

Port Fairy Men's Shed NEWSLETTER

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Affiliated with the Australian Men's Shed Association

Men's Shedders get active!

In the last issue we called for expressions of interest from members of the Port Fairy Men's Shed assist the Port Fairy Folk Festival in building benches in time for next year's festival. It is therefore pleasing to report that the support received was substantial and, along with Festival regulars and some members of the Lions Club, some 28 participants helped build 380 benches!

The project took two weeks to complete and the "Men's Shedders" contributed an estimate of 300 hours work to what is a very worthy cause.

Above all, it proved that the basis for the Men's Shed concept - of bringing people together to work on common projects - works well as everyone who assisted seemingly enjoyed the work and camaraderie. *And we did this without even having our own shed!*



The production line in full swing!



The finished product - very sturdy bench seats

All the work on building the benches was carried out at Jack Smits's shed and under his careful supervision. Once the production line was established everything seemed to run like clockwork.

Update on Shed location

The Steering Committee of the Port Fairy Men's Shed (PFMS) is still working hard to secure a shed location. Last issue we reported on the progress and discussions with the Port Fairy Sea Scouts. We are still awaiting response from the Scouting Association as to whether we can erect a shed on their land but are still hopeful this may be supported. If permission was granted, there would still be many obstacles to overcome before we can say we have a shed of our own. Funds would not only have to be raised but building and planning permits secured as well. This will all take time and may well take 12 months or more!

In the interim, it is pleasing to report that, as a consequence of our last Newsletter, we received an expression of interest from the Port Fairy SES to allow us interim use of a shed on their property in Sackville Street. This is an attractive offer and one we are pursuing with much vigour as it would enable us to establish a base much sooner. We would then use our grant funds from the Moyne Shire Community Assistance Fund (\$5,000) to set-up the shed and get some basic equipment. We will keep you informed on progress but it is fair to say that the Steering Committee is most enthusiastic about this option and have formally written to the SES and the Shire to bring this opportunity to fruition.

Above all, we hope to have some good news about establishing a working shed soon!

Wood turning demonstration

Despite the relatively poor response to our call for participants for a woodturning demonstration when announced in the last Newsletter, plans are still afoot to hold the demonstration. The proposed date has been set to be **3rd December 2008 from 10am to 12 noon followed by a BBQ**. The demonstration will be held in Gary Hommelhoff's shed at 78 Regent Street, Port Fairy and Brian Eldridge will be the instructor.

If you are intending to come along then, to assess numbers for the BBQ, you are asked to ring **Don Stephens on 5568-2153** by the 1st December to confirm your attendance.

Equipment acquisitions

The recent closure of the Dartmoor wood mill was very unfortunate for the workers and the local Dartmoor community in general but has resulted in a windfall for the Port Fairy Men's Shed.



We contacted the parent company, **Carter Holt Harvey (CHH)**, to enquire about the possibility of any equipment being disposed by the mill that we may be able to acquire. CHH responded very positively and offered to donate a single phase thicknesser, some work trestles, a bench saw and a power drill which were gratefully received.

Don Stephens, Keith Bunge and Harry Bracegirdle then took off to Mount Gambier, armed with a trailer, to pick up the donated goods that are now in storage, along with the woodturning lathe that we got from the Hamilton Men's Shed, until we can establish our own shed in which to set them up.



Don and Keith tie down the load in Mount Gambier

Don Stephens also made a coup by purchasing five, good quality kitchen chairs from the local Op Shop that will be very useful in our future tea room! At \$5 each they were a bargain.

An auction of disused equipment in Warrnambool on Saturday 22nd December also provided the PFMS an ideal opportunity to buy workbenches, cupboards, a whiteboard and other useful equipment items. Keith Bunge attended the auction where he purchased items to a total of \$645 that we now plan to claim back from our Moyne Grant CAS grant.

Membership fees

As a consequence of the benches project for the Folk Festival, the Steering Committee felt it was best that we had people formally entered on our membership register in accordance with our articles of Incorporation. The "signing up" of members was done to provide a more formal legal basis and level of protection should we unfortunately suffer any serious accidents whilst at work.

The Committee agreed that, being a formative year, the one-off joining fee of \$5 would only be charged and that the annual fee (also \$5) would be waived in Year-1. As a result we now have 23 paid up members on our books.

If you want to formally sign up with the Port Fairy Men's Shed, please contact **Harry Bracegirdle** (Secretary / Treasurer) to arrange payment of your \$5 joining fee. Harry can be contacted on 5568-2601.

Fund raising activities

John Ellard is currently pursuing options to seek funding from a number of philanthropic organisations in our attempt to raise funding towards the estimated \$70,000 needed to erect and equip a shed.

The Victorian Government, through the **Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD)** has recently advised that a second round of grant funding for Men's Sheds will be called early in 2009. The DPCD aim to distribute a further \$1M of an initial allocation of \$2M set aside for Men's Sheds in Victoria. As this is expected to be the final allocation of funds for this cause, it is imperative that we submit an application for this grant. Hopefully, if successful, the DPCD grant can provide a substantial proportion of the funding we require for our shed.

At a recent PFMS Steering Committee meeting, we met with the local **DVA (Dept. of Veterans Affairs)** Community Advisor, **Mr. Keith McKenzie**. Keith provided invaluable information about the form of the DVA grants. Although the DVA will not fund major infrastructure projects (like a shed!) they will readily cover grants up to \$10,000 for equipment which was encouraging news for us. We also appreciated that Keith can provide assistance in the application process. It is anticipated that, provided we can establish a Shed location soon, we can apply to the DVA for funding in the first half of 2009.

Regional Men's Shed Meeting

Don Stephens recently attended a meeting in Geelong that involved eleven of the Men's Sheds operating in the **South West Barwon Health Network** region. The meeting was called by Deb Kearney of the **Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD)** who advised about the DPCD grants as detailed above.

Eleven regional Sheds were represented and about 30 people attended the meeting. The Sheds represented included – Geelong East, Colac, Winchelsea, Warrnambool, Port Fairy, Corio, Ballarat, Clifton Springs, Torquay, Anglesea and Hamilton.

Each Shed represented at the meeting gave a report on their progress and status. All had started in differing ways and, apart from Port Fairy and Winchelsea; all had some sort of workspace and operated out of a variety of locations including garages, old factories and sheds erected on Showgrounds. Many Sheds were supported by a local church group or Community Houses.

Professor Barry Golding from the University of Ballarat, who has conducted substantial research into the development of, and social benefits flowing from, the Men's Shed movement, also addressed the meeting. Barry has been a strong advocate of Men's Sheds and a major contributor to the establishment of the Australian Men's Shed's Association.

