



Weddel's World

★ WESTFIELD
★ TOMOANA
★ PATEA
★ KAITI - in conjunction with
Gisborne Sheepfarmers
Freezing Co. Ltd.

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
ISSUED BY
W. & R. FLETCHER (N.Z.) LTD

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1981

CANNED MEAT EXPORTS TO PACIFIC ISLANDS

McCallum Industries, a joint venture with W & R Fletcher (NZ) Ltd exports canned corned beef and mutton to the Pacific Islands, in a marketing situation which is steadily increasing.

The venture follows a five year break on Fletcher's part from the market. Prior to that W & R Fletcher operated a similar business from the Westfield works where nine lines of tinned goods including spaghetti and meatballs, were processed.

Although business was increasing, the cannery was in need of updating and this was not economically viable, the operation was closed down.

Hector McCallum, managing director of the factory which is situated in Waitakere, near Henderson in Auckland, says that the factory employs 17 staff and exports 90 percent of its products — Palm corned beef, and Salisbury corned mutton. The latter product is sold mainly to Fijian Indians.

Fiji absorbs 40 percent of the exported volume, Tonga 20 percent and the Cook Islands

20 percent. A further 10 percent is distributed to Samoa and the smaller islands.

The remaining 10 percent is marketed in New Zealand in some of the larger department stores.

These two canned products form a staple protein for many islanders, and are described as a meal in a can. They keep well without refrigeration.

The factory sells more than 90,000 dollars worth of cans each week, and demand is expected to result in sales worth more than 10 million dollars each year during the next two years.

The products are marketed in Fiji by agents, and Fletchers do their own marketing in Tonga and Samoa.

The factory is situated on 10



acres of land, and produces between 18000 to 20000 cans each day. Stock is derived from freezing works in both the North and South Islands, and

some 3500 manufacturing cows, and 6000 ewes are processed each week after arriving at the factory frozen and already boned.

GENERAL MANAGER'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

In last year's New Year message, I said that 1979 was a year of stories built around both good and bad news. That message applies equally this year.

In a period when inflation and the cost of money is causing problems for business, the probability of the Southdown closure sounds a warning for the Freezing Industry generally.

There has to be a recognition from all sectors of the company that productivity — and the continuity of productivity — is essential if there is not to be another "Southdown".

At the time of writing, there is unfortunately, still a reluctance to recognise this message. This could prove dangerous, particularly when the difficulties created by the EEC voluntary restraint agreements are also constituting a problem.

From W & R Fletcher's point of view, however, there are clear signs that the new Tomoana plant has overcome its teething problems (and other plants also) in a good production situation which should prove a good harbinger for the future.

In addition, and on the optimistic side, the re-starting of the beef floor in reasonably record time following the 1979 fire at Tomoana, also points towards a favourable note for the future.

Given the tools, the inclination, and despite the difficult times, the ultimate answer lies in a capable and loyal staff. In this respect we are indeed favourably placed.

I want to place on record the company's appreciation of the way that staff have dealt with past difficulties. In this respect we are confident for the future.

I would like to wish all staff members and employees, together with their families, and also our many valued clients and associates, all the best for the coming year.

PATEA FIRE BRIGADE

The Patea Brigade was first formed in December 1940 with Mr C H Carey as the Chief Fire Officer. Since then Mr H F Baley has been CFO (1958 - 1967) and the position is currently occupied by Mr A B Minton.

feature in 1959, with Westfield as the first host. Each brigade has had its share of wins in the following 21 years, and only on one occasion has there been a three way tie.

Last year, Patea were the



Members of the Patea Freezing Company Volunteer Fire Brigade standing by their fire appliance.

The Brigade was first registered with the New Zealand Fire Services Commission as an Industrial Fire Brigade in 1951, and it presently provides a back-up service to the town's Fire Brigade.

It was the Patea members who mooted the idea of an interworks competition to be held on a regular basis after a visit to Tomoana, and these competitions were begun as a regular

hosts for the 1980 interworks competitions, and trophies were presented by W & R Fletcher's General Manager Mr Peter Johnston.

The highlight of the evening function was the presentation of the volunteer Fire Brigades Association's Gold Star Award to Deputy Chief Fire Officer Barry-Wills Rawlings, and third Officer Hugh Katu.

AT TOMOANA

Here today, gone tomorrow — and then back again. Since beginning work with Fletcher's six months ago, **Mike Pownall** has certainly been on a shuttle between Wellington and Tomoana. At the works he is looking at the development of the computer system to ensure its efficiency and effectiveness.

Mike is an electrical engineer by qualification. He attended Victoria and Auckland Universities, and his introduction to computers came while doing post-graduate work in data processing systems at the Radio Research Centre.



Mike Pownall

After graduating, he continued his association with broadcasting and worked (during what are now known as the "golden" years of television) on television transmission systems, and project control. Much of his time was spent as leader of the Special Development group which worked on the remote control systems for radio and television throughout the country.

In 1973-74 he was the Wellington Hospital Board's Electrical Engineer and later in 1974 he went to the DSIR to work with a group which was looking at the application of computers to the meat industry.

He stayed with the DSIR for two years, and while there he examined the application of computer technology to such areas as weighing and graphic ticket-printing, data-collection and sorting.

After his time at the DSIR Mike went to a firm of consulting engineers where he was involved with industrial control and microprocessing systems, and during that time worked on the installation of a data collection system at the Whakatu works and on a trial system for the Australian Meat Board which was actually tried at Riverstone plant, an Australian associate of the W & R Fletcher Group.

LIVESTOCK CORNER

David Whelan joined W & R Fletcher in January 1958 as a booking clerk in the Hamilton office.

After two years he was assigned to a cadetship with two of the most senior members of the buying staff, Mr Geof Manchester and Mr Alec Gillespie.

Mr Manchester was regarded as one of the most outstanding lamb drafters in the Waikato, as was Mr Gillespie as a buyer and excellent judge of cattle.

David's ability as a sound judge of stock was quickly recognised, and when Mr Manchester retired in 1964, David was appointed as his replacement.

During the past 15 years, he has developed into a particularly good judge of cattle, and is sought after as a judge in Agricultural and Pastoral Show Associations' prime cattle classes, and Breed Society's field days.

This ability has taken him to all cattle centres in the North Island.

In May 1979 he was appointed Livestock Manager of the Waikato, Thames Valley, Rotorua King Country Bay of Plenty districts.

David also has an eye for thoroughbred horses, and was a partner in that successful old warrior — Jack Johnson.



David Whelan

He played senior cricket in the early 1960's for the Hamilton Star Cricket Club as an opening left handed batsman. He is married with one boy and two girls, and his wife is a talented floral artist.

COMPANY PROFILE

Les Bruce began with the company as an officeboy in January 1941 and moved through a number of positions at Westfield, including those of pay office clerk, slaughterfloor clerk, and test inspections clerk. He was later promoted to



the position of assistant wool foreman. While at Westfield he was a member of the Sports and Social Club, and also the interworks football team. During his time at Westfield he also developed an interest in MG sports cars, and was once the possessor of the reknowned J2 and also a 1936 SS model.

During the war years he spent almost five years in the airforce, and was in the Pacific with the No.25 Dive Bomber Squadron. He also managed to be in Britain for the victory parade as one of the NZ contingent who were presented to the King and Queen.

In 1954 he transferred to Patea as the Wool Foreman, and while there he was sent to Australia to get the Slipemaster operational — an event he considers to be the highlight of his time with the company.

He was subsequently promoted to the position of Assistant Works Manager and later to that of Works Superintendent — Meat.

He transferred to the Wellington Office in 1977 as a production co-ordinator and last year became assistant Shipping Manager.

Besides MG's, his interests include boating, his membership of a local historical society, and also an interest in party politics.

He was presented with a gold watch in January, and hopes to stay with the company for the next eight years until his retirement.



Julian Awdry, and Simon Goulden.

Simon Goulden and Julian Awdry, management trainees from the Union International Company (UK), were in New Zealand last year for six months to work in two of W & R Fletcher's freezing works.

Julian was based at Tomoana, and Simon worked at Patea where he stood in for the General Manager, Alan Parker, while he was in the UK.

Both men left New Zealand to holiday briefly before moving on to their next postings. Simon has been posted to Frigorifico, Brazil, at the Barretos works, and Julian has returned to the UK to work in the trading side of wool and pelts.

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At Tomoana, he will be working on the computer system which has been designed particularly to sort carcasses for bagging and storage. It will also collect information on each carcass for farmer payment and for work records. The system will print identification tickets and control the operation of the tunnel blast freezers. The sorting is done by 42 fully mechanised rails which can sort carcasses by grade or order before bagging.

This computerised system will improve quality control and accurately record the information on individual carcasses. It is aimed also at providing customer satisfaction in that it will allow special orders to be put together quickly and accurately.

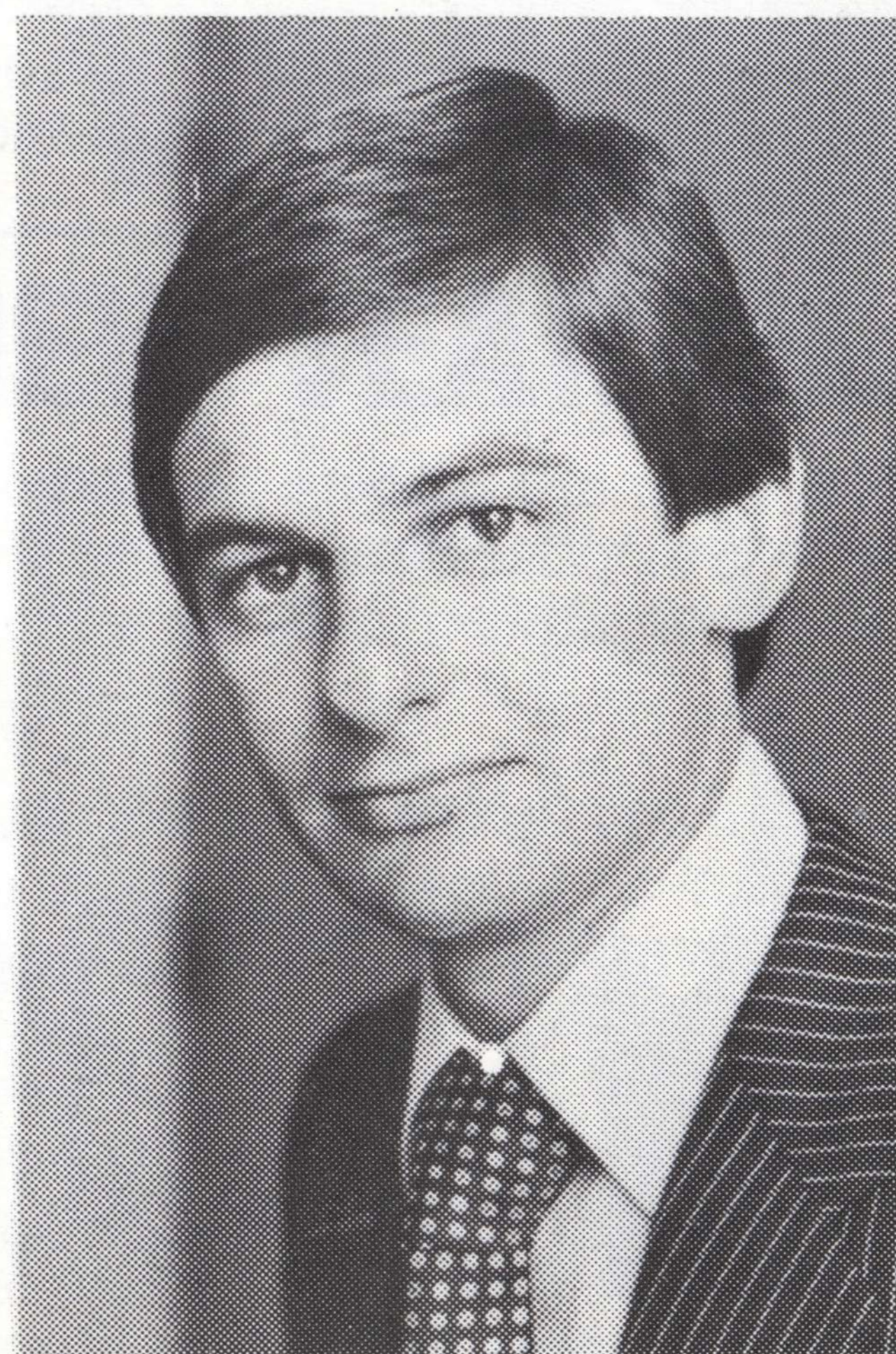
Mike, who is married with three sons, describes himself as a do-it-yourselfer who enjoys building, and also social squash and jogging.

CHILLED BEEF MARKETS EXPAND

The advent of containerised meat shipping has seen Weddel's share of the Hong Kong lamb market increase from 30 to 55 percent. Plans are now underway for changes in the strategy of chilled beef marketing which will, it is hoped, see further increases in the tonnage of beef supplied from New Zealand to Hong Kong.

Hugh Haslehurst-Smith, who managed to combine a well-earned holiday with business commitments, was in New Zealand recently to discuss such possibilities in Hong Kong with W & R Fletcher's management.

A considerable amount of beef that is supplied to Hong Kong comes from Mainland China, but during the past year, with world beef shortages and the resultant escalation in the price of beef, total beef imports to the colony have dropped from 20,000 tonnes to about 8,000 tonnes.



Hugh Haslehurst-Smith

Along with the decline in beef imports, and also as a result of the world-wide economic downturn which has affected Hong Kong along with most other countries, there has been a parallel decline in the numbers of small, lower middle class restaurants — traditionally frequented by Chinese who

have been consumers of frozen beef.

Such phenomena have meant a re-think of beef marketing, especially to the up-market consumers — a sector who eating habits are least affected by economic fluctuations, and who also wish to eat quality beef.

It is for this reason that supplies of quality chilled beef are under discussion, and while Hugh admits there is competition from Australian beef, quality beef from New Zealand is regarded favourably because of its price and superior taste.

And with the Hong Kong Refrigerating Company's new cold store situated adjacent to the container base at Kwai Chung, the company has a facility that clearly provides the base for expansion of its business in the 1980's.

RETIREMENTS AT WESTFIELD

Last year management and staff at Westfield farewelled the following members of their staff:

Mr Alf Hearne spent 49 years with the organisation. He joined Union International as a boy of 14 in 1931, and served as a junior clerk under the original Lord Vestey. He and his wife Irene emigrated to New Zealand in 1970 and he joined the Westfield Freezing Company as a member of the accounting section — a position he held until his retirement.

Mr Lou Jagger was the Group Scientist at Westfield, and he retired after spending 32 years with the company. He joined in 1948 as Assistant Chemist but soon after took over the position of scientist to the group.

He had a wealth of knowledge relating to all aspects of the industry, and was considered an expert on the meat processing and export industry, small goods manufac-

turing operations, meat and vegetable canning and stockfoods manufacturing.

In fact, Lewis (as he is known) played a very important part in setting up the Stockfoods business. He also represented the industry for many years on the Industrial Trade Waste Committee of the Auckland Regional Authority and his knowledge on such matters is considered to be almost unlimited.

After serving his time as an apprentice engineer **Mr Noel McDougall** served in the British Mercantile Navy from 1938 until 1946. He joined the staff of Westfield in 1955 as a senior shift engineer — a position he held until his retirement.

After joining the Company in 1961 as a carpenter, **Mr Bert Halsey** was appointed to the position of leading hand in 1963. He became a member of the engineering staff in 1970, handling various engineering

records — a position he held until his retirement.

Mr Murray McIvor joined the Company in 1941 as a chamberhand. He was appointed leading hand in 1943 and became an assistant foreman in 1956. In 1974 he took on the responsibility of 2IC of the freezer, a position he held until his retirement.

Mr Gordon Harvey joined the Westfield Freezing Company in 1947. He held the position of leading hand in the freezing chambers for some 13 years, and during the past six months was an assistant foreman in the same department. He was a champion cyclist in his day.

Mr Frank Horspool joined the company in 1949 as a carpenter, and was appointed to the staff as a Safety Officer in 1970. Frank was very prominent in the Works Fire Brigade as an officer and competitor.

Mr Bert Warrington joined the Company as a yardhand in prewar days. He saw service overseas during the war, and rejoined the organisation in 1947 to look after the company's interests on the wharf. He was appointed to the staff in this capacity in 1948, a position he held until transferring as an assistant yard/transport foreman at Westfield in 1977. Unfortunately Bert met with a nasty accident four years ago which necessitated an early retirement.

Mr Ben Porter joined the company in 1970 as a sales clerk — a position he held until his retirement. Ben also had a distinguished war record with the Maori Battalion Second NZEF where he served as a officer having the distinction of being decorated with the Military Cross and Bar.

To all these gentlemen and their wives, we wish them a long and happy retirement.

A FIRST FOR FIRST AID



Nine employees of the Tomoana freezing works at Hastings have created a first — they are the first industrial workers to complete an advanced resuscitation course run by the St John Ambulance Association.

The nine employees, including the industrial nurse, tradesmen and freezing workers, are now able to give effective first aid to heart attack victims and other patients who have stopped breathing.

From left to right R McEwen, P Goodwin, Nurse R Greville, R McKee, G Johnston, C Wright, R Shortt, D Maaka, ST John Ambulance Field Officer N Wood, Absent: R Kerr.