

Noise from the Shed

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President's message

David Bowskill, President

Welcome to the rejuvenated Katoomba Men's Shed Newsletter. A new edition is planned four times each year with the intention of keeping members in touch with our Men's Shed and what we are doing.

I am pleased to say our Shed is prospering. Membership is growing steadily and the Shed is almost always busy.

We have updated our constitution recently to bring us up-to-date with the current requirements for incorporated associations. The new constitution, titled 'Katoomba Men's Shed Rules (Constitution)' is available from our website. It can be found on the 'About us' page.

Members are now enjoying a newly renovated space that has become known as the 'quiet room'. Formerly part of the workshop, the space has been enclosed and lined to provide an

additional area where members can sit, talk, read, do leatherwork, play chess, hold meetings or take part in training courses. The latest addition is a large screen TV that can be used to display presentations and videos, or linked to a computer for training courses.

This new room shows that the Shed is far more than just a workshop!

Workshop restoration jobs

A member of the public asked if the Shed could refurbish a rocking horse. The antique rocking horse had all the signs of a well-used and favourite toy, but was in a sad state.

Shed toymaker Eddie coordinated the project with expert help from, Kevin, Keith and Greg. The horse was stripped back and some major cracks were repaired. The body was repainted and fitted with new harness, mane and tail, all purchased by the owner from a commercial supplier. Some parts of the base were remade from recycled timber, and the horse was reassembled.

The horse was finished in time for Christmas and the result was one very happy family!



The completed horse with new harness, mane, tail and refurbished base.

Another family brought a small wooden box, another family heirloom. It was almost beyond repair, just a jumble of pieces. But Shed member Robbert took the project on and managed to reassemble the jigsaw of pieces and restore the box to near-new condition.



The completed box after Robbert's restoration.

New objectives

Our new Shed Rules (Constitution) defines new objectives for the Shed. They were copied from the Australian Men's Shed Association model constitution and are as follows:

To advance the health and well-being of our members by providing a safe and happy environment where skilled and unskilled men can, in the company of other men;

- Pursue hobbies, pastimes and interests
- Learn new skills, practise and pass on old skills
- Learn about their own and other men's health and well-being
- By their efforts, contribute to their families, their friends, the Shed and their community
- Mentor younger men.

Computer club

David Bowskill

The computer club is a loose gathering of people interested in computers, who gather at the Shed on Fridays. Some are learning to use computers, others are exploring interests such as open source computing.

A feature of recent months has been a course on computer networking, that has seen participants

delve into the complex world of computer communication.

If there is sufficient interest, this may be followed by a course in computer programming, possibly using the python language. If you are interested, contact the Shed secretary – secretary@kms.org.au.

What's on

2-9 August: DonateLife Week

17-20 October: Australian Men's Shed Association 6th National Conference, Newcastle (www.dconferences.com.au/mensshed2015).

3 November: Melbourne Cup social afternoon at the Shed.

See our website for more information and calendar updates – www.kms.org.au/events.

Health in focus

Does your family know what you want?

Many of us are prepared to donate our organs and tissues when we die, but many families don't know what we have decided.

The majority of Australians are willing to become organ and tissue donors and know that family confirmation is required for donation to take place. Almost 70% of Australians have discussed the subject with family members, but only about 50% of people know their loved ones' donation decisions.

Importantly, 94% of those who do know their loved ones' donation decision say they would uphold their decision.

Organ and tissue donation saves lives. One donor can transform the lives of up to 10 people and significantly improve the lives of many more.

To optimise every potential organ and tissue donation, every Australian family needs to ask and know their loved ones' donation decisions.

DonateLife Week will be held from Sunday 2 August to Sunday 9 August.

For more information see www.donatelife.gov.au

Sad in winter?

Are you one of those people who feel down in the cooler months? Did you know that there is a well-recognised mood disorder called Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD?

The cause of the disorder is unclear; however it is thought to be related to the variation in light exposure in different seasons. It's characterised by mood disturbances (either periods of depression or mania) that begin and end in a particular season. It is much more common in countries with shorter days and longer periods of darkness, such as in the cold climate areas of the Northern Hemisphere and it is quite rare in Australia.

Remember that whatever the cause, depression is treatable and effective treatments are available. The earlier you seek help the better. If you suffer depression, whatever the cause, talk to your GP or other health professional. See www.beyondblue.org.au for more information.

Member profile – Uncle Ed

Uncle Ed Walker spent his early years in Adelong where his father worked in the timber industry. When Ed was six, his father died and his mother was unable to cope, so the children went into the care of an Aboriginal mission. So Ed spent most of his childhood at the Marella Mission Farm at Kellyville. He has fond memories of this time and remembers working on the farm, milking the six cows morning and night and tending to the crops.

As an adult, Ed trained as a carpenter and joiner and worked in the building industry and in his own home maintenance business. He married and had three children. When his marriage broke up, Ed moved to the North Coast and lived in the Byron Bay area. It was here that he was injured in a workplace accident and his injuries prevented him from continuing to work in the building trades. He turned his skills to toymaking.

Ed moved to the upper mountains after he visited friends in Leura. He was particularly attracted by the Katoomba Men's Shed, which he had found during his visit!



Uncle Ed Walker at the Shed with one of his block trolleys.

Ed thinks of the Shed as his second home and particularly enjoys the mateship he has with other members. He also appreciates the opportunities to learn about new things.

Ed leads the Shed's toymaking efforts, using designs he developed at Byron Bay. He is also a talented artist in the indigenous dot-art style. The use of the term 'Uncle' signifies Ed's recognition as an Elder among the Koori people.

Your Management Committee

The Shed AGM in March elected a Management Committee to manage the affairs of your Men's Shed. The new Committee has many familiar faces, but the roles have shuffled about a bit since last year.

David Bowskill is the President. David worked as an electrical engineer and has served on the Committee for some time, including being Secretary for the last few years.

David White is the Vice-President, carrying on from last year. David is a retired solicitor and has also taken on the important role of the Public Officer of the Shed. He also acts as the minutes secretary.

Gren Olsen is the Treasurer, carrying over from last year. Gren has a background in accounting.

Bruce Ward is the Secretary. Bruce is new to the committee this year and also looks after the

Shed website. In his working life Bruce worked for the Department of Agriculture.

Kevin Wallace is a member of the Committee, carrying over from last year. Kevin is also the Day Coordinator on Wednesdays and Thursdays. He has a background in plumbing and teaching.

Robbert Van Leeuwen is a member of the Committee, carrying over from last year. Robbert ran his own businesses before retirement.

Ted Burke is a member of the Committee, carrying over from last year. Ted was an academic in the field of economics.

David Christie is an ordinary member of the Committee. He was the previous President, a role he filled for a number of years. David continues to work as a geotechnical engineer.

In the workshop

Bruce Ward

One of many workshop projects is the assembly of bikes and other items for the local Big-W store. This has proved to be a good source of income for the Shed, and keeps a number of members busy on Thursdays. Some of the repairs have proved a challenge, as the photo below shows.



Serious men's business – repairing a bike by committee.

My first hammer

David White

When I was a kid, if ever I said, 'Mum, I haven't got anything to do,' she'd say, 'Go down the shed and make something.' Then I'd think, 'Of course, that would be a great thing to do.'

Even in those safer 1950's days, dad kept the shed locked, and I'd go and get the keys off the hook in the laundry cupboard, and go down the back to the shed.



My hammer had probably been my grandfather's originally, like many of the tools in the shed.

Under the saw bench there was an old fruit box filled with off-cuts of wood, and the rule was we could use anything out of that box. There were two tools that I could hold properly, the tenon saw which was small enough to fit my hand, and my hammer.

It was always acknowledged that it was my hammer. Even my brother Peter acknowledged it, probably because he had his own small hammer. My hammer had probably been my grandfather's originally, like many of the tools in the shed. He was a toolmaker and there's a fair chance, given the hammer's unusual shape and obvious antiquity, that he had made it himself.

My hammer was light enough for me to pick up and swing, but heavy enough for banging in a nail with a furious flurry of 8 year old taps.

We had two favourite things to make, Pete and I: boats and guns. The boats you could float in the bath or the old tub in the chook pen, or in the street when it rained and the water gushed down the drainage ditches, because there was no kerbing or guttering in Sans Souci in those days. The guns – well, straight off the top of my head, I can think of at least 10 games you could play with a home-made gun.

My hammer hung on two nails above the bench in dad's shed. Now it hangs above my bench. If mum had never said 'Go down the shed and make something,' and dad hadn't let us use those kid-sized tools and shown us how to use them, there would perhaps have been many things later in my life that wouldn't have been built.

Sheddies are resourceful

Bruce Ward

What does a man do when his favourite glasses break? Some would get them repaired by the optometrist. Others would buy a new pair, or perhaps get by with some generic magnifiers from the convenience store.

But not a true Sheddie!



Spotted on the lunch-room table at the Shed - with a piece of wire and some tape, you can fix anything.

Joe has repaired his own glasses. A piece of wire becomes a new arm padded with some quickly applied insulation tape.

Wood turning at the Shed?

Bruce Ward

Looking for something to do? The Shed has a well equipped wood-turning facility that is rarely used by members.

We have three operational wood lathes, plenty of wood turning tools and a supply of wood just waiting for someone's projects.

I was one of three members who recently completed an informal wood turning course run by Kevin and I was very pleased with the results I was able to achieve. I have a nice little list of projects I want to try!



The latest and largest of the three wood lathes at the Shed, with a set of tools on display.



This stack of wood is available if members want to try their hand at a turning project.

Editorial details

This newsletter is produced by:

Katoomba Men's Shed Inc
6 Orient Street, Katoomba

Ph (02) 4782-7433

Email secretary@kms.org.au

Web www.kms.org.au