

Hawke's Bay trio count-down to shearing record - January 29, 2013

Former World Champion and World record-breaking shearer Cam Ferguson is confident he'll get his name back into the record books on Thursday (January 31) when he and two workmates tackle a woolshed tally record which has gone unchallenged for 14 years.

Waipawa shearer Ferguson will team with Dannevirke guns Adam Brausch and Ringakaha Paewai in pursuit of the World three-stand, eight-hours lambshearing record, targeting a tally of 1784 shorn by King Country shearers Digger Balme, Roger Neil and Dean Ball in 1999.

Ferguson, who won the World title in Wales in 2010 and six months later set a solo record of 742 lambs in eight hours, which stood for a year, believes Brausch and Paewai are also capable of 700 each in a day in the record attempt which will take place at Moa Stone Farm, east of Ormondville.

The three shared duties crutching the lambs at the weekend, although Brausch took a break on Saturday to compete at the Taihape A and P Show, where he reached the Open final and finished third.

With ideal conditions forecast for the week, more than 2500 of farmer Dave Chadwick's lambs have been culled, the first to be shorn before a panel of World Sheep Shearing Records Society judges on Wednesday afternoon, when they must average at least 0.9kg of wool per lamb.

The record the following day, overseen by a panel of at least five headed by Australian judge Peter Artridge, is expected to start at 7am and end at 5pm, with four two-hour runs, two-half-hour 'smoko' breaks, and an hour off for lunch.

In the 1999 record, near Bennydale, in King Country, the pace was set by Balme who finished with 621, while Neil shored 600 and Ball 563. Balme opened the day with 154 in each of the runs before lunch and upped the pace in the afternoon for separate run tallies of 157 and 156. Thursday's challenge will be the first record attempt in Southern Hawke's Bay since an eight-stand tally of 3316 in nine hours was shorn at Mangaorapa, near Porangahau, in December 1970.

Fees of almost \$4000 have been paid to the records society, and a team of about 40 helpers is expected. Principal sponsors are Cavalier Wool Scours, and other sponsors and supporters are Tectra, Farmlands Co-op, Elders Primary Wool, FMG, Waipukurau Hotel, the Commercial Hotel, in Waipawa, Porangahau's Duke of Edinburgh Hotel, and Merrylees Hotel in Dannevirke, the gang's current employer, Darrin Paewai, and fellow contractors Paewai Mullins, of Dannevirke, and Shear Expertise, of Masterton.

It will be the first of three shearing record attempts within three weeks. On February 5 Golden Shears champion John Kirkpatrick, Leon Samuels, Eru Weeds and James Mack will target a four-stand record in Southland, and on February 12 at Te Hape, near Bennydale, King Country shear Stacey Te Huia will tackle the ultimate tally, the nine-hour ewes record of 721 shorn by Hawke's Bay shearer Rodney Sutton in 2007.

Honeymoon's over, Smith wins test and weekend double - January 27, 2013

Hastings shearer Rowland Smith was the man of the moment as he won two weekend championships and stood-in at the last minute for unavailable Southland shearer Nathan Stratford as New Zealand beat Wales in the first test of the three-test Elders Primary Wool Shearing Series.

Recently married to fellow record-breaking former shearer Ingrid Baynes, 2011 New Zealand Open champion and national team member Smith won the Horowhenua A and P Open title last week after returning from his honeymoon in Hawaii, and made it three in a row by winning Saturdays Taihapa show Open final, and today's Agrodome Shears title at the Rotorua A and P Show at Ngongotaha.



Rowland Smith, from Northland but now based in Hastings, shears New Zealand victory over Wales in Rotorua today. At right is Welsh shearer Richard Jones. Smith was a late stand-in for Kiwi selection Nathan Stratford, of Invercagill.

It was at the Rotorua show that he and reigning Golden Shears and New Zealand champion John Kirkpatrick made-up an all-Hawke's Bay team which beat touring Welsh shearers Gareth Lloyd Evans and Richard Jones, from the Denbighshire town of Bylchau and Corwen respectively. Smith was first to finish the 12 sheep, taking 10min 38.8sec, almost 20 seconds quicker than his teammate, with the first of the Welsh, taking 11min 55.1sec, enabling the Kiwis to win by more than 13pts.

Smith's brother, Matthew, was runner-up in the Open final at Rotorua, and brother-in-law Lachie Baynes, of Wairoa, beat Te Kuiti's Jack Fagan in the Senior finalsd at both Taihape and Rotorua, also making it three wins in a week after re-entering the competition scene with a win ast the Wairoa A and P Show.

A feature of the Rotorua show was the appearance of two Hastings-based French shearers in lower-grade finals, with Loic Leygonie fourth in the Intermediate class, won by David Gordon, of Masterton, and in the Junior final Thibaut Negre fifth behind winner Marshall Guy, of Kaeo.

Gordon, having also won at Taihape on Saturday, has won nine finals in a row, since opening the season with a fourth placing in the opening North Island show of the season at Gisborne in October.

Te Awamutu woolhandler Keryn Herbert also made it three-in-a-row, wigth wins at both Taihape and Rotorua, after winning the national crossbred lambs woolhandling title in Southland the previous weekend. Sunday's win had some special significance - winning a trophy she had provided for the event. Her 2010 World champion teammate, Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, was runner-up in Saturday's event, and there was promisig return to competition at Rotorua for Ailsa Fleming, of Te Karaka, finishing runner-up in her first event for eight years.

SOUTH ISLAND

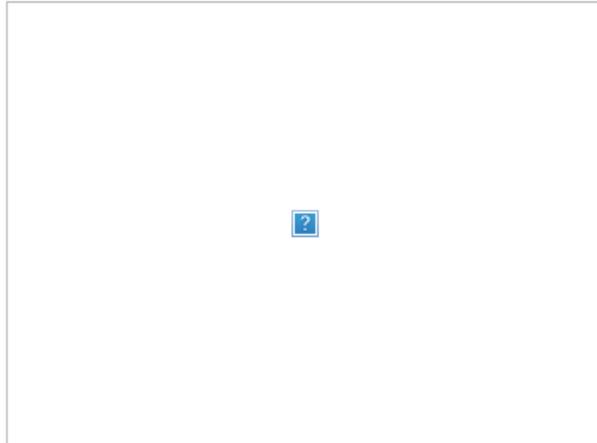
Seasoned traveller Hamish Bramley, originally from Kaeo in Northland but now operating a gang in Australia, scored his second win in a week in an old stamping-ground around the top of the south with an Open shearing final win at the Tapawera Sports on Saturday, a week after winning at the Golden Bay A and P Show at Takaka the previous weekend. The Junior final was a triumph for Golden Bay casual farm worker and woolhandler Estai Causer. Also embarking on a judging career, she helped make up the numbers but ended up winning by more than 20pts.

Shear guns ready for Welsh in Elders Primary Wool series - January 22, 2013

New Zealand shearers John Kirkpatrick and Nathan Stratford have hit top form at the right time to defend the honour of the black singlet in the three-test Elders Primary Wool Shearing Series against Wales, starting at the Rotorua A and P Show on Sunday.

Facing tests also in Balclutha on February 9 and Pahiatua on February 24, Kirkpatrick, from Napier, and Stratford, from Invercargill, keen for victory after a 2-2 series result in Wales last July, last weekend filled the first two places in both the national fullwool crossbred championships and national crossbred lambshearing championships in Southland, claiming a win apiece.

Meanwhile the Welsh team of Denbighshire shearers Gareth Lloyd Evans and Richard Jones was beaten by a Shearing Sports New Zealand Invitation team in the tour opener on lambs at the Tauranga A and P Show.



Elders Primary Wool national wool manager Simon Averill (left) and Shearing Sports New Zealand chairman Gavin Rowland, announcing the Elders Primary Wool Shearing Series of three tests between New Zealand and Wales. The tests are at the Rotorua A and P Show on January 27, the Otago championships in Balclutha on February 9, and the Pahiatua Shears on February 24.

The tests will all be shorn on ewes, on a tour in which two further matches against invitation teams will be shorn at Reefton on February 2 and the Southern Shears in Gore on February 16.

Evans and Jones are also expected to contest Open competitions at each venue, as they did in the Tauranga Shears last Saturday. Evans, 31, is the more experienced of the pair, having won the Champion Shearer of Wales final at the Royal Welsh Show three times and now in his seventh season in New Zealand, where he has not featured in any major finals, but where he does have a best woolshed tally of 630 lambs in nine hours.

Shearing Sports New Zealand chairman Gavin Rowland, of Christchurch, and Elders Primary Wool national wool manager Simon Averill, both said they were particularly proud of the long association between the organisation and the sponsor.

"It is this sort of strong support which allows New Zealand teams to compete and maintain a reputation of having the top shearers in the World, at the same time as fostering shearing and promoting the wool industry around the World."

Mr Averill said: "We believe it is important to support the service providers of our wool industry. The quality of the shearers and woolhandlers in our industry is renowned for producing high quality wool products and it is integral to the wool industries' future success and our success that we continue to support woolhandling standards and shearing skill development."

"Elders Primary Wool appreciate the continued support we also receive from all the hard-working people involved in producing wool, and are deeply committed to working towards improving returns to growers," he said.

"We know the enormous effort and training that goes into getting to competition level in shearing sports and watch in awe as records



John Kirkpatrick, of Napier, four-times Golden Shears Open champion and member of New Zealand team for Elders Primary Wool Shearing Series tests against Wales at the Rotorua A and P Show on January 27, the Otago championships in Balclutha on February 9 and the Pahiatua Shears on February 24.



Nathan Stratford, of Invercargill, member of New Zealand team for Elders Primary Wool Shearing Series tests against Wales at the Rotorua A and P Show on January 27, the Otago championships in Balclutha on February 9 and the Pahiatua Shears on February 24.

get smashed," he said. "Every year we see competitive standards rise and recognition increase as shearing sports grows in popularity and carves a spot in sporting history both locally and internationally."

Highlighting the effort and commitment will be four-times Golden Shears Open champion Kirkpatrick's entry into the records race between the first two tests, joining three others for a four-stand lambshearing record near Mossburn in Northern Southland on February 5.

Elders Primary Wool Shearing Series

January 27: New Zealand v Wales (first test), Agrodome Shears, Rotorua A and P Show, Ngongotaha

February 9: New Zealand v Wales (second test), Otago Shearing and Woolhandling Championships, at Balclutha.

February 24: New Zealand v Wales (third test), at Pahiatua Shears, Pahiatua.

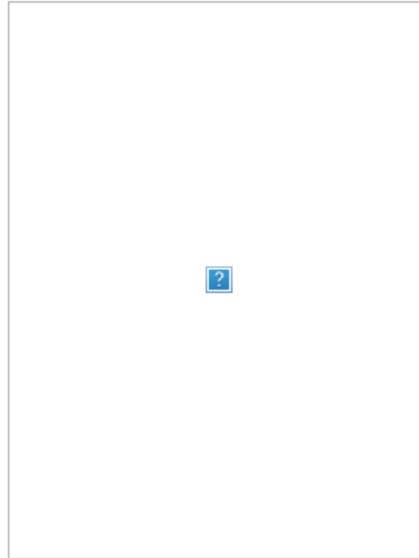
New Zealand

John Kirkpatrick, 42, of Napier, Hawke's Bay
While yet to win the World Championships individual title, John Kirkpatrick is one of the most successful competition shearers ever. Has won more than 200 titles in 19 seasons of Open-class shearing, including four Golden Shears Opens at Masterton, and three New Zealand Open at Te Kuiti, and this season has won the Australian Crossbred and New Zealand Crossbred Lambshearing titles.

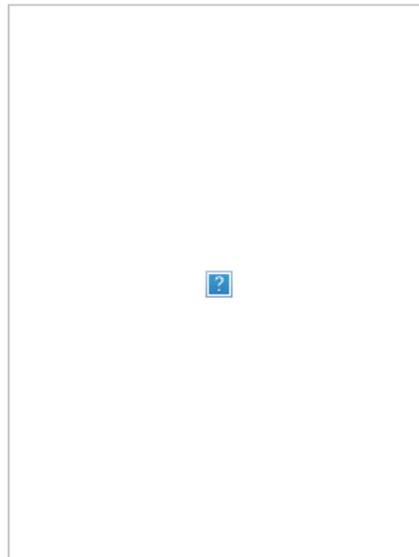
Nathan Stratford, 38, of Invercargill, Southland
In 2012 Nathan Stratford became the first South Island shearer to represent New Zealand on a UK tour in 11 years, although as one of New Zealand's top finewool shearers he has represented his country in the annual home-and-away Trans Tasman tests. He was selected in this team as winner of the New Zealand Circuit final in Te Kuiti last April. Won the Corwen Open final in Wales in July and on January 18 won the NZ fullwool ewes title at Lumsden.

The manager is Willie Buick, of Masterton.

Wales



Gareth Evans, of Bylchau, Denbighshire, three-times Champion Shearer of Wales and member of Wales team for Elders Primary Wool Shearing Series against New Zealand.



Richard Jones, of Corwen, Denbighshire, Welsh circuit champion and member of Wales team for Elders Primary Wool Shearing Series against New Zealand

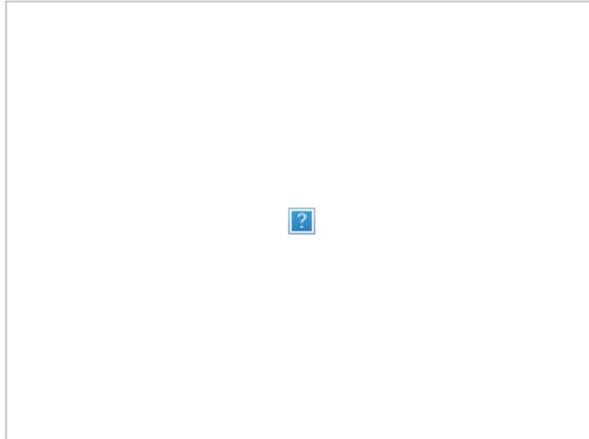
Gareth Lloyd Evans, 31, of Bylchau, Denbighshire, North-East Wales

Evans is one of Wales' more experienced shearers, with 10 years in Open-class competition including three wins in the Champion Shearer of Wales final at Royal Welsh Show, this year winning him selection in the team for the last two tests in Wales last July and this year's New Zealand tour. It's his second tour, but he has had seven seasons in New Zealand with best nine-hour tallies of 630 on lambs and 520 on ewes, but has not had any major placings in New Zealand competitions.

Richard Jones, 24, of Corwen, Denbighshire, North-East Wales

While having won just a small number of competitions, represented Wales at the World Championships at the Golden Shears in Masterton last March, and with No 1 Welsh shearer Gareth Daniels claimed third place in the teams event. Won his place in the team as Welsh Circuit Champion, while best wins in Welsh finals in were Three Counties last year, and Lampeter Shears in 2011. Has a best tally of 510 on lambs.

The manager is John T.L. Davies, of Sennybridge, Powys, Mid-Wales.



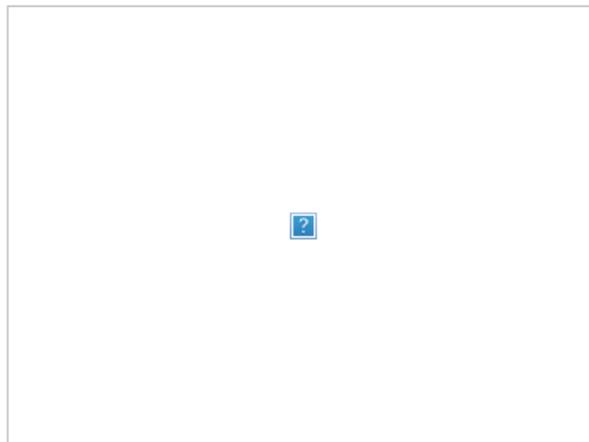
Wales shearing team manager John T.L. Davies

Welsh beaten in test-series warm-up - January 21, 2013

Welsh tourists Gareth Lloyd Evans and Richard Jones made a promising start to their six-show New Zealand visit although beaten by New Zealand Invitation team members Mark Grainger and Doug Smith in Tauranga on Saturday.

There was just 4.76pts in a contest of 10 lambs each, after three-times Champion Shearer of Wales Evans beat Te Kuiti shearer Grainger by 2.5 seconds in the race to be first off the board, Evans taking 9min 21.7sec in front of a good crowd at Gate Pa Racecourse.

Smith and Jones battled away more than a minute behind, Jones claiming the best points on the board but Hastings-based Smith took overall individual honours with easily the best from the judges in the



Teams after the first match of the Welsh tour from left Acto representative Richard Waddell, invitation team members Doug Smith and Mark Grainger, a Farmlands representative, and Welsh team members Richard Jones and Gareth Lloyd Evans and manager John T L Davies.

Hero of the South: Nathan Stratford - January 20, 2013

Invercargill shearer Nathan Stratford ended four years of northern domination of Southland's major shearing events by winning Friday's national fullwool crossbred Open title at Castlerock Station, Lumsden.

But the fortunes were reversed the next day when runner-up, Napier gun and regular Southland competitions winner John Kirkpatrick beat "Stratty" by two lambs and a final total of almost six points in the national crossbred lambshearing championship final at the Winton A and P Show.

With Kirkpatrick having won both events for three years consecutively in 2009, 2010 and 2011, matched last year by fellow Hawke's Bay shearer Dion King, Stratford's win on Friday was the first by a South Island shearer in either event since his own win in the lambshearing final in 2008.

It was a year longer since the last southern win in the Open final at Lumsden, Tuatapere shearer Alton Devery's victory in 2007.

It was an important win for Stratford who next weekend shears with Golden Shears and New Zealand Open champion Kirkpatrick for New Zealand at the Rotorua A and P Show, in the first of three tests against Wales.

Stratford claimed a place in the team when he won the New Zealand Circuit final in Te Kuiti last season, and then shared in a 2-2 series draw against Wales in the UK, where he won the Corwen Open final in the last event of the tour.

Winton contractor Darrin Forde, now living in Lornville, Invercargill, was the fastest in both weekend finals, showing he still has the pace after more than 20 years in Open-class shearing, but when all points were counted had to settle with two third placings in the six-man showdowns.

He finished the 20 sheep of the fullwooled ewes final in 18min 6.7sec, more than 13 seconds ahead of second-man-off Kirkpatrick, and on Saturday took 16min 51sec, nine seconds clear of Kirkpatrick, in Southland for a February 5 record with fellow North Island shearer James Mack and Southlanders Eru Weeds and Leon Samuels.

Claiming the better quality points, Kirkpatrick's scored his first first win in nine finals this season.

Dipton shearer Cory Palmer relied on quality to overcome the speed of Maitua gun Brett Roberts to win both Senior finals.

Rakaia cousins Alex and Corey Smith scored an Intermediate and Junior grades double for the family at Lumsden. Alex was fourth at Winton behind winner Phoenix Hawkins, also of Rakai, while Corey's Winton final finished with a third placing behind winner Brendan Humphries, of Maitua.

The shows also featured the first woolhandling events on the Shearing Sports New Zealand calendar since November, both seeing the defeat of World champion Joel Henare, who had won four finals earlier in the season.

Tia Potae, of Milton, won the fullwool title at Lumsden, with Tina Rimene, of Masterton, second and Henare having to settle for fourth, while in the lambs final on Saturday he was runner-up to Keryn Herbert, of Te Awamutu, reversing the placings of last year's Winton final.

The senior woolhandling final at Lumsden went to Jenna Holland, of Tuatapere, by four points from 2011-2012 Anne Maree Kahukura, last season's top Junior, while Juliette Lyon won the Senior title at Winton.

Emma Kate Rabbidge, of Wyndham, and Gore woolhandlers Sharon Tuhakaraina and Valerie Weatherburn made the finals at both events, Rabbidge taking the fullwool title and finishing runner-up to Tuhakaraina in the lambswool contest 24 hours later.

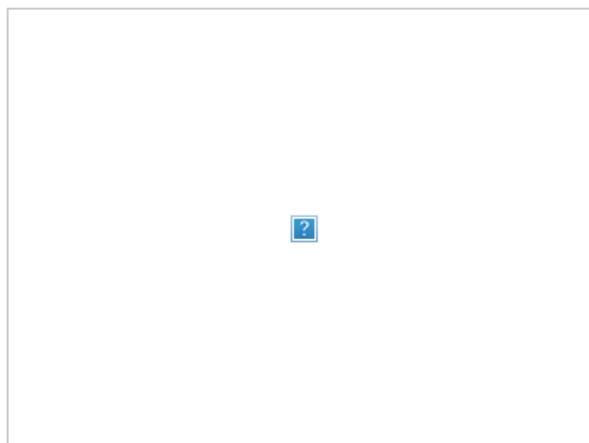
The Lumsden championships attracted 66 shearers and 35 woolhandlers, while the entry at Winton comprised 56 shearers and 42 woolhandlers.

A balmy day's shearing at Tauranga show - January 20, 2013

Organisers of the shearing championships at the Tauranga A and P Show on Saturday had always planned to make a presentation in recognition of a quarter century of support by Te Kuiti shearer Digger Balme.

But despite the fact he was the defending champion and shearing in the final for a third year in a row, they never thought the presentation would include the winning cheque.

That's the way it was, however, after Balme's win in the show's 15-lamb Open final over his driver for the day and longtime nemesis, Te Kuiti shearing legend David Fagan, who won his 17th New Zealand lambshearing title in Raglan a fortnight ago.



Digger Balme pips David Fagan by a few seconds at Tauranga, and retains the Open title.

It was a rare moment for 48-year-old Balme to pip 51-year-old Fagan on both time and quality as the pair beat younger hopefuls Mark Grainger, of Te Kuiti, and Hastings-based Northlander Doug Smith, the Invitation team members who a short while earlier beat Welshmen Gareth Lloyd Evans and Richard Jones in the show's feature international teams event.

Balme, who first shored the Tauranga final in 1987, shored Saturday's 15 lambs in 12min 16.1sec, beating Fagan by three seconds.

But he also had the better board judging and pen quality points, ultimately winning by 1.7pts to claim a winning cheque of \$700, in addition to the bottle of wine presented by Shearing Sports New Zealand life member and competition organiser Hugh McCarroll, of Tauranga.

The lower grade finals provided a cleansweep for the Guy family, from Kaeo, in Northland.

Bryce Guy won the Senior Final, Charlie Guy the Intermediate final, and Marshall Guy the Junior final, while oldest brother Bevan had to withdraw from the Open event with an injured shoulder, after qualifying for the semi-finals.

It was one of two shearing competitions in the North Island on Saturday, with 2010 Golden Shears and World champion Cam Ferguson, of Waipawa, scoring an important win at the Wairoa A and P Show, where the runner-up was Doug Smith's brother, Matthew.

A day later third brother Rowland Smith, recently married to fellow World record breaker Ingrid Baynes, had his first victory of the New Zealand season when he won the Open final at the Horowhenua Show in Levin.

Ferguson was second, and third went to Dannevirke shearer Adam Brausch, fresh from a win in the Open Plate at Tauranga. The pair and fellow Southern Hawke's Bay shearer Ringa Paewai are set to make the first record bid of the season on January 31, targeting a three-stand lambs tally of 1784 in eight hours shorn by King Country shearers Balme, Roger Neil and Dean Ball in 1999.

A feature of the Wairoa show was a Welsh trifecta in the junior final, won by Dion Hughes, while Masterton shearer David Gordon maintained a march through the Intermediate ranks by winning both the Wairoa and Horowhenua titles in his class, taking him to seven wins in his last seven finals.

Another feature of the Wairoa show was the entry of 72 shearers, the best of any of the weekend's six competitions throughout the country, and notable for numbers in the lower classes, including 11 novices.

Southerners out to win back top shearing titles - January 17, 2013

Tough times in the shearing industry could play into the hands of southern shearing guns who will this weekend be out to wrest back two of their top titles after four years of bowing to the might of the north.

The two titles are the Northern Southland Community Shears national full-wool crossbred ewe-shearing championship, to be shorn at Lumsden on Friday, and Saturday's national crossbred lambs title at the Winton A and P Show. Woolhandling titles are also at stake at both shows.

No South Island shearer has won either of the two major shearings titles since 2008, when Invercargill shearer and current New Zealand representative Nathan Stratford won the lambshearing title at its former venue, the Southland A and P Show in Invercargill. Tuatapere shearer Alton Devery was the last South Islander to win the Lumsden event, in 2007.

The events have since been mainly by Napier shearer, a likely starter while shearing in the region preparing for a World Record event next month.

He won both events in three successive years, but had to settle for the minor money last year, and has failed to win an event in New Zealand this summer, despite a string of top placings which see him leading Shearing Sports New Zealand's Open-class rankings.

The events last year drew top fields as parts of a World Championships New Zealand team qualifying series, but without that attraction and with six competitions throughout the country over three days most North Island shearers are expected to stick to competitions closer to home.

Te Kuiti legend David Fagan confirmed today he will be heading to the Tauranga Shears, and therefore won't be seeking to add the crossbred lambs title to the National Lambshearing Championship title he regained in Raglan a fortnight ago.

Significant numbers of New Zealand shearers are also now based in Australia, including leading Jason Win, from the West Coast and who won the New Zealand Corriedale title in Christchurch two months ago.

The south's leading hopes this weekend are expected to be veteran Darrin Forde, Nathan Stratford and first year Open shearer Shaun Matheson.

A big attraction in Southland, however, is two national woolhandling titles, the first woolhandling competitions in the country since November.

Other shearing competitions over the weekend are at Wairoa and Takaka on Saturday, and Levin on Sunday.

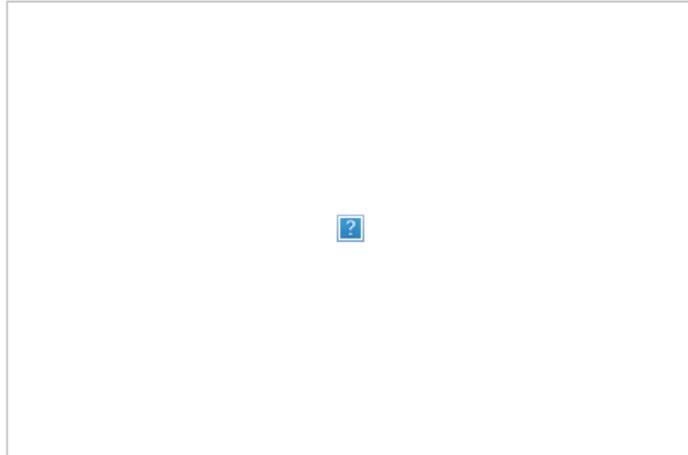
There is also a range of hotel Speedshear events, the first at Otautau tonight (Thursday), and others at Winton tomorrow night, and Te Puna, near Tauranga, on Saturday, while community Speedshear events are being held at the Wairoa A and P Show on Friday evening, and at Ohingaiti in the Central North Island on Monday.

Welshmen Evan and Jones head for big shear Kiwi challenge - January 14, 2013

The Welsh shearing team will begin its preparation for a bid to win to become the first Northern Hemisphere team to beat New Zealand in a shearing test series in New Zealand when it opens a six-show tour at Tauranga on Saturday.

The team of Welsh champion Gareth Lloyd Evans and Richard Jones beat Kiwis John Kirkpatrick and Nathan Stratford in the most recent test between the two countries in Corwen, Wales, to tie a four-test series 2-2 last July.

The opening hit-out downunder this week will be against an Invitation Team comprising Mark Grainger, of Te Kuiti, and Hastings-based Northland shearer Doug Smith, preceding the first test against Napier shearer Kirkpatrick and Stratford, of Invercargill, during the Agrodome Shears at the Rotorua A and P Show at Ngongotaha on January 27.



The teams for the upcoming shearing tests between New Zealand and Wales, pictured after a Welsh victory at Corwen, Wales, last July. From left New Zealanders Nathan Stratford, of Invercargill, John Kirkpatrick, of Napier, and manager Willie Buick, of Masterton, and Welsh manager John T.L.Davies, of Brecon, and shearers Garth Lloyd Evans, of Denbigh, and Richard Jones, of Corwen. Evans and Jones open their tour against an Invitation Team at the Tauranga Shears on Saturday (Jan 19).

Grainger and Smith were invited after finishing fourth and fifth respectively in the New Zealand Lambshearing Championships final won by Te Kuiti icon David Fagan in Raglan on January 5.

The events on Saturday, including the Tauranga Open, Senior, Intermediate and Junior events, will also be shorn on lambs. Grainger is the son of 1985 Golden Shears Open champion Paul Grainger, while Smith is a brother of 2011 New Zealand Open champion and national team member Rowland Smith, with whom he holds a World tally record of 1066 ewes in eight hours.

Evans, from Denbigh, and Jones, from Corwen, were selected at the Royal Welsh Show after Evans won the Champion Shearer of Wales final, and immediately lost their first test together.

But the fortunes against reigning Golden Shears and New Zealand Open champion Kirkpatrick and Invercargill shearer and New Zealand Circuit champion Stratford were reversed just two days later in a dramatic climax to the Welsh season at the Corwen Shears.

The Shearing Sports New Zealand season of 62 competitions throughout the country steps-up dramatically this week, with six events in three days..

The Northern Southland Community Shears will be on Friday, with separate shearing and woolhandling competitions at two woolsheds near Lumsden, and vying with Tauranga for the limelight on Saturday will be the Wairoa A and P Show Shears in Northern Hawke's Bay, the Golden Bay show at Takaka, and the New Zealand Crossbred Lambshearing and Woolhandling Championships and at the Winton A and P Show in Southland. The Horowhenua A and P Show Shears will be held in Levin on Sunday.

The itinerary for the Wales tour of New Zealand is: Jan 19 v Invitation Team, at Tauranga; Jan 27 v New Zealand (first test), at Rotorua; Feb 2, v Invitation Team, at Reefton; Feb 9, v New Zealand (second test), at Balclutha; Feb 16, v Invitation Team, at Gore; Feb 24, v New Zealand (third test), at Pahiatua.

Rankings as at January 5, 2013

Leading Shearing Sports New Zealand rankings after the New Zealand Lambshearing Championships at Raglan on January 5:

Shearing

Open (minimum 3 finals): John Kirkpatrick (Napier) 68pts, 1; Tony Coster (Rakaia) 56pts, 2; David Fagan (Te Kuiti) 45pts, 3; Grant Smith (Rakaia) 39pts, 4; Chris Jones (Renwick) 35pts, 5; David Buick (Pongaroa) 27pts, 6; Darin Forde (Lornville) 24pts, 7; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 23pts, 8; Tony Nott (Blenheim) 20pts, 9; Dave Brooker (Hawarden) and Shaun Burgess (Ashburton) 19pts, 10eq.

Senior (minimum 3 finals): Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 77pts, 1; Brett Roberts (Mataura) 46pts, 2; Rowan Nesbit (Rangiora) 38pts, 3; Cory Palmer (Dipton) 29pts, 4; Mohi Gray (Waipukurau) 22pts, 5; Hemi Dellow (Hastings) 21pts, 6; Floyd Neil (Taumarunui) and Jotham Rentoul (Wakefield) 20pts, 7eq, Brett Langrell (Temuka) 10pts, 9.

Intermediate (minimum 3 finals): David Gordon (Masterton) 64pts, 1; Phoenix Hawkins (Rakaia) 37pts, 2; Lyaal Windleburn (Waiau) 30pts, 3; Adam Morton (Wairoa) and Alex Smith (Gisborne) 27pts, 4eq; Sam Brooks (Pio Pio), Andrew Leith (Dipton), Fraser Quinlivan (Otane) and Joseph Stephens (Ireland) 24pts, 6eq; Ethan Pankhurst (Masterton) 23pts, 10; Aaron Booker (Ward) 21pts, 11.

Junior (minimum 2 finals): Liam Quinlivan (Waipukurau) and Quinton Sanson (Feilding) 50pts, 1eq; Duran Smith (Gisborne) 42pts, 3; Marshall Guy (Kaeo) 21pts, 4; Ramone Smith (Gisborne) 20pts, 5; Kahn Culshaw (Ashburton/Raupunga) 18pts, 6; Josh Balme (Te Kuiti) 17pts, 7; Alex Smith (Rakaia) 9pts, 8.

Woolhandling:

Open (minimum 2 finals): Joel Henare (Gisborne) 49pts, 1; Keryn Herbert (Te Awamutu) 47pts, 2; Sheree Alabaster (Taihape) 36pts, 3; Tina Rimene (Masterton) 30pts, 4; Taiwha Nelson (Alexandra) 21pts, 5; Monica Potae (Tokomaru Bay/Milton) 16pts, 6.

Senior (minimum 2 finals): Samantha Gordon (Masterton) 25pts, 1; Kodi Hawkins (Martinborough) 24pts, 2; Stevie Mason-Smallman (Taihape) 22pts, 3; Amber Stringer (Ranfurly) 21pts, 4; Carmen Smith (Pongaroa) 17pts, 5; Brittany Tibble (Gisborne) 16pts, 6; Maidens Elers (Mataura) 15pts, 7.

Junior: David Gordon (Masterton) 27pts, 1; Blaze Pineaha (Waipawa) 21pts, 2; Sarah Higgins (Havelock) 18pts, 3; Kyle Ellen (Waipukurau) 17pts, 4; Kandy Huata (Raupunga) 16pts, 5.

Smith repeats Peninsula success - January 14, 2013

A bit of control under pressure saw Master Shearer and former New Zealand team member Grant Smith safely through the defence of the Peninsula Duvauchelle show's Open title in a 12-sheep final on Saturday (Jan 12).

Smith was up-against some familiar faces in a four-man contest judged solely on speed and the finished product in the pens, board judging dispensed with in another trial aimed at making the events more spectator-friendly.

On a scorching Canterbury day it might have been of some relief to the judges who were able to take a break to watch the action, as Smith and fellow Rakaia shearer Shaun Bugess battled for the time honours.

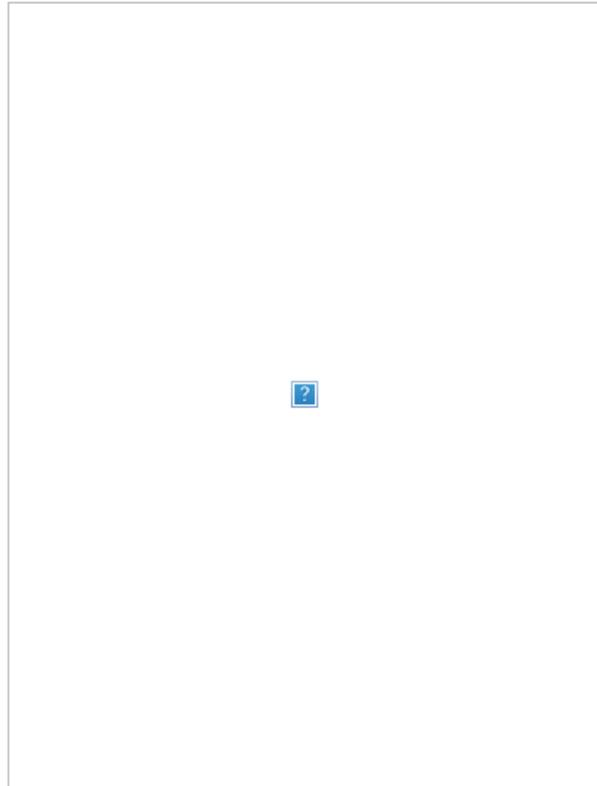
Finishing in 12min 10.19sec, Burgess was first off by two-and-a-half seconds but the real interest was in whether Tectra instructor Kevin Hessel had done enough to sneak the win, in a showdown also featuring boss and Shearing Sports New Zealand chairman Gavin Rowland. Hessel, having a further 18 seconds after Smith, did claim the best pen points, but Smith had done enough to claim the ribbon and cheque, beating Hessel by 0.7pts.

Lifestyle block shearer Lance Barnes, of Diamond Harbour, made a rare finals appearance to win the Senior title by just 0.06pts from Nelson visitor Jotham Rentoul.

Third was first-man-off Shane Hackett, of Christchurch, while Waiau contractor defending Senior champion Greg Moriarty, in the final for a fifth consecutive year, was fourth.

The Intermediate final was won by rare competitor Vinnie Enright, of Rangiora, beating the promising duo of Paul Hodges, from Geraldine, and Lincoln student and young Masterton shearer Ethan Pankhurst, while the Junior final went to the Open champion's nephew, Cory Smith.

The competition experienced the same decline in the number of entries affecting other shows this season, but organiser Phil Bremner is hopeful the celebration of the A and P Show's centennial will attract more competitors next year.



GRANT SMITH, who on Saturday successfully defend the Open title at the Peninsula Duvauchelle A and P Show, pictured during the 150th Canterbury Show in November.

Hot summer hot-up for record tally shearers

The World Shearing Records Society has confirmed applications have been received for three record bids over the next five weeks.

The first will be on January 31 when former solo 8hrs strongwool lambs record holder Cam Ferguson, of Waipawa, will team-up with Dannevirke shearers Adam Brausch and Ringa Paewai in an attempt on the three-stand record of 1784 set by King Country shearers Digger Balme, Roger Neil and Digger Balme in 1999.

The attempt will take place near Ormondville in Southern Hawke's Bay and the trio will need an average of 595 each to set a new mark, Ferguson having shown he will be a significant contributor having shorn 742 in claiming the solo record two years ago.

The second attempt will be on February 5, with a surprise entry into the records race by Golden Shears and New Zealand opens champion and Napier shearer John Kirkpatrick, teaming with Invercargill-based Eru Weeds, originally from Dannevirke, James Mack, originally from Thames Valley, and Leon Samuels, of Invercargill.

Shearing at Centre Hill Station near Mossburn, Northern Southland, they plan to set a mark for the vacant four-stand lambs record for 8 hours.

The third attempt will be Te Kuiti shearer Stacey Te Huia, targeting the 9hr ewes record of 721 which has not been challenged since Southern Hawke's Bay shearer Rodney Sutton claimed the ultimate of shearing's tally records by just one sheep in a dramatic day at Mangapehi, in the King Country, six years ago.

Te Huia will make the attempt on February 12 at Te Hape, also in the King Country and where he shored his current best tally of 674 as he and Sam Welch, of Waikaretu, broke a two-stand record last summer.

Fagan wins 17th national lambshearing title

David Fagan added another title to his mile-long list of triumphs over the last 30 years when he won the national lambshearing title for a 17th time in Raglan on Saturday (January 5).

Now 51, he won the event 16 times between 1986 and 2004, and was missing from last year's final. While entries this year were surprisingly and worryingly low in number, Te Kuiti gun Fagan still had to overcome the challenge of defending champion and reigning, Golden Shears and New Zealand Opens champion and Napier shearer John Kirkpatrick, the only survivor from last year's final.

Fagan and fellow Te Kuiti evergreen Digger Balme dominated the five-man race over 20 lambs each, Balme finishing in 15min 22.3sec, just pipping Fagan.

But Fagan still beat Kirkpatrick by 36 seconds, enough to hold out the World championships team who carded easily the best quality points.

Ultimately, Fagan won by 0.607pts from Kirkpatrick, with a 10pts gap to third-placed Balme. Mark Grainger, of Te Kuiti, was fourth, and Hastings-based Doug Smith, of Ruawai, fifth.

Fagan had already this season shown he could more than mix it with the younger brigade when he won an Open final at the Wairarapa A and P Show in Carterton.

Heading towards a career tally of 620 open competition titles, easily the most by any shearer and including five World individual titles, he told his followers at Raglan: "It goes to show if you stick at it long enough, you can get there." Bryce Guy, of Kaeo, added the Senior title to the Intermediate title he won last year, this year with a commanding margin of almost 6pts over Fagan's son, Jack, who was second.

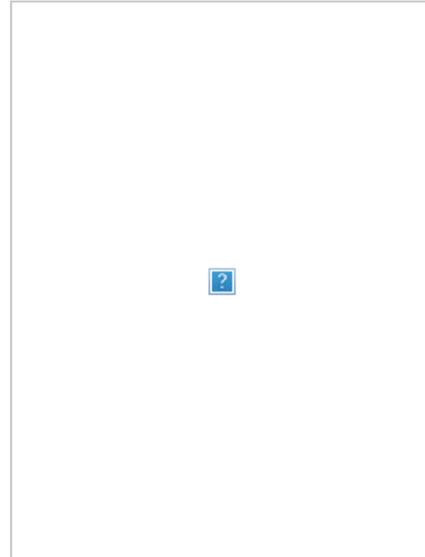
But Guy's brothers, Charlie and Marshall, had to each settle for second in their events.

Charlie Guy was beaten by 2011 Junior winner David Gordon, of Masterton, in the Intermediate final, in which a surprise fourth placegetter was French shearer Loic Leygonie.

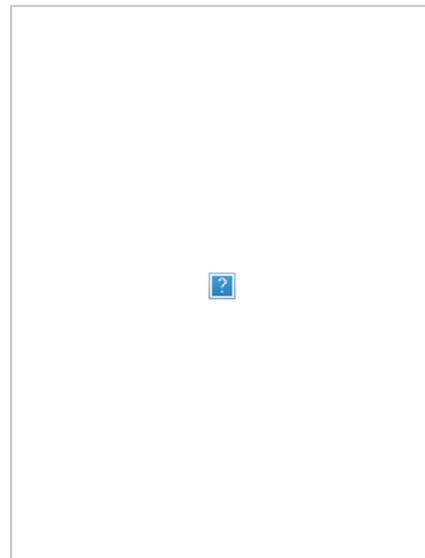
Marshall Guy was runner-up in the Junior final, won by Michael Herlihy, of Stratford.

A particular feature was the effort of retired farmer and competition stalwart Jim Macdonald, now living in Tauranga. He won the Angus Wilson Memorial veterans event for an 8th time, at the age of 77 and 29 years after he first won the cup, when he would have been "just" 48.

Macdonald had won the event in 2011, but missed last year because he was "crook at the time," and it was almost a year



Shearing icon David Fagan, of Te Kuiti, winning his 17th New Zealand Lambshearing Championship at Raglan today.No 51, his first was in 1986.



Retired farmer Jim Macdonald, after winning the Veterans event during the New Zealand lambshearing championships at the Western Shears in Raglan. He's 77, and first won the event in 1984

Seven shearers contested the Veterans event, Dean Te Huia, of Te Kuiti, finishing the job quickest in 3min 42.77sec, but Macdonald, 4th off in 4min 29.57sec, claimed the best quality points, and ultimately the top prize on the unique age-adjusted scale used for the event.

Despite the fine weather across the North Island, the championships classes attracted a combined entry of just 41, the 13 in the Open including Shearing Sports New Zealand chairman Gavin Rowland, travelling from Christchurch to get more points in the PGG Wrightson National series and finishing with enough to almost certainly guarantee a place in the top 12 for the finals at the Golden Shears in March.

Among those missing was World champion Gavin Mutch who had earlier in the week indicated he hoped to be there, but who now will probably make his return at the Wairoa show on January 19.

Ironhorse World champion on comeback trail

If Gavin Mutch was a racehorse he probably would have been put down last year, if not just before he became World shearing champion then not long afterwards.

Now, if the Taranaki-based Scottish farmer and shearer was still a racehorse, the formline leading into an event as big as Saturday's national lambshearing championships at Raglan could read: "Forward in condition, ready to resume." More boldly, it might add: "The ironhorse is back."

That about sums up the 33-year-old who beat the Kiwi favourites in last year's World championships in Masterton, without anything other than guts and determination to help him over the shoulder injury which just days earlier had him prepared to pull-out.

He'd dislocated his right shoulder - that's his shearing one - and it was popping in and out, but stayed in place for the crucial preliminary rounds in Masterton, and the 19min 12.27sec it took to shear the 20-sheep final and pip defending champion Cam Ferguson, of Waipawa, and event favourite John Kirkpatrick, of Napier.

Remarkably, he had also survived the teams event the previous night, when he and teammate Hamish Mitchell came within 0.7pts of beating the Kiwis in the teams final, although they'd won a tooth-and-nail race for time honours as the two teams finished more than two minutes ahead of the next-best.

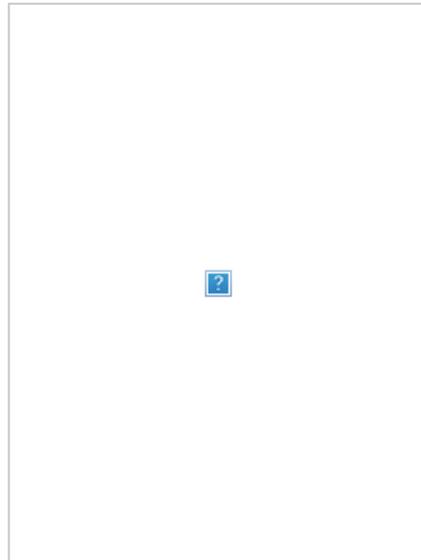
Few knew of what he had endured as the kilted-one held aloft the trophy on the final Saturday night, but already thinking of winning again two years hence, Mutch knew there was plenty to do to even be able to defend the title in Ireland in 2014.

Foregoing the usual mid-year trip home to Aberdeenshire, he underwent keyhole surgery in New Plymouth, and set about being fit in time for the Scottish team selection events in the Northern Hemisphere this year.

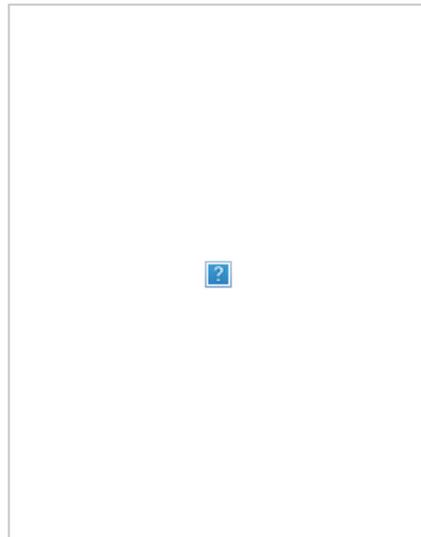
After the operation in New Plymouth in July, Mutch returned to the Whangamomona farm where he lives with Kiwi wife Pip and their three children, by late-November he was back into fulltime mob shearing and soon doing over 350 ewes and lambs a day.

Topped with three long days weaning and dipping among the 3000 sheep on the farm this week, the self-diagnosis was simple.

"I think I'm a bit ahead of where I thought I would be at this stage," he said.



Gavin Mutch, Taranaki's most famous Scotsman, winning the World Shearing Championship at the Golden Shears in Masterton last March. On Saturday he tackles the New Zealand lambshearing championships at Raglan.



PHOTOS/Pete Nikolaison, Golden Shears

It's probably enough to send the woollies up such men as defending lambshearing, Golden Shears and New Zealand Open champion Kirkpatrick, but winning at Raglan, where Mutch's 2007 win was his biggest in New Zealand before his World Championships triumph during last year's Golden Shears, is not the be-all and end-all where he expects to be under pressure to perform.

As is the case for several other shearers, the first goal is high place-points in the heats, which constitute the fourth of five rounds in New Zealand's multi-breeds championship, the PGG Wrightson National.

Commemorating 40 years since the title was established with the first presentation of the McSkimming Memorial Triple Crown in 1973, Mutch got the obligatory single point for competing in the compulsory opening round at the New Zealand Merino Championships in Alexandra in October.

But a single bad shot on a hock in an otherwise good shear at the national Corriedale Championships at the 150th Canterbury Show cost him dearly and he now finds himself needing a good one to break into the top 12 to qualify for the showdown at the Golden Shears, as he did two years ago.

He would, also, dearly love to win the Golden Shears Open, having already been the only Northern Hemisphere shearer ever to contest its final.

"We'll see how it goes," said Mutch, who expects, shoulder-willing, to be competing most weekends in the North Island over the next two months.

"I'm not too worried about the season here, though, as long as I get fit to go back home and qualify for the Scotland team," he said. The competitive streak cannot be denied, however.

While short on travel companions for the usually long trips, with a limited number of competition shearers around Whangamomona, the World champion expects to be paying his dues at such smaller shows as the Wairoa A and P Shears on January 19, and remote Ohura, scene of his only 2011-2012 season win outside of the World Championships.

"It's bloody hard when people expect you to perform every time, because you're the World champion," he said, but not shying from the pressure. "I know, myself, I'll push myself till it breaks."

Kirkpatrick, the winner of 200 finals in New Zealand, is expected in Raglan to go for a third national lambshearing title in a row, before heading south for his first World record bid, chasing a vacant four-stand lambshearing record in February.

Ferguson, yet to win the national lambshearing title but having once shorn a year the World eight-hour lambshearing record of 742 in eight hours, is also expected at Raglan, early in his preparation for a bid to re-enter the record books with a three-stand tally bid in Hawke's Bay on January 31.

Saturday's championships, at the Western Shears, mark a resumption of the Shearing Sports New Zealand season after a traditional month off during what had for decades been the busiest time of the year in the woolsheds.

Shearing will be in four grades, with Junior heats starting at 8.30am.