

The Curlew Capers – December 2025

COMMITTEE

President – Glenn Samuel
Vice President – David Ross
Secretary – Glenn Mackay
Treasurer – Jim Vane
John Taylor
Alan Whiting
Kevin Corrigan

This is a new committee elected in August, with a new President, Vice President and Treasurer. They will be looking for volunteers to fill the roles in the many sub committees, and it is up to the membership to step up. Fortunately, there is continuity in the other management positions to assist in the running of the shed.

CALENDAR

December

Thurs. 4th – Shed Christmas lunch at the Victory Hotel, Mooball, 12 noon.
Thurs. 11th – Members meeting at the Shed and sausage sizzle, 10.00am
Mon. 15th - Last Pluckers band practice
Thurs. 18th – Last workshop day followed by clean up and BBQ
Drinks at the Tavern, 5.00pm

January

Mon. 5th - Pluckers resume practice for 2026
Tues. 6th - Workshop reopens for 2026
Thurs. 29th – Lunch at the Tavern, 12.00

February

Thurs. 12th – Members meeting at the Shed and sausage sizzle, 10.00am
Thurs. 26th – Drinks at the Tavern, 5.00pm



VALE CEC HAYES

We sadly acknowledge the passing of Shed member, Cec Hayes.



Cec was a most interesting character and found his occupation in life in the printing industry. His career covered stints with the Bulletin magazine owned by Frank Packer, Rupert Murdoch's, The Australian and finally with the Sydney Morning Herald, where as a union rep. he organised a strike for better pay.

This collapsed following a deal with management. Cec himself was then appointed to a management role with 25 staff.

Cec was fond of fast cars and bought a Porsche, which he blamed for collecting enough speeding tickets to lose his licence!

On retirement Cec and wife Leonie moved to Pottsville, managing the Diamond Beach apartments, acquiring his guide dog Odin in 2012 following a stroke which affected his eye sight.

Cec is survived by Leonie, their two sons and of course Odin and our condolences go to them. He was a valued member of the Shed and could be seen clearing the kitchen after smoko. Cec was always ready for a good chat, and he and Odin will be greatly missed.



SHED NEWS & ACTIVITIES

Shed ladies' morning tea

The ladies gathered at the Cheese Factory at Burringbar on 8th September for a most enjoyable morning tea. Many thanks to Colleen for organising this occasion.



September Social Lunch

Many thanks to all who joined us for the bimonthly lunch on 28th September, which doubled up as a tribute to Cec and a farewell to Leighton and Marilyn Meredith.

Vice President, David Ross, welcomed all with special reference to widows of past members, Jo Barrass and Joyce McBride, life member and inaugural president, Alan May, past members, Johnno Smith and Mal Stapleton with his wife Gay. He also welcomed the ladies who played Life Ball with Marilyn Meredith.

John Taylor was introduced and spoke about Cec and his life. What a full and rich life he had prior to losing his sight. Cec made the best he could of his new life circumstance. Late in life he also battled Parkinsons. Cec's wife, Leonie, told John how much he valued his visits to the shed and the opportunity to talk to other members. Everyone then joined John in a toast to Cec's memory.

David asked Craig Buttfeld, aka, Pappy, to say a few words about Leighton Meredith, a foundation member and life member. Pappy spoke glowingly of Leighton and his contribution to our shed from it's inception in 2013 until now. He presented Leighton with a gift and a farewell card signed by everyone.



I should mention that when Pappy took the microphone there was a cheeky call or two, from the crowd 'sorry Pappy no Pies today'. As always Pappy took it with good humour, and we all had a good laugh.

Owen Reynolds presented Leighton with gifts from the workshop to ensure that he wouldn't forget his mates in Pottsville once he settled into life in Tasmania. Another gift of two joined caps brought a laugh!

David Ross mentioned that it was Leighton's 80th Birthday in three days' time, which was followed by a hearty rendition of [Happy Birthday](#) by everyone in the room. David also congratulated Noel and Brenda Hayes who are celebrating 44th years of wedded bliss today.

Jan Hampson and Karen Ross then presented Marilyn with a beautiful bunch of flowers from the Life Ball ladies.

Visitors from Mt Gravatt Men's Shed



The 1st of October saw the Shed host a group from Mt. Gravatt Men's Shed where many ideas were swapped. This was the second visit by Mt. Gravatt, and it was interesting to hear how a shed with 350 members was run.



Footy tipping competition

Another successful season of NRL and AFL footy tipping, professionally organised by Pappy. He did such a good job that no one complained when he shared first place in the AFL competition.



Other winners were:

NRL 1st Potty Mac (AKA Glenn Mac)
 2nd Great Britten (AKA Ray)
 3rd David Ross

AFL Equal 1st Pappy and Middle Jim
 3rd David Ross

The stewards have been asked to investigate Dave Ross after he featured in the winning circle for both codes.

Thank you, Pappy, for your efforts in arranging this event, hopefully you will continue, I am sure all participants are looking forward to the challenges of next

season.

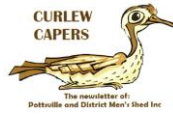
Service NSW Presentation

On Tuesday 30th September, Susan Howell from Service NSW came to the Shed to discuss her role as Savings Specialist supporting communities by providing information on how to apply for current rebates, savings and vouchers that we may be eligible for.



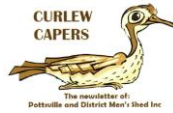
Service NSW provides free face to face and over the phone appointments assisting customers to access over 70 rebates and vouchers to help ease the cost of living. There are initiatives and programs available within our community through government and non-government agencies that not many people are aware of, so Susan enlightened us on what is available and what we may qualify for.

Susan spoke to us for about **30 minutes** and then **stayed** for another 30 or 40 minutes to enjoy morning tea with us and some one-on-one conversations with members.



The Pluckers performed again at The Nook on 31st October to an enthusiastic Halloween crowd of around 90.





Roger in his usual position dressed up for the occasion!



The Gravel Rashes Friday morning coffees at the Nook are continuing to provide the usual banter.

Bruce Brown is featured receiving the s**t stirrers award from B Mac. This stemmed from Bruce's campaign on our sewerage capacity and his efforts to enlist B Mac's expertise.



School tribute

A tribute has been sent from Luke Denneley, Principal of Burringbar Public School, to Leighton on his departure and Middle Jim as a thank you for their mentoring to the students over the past few years.



The photo on the left features three boys with the goal posts made under Leighton and Jim's supervision.

Owen "enjoying" morning smoko.





THE GARAGE SALE

Thank you so much to one and all who came to Black Rocks on 8th November to help with our garage sale. This was a huge day, and we couldn't do it without your help, so thank you again.





A figure of just shy of \$7,000 was raised for the day plus \$225.00 approx on our Christmas raffle, which was run in conjunction.

A special mention is to be made of Brenda Hayes and all her helpers. The cake stall raised about \$2,340.00 on their own. We realise what a mammoth effort is required to organise the stall, make and sell these goods. I am sure that Brenda has thanked her many helpers. We would also like to thank Brenda and her team, it was a magnificent effort, thank you ladies.



A big thanks to Roger Tempero for his initiative to have a plant stall and all of the hard work that went into the effort, which raised about \$1,100.00 for the shed. Thank you, Roger, and to Simon Thompson for their donation of an extensive range of pot plants.





The sausage sizzle and book stall were also handy contributors

Pictured below is the sausage sizzle in action and Peter Sharpe manning the book stall. Thank you, Peter and the team of cooks.



The Pluckers also contributed with their excellent repertoire and even encouraged a very youthful dancer!



Also, it was great to see Sue bring foundation member Gordon Benson to our event and Tina Corbridge giving some help during setup as Ian was ill and unable to join in, thank you Tina.



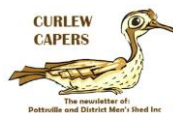
What a great day and a great result. A fantastic effort by one and all, our thanks again to everyone who assisted and for the support from our local community who turned up in droves

The editor would also like to thank Jonathon Howard for the promotion of the event in The Tweed Valley News.

MEMBER PROJECTS

A popular contributor to our garage sale funds has been our Christmas themed items, namely Christmas trees and reindeer. The reindeer are progressing nicely and the photo features several reindeer at the end of the production line awaiting the finishing touches



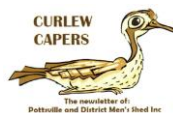


The metal shop has been busy and featured is one of their productions, a frame for hanging weights for a gym.



Carlos is featured below, part way through his production of an upmarket Billy cart for a grandson.



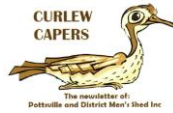


The production of the cubby houses for Kingscliff Public School is continuing under the hands of Andrew Wright and Middle Jim, pictured below with the frame.



Coffee tables from our wood workshop courtesy of Tony H.





FUND RAISING

The Christmas raffle is well underway under the motivation of B Mac, who of course is the “director of construction” of the rocking horse. Thank you to the volunteer ticket sellers and to the management at the respective shopping centres, Kingscliff, Cabarita, Casuarina and IGA and Foodworks at Pottsville for their venues.



Little Jim and Brian Mac at work

What a fantastic result from the Bunnings BBQ on 15th November netting to just short of \$2,400.00. A big thank you to all who contributed to our successful day. and to Lex Cush for his work in organising. Also thank you to those who have jumped in to help sell tickets at Bunnings for our Christmas raffle netting a further \$255.

What a phenomenal effort so quickly on the heels of our open day.

Our team of volunteers has raised more than \$10,000.00 in the last few weeks - that is including pub raffles and of course the sales of the Christmas raffle tickets.

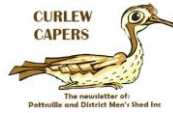
Thank you to Foodworks as the sales of cutting boards are continuing at a steady pace.

GRANTS

We are thankful to the Tweed Shire for their Community Grant of \$2,000.

Please continue to support the raffles every Thursday night, they are a major contributor to our fund raising





MEMBER PROFILES

BILL WAFER

Bill was born in Newcastle in 1950 and grew up with an older brother and younger sister.

He attended Jesmond Public School and then Newcastle Boys High School, sitting for the HSC in the very first year of its introduction into the NSW education system. Bill's major sport was swimming, and he was selected for the school team. (Ed. I can attest to Bill's ability in the pool as swimming with him, he does 10 laps to my 8!)

On leaving school in 1967, Bill joined a BHP group company, Rylands Bros., for a Mechanical Engineering Traineeship, completed in 1971, and then worked in maintenance supervision roles.

In 1975, Bill was offered a two-year transfer to Papua New Guinea as Manager of United Packages (N G) Pty Ltd. This company was a modern, high speed (480 cans per minute) can manufacturing business supplying beer cans to San Miguel and South Pacific breweries. At the age of 25, he was the youngest company manager in the BHP corporate directory. The two years spent there gave him and his wife, who he married in 1972, the opportunity to tour around PNG and SE Asia as well as explore around the Port Moresby coastal islands by boat.

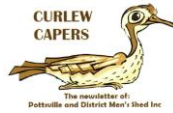


At that time beer cans were manufactured with a steel soldered body, one steel end and one easy open (ring pull) aluminium end. There was no commercially viable way of separating the aluminium from the steel after use, so they were not recyclable. BHP decided to use PNG as a test market for an easy opening steel end, designed by their Melbourne Research Laboratory, called a 'Presto' end, similar to the photo on the left. This design provided a non-disposable opening which eliminated an environmental hazard and provided a completely recyclable steel product after use.

Bill was responsible for quality control on both empty and of course, full beer cans. Great job Bill!

Unfortunately for BHP, the aluminium producers were also working on a fully recyclable 2-piece aluminium can, and this became the forerunner to the product we are familiar with today.

At the end of 1976 Bill moved back to Newcastle with Rylands, living in New Lambton, staying for another 5 years in various engineering roles.



1982 saw Bill join Warman International Ltd, manufacturers of heavy-duty slurry pumps, as Hunter Regional Manager. These pumps were predominately used for coal preparation in the Hunter Valley mines, and mineral sand dredging, both booming at that time.

Following 12 years at Warman, he joined CCI Engineering as Marketing Manager developing a market for a high-pressure pump for environmentally friendly water hydraulics to replace oil, again mainly associated with long wall mining. These Swiss made pumps, with prices ranging more than \$100k provided an exclusive but challenging market.

Moving again after 4 years, Bill joined Metso Minerals, still in Newcastle, as Service Manager for Eastern Australia.

He retired in 2010, moving to beautiful Boomerang Beach, on the coast south of Forster, involving a major renovation to what had been a family holiday home. Not to be idle, Bill set up a home property maintenance business titled Bill Fixit. The demand cycles of this business centred around the summer holiday periods with quieter winter times allowing for the opportunity for touring Europe every second year, with Bill proclaiming Paris his favourite city.

In 2018 Bill was diagnosed with prostate cancer, undertaking a robotic prostatectomy in 2019 followed twelve months later by radiation therapy. In 2021 there was a further requirement for 3 months of hormone therapy followed by a second round in 2024. Bill did not raise this topic for sympathy but rather as a request to support advocacy as it is a subject that needs to be openly acknowledged and discussed. Gender specific ailments related to men do not receive anywhere near the public exposure they deserve. This cancer is no longer an old man's disease, with new patients being diagnosed in their 40's and 50's and very limited private or Government financial assistance for research into the cause, treatment and prevention. The current, most common long-term treatment has now been in use for around 80 years with significant quality of life impacts. We need more politicians and high-profile sportsmen to identify this disease as a worthy recipient of research funding. There was a lost opportunity when King Charles was diagnosed in 2024 but then a wall of silence relating to his treatment and ongoing diagnosis stifled the conversation. It is critical that all men over 50 are routinely tested and if there is a family history of cancer they should start testing at 40. Let's make sure we talk to our brothers, sons and mates and keep getting checked!

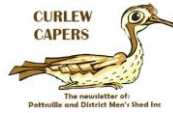
In 2021, Bill's 50-year marriage unfortunately didn't survive this challenging period.

However, Bill's fortunes took a great turn, meeting Kerry in late 2022. They married and moved to Pottsville in 2023.

He joined the Shed in May 2024, becoming a proficient Christmas reindeer producer under instruction from Roger.

Bill enjoys spending time with his blended family, including 6 children, their partners and 12 grandchildren.

Bill and Kerry are members of St. Marks Anglican Church in Pottsville and are very much welcome in the community and the Shed.



Ed. Thank you for the interview, Bill and it was very brave of you to want to include your condition.

JOHN BAILLIE

As a relatively new member John, welcome to the Shed.

John was born in Brisbane in 1951 into a family with two brothers and a sister.

He attended Yeronga Public School and Yeronga High School, excelling in tech drawing and playing Aussie Rules for the school and on leaving school in grade 10, for the South Brisbane club.

His football days came to a halt on his purchase of a surfboard, his favourite spots; Coolum, Sunshine Beach and Lennox Head.

John attended TAAFE and qualified as a fitter and turner. He was stationed at Yeronga and Bulimba Power Stations. After two years in Brisbane, he moved to Stradbroke Island for 4 years working in his trade.

Moving north, John landed a job on Heron Island working on a service boat for 18 months and then another one on charter boats for 2 years in the Whitsundays. Moving again to Mackay, he joined Point Hay tugs as a deckhand and after 13 years obtained his master's qualification working as the tug master for another 20 years. This involved directing the enormous coal ships tying up to the 3 kilometre long wharf at the end of the coal conveyor belt.

During his time in Mackay, John's leisure time was spent sailing catamarans, the first a 30 footer and then a 45 footer with six berths, mainly inside the reef around the Whitsundays.

He retired in 2016 and moved to Angourie to surf every day. He and his wife Susan then moved to Black Rocks in 2023.

John joined the Shed only three months ago and has been heavily involved in the Shed's massive cheese board production and has also been spotted assisting Theo with the gym weights frame.

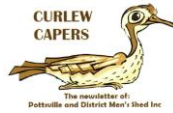
John is enjoying life in Pottsville and his family of two sons and 4 grandchildren.

Ed. Thank you for the interview, John and no wonder you enjoyed your occupation in such an idyllic environment.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to Simon Thompson. Simon has slotted in well with his activity in the wood workshop and donation of 50 potted succulents for the garage sale.

Thank you, Simon.



A LIGHTER SIDE

Ed. This is a poem I have previously published. Here it is again for those still able to remember "The Good Old Days"!

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.

The wit of Ming and Gough brought debate above the trough.

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", beetles lived in gardens and monkeys 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.

Editor - I would like to give utmost thanks to Michael Ryan who published the Capers over the past 8 years and to Bill Wafer for his generous offer to take over from this latest issue.



"You're looking a lot better today, Ralph."

