

The 17th Scottish Blackface Shearing Championships

LOCHEARNHEAD SHEARS 2010

Once again the wet weather and consistent rain didn't seem to dampen the spirits of the shearers at Lochearnhead Shears last weekend. An international line up of competitors congregated to fight for the Scottish Blackface Shearing Champion title. Many new faces appeared, trying to get experience on the British Sheep before the World Championships to be held at the Royal Welsh later on this month.

The Junior, Intermediate and Senior heats took place on Saturday afternoon with the Wool-Handling competition taking place in conjunction with the senior heats, under shearing shed style conditions and rules – the girls then qualifying through to the final on the Sunday afternoon. Sheree Alabaster, member of the New Zealand team for the forthcoming World Champs, took top honours, furiously looking after eight fleeces, throwing them on a table, wrapping them up and sweeping up the boards – all this at break neck speed. Audrey Lamb from Lanark secured runner up spot, with Argyll girl Linda McWhirter taking 3rd and Gwenan Paewai from Wales settling for 4th.



Sheree Alabaster Wool Handling Champion



Blade Finalists- D McColl, W Taylor, D Ferguson & W Shaw

Sunday evening's finals commenced with the traditional blade shearing, Scottish team members for the World Champs, David Ferguson and Willie Shaw, battled it out with local farmer Willie Taylor from Ardeonaig, Killin and past Scottish team member Donald McColl from Fort William. David Ferguson from Newton Stewart came out the victor, ahead of Willie Shaw from Saline, with Willie Taylor and Donald McColl taking 3rd and 4th places respectively.

The Junior final where they shored four blackie hogs in just over 5 minutes saw young Sandy McKellar from Auch Estate, Tyndrum take home the silverwear. Taking runner-up place was Brendan Graham from Gorey, Co Wexford with Ifan Prys, Conwy, Wales and Euan MacKinnon, Bathgate taking 3rd and 4th places respectively.

The International relay was next, teams of three from New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales competed in what was a crowd-thrilling event with support from each of these nations cheering on their team. The New Zealand Team of Johnny Kirkpatrick, Darin Forde and Kevin Hessell were triumphant, Wales were 1.50 points behind to put them in 2nd place with Scotland and Northern Ireland having to settle for 3rd and 4th place.

A new invitation test – Scotland against Republic of Ireland, with a Junior and Intermediate shearer from each country, saw young Scottish lads – Sandy McKellar and Alan Brady pulled this off over the visitors Brendan Graham and Robert Kells from the Republic of Ireland.

Three Welshmen and a Scotsman lined up in the Intermediate final with Clwyd Jones from North Wales received the red ribbon ahead of his fellow countrymen Iwan Morris and Ifan Jones, with David Gibson from Gartocharn taking 4th place.

The welcome return visit of the Northern Ireland Senior team test, consisting of Finn Butler and Trevor Clark with manager Gerard Kelly and Scottish representatives, Brian Simpson and Calum Shaw saw the Scottish team on their own kind of sheep prove winners in a very close fought and exciting event.

The Scotland .v. New Zealand Test, saw the 4 shearers who will be competing for their countries at the Royal Welsh shear their 12 sheep in just under 8 minutes – Gavin Mutch and Hamish Mitchell for Scotland showed that they know their way round the blackie hogs with longtime supporter to Lochearnhead David Fagan and newcomer to the New Zealand team Cam Ferguson taking reserve place.

The line up in the senior final, saw three Scotsmen and a Welshman with the pace moving up another gear, the finalists shored their 10 sheep in around 9 minutes, Matthew Evans from South Wales took top honours with Stewart Kennedy from Aberfeldy taking runner up position, Calum Shaw from Saline taking 3rd and Brian Simpson from Blairgowrie taking 4th.



Mathew Evans - Senior Champion



Provest Wood with Stewart Kennedy who won the best pen in any final.

The Open finalists originally cut from the 44 open competitors down to 4, with some reckoning the Lochearnhead Open Final is amongst the toughest to make throughout the UK. The quality of workmanship and speed was the order of the day. Once again with the crowd of their seats in excitement saw 4 previous Blackface Shearing Champions take the stage – break neck speed saw Gavin Mutch from Huntly shear 20 hoggs in a new record of 12 minutes 11 seconds, with Hamish Mitchell just 2 seconds slower. Gavin's slightly cleaner pen and board scores saw him take the title, Hamish had to settle for the blue ribbon, kiwi Johnny Kirkpatrick took 3rd spot with Kieran McCullough, Northern Ireland in 4th.



Gavin Mutch, Open Champion - shearing his 20th hogg in the Open final.

RESULTS

INTERNATIONAL RELAY

1 st	NEW ZEALAND	(Darin Forde, Johnny Kirkpatrick & Kevin Hessell)
2 nd	WALES	(Nicky Beynon, Delwyn Jones & Rhys Jones)
3 rd	SCOTLAND	(Jordan Smeaton, Allan Wright & Simon Bedwell)
4 th	NORTHERN IRELAND	(Kieran McCullough, Ian Montgomery & John Buchanan)

SCOTLAND .V. NEW ZEALAND TEST

1 ST	SCOTLAND	(Hamish Mitchell & Gavin Mutch)
2 ND	NEW ZEALAND	(David Fagan & Cam Ferguson)

SCOTLAND .v. NORTHERN IRELAND TEST

1 st	SCOTLAND	2 nd	NORTHERN IRELAND
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SCOTLAND .v. REPUBLIC of IRELAND TEST

1 st	SCOTLAND	2 nd	REPUBLIC of IRELAND
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R McLARTY & SON HAND SHEARS

1st David Ferguson 2nd Willie Shaw 3rd Willie Taylor 4th Donald MacColl

SCOTTISH WOOL GROWERS WOOL-HANDLING

1st Sheree Alabaster 2nd Audrey Lamb 3rd Linda McWhirter 4th Gwenan Paewai

A B GAIRNS JUNIOR SHEARING

1st Sandy McKellar, Tyndrum 19.79
2nd Brendan Graham, Rep of Ireland 23.72
3rd Ifan Prys, Wales 25.18
4th Euan MacKinnon, Bathgate 30.50
5th William Hurcomb 6th Alastair Shaw 7th David Ferguson 8th Iwan Williams

HIGHWAY SHEARING (UK) Ltd., INTERMEDIATE SHEARING

1st Clwyd Jones, Wales 33.08
2nd Iwan Morris, Wales 37.12
3rd Ifan Jones, Wales 40.93
4th David Gibson, Gartocharn 41.38
5th Iwan P Jones 6th Dafydd Jones 7th Sion Evans 8th Jimmy Wright

REID AND ROBERTSON/DECTOMAX SENIOR SHEARING

1st Matthew Evans, Wales 38.10
2nd Stewart Kennedy, Aberfeldy 28.60
3rd Calum Shaw, Saline, Fife 38.70
4th Brian Simpson, Blairgowrie 39.30
5th Finn Butler 6th Chris Ruby 7th Willie Taylor 8th John Gibson

HEINIGER SCOTTISH BLACKFACE CHAMPIONSHIPS OPEN SHEARING

1st Gavin Mutch, Huntly, Aberdeenshire 47.65
2nd Hamish Mitchell, Lochearnhead 48.10
3rd Johnny Kirkpatrick, New Zealand 49.95
4th Kieran McCullough, Northern Ireland 51.35
5th Jordan Smeaton 6th David Fagan 7th Grant Lundie 8th Cam Ferguson

The Colin MacGregor Salver for the best pen in any final – Stewart Kennedy