

# CURLEW CAPERS



The newsletter of:  
**Pottsville and District Men's Shed Inc**



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Men's Shed Inc**

**P R O M O T I N G M E N ' S  
H E A L T H O N T H E  
N S W T W E E D C O A S T**

March 2017

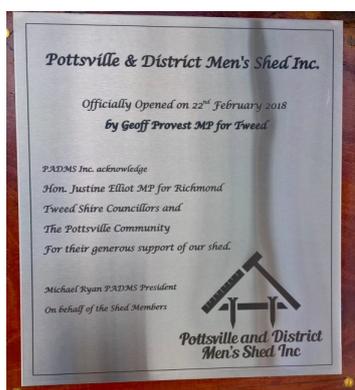
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## THE GRAND OPENING OF THE PADMS

What a perfect day!  
The attendance of around 200 exceeded our expectations.

It was so encouraging to see so many of those who supported the move to our new shed; our political representatives, our local community and members of other Men's Sheds.



Our official guests were:

Reece Byrnes - Deputy Mayor, Tweed Shire Council  
Justine Elliot - Federal member for Richmond  
Geoff Provest - State member for Tweed  
Councillors Chris Cherry, Warren Polglase also attended

Thank you all for coming, for your past and ongoing support and for Geoff kindly consenting to open the new shed.

## CALENDAR

### MARCH

Thursday 8th. 10.00am. Members meeting  
Sunday 18th. 6.00am. Kingscliff Triathlon  
Tuesday 27th. 6.00pm. Dinner at the Tavern

### APRIL

Sunday 8th Bunnings BBQ  
Thursday 12th. 10.00am Members meeting  
Thursday 26th. 5.00pm. Drinks at the Tavern

### MAY

Thursday 10th. 10.00 am. Members meeting  
Thursday. 31st. 6.00pm. Dinner at the Sports Club

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2016-17

Michael Ryan - President  
Owen Paxton - Vice-President  
John Wells - Secretary  
Leighton Meredith - Treasurer  
Craig Butfield  
Jim Hutchings  
Robin Barrass

We received apologies from Barry Longland (Former TSC Mayor), Cr James Owen, Cr Pryce Allsop and Alan Pilay of the Pottsville Beachside Church,

A big thanks goes to Allan May as MC. Allan was our founding president and led our organising committee for the opening. This planning resulted in a successful operation on the day.



We were also overwhelmed by the generosity of the ladies in organising and providing the excellent morning tea. Steve & Julie Carratt organised the Shed Cake.

Allan introduced the speakers, starting with our President, Michael Ryan.

#### MICHAEL RYAN

Michael gave us a most interesting history of Pottsville & District Men's Shed, of which most of us were fairly unaware.



In December 2013, Allan May called a meeting at the Pottsville Sports Club with the idea to establish a local men's shed in Pottsville. This was attended by 80 or so men and a committee was formed in January 2014, comprising Allan May, Michael Ryan, Leighton Meredith, Tim Whitfield, Ron Haggett, Noel Mather and Ian Cooper, who unfortunately has recently passed away. P&DMS was incorporated and we registered with the Australian Men's Shed Association, Tweed Mayor, Barry Longland and, Geoff Provest our Tweed State MP were very supportive.



Donations followed with a very much appreciated \$500 from Pottsville Beachside Church and several members provided establishment loans of \$100 each to the Shed. Two truckloads of tools from St. Lawrence College in Brisbane appeared and Shackell Transport provided storage at their Pottsville depot for these tools, Tricare Community at Hastings Point allowed us to hold monthly meetings in their common area. Hutchinson Builders donated a shipping container which we located at North Pottsville Caravan Park and Pottsville Self Storage also provide the shed with a storage unit for all the donated tools and equipment that were coming in. The Shipping Container at the Pottsville Caravan Park was basically the Shed for over 12 months.

The big breakthrough came in November 2014 when the Pottsville Beach Public School former Principal, Debbie McKinnon offered P&DMS a demountable classroom to use as a shed. We fitted the classroom out and in January 2015 we moved in. This enabled us to start projects and we developed a firm relationship with the school where we were able to mentor students in woodcraft. It is planned to resume this relationship in our new shed.

The NSW State Government with the backing from Geoff Provest has generously provided two grants of \$37,500 in 2015 and \$35,000 in 2016. The Pottsville Tavern has donated over \$2,500 to the shed from their Thursday Community Raffles. The Pottsville Beach Sports Club has donated \$4,000. We have held several Bunnings BBQs, manned by our members and our provision of marshals at the Kingscliff Triathlons and Tweed Enduros has to date raised \$4,500. Splendour in the Grass were generous and gave us a donation of \$5,000.00. Northern Rivers via their Community Grants Programme kindly donated \$4,500.00 and further funds have been generated by manning the BBQ stall at the Round Mountain super boats and setting up at the fortnightly Pottsville markets.

All this has helped with the construction and fitting out of the new shed and the purchase of equipment. All the labour of fitting out was voluntarily supplied by our members, with particular reference to Steve Carratt of (SJC Electrical Contactors), giving many hours away from his business and his offside, retired electrician, Mal Stapleton and site manager, Brendan Menagh, on site seven days a week and liaising with council.

Several members volunteer to go to Kingscliff very early every Wednesday to pick up produce from Woolworths for the Pottsville Pantry run by Beachside Church.

There are social dinners, including the ladies and members drinks on a regular basis. Many of our members have moved to Pottsville in recent years and they and their ladies have appreciated the welcome they have received.

REECE BYRNES

Reece mentioned "the war" and now "the peace" and paid tribute to the work done, the support from the community, wives and partners of members.

We are indebted to Cr Reece Byrnes, Cr James Owen, Cr Warren Polglase and Cr Pryce Allsop who voted in favour of our move to Black Rocks.



JUSTINE ELLIOT

Justine stated that this was a truly community event and mentioned the work that the shed gives back to the community on various projects and events.

She was impressed by the camaraderie within the shed and the support given by the presence of members from sheds in the area.

Thank you Justine for your support and for your encouraging visit to the shed during construction.



GEOFF PROVEST

Geoff alluded to the long arduous journey, a journey that caused friction within the community, but good things come to those who work hard for a good cause.

He mentioned the overcoming of hurdles to the fulfilment of today. One involving the delivery of the flat pack shed a few days before Christmas. This and the subsequent storage of this rather enormous package was planned for a later date.

Geoff interceded and Tweed Council offered storage at their premises at Chinderah, with council employees helping several shedders with the unloading.

Geoff brought up the issue of men's mental situations. He related the opportunity he had to meet with three shed member's wives at one of our neighbouring sheds. These ladies were so thankful for the effect their shed had on their husbands' health and their recovery from various mental issues. Loneliness and lack of self worth were mentioned and he stated that filling a void and helping men in this way was the true meaning of men's sheds.

## MEMBER PROJECTS

These were put on hold until recently, as the fit out and internal floor plan for the equipment and installation of ceiling power cables and dust extractors were proceeding.

## FUNDRAISING

We received a cheque for \$750 from the organisers of the Kingscliff Triathlon. Many thanks to the 12 shed volunteer who acted as race marshals on what was a very hot day on December 3rd and to Johnno for coordinating.

There is another Kingscliff Triathlon on 18th March once again we have been given the opportunity to contribute. Johnno will be coordinating again and looking for volunteers.

The January Bunnings BBQ raised a profit of \$1,891, a record for this event. Many thanks to the 18 shedders who volunteered on a very hot summer day to Johnno who coordinated the operation, no mean feat and to Mal our groceries buyer.

The next one is scheduled for Sunday 8th April. We are thankful for Bunnings support and Johnno will again be looking for volunteers for this event.

The Pottsville Enduro was held on 10th February, again very hot for the 16 shedder volunteer race marshals. We are thankful again for this support, the \$1,000 donation and for our serial coordinator, Johnno. A big thanks to Iris for providing a 6.00am morning tea and coffee and for standing in as a marshal for husband Peter who was unexpectedly called away.

We have accepted the Pottsville market day organiser's offer of setting up for EVERY market day this year. This comprises a 6.00am start every fortnight with an anticipated finish by 7.30am. There are too few members rostered at this stage and it is obvious that many more will be required. Craig is coordinating this and you can expect a tap on the shoulder!

## GRANTS

An application has been made to the National Shed Development Programme for \$10,000, \$7,500 for solar power and \$2,500 for a defibrillator.

## OTHER NEWS

Just on a lighter note although it could have ended differently, one of our members kindly offered Cec Hayes and Oden, his guide dog, a lift home from the shed.

The good Samaritan promptly dropped both them off in the wrong street. Oden however rose to the task and guided Cec home!

Another member was having trouble in being advised to do something a certain way and was told to pretend that he was at home!

Our trusty green keeper and pro cyclist has performed a couple of double somersaults with pike off his bike over the past two shed bike excursions up to Salt. Good one Pat, a great example for us amateurs! Also, thanks to Pat for your activities in watering and mowing the grass at the shed ensuring its immaculate condition for the opening .

## MEMBER PROFILES

The last issue of "Curlew Capers" featured two "true blues". This time we have contributions from a "Taff" and a "Pom".

### **Leighton Meredith aka our fearless treasurer.**

From his accent Leighton informs us that he wasn't born in Australia!! He was born in a small mining village in the Rhondda Valleys called Llewypia in the local cottage hospital.

His family lived with his grandmother in Penrhiwfer for his first week, then by train to Kent in England where his father was stationed with the RAF in Bomber Command as a rear gunner in Lancasters.

They lived in a Camden Squire, the only house left standing after the Germans had flattened the place firing from two very large guns on a railway track in France, 22 miles away.

When Leighton was very small, he was taken to hospital very ill but his parents were told that due to a lack of beds that they should take him home to die as it would be better to have the family around him. He obviously survived and his mother took him back to Wales. The local doctor who had just returned from a Japanese POW camp on the death railway referred him to a larger hospital in Llantwit. He was then fortunately treated by a doctor who subsequently became a top children's medico in London. It took another 12 years to define the problem.

In the meantime he started at the village school in Penrhiwfer, then to infants school at Williams town, and finally Craig yr Eos secondary school in Penygraig with a 3 mile each way walk. Due to his condition, Leighton wasn't allowed to play any sport.

At age 14 he enrolled in the local college (TAFE?). He wanted to be a carpenter but was told that that would be too strenuous. He applied unsuccessfully for a carpentry apprenticeship! So then he took a tailor's apprenticeship, which didn't work out due to the dust and dryness of the cloth. Then off to work in a factory in Tonypany making bags with an all girl staff! Finally however Leighton had his dream realised, following a letter and then a successful interview with the local council for a carpentry apprenticeship, with the full backing of his doctor. He was given a 5 year apprenticeship grade A, passed his City & Guilds craft, advanced craft and a full technical certificate in building.

Leighton's next job was with a Canadian company, York Trailers as a trailer body builder. He used to run bus trips to Blackpool and met Marilyn Lewis, got engaged and married on 6th June, 1970 (D-Day). The work involved 60 to 100 hours a week, seven days a week and Leighton dropped to nine and a half stone. After two years Leighton left and after retraining, operated and repaired banks of weaving looms. Then on to an RAF camp at St Athens in Glamorgan as a carpenter/joiner. Bored, he then moved to the Llantrisant & Llantwit council in Cardiff, where he passed his Ordinary national certificate in surveying and higher national certificate in building and law, now a degree course. This establishment was reorganised to form Taff Ely CBC where Leighton was first a carpenter and then a site foreman. He retired in 2000 as a building inspector with Rhondda BC.

After helping his two boys building their houses, Leighton sat for his assessors exam, teachers certificate and internal verifiers qualifications. He then helped, with a team of 5 Poms, to rewrite the new qualifications for the building industry for England and Wales, for both City, Guilds and Construction Skill.

He retired on a Friday and on the following Thursday, with Marilyn, left South Wales for a short stay with their son in Kent and embarked for Australia. As this great state was named after their own part of Wales, where else could they go!

(Ed. footnote. What a roller coaster and it goes to show that even with life's early setbacks you can't keep a good man down! Thanks Leighton and a note to shedders, with all these qualifications and work experience, let's heed Leighton's suggestions.

For those of us who have difficulty with the Welsh accent, just try pronouncing, Llewnypia , Penrhiwfer, Llantwit, Penygraig, Tonypandy and Llantrisant!)

### **Bill Crossley**

Bill was born in February 1938 at Hebden Bridge, West Riding, Yorkshire.

Hebden was a small town manufacturing clothing. All Bill's relations worked in that industry except for an uncle who was a farmer. His father died when he was very young and his mother never remarried.

Bill attended the local primary and high schools. He stated that one aspect of writing this history is remembering things that have lain dormant since childhood. He recalls one day in his second year of school when he was only five, a bicycle collided with him on his way to school. No one was badly injured, just grazes. However the incident caused him to be late for school. Despite his explanations the teacher clouted him on the head and stood him in the naughty corner for half an hour. Times have changed thank goodness, definitely not politically correct! (Ed. note, but in my experience very effective!)

Bill's schooldays passed without further drama. At the age of 14 he left home to go to sea school in Hull for nautical training.

In 1954, with an apprenticeship with a company called James Nourse, his seafaring career began on a motor vessel, the "Kallada". His first voyage took him to India via various Mediterranean ports, Suez Canal, Red Sea, Yemen and finally along the Indian coast to Calcutta. This trip took 9 months, the second 11 months and the third over two years, which included two visits to the Australian east coast, Cairns to Sydney, back to Calcutta, Cairns, Brisbane, Sydney, Fiji, Calcutta again, round the cape to the West Indies, then back to London. (What a tour! These days tourist pay squillions for this, but Bill was paid!)

Bill's apprenticeship finished and he the opted to look for work entailing shorter trips.

He succeeded in his application as third mate on a ship trading to the West Indies and South America. It proved to be a dream of a job and included some trips up the Amazon all the way to Iquitos in Peru.

This was all fine but he had met this future wife, Brenda and wanted to get married. Ferries seemed to be the answer. The now married couple bought a house in Preston.

Bill scored a position as ferry officer on ferries running to Belfast and Larne. He eventually captained the "Isle of Innesfree" of Irish Ferries Ltd until his retirement in 1995.

Brenda and Bill had two girls, Louise, the elder and Rebecca. Louise died tragically at 17 of meningitis. Rebecca married and produced their only grandchild, who is the reason that they are now Australian citizens. Becky and her husband moved to Australia in 2005 and Brenda and Bill followed in 2011. Only last year they became Australian citizens and formally welcomed by mayor Katie Milne.

Looking back Bill reflects that with a few exceptions, they've had a fortunate life, happy in Australia, have made many friends, including about 50 in P&DMS for a start!

Bill has found a cousin he didn't know he had, petrol is still less than a pound a litre. He hasn't had Yorkshire pudding for 6 years, weighs 10 kilos less and the doctor says he's good for another 20.

(Ed. Many thanks Captain Bill and for joining us at the shed. If you're desperate you can buy Yorkshires at Coles! My wife is from near your neck of the woods and she reckons they're not too bad!)

We welcome four more new members, David Honey, John Taylor, Richard Snell and Noel Hayes. The new shed is attracting new members every month and our membership has now expanded to (54?)

When the editor joined two years ago our numbers were 34 and our premises at Pottsville Beach Public School were already bursting. The construction of the shed at Black Rocks has given more of our local men a place to meet and share on a regular basis.

## IN THE LAND THAT MADE ME

Long ago and faraway in a land that time forgot there live a race of innocents and they were you and me.

For Menzies was in the parliament, that land where we were born, where navels were for oranges and No. 96 was porn. We danced to "Little Darlin'" and sang to Buddy Holly in the land that made me.

Only girls wore earrings then and three was one too many and only boys wore crew cuts except for Jean McKinney. Only in our wildest dreams did we expect to see, a boy named George with lipstick in the land that made me.

We fell for Doris Day, Bardot was oh so nice and when they made a movie they never made it twice. We didn't have a Star Trek Five, Psycho Two or Rocky/Rambo 20 in the land that made me.

Miss Kitty had a heart of gold and Chester had a limp and Tarzan was a loner whose co-star was a chimp. We had our share of stars and never thought they'd go, at least not Johnny O'Keefe and Marilyn Monroe.

We'd never seen the rock band that was grateful to be "Dead" and aeroplanes weren't named Jefferson and zeppelins were not "Led", beatles lived in gardens and monkees lived in trees and Madonna was Mary in the land that made me.

We'd never heard of microwaves or telephones in cars and babies might be bottle fed, but not grown in jars. Pumping iron got out wrinkles and "gay" meant fancy free in the land that made me.

We hadn't seen enough of jets to talk about the lag and microchips were what was left in the bottom of the bag. Hardware was a box of nails and bytes came from a flea and rocket ships were fiction in the land that made me.

Peep shows came with winders and side shows came with freaks and swimming togs came big enough to cover both your cheeks and Coke came in bottles and skirts below the knee in the land that made me.

There were no Golden Arches, Perrier to chill, fish were not called Wanda and cats were not called Bill. Middle age was 35 and old age 53 and ancients were our parents in the land that made me.

So now we face a brand new world in slightly larger jeans and wonder why they're using smaller print in magazines and we tell our children's' children of the way it used to be, long ago and far away in the land that made me.

**SPONSORS**

The members of PADMS would like to thank these companies for their continued support of our Shed:

- Pottsville Self Storage
- Pottsville Beach Public School
- Beachside Church Pottsville
- Stocklands Property Group
- Pottsville Beach Sports Club
- Pottsville Tavern
- Splendour in the Grass
- NX Sports Tweed Coast Enduro & Kingscliff Triathlon
- Tweed Valley Jet Sprint Club (V8 Superboats)
- National Australia Bank



Pottsville Self Storage is conveniently located to provide secure, cost-effective storage for Pottsville clients. Based in Pottsville, we are easily accessible to Murwillumbah and Ocean Shores residents. Accessible 7 days a week, with drive-up units, we can securely store your car, furniture, office equipment and more. Call us for a quote.

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