

The Curlew Capers – June 2026

Welcome to the June 2026 edition of the quarterly newsletter of Pottsville and District Men's Shed.

Looking back at the past three months I realize why time seems to have disappeared, there has been a lot happening. Enjoy catching up on our shed activities.

Pottsville Health and Wellness Expo

After two attempts to host this event in 2025, both abandoned due to adverse weather, the 2026 event was an outstanding success. Held in conjunction with Seniors Week, 37 invited exhibitors contributed to the day, held in the Pottsville Community Hall.



Early start for the setup volunteers



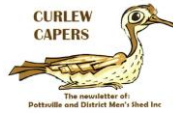
The event offered something for everybody



There was a constant flow of visitors



Feedback from exhibitors was 100% positive



Feedback from an exhibitor, Dovidia, sums up the general feeling of the day: -

*"Many thanks to John Taylor and the wonderful team from **Pottsville and District Men's Shed Inc** for inviting **Dovidia Tweed & Northern Rivers** to be part of today's hugely successful Health and Wellbeing Expo at the Pottsville Community Centre. With more than 35 stallholders from across the health and wellbeing sector, it was a terrific day filled with connection, conversation and a shared commitment to supporting our community. We're already looking forward to doing it all again next year."*

These events do not happen without a lot of work and special thanks must be given to John Taylor and Clency Bernard for your efforts. Thanks also to the volunteers on the day who contributed and the exhibitors for your support and positive feedback, we look forward to seeing you again.





Bus trip to Casino Community Mens Shed

16 PDMS members visited Casino Community Mens Shed at the invitation of the Shed President, Harvey Reddell.



The Casino Shed was different to PaDMS as there are both male and female members. While this model is not unique in the Mens Shed Association, most Sheds with mixed membership roster separate days for men and woman to work in the workspace. Casino has men and woman operating equipment, side by side, and sharing the facilities in good natured harmony.

Harvey spoke about the benefits of this model of operation, including growing a sustainable membership in an environment more akin to our modern society, expanding the range of skills and activities available to members and the ability to attract a broader range of funding from both Government and private sectors because of the scope of interests and participants.

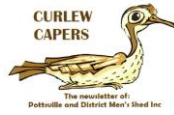


The visitors were impressed by the space and layout of the workshops, clear marked walkways, meeting and community areas that provided for a safe working environment and access to alternative activities including art and lapidary. Some good ideas for our own extension.

The visitors were treated to a delicious morning tea, the cake was so good that Peter R had to have a second helping.



Thanks go to Harvey Reddell for your hospitality and Mike for your safe driving of the bus. Thank you also to John T and Big Jim for your organisation and contribution.



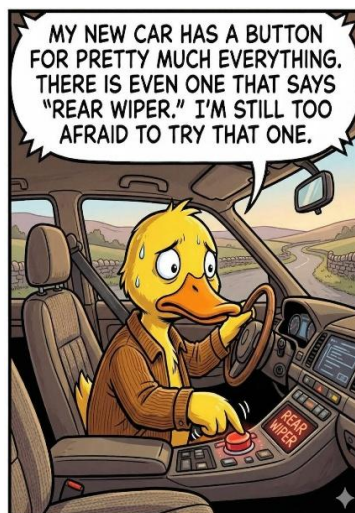
Power tool stand including charging station



Space and natural light



Well planned storage space





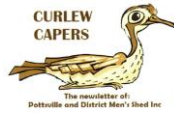
Significant Birthday Celebrations

Our April meeting was combined with a Birthday celebration for Jim Hutchings AKA Little Jim. Due to fire restrictions the candles had to be shared on two cakes and demanded a herculean effort to extinguish.

Congratulations and Happy 87th Jim.



What happens when you order your new wheels from TEMU



Anzac Day Pottsville 2026

Following the tradition of previous years, Pottsville and District Mens Shed were asked by the RSL to assist with the set up of the Pottsville Anzac Ceremony, held at the Cenotaph adjacent to the Community Centre. Despite the inclement weather a crowd estimated at 2000 people showed their respect.



Early start for the Shedders



A good crowd appreciated the ceremony



The rain came and nobody left





Inside the Engine Room - Mens Shed Kitchen



Napoleon Bonaparte wrote “An army marches on its stomach”, the Shedders at Pottsville are no different.

The PaDMS kitchen and the men who run it have been credited with maintaining the best Mens Shed morning teas in the region.

Staffed by Dermot, Trevor and Fred, the team prepares a varied and delicious array of savory and sweet dishes to compliment a cuppa, three mornings a week. In addition to this, Trevor has taken the initiative to provide the Pluckers band members with afternoon tea on various band practice days.

Trevor, a baker and pastry chef, has been involved since the early days of the Shed, when they met in two demountable school classrooms. He gains enormous satisfaction from seeing the members enjoying the results of his labor.

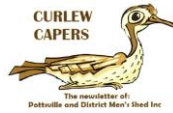
Working under tight budgetary controls and financed mainly by the member daily attendance fee, Dermot has honed his shopping skills and enabled the team to continue to maintain the high standard of excellence the members have come to expect.



Fred’s sandwich making skills are legendary and he lends a willing hand to all food preparation and maintaining the kitchen as a safe and efficient work space.



There has been a suggestion from some Shedder’s partners to cut down the food being served because their Shedders were gaining too much weight.



Occasionally a Special Guest Chef will visit the kitchen.

They are always welcome.

Thank you to our kitchen team and support workers.

It may not always be evident, but you are very much appreciated and an essential part of our Shed

Shed Social Activities

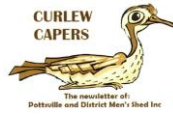
Our April luncheon for members and partners at the Victory Hotel Mooball was well attended. We officially had 42 guests, who all enjoyed their meal, although Pappy, an avid Collingwood supporter, counted 62. Like all Pies supporters Pappy is known to exaggerate - the Pies will try to win any way they can!



Members took to wearing bunny ears for the day, thankfully their partners, also sporting bunny ears, eased the eye strain created by the men. We had one member vainly trying to imitate either Bill or Ben (the Flower Pot Men) by wearing a bucket on his head. All were usurped by Julia Boyle who donned easter bunny earrings and deservedly won a bottle of wine donated by the Victory Hotel.

We took the opportunity to raise \$360.00, much needed funds, by running a raffle with prizes generously donated by our Pottsville business community, starting with two magnificent meat trays donated by our Pottsville IGA, a \$50 voucher from Foodworks, two magnificent cutting boards from the Men's Shed, two chocolate Easter Bunnies and a print donated by the Post Office.





Lucky Winner's were:

Brian Mackney - meat tray
 Kim (Victory Hotel) - meat tray
 Erica Bebendorf - \$50 voucher
 Lorraine Ingram - cutting board
 Wayne Carlisle - cutting board
 Jim Sellwood - chocolate easter bunny
 Joyce McBride - chocolate easter bunny
 Karen Ross - the floral print

Shedder Partners Social

The morning tea ladies had another lovely gathering on Friday 10th April.

We had 16 ladies, some who have not been for a while, which was a lovely surprise.

The weather was perfect and the dahlia table decorations were so beautiful. Some of the group had a little roam around in the garden after a scone and tea. (some cutting may have wandered into a few pockets!!)

Our next tea morning is Friday 15th May; a bit sooner than it would have been. This is so we no longer clash with the Men's Shed luncheons. I hope everyone had a great chat and catch-up and look for to our May gathering.

Thank you Colleen for your update.

Did you hear about the restaurant on the moon?

I heard the foods good but there is no atmosphere





Pluckers News

February 28 saw The Pottsville Pluckers 'leap' into a return concert at The Nook Italian Cafe in Hastings Point.

This was our largest audience to-date with 92 patrons booked and at least a further 10 or so 'walk in' customers attending.

The audience enjoyed our performance and were dancing in 'the mosh pit' and also extended the dance floor by taking over the car park.

Our entertainment went from 6pm until our Sweet Caroline encore at 9pm. We thank Georgia and Luca from The Nook for another generous donation to our Shed in appreciation for our gig.

We look forward to our return to The Nook in a few months and the great fun that we have sharing our interest and love of music with others. Thanks to the patrons for joining us in a fun-filled evening of singing, dancing and friendship.

We are continually adding new songs to our repertoire, and I thank The Pluckers for their valuable contribution to our Shed, the music group and our local community.



L to R

Dave Ross- Uke and Tambourine

Rod Stoker- Guitar and Lead vocals

David Andrews- Accordion and Keyboard

Steve Waygood- Guitar, Lead vocals and Tambourine

Lester Cooke- Bass guitar

Eric Wall- Guitar and Lead vocals

Peter Chaston- Guitar

David Murray- Guitar

Glenn Samuels- Banjo, Banjolele and Lead vocals

Murray Collier- Guitar

Out of shot: Roger Salt- Sound engineering



The guests showed their appreciation on the dance floor.



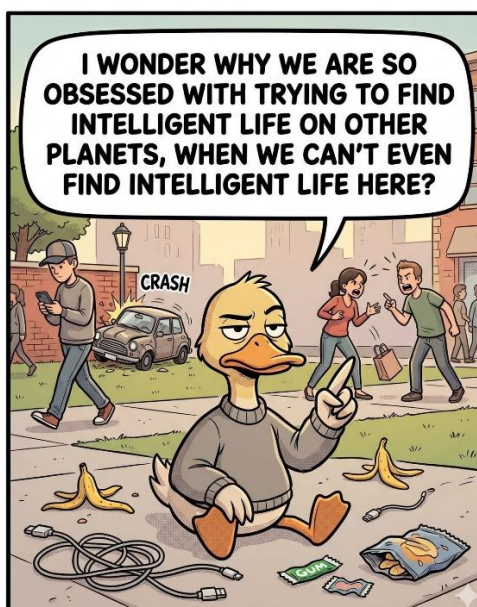
Monday April 20 saw a packed house at BUPA Aged Care at Banora Point with residents and staff thoroughly enjoying our first-ever concert at this facility. Dancing, clapping in time and singing along in songs such Song Sung Blue, Get it On and Sweet Caroline was the order of the day and we received many positive comments from audience members and staff, and are looking forward to The Pottsville Pluckers returning for another concert in the next few months.

Upcoming gigs include:-

- May 14 PADMS BBQ for members and partners
- June 27 Burringbar Public School Winter Festival
- July 30 Xmas in July Shed luncheon at Pottsville Tavern
BUPA Pottsville- TBC

'Stay tuned'

Rod Stoker on behalf of The Pottsville Pluckers





Shed Projects



A request from the Shara Community Gardens committee, at Ocean Shores, to provide a toy box, (photo left) for their garden upgrade was no challenge for our wood workers and the results are now being appreciated by the young visitors to the park. The SCG President, Paula Brown, said they had seen a similar toy box at Pottsville Beach and were very grateful when the Shedders agreed to help.



Wine barrels ready to be recycled



A new life as a planter pot



More planter pots



Lex applies the finishing coat to a day bed



Building Fund Raising – Bunning BBQ

In early May, a team of 17 Shedders staffed the Bunnings BBQ tent over three shifts. At the end of the day a total of 64 kilos of sausages and dozens of drinks had been sold raising in excess of \$2000 towards our shed extensions.

High praise for the quality and flavour of the meat was a regular response from the customers, thank you **Pottsville Village Meats** for your support, we were happy to promote this great local business.



Pappy and John keep the sausages coming



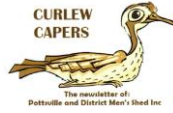
Big O upselling, "would you like a drink with that"



Ray and Glenn on the assembly line

Thank you to the Shedders involved with this successful fund raiser, it was a huge effort, the customer response and financial results were a just reward.





Lesser-Known Knights of the Round Table

The knight who was afraid to fight: Sir Render

The knight no one believed: Sir Real

The knight too big to sit at the table: Sir Round

The knight who designed the table: Sir Cumference

The knight who was never killed in battle: Sir Vivor

The knight who exceeded expectations: Sir Passed

The undercover knight: Sir Veillance

The knight who showed up unexpectedly: Sir Prize

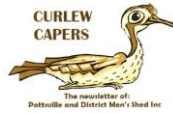
The knight who overcame obstacles: Sir Mount

The knight who kept the maps up to date: Sir Veyor

The knight who drinks too much: Sir Rhosis

The knight who performs in three rings: Sir Cus





Members Profiles (Interviews by roving reporter Jim Hutchings)

Peter Howell

Peter was born in 1936. at Newcastle, growing up in Mayfield with a brother and two sisters.

His dad was an engineer with BHP and during the Second World War, due to a Japanese submarine shelling Newcastle, BHP evacuated families, with Peter and his family moving to Patterson.

His dad was then transferred by BHP to Sydney and the family moved to Artarmon, with Peter attending Artarmon Public School. He started his first business at the school, buying tobacco and roll your own and selling the cigarettes @ 3d, a most lucrative venture!

He then attended Mosman High School, leaving school after the intermediate certificate. He had a habit of non-attendance, and his favourite day was getting on the ferry from Taronga Park to Circular Quay and then on to Manly. Shades of Ferris Bueller's Day Out.

Having just scraped through the Intermediate certificate, Peter left school, getting a "suit" job with a marine insurance business. He thought that this might involve some time sailing around the harbour, but after 6 months confined to the office, he resigned. At this stage Peter had a VJ, a VS and a quickcat, spending many a day on the harbour.

Dad said get a job! On walking through Chatswood, he noticed a black 1948 Buick parked outside a plumbing shop. On ascertaining that the car belonged to the owner, Peter thought "that'll do me" and not being backward, applied and got the apprenticeship with that plumber, at the same time attending Gore Hill TAFE.

At the end of his second year, his dad bought a 75 acre farm at Port Macquarie, farming small crops and the family moved there. After 2 years he was disillusioned with this and went back to plumbing in Port Macquarie, finishing his apprenticeship.

He joined a local roofer, Zircon. But at this stage, Peter met Iris, a Tamworth girl from Armidale Teachers College. Her first posting was to Fairfield Public School and as now having established himself as her boy friend, he moved to Homebush joining John Shearer and Sons. They were taken over by Southern Cross and he was transferred to Tamworth, where Peter and Iris were married.

Southern Cross then transferred him to Lismore, Iris transferring to Lismore Public School.

Entrepreneur Peter had the habit of buying and selling anything that moved, including cars. Two of these are featured below. Peter attests to achieving 150mph in the blue car.

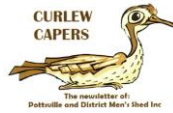


He then set up his own business in Lismore against three big plumbing firms who employed 20 to 30 plumbers each. Peter started working for the sugar mill and eventually procured their business. To keep himself afloat he bought a milk run in addition to his plumbing business. This helped him pick up maintenance work for Norco.

After three years he had 3 employees but the hours on the milk run proved too much and he ended up in hospital and Iris sold the milk run. Coming back, the plumbing business prospered with 14 employees and after 25 years he retired at 55.

They moved to Pottsville in 2004, Peter joining the Shed in 2014. The shed started at the Sports Club, then to Peter's back yard and Tricare then to the demountable at Pottsville Beach Public School in 2015. He is a Foundation Member and a Life Member.

He has been an active participant in the wood workshop and is a founding member of the Gravel Rashes in 2017. Peter is turning 90 this year and still enjoys the Friday and Monday rides. Some of these excursions have covered the rail trail to Murwillumbah, Lismore and Casino, Coolangatta to Southport, Lennox Head to Ballina and Ballina to Wardell. These also comprised the return trips!



Peter and Iris have 1 son and two daughters with the son and family living in British Columbia, ensuring trips to Canada,

Thank you so much for the interview, Pete, I really enjoyed it. Such an interesting life.

PETER BOTTIGLIERI

Peter was born at Salerno in 1947. He attended elementary school and his academic qualifications emerged early, repeating year 1!

The family moved to England in 1957, Peter attending a school in East Anglia. They then moved to Peterborough, Peter attending secondary school at St. John Fisher. The school was mainly comprised of immigrants, Irish and Italian. He was always last in class, but “majored” in football (soccer) winning two premierships for the school. He had his priorities!

On leaving school at 15, Peter obtained an apprenticeship as a diesel mechanic with GRF dealership working on heavy transport.

In 1969, he decided to travel and ended up emigrating to Australia. with a job offer in Sydney, arriving on a Friday. On Saturday visiting Circular Quay he had his first Aussie burger, with egg and, of course, beetroot. On Monday he was interviewed and received a job as a fitter with EPT, transmission line installers doing construction and maintenance work for BHP.

The position was in Wollongong and the clincher was whether he played football and was hired on the spot! EPT had a team in the Illawarra District League. The football boots were the priority and the work wrench second! His main responsibility was to be at training twice a week. The workforce lived in a camp attended by Italian cooks. The food attracted the BHP supervisors to lunch with EPT management, ensuring the contractor was kept on board!

However, Peter got the travel bug and bought an FH Holden for \$500 to perhaps drive overland to Italy. This dream faded and he ended up in the Pilbara landing a job with Goldsworthy Mining Coy. at Port Hedland. This was 24/7 work and one day due to union pressure on work hours Peter found himself at the local swimming pool. Intent on getting some enjoyment in life, he and his Irish mate left, driving to Broome. Then on the road to Darwin where they were delayed at Fitzroy Crossing due to severe wet season flooding, enjoying a 4 day stay at the pub. After that down to Uluru and Alice Springs, where flooding again caused problems, where big mining trucks were employed to rescue stranded motorists.

Moving on to Mt. Isa, and due to more flooding, putting the car on a train to Townsville. Eventually arriving back in Wollongong via Cairns and Sydney. Back to football, a goal from Peter saving the team from relegation.

In 1972, not satisfied to stay still, Peter embarked on a ship to England, where he met Julianne. He visited his family and toured around Europe with Julianne.



He returned to Australia and the Pilbara.

But in 1974 decided to emigrate to Canada, where he worked in the logging industry in British Columbia. Peter met and married Anne and settled down to family life with 6 children.

But in 2006, Julianne was in Vancouver and somehow contacted Peter. The marriage was already over and after 35 years they were together again.

Julianne returned to Australia and Peter soon followed. Peter was divorced they went to live at Salt, Peter working in a garage at Currumbin. He stated that he nearly drowned in the surf at Salt and was rescued on a paddle board. His 6 children and 13 grandchildren live in Canada and some have visited Peter at Salt, enjoying the beach.

Peter retired in 2021 and joined the shed in 2024. He is very handy and can be seen busying himself in the wood workshop.

Thanks for the interview Peter, what an interesting and exhausting life!

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We would like to thank our major sponsors and ask all our members and their families to support them whenever possible

