

MEDIA RELEASE
From Doug Laing,
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July 24, 2018

Captions 1:

Transglobal teamwork cemented as Allan Oldfield, from New Zealand, congratulates Irishman Peter Heraty after Heraty's blade shearing record 326 sheep in nine hours in Ireland on Friday.
PHOTO/SUPPLIED

Caption 2:

Irish shearer Peter Heraty during his Irish bladeshearing record of 326 sheep in nine hours at Owenwee, Co Mayo, Ireland on Friday. PHOTO/SUPPLIED

Oldfield considers record options after Heraty's big day out

July 24, 2018

New Zealand blades shearer Allan Oldfield is considering a possible World record attempt after helping an Irishman tor one of the biggest one-day tallies ever shorn with the clippers.

Allan Oldfield, of Geraldine, was on-hand for every one of the 326 sheep shorn by 28-year-old Ireland international Peter Heraty in nine hours to establish an Irish record at Heraty's home in Owenwee, Co Mayo, on Friday (NZST).

The sheep the local "Mayo blackface" - ewes, hoggets and two-year-olds, mainly his own and with an average wool weight of 1.67kg of wool per sheep in a pre-record shear of 10 sheep, and the tally was 73 more than his previous best, in an eight-hour day on the same sheep last year.

The World Sheep Shearing Records Society, which was not involved in Friday's effort, has strongwool standards of 0.9kg for lambs and 3kg for adults sheep.

Oldfield is now investigating doing a two-stand record with Heraty, who shore 72 in the opening run of two hours followed by successive 1hr 45min runs of 65, 62, 64 and 63. Watched closely by three judges, Heraty's tally was 120 more than the 206 shorn by fellow Irish shearer Patrick Moran in the early 1990s, commonly accepted as a British record although last year Welshmen Gareth Evans and Clive Hamer did a combined tally of 397 lambs in nine hours at Fernhill in Somerset, England, Owen claiming a solo record with a person tally of 202.

The efforts compare with the 353 perendale lambs shorn by New Zealand shearer Peter Casserly at Mt Somers, near Methven, on February 13, 1976, and the 308 romney-border cross lambs shorn by Bruce Davidson at Hanmer Springs on December 12, 1973.

It also compares with the 321 shorn in 7hrs 40min by the legendary 19th century Australian shearer Jack Howe at Alice Downs, Blackall, Western Queensland, on October 10, 1892, still the biggest blades tally recorded in Australia and one which was not beaten by a machine shearer in Australia until 57 years later.

The only blades records currently recognised by the World Sheep Shearing Records Society, for these established after a revision of records rules in 1983, come from an eight-hours challenge in South Africa on February 10, 2006, in which Samuel Juba set a solo merinos mark of 245 and with Bangani Joel a two-stand record of 460.

Heraty and Oldfield have known each other for about eight years since meeting in New Zealand in 2012, when Heraty first represented his country at the World Championships, and when he first came in touch with blade shearing supplies operation Shear Sharp NZ, started by Oldfield's father, 2017 World Championships third placegetter Phil Oldfield..

Heraty had learned to shear with the blades by the time he was seven or eight years old, from his father who he says is “a great blade shearer.”

He won the All Ireland Handshearing Championship for a first time in 2012, at the age of 22, using the Shear Sharp gear he bought in New Zealand. He’s since won the title the last five times in a row.

In Ireland for a fortnight helping prepare, Oldfield was at Heraty’s side throughout on Friday, timing sheep to keep the hopeful gun on target, and said later: “It was great. Peter was going hard, but he was knackered at the end.”

But Heraty said this week: “I was very surprised. I was no more tired the next day than any other working day, but I was very tired the night of it.”

About 80 per cent of his shearing is with a machine handpiece, but blade shearing seems likely to endure for a while yet.

“Some hill farmers over here are set in their ways and won’t change to machine shearing at this stage,” he said.

Oldfield was quickly into action of his own, heading for Wales where he won the Royal Welsh Show’s Open blades title on Monday.



