

# GLENBURN SHEARING SHED & QUARTERS

In its heyday during the wool boom in the 1950s, the Glenburn shearing shed handled up to 10,000 sheep in a season. The sheep were brought from as far as Captains Flat.

## A sketchy past

The original structure most likely started out as a hay-shed, built in the early to mid 1860s by John McInnes for the absentee landlord John James Wright (1861 - 1866). It could also have been built by John a few years later for subsequent absentee landlords Martin Byrne (1866 - 1871) or George Campbell (from 1871).



Members of the McInnes family shearing and wool classing in the Glenburn shearing shed c 1990. The McInnes family (descendants of John McInnes) have held leases in the vicinity of the shearing shed complex for more than 100 years. Photos: Kerrie Anne McInnes.

Over the years the shed grew rather erratically with the addition of many skillions with sides made of timber slabs and corrugated iron. In 1913, for example, there were three skillions. Now there are a lot more.

Many of the additions, including the engine room and the holding pens, were made during the 1920s. The timber slab and corrugated iron skillion on the western end was added later, possibly during the wool boom of the 1950s.

## A bustling interior

Standing the test of time, the four stands with overhead Lister mechanisms (driven by a leather belt connected to a Moffat Virtue diesel engine), are still in working order. This equipment was installed in 1922, and in 2014, was 92 years old. There are also several sheep and wool storage pens, wool classing tables, and three wool presses. The shearing shed is no longer used.

## Making do

The sheep yards are made from a great variety of materials including dropped logs, iron mesh, flat and corrugated iron, sawn rails, netting covering star pickets and Marsden matting (the iron sheets with large round holes in the western fence of the southern yards).

To the immediate south of the shearing shed, there is a plunge dip which was used to treat external parasites such as lice. A set of demountable steel cattle yards lies to the south-east.

## Welcome shade

The deciduous trees in the yards are Black Locust *Robinia pseudoacacia*, which are native to the south-east of the USA. In October, they are a mass of creamy white pea-like flowers that hang in long clusters.



A sketch of the shearing shed in 2013 by Gary Thompson.

## Home to the shearers

The current shearers' quarters buildings were constructed in the mid 1950s to replace earlier ones that did not meet the requirements of the Rural Workers Accommodation Ordinance. The central accommodation block has six rooms, is lined, and has a hip roof and two brick chimneys. The two room extension has a skillion roof. The six bedrooms have no internal access between them or between them and the other two living and kitchen areas. In one of the fireplaces a Bega cast-iron fuel stove was used for cooking.

Much of the plumbing in the laundry/shower block, including the copper, has been removed. The tank that was on top of the very high stand has also disappeared.

On the eastern side of the accommodation block there is a small brick and corrugated iron building with an iron roof. This was a meat safe.

*Please respect this site. It is an important part of the early European history of the area and is significant to many ACT and interstate families.*



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