.

Mr Olsen, now deceased, was his mentor, and Mr Morrison recalled how he first began judging in 1972, when he was 22.

"It was at Stratford or Hawera," he said. "I shore in the Junior, and then they were short of a judge or two. So I helped judge for the rest of the day."

It was the same year that the first Pahiatua Shears were held, using a three-stand board transported from the Wairarapa show and held in association with the :Pahiatua horse sports on a farm near Pahiatua Golf Course, between Pahiatua and Mangatainoka.

Anna Morrison, after accepting the award on her husband's behalf.

Phil Morrison, during the 50th Golden Shears in 2010. Now the President, he was on October 16 named Tararua District Sports Official of the Year.

Pahiatua was soon to build its own stand, but it was never used for the competition. It rained on the first day it was to be used, and the shears moved to Balfour Stud, south of Pahiatua, where they were held in the woolshed for more than 20 years.

While there had been the early flirtation with judging, it was not till 1977 that he took it up more formally, his first show judging being at Levin.

"I'd had my go at competitions, my back didn't play ball, so I switched to judging," he said.

He was chief referee at Golden Shears from 2003-2010, and has been on the committee since 2003, becoming President in 2013.

He has also chaired the National Circuit committee, is a Shearing Sports New Zealand delegate, and has had numerous roles in rules, and judging up to Golden Shears World Championships level.

Wairarapa show - Golden opportunity - October 28, 2015

A window of opportunity Opens for anyone looking to chalk up a win in the big-time at the Wairarapa Spring Shears on Saturday.

In the seven years since the Wairarapa A and P Show competition at Clareville came out of a short recess in 2008 there've been five winners of the Open shearing title, and six winners of the Open woolhandling final.

The Shears were last year also the scene of a Novice woolhandling win by the 14-year-old Marika Braddick.

She later swept through the Junior competitions with three wins and three placings to become possibly one of the youngest to be promoted to Senior class, where she has started the season with two wins from two shows, at Gisborne and Hastings.

Competition is set to start at 9.30am.

Winners of the Wairarapa Spring Shears since 2008:

Shearing:

Open: 2008 Paul Avery, 2009 John Kirkpatrick, 2010 Adam Brausch, 2011 John Kirkpatrick, 2012 David Fagan, 2013 David Buick, 2014 David Buick

Senior: 2008 Lindsay Brown, 2009 Mark Buick, 2010 Matene Mason, 2011 Kane Kapene, 2012 Jack Fagan, 2013 Casey Bailey, 2014 Willie Lambert

Intermediate: 2008 Tipene Te Whata, 2009 Wi Poutu Ngarangione, 2010 Sharnie Rimene, 2011 Michael Rolston, 2012 David Gordon, 2013 Catherine Mullooly, 2014 Ramone Smith

Junior: 2008 Simon Robinson, 2009 Cushla Gordon, 2010 Michael Rolston, 2011 Manahi Fox, 2012 Quinton Sanson, 2013 Shaun Turton, 2014 Hemi Lambert

Novice: 2008 Tane Matiaha, 2009 David Gordon, 2012 Hamish Pollock, 2014 Cody Greig

Woolhandling:

Open: 2008 George Hawkins, 2009 Tina Rimene, 2010 Ngawai Tau, 2011 Choppy Pattison, 2012 Keryn Herbert, 2013 Sheree Alabaster, 2014 Keryn Herbert

Senior: 2008 Rocheee Collier, 2009 Larnie Morrell, 2010 Rangi Barakat, 2011 Kiley Laris, 2012 Tumanako Waikare, 2013 Keisha Te Huki, 2014 Rahna Williams

Junior: 2008 Fiona Christensen, 2009 Kiley Laris, 2010 Connor Puha, 2011 Lauren Sargent, 2012 Angeline Colquhoun, 2013 Erica Reti, 2014 Danielle Fox

Novice: 2014 Marika Braddick

Close competition looms at Ashburton - October 27, 2015

Champion all-breeds shearer Tony Coster isn't taking anything for granted as he lines up the opposition this Saturday at Ashburton, another of the regular happy hunting grounds in Canterbury.

Winner of the Open final five times in the last 10 years, Coster's expecting some tough opposition as the show helps sort-out contenders for the All-Breeds final at the Canterbury Show next month.

Among those expected at the show, less than 30km from home, is New Zealand transtasman series teammate Troy Pyper, from almost 500km away in Invercargill.

The show is expected to continue the trend of increasing entries in the Junior and In intermediate classes, and hopefully the blade shearing as competitors clip a path to the next World championships. Competition starts on Saturday at 9am.

Winners of the Ashburton A and P Show Shears since 2005:

Open: 2005 Tony Coster; 2006 Jason Win, 2007 Grant Smith, 2008 Grant Smith, 2009 Grant Smith, 2010 Tony Coster, 2011 Tony Coster, 2012 Tony Coster, 2013 Darrin Forde, 2014 Tony Coster

Senior: 2005 Angus Moore, 2006 Shaun McNicol, 2007 Ant Frew, 2008 Rob Mainland, 2009 Ant Frew, 2010 Kaleb Godsiff, 2011 Jason Edwards, 2012 Damian Bloomfield, 2013 Ethan Pankhurst, 2014 Darren Alexander

Intermediate: 2005 Lewis Street, 2006 Rob Mainland, 2007 Malcolm Sweeney, 2008 Jason Edwards, 2009 Luke McCarthy, 2010 Floyde Neil, 2011 Phoenix Hawkins, 2012 Phoenix Hawkins, 2013 Corey Smith, 2014 Corey White

Junior: 2007 Andrew Cheyne, 2008 Rowan Forrest, 2009 Brett Langrell, 2010 Phoenix Hawkins, 2011 Ethan Pankhurst, 2012 Kahn Culshaw, 2013 Hugh De Lacy, 2014 Emily Te Kapa

Blades: 2005 Justin Woodrow, 2006 Noel Handley, 2007 Noel Handley, 2008 Brian Thomson, 2009 Allen Gemmell, 2010 Allen Gemmell, 2011 Brian Thomson, 2013 Brian Thomson, 2014 Tony Dobbs

Coster wins No 5 at Rangiora - October 24, 2015

National representative Tony Coster won his fifth Northern A and P Show Shears Open title in a row at Rangiora today.

Coster, shearing the 10 sheepo in the final in 12min 47sec, won by 5.5pts from fellow Rakaia shearer Grant Smith.

The Senior final was won by Lyall Windleburn, who won towo titles in his first Senior season Last year. He won by 1.42pts from Hugh De Lacy, of Cheviot, who was going for three-in-a-row after winning at Waimate and Ellesmere.

Woodville shearer asnd Lincoln student Tegwyn Bradley won the Intermediate final, with Waimate and Ellesmere winner Lionel Taumata, of Gore, having to settle for second place, while Josh Harding, from Hunterville, added the Junior title to a win the previous Saturday at the Ellesmere show.

The blades event had a disappointingly low number of entries but still produced a good winning effort from Allen Gemmell, who represented New Zealand at the 2010 World championships in Wales.

Woolhandling champion beaten by first time winner at Royal Show - October 23, 2015

There was a string of firsts all-round as the Great Raihania Shears were held at the Royal Show in Hastings today.

They were headed by Te Karaka woolhandler Mary-Anne Baty, of Te Karaka, who beat Golden Shears and 2012 World champion Joel Henare in winning her first Open woolhandling title after three years of trying.

World champion shearer Rowland Smith, of Hastings, won the competition's Open shearing title for the first time, and Catherine Mullooly, of Matawai, became the first woman to win the show's Senior shearing title.

Young Raupunga shearer Hemi Lambert had his first Intermediate win, and Eli Raheke, of Porangahau, scored his first win by claiming the Junior shearing title, in what was also the first six-stand final at the Great Raihania Shears, on the board borrowed from Rangitikei Shearing Sports in Marton.

Angela Kirkpatrick, daughter of Open final runner-up John Kirkpatrick and in nher right extensively involved in the running of the event, had her first win in the Junior woolhandling final, while in the other final, young teenager Marika Braddick made it two-from-two in her Senior woolhandling career, having also won at Gisborne last week.

It was a particularly popular win for Te Karaka woolhandler Baty, who hadn't won a final since the 2011-2012 season when she was the No 2 ranked Senior woolhandler in New Zealand, with four wins during that summer, including the Hawke's Bay Senior title in October 2011.

Mary-Anne Baty after her first Open-class win, in the Royal Show's Great Raihania Shears Open woolhandling final.

She was runner-up to World and Golden Shears champion Joel Henare in the Open finals in Hastings in 2013 and 2014, and had a particular highlight when reaching the Golden Shears Open final in March 2014. Thanking a string of people who had encouraged and mentored her along the way, she said after her win, on a day where temperatures in Hastings reached a nationwide high of 27deg: "I didn't think I was going to win."

She needn't have worried, for in the end it was by a comfortable 20 points from Henare, with a margin of almost 50 more points to third placegetter, multiple New Zealand Open champion and 2008 World champion Sheree Alabaster.

Now hitting 29 and with daughter Erana at home, she's been woolhandling about 10 years since meeting partner D J Crawford, who also contributed to the housekeeping by finishing sixth in Friday's Senior shearing final.

She thanked the likes of Henare, Penny Kerekere, first contractor Butch Pardoe and now regular employers Ian and Lilibeth Kirkpatrick, and said: "I've worked with Joel for 9 or 10 years... It means a lot to me to be working and learning from the champions."

Action along the six-stand board, borrowed from Rangitikei and used in Hastings for the first time. Dion King, on Stand 1, on watch by judge Bart Hadfield in the Open shearing final, won by Rowland Smith..

"I'd hate to think what else I'd be doing," she said later.

Smith, on his 29th birthday, was third off the board in the Open final, 36 seconds behind Kirkpatrick, whose 17min 54.19 just pipped home-town chance Dion King in the race for time honours over the 20 sheep.

Smith's better pen points were crucial to his winning points of 69.614, beating three-times Great Raihania Shears winner Kirkpatrick by just 0.196pts.

Mullooly, 25, made the best of less than a fortnight back home in New Zealand, adding her Hawke's Bay title to a win at Gisborne six days earlier. She headed straight back across the Tasman to continue working for George Parker in Kingston, South Australia.

The crew and the crowd in action during the finals.

Eli Raheke, of Porangahau, gets his first win, in the Junior shearing final

Taking on The Bay - a Royal chance - October 20, 2015

It'll be The Rest taking on Hawke's Bay in the Great Raihania Shears Open shearing at the Royal Show in Hastings on Friday, despite the absence of injured 2013 and 2014 winner Cam Ferguson.

Host province shearers have won all but one of the 11 finals since the Hawke's Bay show's shearing was revived in 2005 and relaunched in the honour the Rimitiriu (The Great) Raihania who won the event when it was first held as a machine shearing event in 1902.

Dion King, of Hastings has won it five times, John Kirkpatrick three times and Ferguson twice, the only shearer from outside taking the title being now-retired King Countrylegen David Fagan in 2009.

Kirkpatrick will be out make it two-from-two in North Island shows this season after winning at Gisborne last Saturday, Catherine Mullooly will be out add the Senior title to the Great Raihania junior and intermediate double she scored in 2011 and 2013, and champion woolhandler Joel Henare will be out for a fourth Hastings win in a row to match a similar feat at Gisborne.

The Royal Show, being held in Hastings for the next three years, will have the novelty of two shearing boards working at nonce, in the pavilion where most of the woolhandling will be done, and in the open-side sheep pavilion where the six-stand board from the Rangitikei Shearing Sports has been erected.

Competition will start at 8am, with hopefully no late starters from a Speedshear being held at new private stadium facility Weston Sports (1450 Omahu Rd, Hastings) on Thursday night. Winners at the Great Raihania Shears (Hawke's Bay Show) since 2005:

Shearing:

Open: 2005 Dion King, 2006 Dion King, 2007 John Kirkpatrick, 2008 John Kirkpatrick, 2009 David Fagan, 2010 Dion King, 2011 John Kirkpatrick, 2012 Dion King, 2013 Cam Ferguson, 2014 Cam Ferguson

Senior: 2005 Michael Fabish, 2006 Wesley Cave, 2007 Stafford Chase, 2008 Paul Lewis, 2009 Matene Mason, 2010 Matene Mason, 2011 Wi Poutu Ngarangione, 2012 Brett Roberts, 2013 Casey Bailey, 2014 Robert Mudgway

Intermediate: 2005 Bevan Holm, 2006 Punga Mullins, 2007 Ian Kirkpatrick, 2008 Ingrid Baynes, 2009 Wi Poutu Ngarangione, 2010 Brett Roberts, 2011 Henare Nia Nia, 2012 Frazer Quinlivan, 2013 Catherine Mullooly, 2014 Carlton Aranui

Junior: 2005 Lachie Baynes, 2006 Tuara Hemara, 2007 Matt Hawkins, 2008 Tyson Hema, 2009 Hine Biddle, 2010 Matt Spence, 2011 Catherine Mullooly, 2012 Liam Quinlivan, 2013 Marley Waihape, 2014 Hemi Lambert

Woolhandling:

Open: 2005 Keryn Herbert, 2006 Hayley Holm, 2007 Ronnie Goss, 2008 Leanne Gray, 2009 Joel Henare, 2010 Keryn Herbert, 2011 Keryn Herbert, 2012 Joel Henare, 2013 Joel Henare, 2014 Joel Henare

Senior: 2005 Karina Munro, 2006 Talia Holm, 2007 Erimiha (Boy) Neho, 2008 Rochee Collier, 2009 Amy Lee Ruki, 2010 Kyle Wihongi, 2011 Maryanne Baty, 2012 Annette Maki, 2013 Foonie Waihape, 2014 Ana Braddick

Junior: 2005 Maree Munro, 2006 Amber Collier, 2007 Molly Kidd, 2008 Ngaio Braddick, 2009 Cushla Gordon, 2010 Kiley Laris, 2011 Tyneil Smith, 2012 David Gordon, Vivian Taitapanui, 2014 Teresa Lambert

Will anyone tip-over Coster at Rangiora? - October 20, 2015

The undisputed king of shearing in Canterbury will be gunning for a fifth consecutive Northern A and P Show title at Rangiora on Saturday, and welcomes the any competition going.

"I'll be there," said multiple Canterbury All-Breeds winner and four-times PGG Wrightson McKskimming Memorial Triple Crown National winner Tony Coster said, a few days after being beaten by Invercargill shearer Troy Pyper at the Ellesmere show at Leeston.

"There are few more chasing the All-Breeds this year, so that's all good," he said. Pyper hadn't been too sure whether he'd make the trip this weekend, although he would be at Ashburton the following weekend.

But when told transtasman series New Zealand teammate Coster had won four in a row at Rangiora, Pyper said: "Hmmm, has he now?"

"Tell him to come up," said Coster, "so I can kick his arse."

Coster and fellow Rakaia shearer Grant Smith have made the Northern Shears their own for most of the time over recent years, and over the last decade only Irish shearer Ivan Scott in 2008 and Eli Cummings the following year made it any different.

Winners at the Northern A and P Show, Rangiora, since 2005:

Open: 2005 Grant Smith, 2006 Tony Coster, 2007 Grant Smith, 2008 Ivan Scott, 2009 Eli Cummins 2010 Grant Smith, 2011 Tony Coster, 2012 Tony Coster, 2013 Tony Coster, 2014 Tony Coster

Senior: 2005 Andrew Booth, 2006 Bruce Corby, 2007 Ant Frew, 2008 Aaron Haynes, 2009 Ant Frew, 2010 Kaleb Godsiff, 2011 Brook Todd, 2012 Floyd Neil, 2013 Ethan Pankhurst, 2014 Ethan Pankhurst

Intermediate: 2005 Chris Kyle, 2006 Ant Frew, 2007 Mason Adams, 2008 Jason Edwards, 2009 Danny Newall, 2010 Tim Mahoney, 2011 Phoenix Hawkins, 2012 Ethan Pankhurst, 2013 Corey Smith, 2014 Hugh De Lacy

Junior: 2005 Ricky Burton, 2010 Shun Oishi, 2011 Patrick McCarthy, 2012 Corey Smith, 2013 Hugh De Lacy, 2014 Kelly MacDonald

Blades: 2005 Brian Thomson, 2006 Peter Race, 2007 Shane Casserly, 2008 Brian Thomson, 2009 Brian Thomson, 2010 Allen Gemmell, 2011 Mike McConnell, 2012 Chris Russell, 2013 Mike McConnell

Pyper masters the Masters at Ellesmere - October 19, 2015

Invercargill shearer Troy Pyper has had his second Open-class win by beating two fellow New Zealand representatives in one of the best-quality Ellesmere A and P Show Open finals in several years at Leeston on Saturday(October 17).

Pyper, who made his debut appearance for New Zealand in a transtasman test in Australia last month, had a comfortable win over more experienced Master shearers Grant Smith and Tony Coster, both of Rakaia. Smith, a former national representative, was beaten by 2.41pts, with Coster, also a current representative, was more than 4pts further away.

Fourth in the final of 9 sheep each was Eketahuna shearer Hemi Braddick, who was shearing in an Open final for the first time.

Pyper, who reached the Golden Shears Open final for the first time last March and scored his first win soon afterwards, at Mayfield, was 5pts clear of the next best in the heats, and had a half-minute advantage over next-man-off Coster in the final, shearing the 9 sheep in 11min 46sec.

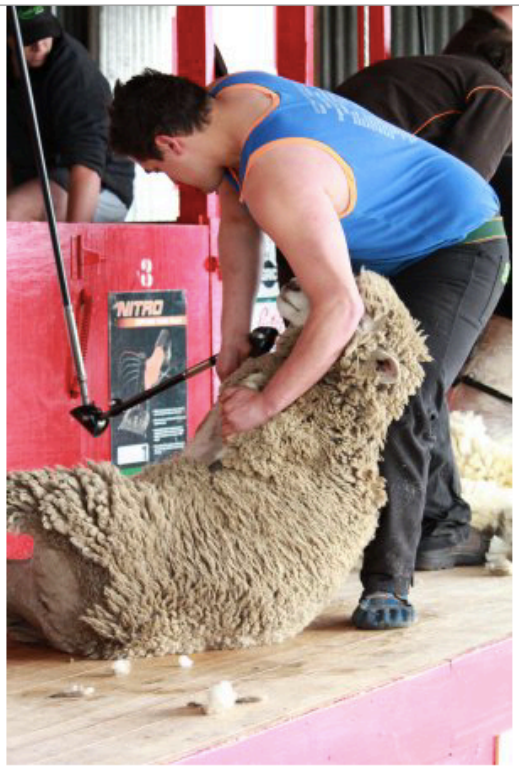
North Canterbury shearer Hugh De Lacy had his second senior win in a week, while Lionel Taumata, of Gore, completed a similar double in the Intermediate final, beating runner-up and Lincoln student Tegwyn Bradley, from Woodville, by 1.35pts.

The Junior final was a near cleansweep for Lincoln students heading off to make some money in the

Ellesmere winner Troy Pyper and contractor and commentator Barry Pullin

summer, and was won by Josh Harding, from Hunterville, with fellow students Mitchel Hoare, from Te Kuiti, and Ben Galloway, from Dannevirke, third and fourth.

It was a busy day for Open shearer Eru Weeds, who won the Show speedshear and then headed for Chriustchurch Airport to fly to Australia for another speedshear.



Intermediate winner Lionel Taumata

Kirkpatrick back in charge at Gizzy Show - October 11, 2015

Multiple shearing champion John Kirkpatrick has bounced back to winning form after a year off with injury.

The 45-year-old Napier gun returned to original home Gisborne territory to win a four-man, 15-sheep Open final at the Poverty Bay Show in Gisborne on Saturday(October 17).

Injured on a UK tour in mid-2014 and having had a shoulder operation last November, his victory today was his first since returning to competition for shearing legend David Fagan's New Zealand swansong at the national championships in Te Kuiti in April.

With Golden Shears champion Gavin Mutch winning the race, shearing the 15 full-wooled sheep in 13min 50sec, four-times Golden Shears champion Kirkpatrick needed the best pen judging points to take the win. He won by 1.7pts from runner-up and Gisborne shearer Tama Nia Nia, while Wangamomona farmer and Scottish shearer Gavin Mutch had to settle for third place after all points were counted.

Kirkpatrick said he was pleased to be back in winning form, after shearing scomfortablky but without reaching the finals at the New Zealand Merino Championships in Alexandra and the New Zealand Spring Shears at Waimate over the previous two weekends.

He will shear again in the Great Raihania Shears at the Royal New Zealand Show in Hastings on Friday. South Island-based Joel Henare returned home to win his fourth Poverty Bay Show Open woolhandling final in a row, with Maryanne Baty, also from Gisborne, claiming second place.

John Kirkpatrick returns to winning form in the Open final.

Catherine Mullooly on her way to her first Senior victory.

Matawai farmer's daughter Catherine Mullooly claimed another milestone when she won the Senior shearing final, beating three male shearers.

Having had her first win at the Poverty Bay show, in the 2011 Junior final, she missed the event last year because she was working in Australia, and flew home just last week.

It was the first win by a woman in a Senior shearing final in New Zealand since Te Atakura Crawford, also from the East Coast, won the New Zealand Merino final in Alexandra two years ago.

Emaraina Braddick in action in the Open woolhandling final, in which she was fourth.

It was also the first win in New Zealand for the now globetrotting 25-year-old Mullooly since the 2013-2014 season when she won seven Intermediate finals and became the first woman to claim a No 1 spot in Shearing Sports New Zealand's annual rankings.

Mullooly reached two senior finals last season, and was one of only two women among more than 80 shearers who reached Senior finals throughout the country.

She had a particularly big moment in July 2014 when she won an historic women's event at the Great Yorkshire Show in England.

Raupunga shearers Carlton Aranui and Hatden Thornton won the Intermediate and Junior shearing finals respectively, while Marika Braddick, of Eketahuna, celebrated her Senior woolhandling debut with victory, and Nye Kerekere, of Gisborne beat former Golden Shears novice woolhandling winner Tameka Hema in the Junior final.

Waimate Shears NZ Spring Shrearing Champs - October 11, 2015

Another win for NZ bladeshears team

New Zealand has extended its unbeaten record in blade shearing tests against Australia with victory in the latest match on Saturday (October 10) at the Waimate Shears in South Canterbury.

The New Zealand team of Brian Thomson, of Christchurch, and Tony Dobbs, of Fairlie, beat Australians John Dalla, of Warooka, S.A., and Ken French, of Glenisla, Vic., comfortably for the fourth time in a year, while Thomson has been a part of all eight victories dating back to a test in Australia in 2010.

With the history, and considerably more opportunity in New Zealand, the Kiwi pairing was always going to be warm-favourite to win the test which was shorn over four long, strongwool sheep each.

It was a feature of the 48th shears, in which more than 100 shearers and woolhandlers took part in the New Zealand Spring Championships.

Dodds also successfully defended the Open bladeshearing title, with Thomson second and Dalla third, a repeat of last year's top three placings. A feature was the return of 2010 World Championships representative Allen Gemmell, among a good field of 14. He was fourth in the final.

The glamour Open machine shearing final was won for a seventh time by Invercargill shearer Nathan Stratford. Hawke's Bay shearer Cam Ferguson is out of action with a broken leg and was unable to defend the title he won for a third time last year.

He won by almost four points from runner-up Angus Moore, of Kaitangata, and Napier shearer John Kirkpatrick, who was third.

King Country's Keryn Herbert won the Open woolhandling title for a third time in four years, with defending champion Joel Henare, from Gisborne, having to settle for second place.

North Canterbury shearer Hugh De Lacy, who won nine Intermediate finals last season, stepped-up to win Saturday's Senior shearing title, with Intermediate honours going to Lionel Taumata, of Gore, and the Junior final being won by Sam Thomson, of Waipara.

The Senior woolhandling final was won by Peketai Puna, of Napier, and the Junior final by Sharni Newton, of Gore.

The Waimate Shears was the second of 60 shows on the Shearing Sports New Zealand calendar this season. The first North Island competition of the season will be at the Poverty Bay A and P Show in

Gisborne, while competition continues with competition in the South Island continuing at the 145th Ellesmere A and P Show at Leeston.

Aussie Boyle wins sixth New Zealand merino shearing title - October 05, 2015

New Zealand shearers have again been unable to break Australian gun Damien Boyle's stranglehold on New Zealand only merino shearing title.

Boyle, 37, from Western Australia, on Saturday (October 3) won the New Zealand Merino Championship's Open final in Alexandra for a sixth time in a row.

Top qualifier from the heats, quarter-finals and semi-finals, he won by just over two points from runner-up and Invercargill shearer Nathan Stratford, the expected toughest opposition whose 2009 win was the last by a New Zealander in the event. Rakaia pair Grant Smith and Tony Coster were third and fourth respectively.

Boyle had signalled his form going into his title defence when he won the Royal Perth Show Open title for a 19th time.

Stratford got off to a good start in the heats, which doubled as the first round of the PGG Wrightson National. He claimed the maximum 12pts, with Troy Pyper, also of Invercargill claiming 11pts.

The other big winner on the night was woolhandler Pagan Rimene who followed in the footsteps of both mother Tina Rimene and father Dion Morrell in also becoming an Open champion in Alexandra.

Senior shearing winner Corey Smith

Rimene, who last season won major titles on corriedale wool, and crossbred full wool and lambs, beat New Zealand representative and defending Alexandra champion and final top-qualifier Joel Henare in the Open woolhandling final.

All four finalists wore black armbands in honour of former multiple winner Joanne Kumeroa, who died last April.

Rimene's mother last won the title six years ago and competed again this year, while Morrell was sixth in the Open shearing final, which he had won three times.

Both father and daughter were also in a New Zealand Merino Shears shearing and woolhandling team which beat a Royal Perth Show team.

The senior shearing title was won by Corey Smith, of Rakaia, a deserved result after reaching 10 finals without victory last season.

Alpha Wade, of Cromwell, won the Senior woolhandling final, her best result since winning the New Zealand Spring Shears Junior final in Waimate in 2010, and the Junior woolhandling title went to Beks Osborne, from Hamilton. She became the first winner of the Joanne Kumeroa Memorial Trophy.

A big moment at the championships, which were first held in 1962, was the awarding of New Zealand Merino Championships Society life membership to Alexandra contractors and event stalwarts Peter and Elsie Lyon. The chairman, Don Moffat, doubted whether the event

Senior woolhandling champion Alpha Wade

could have survived without the input of the couple and their business over the years.

The second event of the season is the New Zealand Spring Shears, being held on Saturday in the Waimate Stadium for the last time, ahead of a shift to a new venue in the town next year.

A Speedshear, including a speedthrow, will be held on Friday night.

Open shearing champion Damien Boyle and Open woolhandling champion Pagan Rimene

Junior woolhandling winner Beks Osborne first winner of Joanne Kumeroa Memorial Trophy