

FIELDAYS EXHIBITOR

Issue 1

WEDNESDAY, 2015

Seamlessly produced by

The School of Media Arts

Waikato Institute of Technology



“

It's like the 1500m at the Olympics – it's the event – not only nationally but internationally, it's a very recognised competition. See pg 4





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NEWS HOUNDS: Back row from left: Shontelle Cargill, Haylee King, Chris Reive, Bala Yogesh, Kyra Dawson. Front row from left: Paul Mitchell, Dasha Kuprienko, Charlie Scott.

Fieldays Exhibitor is created by Wintec students and distributed by volunteers. The Exhibitor has published since 2004 and has been recognised by the NZ National Fielddays Society for its outstanding contribution to the success of the Southern Hemisphere's biggest agricultural show.

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www.waikatoindependent.co.nz/fieldays/

CONTENTS

- 02 Voxpop | Rating the rural bachelors
- 03 Kingsley Field | By the numbers
- 04 Cover article: Nick Liefting's last fence
- 05 International business at Fieldays | Induction
- 06 Ag Art Wear
- 08 No 8 Wire Awards
- 09 Art with a twist
- 10 Rural Bachelor 2014
- 11 Fieldays set-up: Preparation
- 12 Cuisinescene

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Written by Charles Riddle



Welcome to the Fieldays Exhibitor for 2015. Like you, our students have been hard at work for the past month or more getting set for this year's event. Our graphic team have tweaked the design of the magazine, introducing a more glossy feel to the inside pages. And we have a smorgasbord of interviews and photographs which we hope will keep you in touch with what is happening outside of your stand.

This edition we rate the bachelors before they've begun and bring you Fieldays by the numbers, along with reports and photographs of what school pupils have come up with for the Ag Art Wear competition, which turns 21 this year, and opens today at 11. Then there is full coverage of the No 8 Wire competition, currently on display at the ArtsPost in Victoria Street.

And you can read a full interview with fencer Nick Liefting. Liefting started competing in the Golden Pliers when he was 19 and he is set to retire from the event this year following his 60th birthday. His presence this year will make him the first 60-year-old to compete at the Golden Pliers. He's won the Golden Pliers twice and finished quickest for last 28 years straight, often beating out younger men by hours.

Happy reading and remember to ask one of the Fieldays volunteers for your next copy of Fieldays Exhibitor when they visit your stand again tomorrow.



RACHEL MIDDLETON - COMMUNICATIONS EXECUTIVE MYSTERY CREEK

What are you looking forward to? The complete hustle and bustle

What is your top tip? Comfortable shoes

Is there anything you plan to buy? A house? An SUV? Probably just a lot of food, to be honest

How many Fieldays have you been to? Just the one

WARREN BOGGISS, SALES MANAGER FOR HAUTAPU PINE, FROM HAMILTON

What are you looking forward to? Catching up with clients and looking at the new utes.

What is your top tip? Don't stay too late, get out before the traffic gets crazy.

Is there anything you plan to buy? A mussel fritter.

How many Fieldays have you been to? About seven or eight.

MONIQUE LOOTSMA, ADMINISTRATOR FROM NORTH SHORE, AUCKLAND

What are you looking forward to? Showing the animals to my 3-year-old daughter

What is your top tip? Take your own water and the banks often have good rest/play areas for families set up

Is there anything you plan to buy? We will be looking at heating options for our house.

How many Fieldays have you been to? About 15

BARRY QUAYLE - FORMER GENERAL MANAGER OF NATIONAL FIELDAYS SOCIETY

What are you looking forward to? The buzz and the huge range of personalities on site, plus the latest gadgets and various agri-entertainments, as well as to see how generally the events are developing

What is your top tip? Do a bit of pre-event prep with the programme online of what you want to see and where it is. Work out your walkabout for seeing the exhibit sites you want to see, so that you can also make the most of the activity programme. If you have a group, wear distinctive hats so you can find each other in a crowd. Charge your cell phone prior, and use text mostly. Get in early but avoid leaving between 4.30pm and 5.30pm to miss traffic problems, except Saturday when there are no real issues.

Is there anything you plan to buy? Looking at buying some mohair products, white bait fritters, coffee, and maybe checking out the latest vehicles

How many Fieldays have you been to? Been to 25 Fieldays. Two as an exhibitor in the late 1980s

RATING THE RURAL BACHELORS

Written by Charlie Scott | Photographs Supplied

The finalists have been screened and selected for Fieldays Rural Bachelor 2015. We took a vote in the Exhibitor newsroom to see who we thought should win the Golden Gumboot.

Come on down 23-year-old Aussie bachelor, Daniel Rogers who took out last year's RASV Young Sheep Producer of the Year award at the 2014 National Sheep and Wool Show in Bendigo. We picked him for the win, tallying six votes on the whiteboard of truth. We think he looks the cutest. And figure he deserves a win if he is desperate enough to come all the way to New Zealand to find a match.

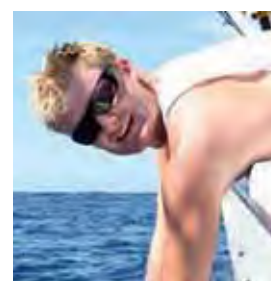
The number 2 spot on our unofficial podium went to 25-year-old Te Awamutu bachelor, Tony Peake. He's a wingsuit pilot, biker, and boxer with a sidestep as a

competitive ballroom dancer. Tony scored three whiteboard pen strokes of approval ofr his clear all-roundedness. And we are happy to see a local boy in there. We love that he is into adventure sports.

So there is our guess. Based on almost nothing - some grainy photographs and brief personality blurbs.

Best of luck bachelors!

Follow our coverage at www.waikatoindependent.co.nz/fieldays and read what the competition meant for last year's winner in this edition.



SELFIES: Top to Bottom: Tony Peake, Daniel Rogers

IF IT'S JUNE, IT'S FIELDDAYS



rag themselves in gaudy threads and fancy footwear, soon discover the error of their ways and either immediately splurge on Swannies and gummies or head home early muttering dark imprecations about “who’d want to be a cockie anyway?”

Well, the answer rather emphatically is that tens of thousands of folk want to be cockies in one form or another, as is shown every year by land-people who flood the Mystery Creek site in ever-increasing numbers. They come from all over the country, and an additional several thousand arrive as international visitors. As well, tens of thousands more, from rural villages, country towns and the nation’s biggest cities pour into the site. And virtually all of them are fascinated, intrigued, astounded, amazed or bemused at the enormity of the site’s tent city and the extraordinary range of “stuff” there is on display.

But to get it there and to have it all clean and tidy and properly shown off has taken thousands of hours of work over the past half year and more. For months National Fielddays’ staff and contractors have been improving and adding to the site’s grounds and amenities. The place has had a \$1.6 million facelift, with 26 additional exhibition sites added. This takes exhibitor numbers to more than 1000 and exhibitor sites to more than 1400, making the show easily the biggest agribusiness exhibition in the Southern Hemisphere. In fact, it’s been that way for years, and it just keeps getting bigger.

A visit to the site in the middle of last week showed a real intensity of activity as exhibitor staff and contractors pushed hard to get their individual displays up and running.

Many of the plots already had their tents erected,

and hundreds of tonnes of wood chips, saw-dust, bark, sand and even big slabs of rock were being shuffled around by hand or powerful little front-end loaders to create attractive display areas and comfortable, mud-free places for the hoped-for buyers to discuss business. Potted native trees, ferns, tussocks, grasses, flaxes and other herbage were all being carefully and strategically placed to look natural and inviting. By contrast there were huge tractors with enormous wheels, the machines gleaming in fresh red or orange or yellow or green paint and their tyres all newly painted in shiny tyre-black.

Logs and posts and rails and boards were being firmly planted in the ground or nailed or screwed to supports; mounds of earth or stone had been formed so craftily-angled 4x4 trucks and utes and vans could be shown off to advantage; immense cropping machines languished haughtily on beds of bark; and away down the other end of the 113ha site (car-parks included) the Lifestyle Marquee was humming with exhibitors setting up to spruik the latest in frying pans, potato peelers, wine, sheep’s milk cheese, and woolly socks.

The fact that it was raining was of no consequence. There was a little mud here and there, but the hardy workers slogged on with the job, regardless of sodden clothing and footwear.

It was all aimed for kick-off at 8am today, when the first tsunami of an estimated 120,000 visitors will pour down the hill. And, as has happened every year for almost half a century in the Waikato, the National Fielddays are here again, they’re ready, and they will be good.

Who cares if it’s wet?

If it’s June and it’s raining it’s because the Fielddays are on.

It’s a hoary old adage, for sure, but it has been unpleasantly true more often than not over the past 46 years, and maybe this year will add to the collection of Fielddays gumboot-weather events staged in the Waikato since 1968. By and large, the majority of those who attend the hugely-popular annual National Fielddays four-day show dress accordingly and pay the weather not a fig’s worth of notice. Conversely, the few who don’t dress properly, but who instead glad-

BY THE NUMBERS

256

Registrations received by Fielddays International

12

Countries have sent in their official delegations

200

Coffees one Nomad coffee trailer makes daily

32

Countries taking part in Fielddays

LIEFTING SET FOR ONE LAST GOLDEN PLIERS

Written by Te Ahua Maitland | Photography by NZFC

Nick Liefing will be the first 60-year-old to compete at the Golden Pliers fencing competition at Fieldays. He spoke to Fieldays Exhibitor about his final appearance after 40 years of competition.



After 40 years of competing, Nick Liefing is preparing to lace up his boots one last time for this year's Fieldays Golden Pliers fencing competition.

The Pukekohe contractor is set to retire following

his 60th birthday. His presence this year will make him the first 60-year-old to compete at the Golden Pliers competition, an achievement which crowns appearances that started when he was just 19.

Liefing has won the Golden Pliers competition twice, and finished first for last 28 years straight, often beating out younger men by hours.

Liefing believes the Golden Pliers is the Olympics of fencing competitions.

"It's like the 1500m at the Olympics – it's the event...not only nationally but internationally, it's a very recognised competition."

He announced two years ago that 2015 would be his last competition, admitting the body did not function as well as it used to.

"Why go on any longer when the body is starting to say 'hey, what are you doing?'" he asked.

Although still in good condition (thanks to working out regularly at the gym), he has had his fair share of setbacks including a knee replacement 18 months ago, a shoulder reconstruction, and back pain.

He is known for being first off the line every time during the competition, but says he tends to lose points on the quality of his fences.

"Because I'm quick I haven't been pedantic with my quality, which the others pick up on... It is judged very severely, with tape measures and spirit levels and everything."

Over the years he has seen a vast change in fencing.

"When I first started you competed and then you walked away, and then 12 months later you gave it another go.

"It is probably easier now for a new competitor from when I first started because they get a judging standards sheet so everybody knows what the judges are actually looking for."

Although Nick does not train for the Golden Pliers anymore, he does focus on his health and nutrition, comparing the event to an ironman.

"It's like an ironman, it will take you five hours but the last guy it could take seven... You don't stop, so you have to be hydrated and well-nourished throughout and to the end."

He said he hired a personal trainer who set up a nutrition programme for the physical event.

"You can be as fit as you like, but you need to have a nutrition programme for fuel and food intake before and during the competition."

A highlight for Nick was in 2008, when the winner of the Golden Pliers was set to compete at the International Fencing Competition in Germany held every second year. Although he did not win the Golden Pliers that year, the sponsors offered him a wildcard entry after seeing his performance at Fieldays.

At 53 years old he won the International Fencing Competition, beating the Golden Pliers winner.

Liefing admits he always find finals day stressful but believes nothing really prepares competitors for the main event.

"Competing in the Golden Pliers and putting up a fence are two completely different scenarios. You can be the best fence farmer in the world but you'll be a disaster in the competition and vice versa."

"A farmer will comment on what you've done well, a judge is looking for all your mistakes. And that's hard for people to handle."

He has a lot of knowledge and experience when it comes to fencing, and provides beneficial advice for participants or people eager to get involved in fencing competitions.

"Once you know what the requirements are, that's

probably the biggest hurdle.

"It's not such much building the fence, but where to spend time on the fence and where not to spend the time... then there is the time component and, also, what the judges are looking for."

Although this is his last year as a competitor, Liefing will be back next year as a judge, and continue to help out at regional events.

"I want to encourage some of the newer and younger entrants, and coach them about requirements and encourage them in the speed element."



DIGGING IN: Nick Liefing will mark his 60th birthday by competing in his final Golden Pliers fencing competition at Fieldays



PHOTOGRAPHED: Marcelo Mieres

INTERNATIONAL DRAWCARD

Written by Bala Yogesh | Photography by Geoff Ridder

International exhibitors are drawn to Fielddays by the lure of the business possibilities at the biggest agricultural show in the Southern Hemisphere. In the run-up to Fielddays this year, 24 countries had confirmed their presence at the event, a number that was likely to rise as others arrive at the 11th hour.

Major international exhibitors for this year include Ireland, Australia, and Korea.

Enterprise Ireland trade representative Treza Gallogly said the organisation will celebrate its ninth year at Fielddays. “Throughout this time, we have grown and improved on our presence at the event and also developed strong relationships with the Fielddays team.

“This year, six of our Irish client companies will be exhibiting on the stand and there are also a further 11 Irish companies exhibiting at Fielddays on their own distributors’ stands.”

The Fielddays International team provides assistance to the international exhibitors including the use of interpreters. The team is increasing its promotions in emerging markets like Latin America and Asia.

Gallogly said Fielddays helps the Irish companies. “[Fielddays is an] ultimate launch platform for Irish companies to showcase their cutting edge technology and innovative agri-business solutions to the NZ market and helps to build on the strong ties between Ireland and NZ in this sector. The flow of information goes both ways of course.”

Enterprise Ireland is the government organisation responsible for the development of Irish enterprise. “Our support of clients starts in Ireland, where Enterprise Ireland work with companies from the early stages of their development. Once they reach a stage where they’re ready to export, Enterprise Ireland help assess which countries they are likely to do well in, and assists them to reach their potential in those countries.”

Fielddays International is similarly oriented to support New Zealand agri-tech companies, and provides information and advice to those companies that would like to start exporting.

Fielddays International business executive Marcelo Mieres highlights their strategy to promote New Zealand products to the world. “We participate at several international agricultural trade shows, where we promote New Zealand agricultural industry and Fielddays.

“We support NZ exporters at international trade shows all over the world. For example we have five sites at the World Dairy Expo, Madison, Wisconsin, USA, that we allocated to New Zealand companies exporting to the US market.”

Any exporter sceptical about the genuineness of an overseas buyer can check with Fielddays International, thanks to the organisation’s vast network of contacts.

Ireland and New Zealand have many similarities, including total population, and the importance of the agricultural sector in their respective economies, and Gallogly said that the farming practices are quite similar as well. “We find that our clients’ machinery and technology are taken up well in New Zealand and suit the New Zealand climate and geography.

“As an example, Ireland have been housing cows for many years, and this practice is now taking off here in New Zealand, especially in the South Island where the climate is colder. Ireland supply cow barns, rubber matting, cow cubicles, waste disposal machinery, milking machines and many other products for this type of farming,” she said.



PHOTOGRAPHED: Guy DeSalis & Phil Fraser

NEW INDUCTION SYSTEM INTRODUCED TO FIELDAYS

Written by Dasha Kuprienko & Haylee King | Photography by Geoff Ridder

Fielddays exhibitors setting up their sites have faced an extra hurdle this year, as inductions have been introduced to meet health and safety requirements.

The inductions were carried out before anyone could go onto the site during build-up and pack-down.

Inductions were running continuously through the day taking no longer than five minutes each, informing visitors of risks, hazards and responsible behaviour.

“Fielddays have made a real commitment to health and safety this year,” inductor Paula Lovegrove said during the build-up on Monday.

Everyone has to wear a hi-vis to be easily visible to everybody on site.

The biggest hazards on site are trips and falls and the induction advises people to pay attention and be aware at all times.

It was recommended not to leave equipment unattended and to supervise untrained staff.

Lovegrove said some people reacted negatively when told they had to take the induction.

But the operation was running smoothly.

“We are expecting over 1000 people today.” Lovegrove said.

With the induction having to be done, traffic wanting to enter the site began to build up.

Guy De Salis, along with other security staff, helped with traffic management into the site at Gate 1.

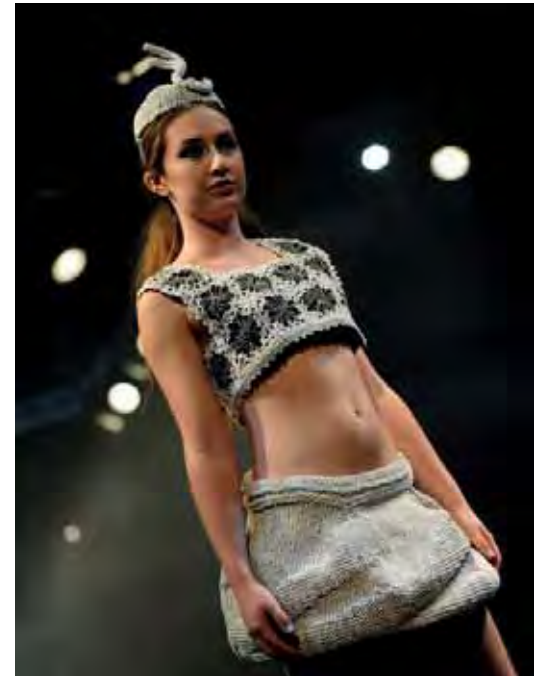
He said traffic was busiest in the morning from 7.30am and was mainly exhibitor contractors.

Inductions were introduced this year following new legislation and OSH laws surrounding health and safety on a building site.

STITCHING TOGETHER A FARMYARD FROCK

Written by Katy Ritchie | Photography by Jordan McClunie and Geoff Ridder

Cambridge woman Sandy Bromwich has entered most years since Fieldays Ag Art Wear began over 20 years ago. It takes months to plan her entry and carefully transform farmyard junk.



Sandy Bromwich sits in her Leamington house weaving glossy black ribbons together with delicate strands of white fabric. The two materials criss-cross on her lap, a long black fringe sashaying over her knees. The chequered panel might evolve into a skirt, a cape or a dress. Bromwich isn't sure yet. "It depends if I can get

what I want to work," she says.

She's experimenting with different looks for next year's Fieldays Ag Art Wear Awards. Everything in the competition has to be created from items that can be found on a farm.

She submitted this year's entry, Glad Rags, two days ago, and started working on next year's, as yet untitled, straight away. The black ribbons are hand scissored from the inner tube of a tractor tyre. For the white lace, Bromwich has shredded an offcut of non-slip matting.

All garments will be worn by models if they make the final. They need to fit a size 10 woman or a medium frame 5'8" tall man in standard New Zealand sizing. Every outfit needs to withstand 10 wears. There will be eight showings over four days plus two extra showings for judges.

It's a good thing Bromwich likes to keep busy. She works full-time in supplies at Waikato Hospital. A mother of three grown sons, she's also a keen cyclist and is heavily involved in the Cambridge BMX Club, coaching both adult riders and the junior Sprockets.

Bromwich won first place in the Designer Traditional category last year with Wired, a four-piece ensemble featuring a metallic skirt and top paired with a pillbox hat and matching boots. "I just couldn't believe it when I won!" says Bromwich. "I was really surprised but also really proud. It was something that I'd tried to achieve for a number of years so it was a very special moment."

After entering the competition most years since 2003, Bromwich had placed third on three previous occasions. However she had never spent as much time as she did on the winning piece. It took two years to complete. She had intended to enter it after 12 months of work, but wasn't happy with how it was sitting. So she took another year to rework it.

For Wired Bromwich laboriously separated lengths of metal and plastic out of electric fencing wire and made the separate garments using different types of traditional knitting stitches. There is movement and form and a fragility belying the outfit's origins on the farm. Squares of crochet are interlaced with silver flowers. The back of the bodice features intricate lacework inspired by a spider's web.

There's a framed certificate up on the mantelpiece announcing the win, together with a photo of the outfit being modelled on the catwalk, and one of herself with Te Radar, the New Zealand comedian who presented the award. Meeting Te Radar was a highlight.

Ag Art Wear is the only design competition Bromwich has entered, although she has given some thought to entering WOW – the World of Wearable Art Awards Show.



Ag Art Wear is a design competition that challenges entrants to **create** a piece of art for the body, made from materials found on the **farm**. Featured are entries from local **high schools**.



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT:

- Models get a briefing from Rachel Middleton
- *Birds Eye View* designed by Jamie Summerell of Waikato Diocesan. Materials used in the creation of this garment are used wool packs, bird scare balloons, chicken wire and brown string.
- Symbolising the balance of conformity and freedom we have *Queen Posilage* by Emma Ayson of Fairfield College.
- Kathlyn San of Hamilton Girls High School created this day wear ensemble made from frost cloth and net packaging.
- Inspired by materials used in the wool shed, Waikato Diocesan student Taylor de Barres-Williams designed this woollen garment.

Photography by Geoff Ridder



NO 8 WIRE AWARDS

Written by Kyra Dawson | Photography by Awhina Kerr



Auckland-based sculptor Rebecca Rose battled with wire for more than a month to take home the top prize for Fieldays' sponsored annual NO 8 Wire Competition.

Artists and art enthusiasts alike were present at the awards ceremony for the NO 8 Wire competition which was launched 18 years ago in 1997.

Rose's sculpture titled *Eye Sight*, is symbolic of the connections of humanity.

"Many twists and turns shape our unique selves. But what is forgotten is our connection to the whole. I see perfectly intertwined threads connecting us all," Rose said in her artist statement.

"It took me about a month of solid work, and that's really going for it.. Trying to get it to work this way and that way, and I made a few mistakes... Of course the wire's a lot stronger than I am."

Rose's husband, Matt Chamberlain, accepted the award on her behalf on the night.

"She has been pleading with me to help her but I refused, I think she has been vindicated tonight."

Rose said she will reinvest the \$8000 prize money into materials for new work. She also wants to donate some to a charity.

"I like to do that when I get some good money coming in."

This year's judge Tony Nicholls said that he had been looking for a marriage between the concept behind the artwork and the skill of workmanship with the wire.

"As a judge you read the work in the same way that the artists made it, or intended to, and sometimes you don't know when you create something, exactly how it's going to be read," Nicholls said.

Nicholls said Rose's piece matched what he was looking for. "I had to set myself [guidelines] that I should judge on and [Rose's sculpture] definitely answers those [guidelines] and [one of its] strengths is its NO 8-ness."

Last year's winning mother and son duo from Te Awamutu, Dagmar and Nick Elliott, entered separately this year with Dagmar coming in second.

Dagmar said last year she had asked her son for help because she did not know how to weld wire, but for her birthday she was given a welding helmet.

Dagmar's award winning piece titled *Rusty Jandals - Gone for a Swim* is intended to symbolise a family who have left jandals by a piece of drift wood while they go for a swim.

Dagmar said the idea came to her after she fell over her husband's "rather big" jandals.

"I picked them up and looked at them with a different material in mind. The next day I went to the workshop and just started to work on one. That pair is hanging on our garage. I certainly enjoy welding

myself but I don't mind some helpful hints and help if I fail which can be often! Nick often tells me: 'Open your eyes Mum, then you can see what you are welding!' Rusty wire has a mind of its own and is not as easy to weld as new wire but I like it and I like the challenge," Dagmar said.

Akky van der Velde came in third place with her sculpture *Fenced In & Out*.

This piece was symbolic of the ghosts of cows. Van der Velde said she made it to remind people of the animals that were part of the herd but have been replaced by the next generation.

"My work... is a celebration of the land, the NO 8 wire and the bovine. It can be looked at as a monument to New Zealand's farming today," Van der Velde said in her artist statement.

President of NZ National Fieldays Warwick Roberts also selected an artwork for the President's Choice.

Roberts chose *Our Nation's Pride* by Katrina Jury of Hamilton which he liked for its simplicity.

"You didn't need to explain what you saw, I felt the simplicity told the tale," Roberts said.

Jury's sculpture was a wreath made from NO 8 wire, which according to her artist statement was to commemorate New Zealand's servicemen and women, past and present.

The creations are priced from \$148 to more than \$17,000 and are on display until June 29 at the ArtsPost. Entry is free.



NYPHEA: Jane Pouls and Dave Sole

LL

I have been around for years and am very reliable. But don't let my practical side fool you, **I enjoy your creativity**, I want to be a form of art, take me and make me your own.

ART WITH A TWIST

Written by Kyra Dawson | Photography by Awhina Kerr

Long term resident of New Zealand, No 8 Wire, has been part of Kiwi culture since ages ago. Kyra Dawson takes a deeper look into the ins and outs on the upcoming Fieldays No 8 wire competition.



With a twist here and a pull there you can shape me how you want me. I'll hold tight and do my job as instructed. Use me to create, invent, or if you prefer, I can be simply practical. I have been around

for years and am very reliable. But don't let my practical side fool you, I enjoy your creativity, I want to be a form of art, take me and make me your own.

That's the challenge for entrants in the Fieldays No 8 wire national art competition. This year their creations were judged by Hamilton man Tony Nicholls.

Nicholls, a Wintec Media Arts technician, has won national prizes for his kinetic sound sculptures. His workshop is shared with arts students and their work. It's full of paint, wood, metal; basically any material you might want to create with. Nicholls has spent time making guitars and enjoys creating sculptures that involve sound.

Although he doesn't normally use No 8 wire in his sculptures, he appreciates the concept behind it.

"Kiwi ingenuity does come into it and it's a part of the transforming nature that I am looking for," said Nicholls.

The No 8 wire art competition has been held as a pre-event in the buildup to Fieldays since 1997. The fundamentals have remained the same from the beginning with the main rule being each sculpture must be made from at least 75 percent No 8 wire. Why this wire? When this event was first created Barry Quayle, a former promotions committee member,

asked himself: what is a backbone to New Zealand within the concept of agriculture? No 8 wire was used in New Zealand by early settlers and since then has become symbolic of Kiwis' DIY attitude. Quayle wanted to find an event that would connect townies and farmers.

At the time the Fieldays promotions committee was looking for a pre-event with a hook to get the public interested.

"We were looking at ways and means that we could actually enhance the profile of Fieldays, because turning out press releases and that kind of thing doesn't really cut the mustard," Quayle said.

"I was looking for something visual, something that could be quite compelling and maybe quirky, with a humorous element to it, but would engage people. That's when we thought we could get the art community involved and do something with No 8 wire."

A competition was born.

With Nicholls being a major player within the art community he was sought after to be this year's judge. He said he had difficulty picking the finalists as he could only view their works as photographs. The final 14 were put on display in the ArtsPost gallery and the awards evening was held on June 4 with a month-long exhibition opening the next day. With an \$8000 prize up for grabs Nicholls wanted to make sure he picked the best sculpture, and he knew what he was looking for.

"I'm looking at each work [in terms of] what they say in their artist statement and seeing if that



JUDGE: Tony Nicholls addresses the prize winners

statement actually matches the work. I'm looking for an honesty. I don't like art that is all concept at the cost of the object, I like a marriage of the two."

Last year the top award was taken home by mother and son duo Dagmar and Nick Elliot.

Dagmar, who works mostly with flax, lives in rural Te Awamutu and was interested in this competition because of its connection with rural New Zealand. Last year she wasn't skilled in welding No 8 wire and asked her son to help her. Since then, she was given a welding helmet for her birthday and has learned to do it herself. She was looking forward to this year's competition.

"Welding rusty wire is not always easy, but I like the broad spectrum of earthy colours the wire has and the connection with some good old kiwi ingenuity."

Nick on the other hand doesn't practise any other form of art but he thought it would be fun to help his mum out.

"We always had heaps of old wire hanging around and we thought, why not do something with it, we had nothing to lose."

From my settler origins I have become part of your culture. At first you used me to separate or fix things. I stuck around so long that soon enough you decided I was a New Zealand icon. You use me to explain you innovative personalities. I have become an artistic material. I enjoy helping you bring your creations to life, but, I will ask one thing of you; please, do not forget what I symbolise. Keep the Kiwi ingenuity flowing.

RURAL, YES. BACHELOR, NO

Written by Charlie Scott | Photography by Chris Davis



While this year's Rural Bachelor finalists are announced in the lead up to Fieldays, last year's winner packs up his things ready for a new challenge. There is a mountain of rubbish in Jeff Peek's office and the same in the lounge. He is going through the house biffing crap, to use his words, and his pantry is now just a box full of condiments.

A new challenge awaits – he is moving from the farm he manages in Morrinsville, with a herd of 350 cows, to a contract milker position in Pirongia, where he will milk a herd of 660. But it is not only his job that is changing. As Peek boxes his belongings so does his partner, Jasmine Bloxhan, as they prepare to move in together.

They met six weeks after Peek won the Rural Bachelor title. He said it was the competition that was the catalyst. It opened doors for him in the dairy industry by introducing him to farmers all over New Zealand. And it made him a more diverse social network, which led to his introduction to Bloxhan, by a mutual friend.

Bloxhan is a jewellery maker by trade.

What kind of jewellery?

"Jewellery."

She also works on a small dairy farm in Otorohanga. When Peek went there and met her, her boss and her friends he was like "ohh".

"To start with it was the ol' courting thing, she'd

come here for a dinner and a movie then she'd bugger off home," Peek said.

It was a big commitment for the two farmers, beginning a relationship with someone who lives an hour away. During calving was especially tough. He would finish work at six to shower then drive an hour. They ate dinner around nine then he would drive back before the morning milking. The effort was worth it.

"Jas is bloody good eh, we get on like a house on fire. We're very similar in terms of what we like to do – being outside, having a good laugh, having some fun, going to the beach. She loves a laugh and a joke and she hates sitting down doing nothing. It motivates me to go and do lots of other things as well. She's very hardworking and it's going to be pretty cool to watch her take that step into a bigger farm," Peek said.

For their second date Peek turned up the romance. He organised a surprise dinner at Fahrenheit restaurant in Te Awamutu – Bloxhan hates surprises. And he bought her flowers.

What kind of flowers?

"Flowers."

Amidst the mayhem of a moving household Peek picks his favourites of the group announced as finalists for the 2015 Rural Bachelor of the Year. "You can stalk them on facebook," he advises. Bets could be on between himself and his rugby mates over who will reap the newest rural bachelor title.

The contestants might get a shock if they think it is going to be a holiday, Peek says. For those wondering,

"there's not as much drinking as you might think". He remembers the media coverage as confronting.

"We had a Dutch woman there from Belgium or somewhere like that – has like millions of followers on this rural TV programme. We didn't have a clue what she was saying or what was going on and she was interviewing us, rattling away – and that was broadcast over there."

Still, Peek would recommend the experience to anyone. And he plans to enter a few of his rugby mates in years to come.

It still feels surreal. He finished work last Thursday, but even after five sunrises, the fact he is leaving has not dawned on him just yet.



BACHELOR 2014: Jeff Peek on the job



BACHELOR 2014: New challenges await Jeff



MUSHROOM MARQUEES: Event manager, Lee Picken

BUILDING A TOWN

Written by Haylee King | Photography by Angus Templeton

Mystery Creek is a bustling town come Fieldays. That only comes after months of planning. Haylee King tracks progress in the build up to the biggest agricultural event in the southern hemisphere. Exhibitors. Check. Event design. Check. Endless proofing. Check.



I love my role, it's **diverse** and dynamic, **creative** and **proactive**. I'm always talking to different people and I work in an incredibly passionate team.



Two weeks before Fieldays begins, Mystery Creek's Fieldays event manager Lee Picken is feeling comfortable.

Picken has been closely involved in 2015 Fieldays planning and organising, and seen the Mystery Creek site unfold and develop in front of her eyes at a steady pace, from her office overlooking the action.

"When I turned up this morning and looked out the window to the site I said 'someone needs to get a photo of this.' The activity is really starting to build."

What she sees two weeks out is a lot of movement on the site as Mystery Creek team members and exhibitors secure their Fieldays territory. Tents, marquees and more tents, contractor vehicles, trucks, tractors and ground movers. A totally different site from what she saw six months ago.

This year's event planning began the day after last year's finished. There were briefings to be held and after a small break, it was into Fieldays organising again.

Green and bare is how Picken describes Mystery Creek six months ago.

Three months ago she could see the site begin to transform in preparation for the 900 exhibitors and more than 120,000 expected visitors.

This was when earthworks began. The dirt was being turned, the lake was being filled and the old tractor pull site was filled to make room for 35 new central exhibition spaces for this year's event as part of Mystery Creek's 10 year development plan.

While the grounds are busy, so is Picken and her team. This is the stage when important details are planned, decided and put into place.

For example, details that surround Rural Bachelor, what sort of heats they are going to do onsite and

before that, what the amazing race will look like, where the contestants will start, and where they will visit. It is all information that Picken and her team of 36 have to brainstorm, plan and finalise.

Site progress. Check. Rural Bachelor plan. Check. Social media promotions. Check.

One month ago, earthworks were nearing being finished. "Twenty-five large trucks were down there, there was a lot of dirt and there was activity like you wouldn't believe. There was a lot of movement, it was really exciting," Picken said.

On the communication side of the office the Fieldays programme and the Fieldays Focus were being written, proofed and proofed again. These are the important documents that are sent to exhibitors and include all relevant information for visitors.

Team management. Check. Tickets. Check. Final details. Check.

CUISINESCENE COMES BACK FOR SECONDS

Written by Haylee King | Photography by Geoff Ridder

Last year's Fieldays was such a sweet experience for first-timers New Generation Liquorice that they have returned in 2015 with an extra range.

Carol Reason and Kelvin Fraser are bringing products from Waikato-based company Cuisinescene New Zealand.

Cuisinescene produce 30 all-natural salad dressings and condiments each using Waikato fruits and vegetables.

Each product is hand-made in small batches by a team of cooks in a registered kitchen in Te Kauwhata.

The range includes vinaigrettes, chutneys, preserves, oils and jellies.

"The black raspberry vinaigrette is the favourite," Reason said.

Cuisinescene can be found in the Kiwi's Best Kitchen building.

They have teamed up with Hamilton based bread company Volare who will supply the bread for taste

testing.

"I hope some of our products get chosen to be used in the cooking demonstrations," Reason said.

Over in the Bledisloe building their New Generation Liquorice site can be found.

The liquorice, nougat and fudge confectionery are made with 100% New Zealand products in Palmerston North.

"We did really well at last year's Fieldays... The raspberry nougat is every girl's favourite," Reason said.

Canterbury Sheepskin exhibitor Ian Hunter said he is really glad to see New Generation Liquorice back this year.

"They're great. I ate so much last year I'm surprised I didn't get myself sick," he said.



CUISINESCENE TREATS: Condiments carefully crafted by hand

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