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OF GUMBOOTS & GRASSCUTTERS

Both Skellerup and Masport will be waiting at the mailbox for a letter from the Queen this year as they celebrate their 100th birthdays. And no centenary would be complete without some hearty reminiscing, so, to honour the success of these classic Kiwi companies, we raise a glass and laugh at their old marketing material.

Back in 1910, George Skjellerup, a Danish Australian, opened the Para Rubber Company in Christchurch, selling tyres and rubber goods for the dairy industry (fun fact: Skellerup is now the third biggest dairy rubberware manufacturer in the world). Its footwear business was formed in 1939 and New Zealand's first

rubber gumboot, the 'Marathon', was released in 1943. But 21 October, 1958 is the day that should live on in Kiwi infamy—and should really be made a public holiday—as it was the day the Red Band gumboot ("available in black with red trim") was born.

Sir Edmund Hillary and his team wore Skellerup products, most notably Mukluk boots, which were specially designed for his Trans-Antarctic Expedition in 1956–1958. And who could forget the people's shoe, the Skellerup All Star, which was made famous by a be-permed Dame Susan Devoy and a very short shorts-wearing Jeff Simpson. *Continued overleaf* ❖





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 The first incarnation of Masport kicked off when Reuben Porter, Harold Mason and Edwin Jones opened City Engineering Ltd in Auckland in 1910 and started manufacturing vacuum pumps and stationary engines for the farming industry. It began making "the Dominion's finest mowers" in 1930 and released New Zealand's

first petrol-powered lawnmower in 1938. But Masport wasn't all about lawn maintenance. It also manufactured World War II grenades and produced New Zealand's first fridge, the "handsome" 'Masport'. And, interestingly, the marketing department was only established in 1966, the same year its sales first exceeded \$2,000,000.

