



Katoomba Men's Shed

Building Better Blokes

Noise from the Shed

No. 10 – May 2016

In this edition

Activity program launched	1
Member profile: Jim Campion	2
Tinkering	2
Restoring an old pump and stove	4
Health in focus: bowel health	4
Shedders at work on history at Tarella Cottage	5
About Katoomba Men's Shed	6

Activity program launched

Peter Kinhead

Part of the objectives in our constitution is for skilled and unskilled men to pursue hobbies, pastimes and interests and learn new skills and pass on old skills.

The Shed is already set up to allow some of this to happen by having a variety of woodworking and metalworking machines and hand tools available, and there are usually a couple of members in attendance each day, as well as the Day Coordinator, to lend a hand or provide some instruction.

The Shed Management Committee feel there is a need to provide some more coordinated activities for those shedders who are looking for something to do in addition to the projects that are already happening.

The following is a suggested list of other activities of a group nature that we hope will be run on a regular basis. Some of these are already happening and some will start up in the next few weeks.

The program, as shown in the second column, will be included in future newsletters and is also available from the Shed website at kms.org.au/activity.

Tuesdays

- Cards

Wednesdays

- Darts
- Woodworking basics

Thursdays

- Bike assembly

Fridays

- Chess
- Computers
- Basic electronics

There are a number of other activities being considered and activities will be added over time. If you have an idea for an activity, contact any member of the Management Committee, send an email to the Secretary, or leave a note in the Vice-President's tray at the Shed.

Assembling bikes and toys for Big W is an existing activity that forms part of the Activity program.



Member profile: Jim Campion

Jim Campion was born in Sydney. He lost his parents at an early age and grew up in foster homes and institutions, including time as a boarder at the Clairevaux School in Katoomba and at the Westmead Boys Home.

Jim left school aged 15 and within two days obtained an apprenticeship as a fitter and turner. He didn't even know what a fitter and turner did! For the first year, he was not allowed to use any machinery in the workshop. After qualifying in his trade, Jim turned to toolmaking.



Jim Campion with one of his wooden models. The models are all to scale and show meticulous craftsmanship.

He worked for a time in the maintenance of earthmoving machinery, then took a position as a toolmaker with the Institute of Technology, later to become the University of Technology.

Jim stayed at the University for the rest of his career, rising to the position of Workshop Manager for the Faculty of Science and Mechanics. This role was challenging at times, particularly when the academic staff needed complicated scientific equipment that had to be constructed from scratch, and Jim often had only rough sketches to work from.



Another of Jim's detailed wooden models.

Jim and his wife of 45 years, Wilma, lived in Toongabbie for many years before moving to Wentworth Falls three years ago. Jim has a small but well-equipped workshop and spends his time following his interests in woodworking, model-making and home restoration.

Jim joined the Shed in 2015 and enjoys talking to people and helping his friends with their own projects. He is always prepared to lend a hand repairing Shed machinery, and he can turn his hand to most things. He has also taken advantage of some of the computer instruction on offer on Fridays, but still classes himself as 'computer illiterate'.

Tinkering

Peter Kinhead

I guess my downfall began as a teenager, when I bought a non-goer VW from a mate for \$1. That amount was to cover the stamp duty for registration transfer or some such thing. That \$1 turned out to be the cheapest part of my early driving/repairing experience.



Not my VW, but you get the idea!

The main problem with the car was the engine. I removed it so often that I got the removal time down to 30 minutes, or something like that. For those who have done it, you will realise 30 minutes is no mean feat.

My problem was that I did not have a clue what I was doing, as evidenced by the number of screws and nuts I had left over after each repair and reinstallation of the motor.

Most of my money was spent on a Saturday morning at a VW parts counter on Parramatta Road, Strathfield, but it was not on exotic items

like pistons or valves; it was mostly on gaskets (could never stop the oil leaks), spark plugs, fan belts etc.

The car worked for a while after each repair, but the quality of the repair was called into question each time my girlfriend at the time had to push the car while I steered it to a safe spot off the road.

Two memorable driving experiences were doing a 360° spin in the wet at night while slowing down (good old drum brakes) at the intersection of Coronation Parade and Punchbowl Road, Belfield, and then, again at night, having the accelerator cable break while driving on the Bells Line of Road, a long way from my then home in Sydney's western suburbs.

These experiences and a multitude of others have led me to the one indisputable belief that cars, whether old or new, will keep your hand close to your wallet.

During my VW era, I went to the then small shopping centre called Bankstown Square to buy some tools, hoping that they would improve the quality of my repair attempts. That quality did not greatly improve, but I still have and use some of those tools. The Bankstown Square of those days has dramatically changed, as has the range of tools now available.

I've done a bit of tinkering on other cars and motors since those VW days, with a range of successes and failures. My current challenge is a 1977 Fiat 124.

When I got the Fiat a few years ago, its purpose was to give me something to do in retirement (some of you would relate to that concept), when there was nothing else on.

What a laugh! I thought in retirement I would have plenty of time to do whatever. Not so when you factor in things like health, family, grandchildren, the Fiat, the Shed etc. I am not sure how I found the time to go to work when I was working.

I still keep my hand close to my wallet – a lot of the parts for these old Fiats are not available in Australia. The postage or transportation cost from America or Europe is almost as much as the cost of the part itself. I started keeping a spreadsheet of parts and costs but the subtotal started to frighten me, so I have not updated it for a while. I justify not having looked at the subtotal by telling myself it is good therapy to have a hobby. I don't know that my bank manager and my wife would believe that, but I do.

To date, with the efforts of my son, myself and some qualified mechanics, the Fiat has had the following done:

- Most suspension parts replaced.
- Floor rust cut out and the floor repaired.
- Exposed metal rustproofed.
- Gearbox refurbished.
- Sump and oil pump replaced.
- Cylinder head replaced.
- Brakes overhauled.
- Carburettor and inlet manifold replaced.
- Alternator refurbished.
- Seats reupholstered and new floor carpet installed.
- New light globes and some new electrical wiring.

I am currently working on refurbishing the wooden dash, and dismantling the dash gauges and giving them a good clean. Once all that has been done, and a few other issues attended to, I will turn my attention to the paintwork.

I must admit that, after considering this list, the Fiat has fulfilled its purpose – something to do in retirement – and when in tune, it runs well. Trips to Penrith and Sydney in the Fiat are not unusual, and I have only been towed home once in four years. Not bad for a car that is almost 40 years old.

So what have I learnt from a lifetime of occasional tinkering with old motors and old cars?

I suppose the first lesson is that there is usually someone out there who has already 'been there and done that', and it is worthwhile spending the time to find them and seek their advice. That doesn't mean that you have to follow their advice, but it's a good idea to take it on board and balance that with your own knowledge, or lack thereof.

The second lesson is to try to strike a balance with throwing out bits and pieces. Storage usually dictates the answer to this, but I sometimes kick myself for discarding something that at the time I considered to be surplus to my requirements.

And finally, have fun! I enjoy the thought of having something in the garage that needs fixing or tinkering with, thinking the job through and enjoying the finished product. My Fiat may not be in pristine condition and it may break down every so often, but so what? I enjoy it. Well, most of the time anyway!

Restoring an old pump and stove

Bruce Ward

Shed member John Stanley has been doing some restoration work for the Tarella Cottage Museum (see John's separate article in this newsletter).

John has just completed the installation of some improved ventilation in an inaccessible part of the cottage to reduce damp and condensation.

He has now moved on to two restoration projects.

The Historical Society have found a small fuel stove and John has been tasked with disassembling, cleaning and then reassembling the stove, which will then be installed in the old kitchen at the cottage. John is aiming for the stove to be in working order, and the society hopes to light it up for some of their open days.



The old stove has been pulled to pieces for cleaning.

John's second restoration project is to restore an old hand water pump. When finished, the pump will go on display outside the cottage. The pump is being restored to working order and John hopes to set it up with a wooden trough, with the water being recirculated through the pump. This will allow people to experience for themselves what it was like to pump water by hand.



The hand water pump after cleaning, oiling and reassembly.

Health in focus: bowel health

Bruce Ward

A few years ago, a good friend of mine in Orange had a close call with bowel cancer. He went to his doctor for something unrelated, and was shocked when the doctor sent him for a colonoscopy. Within a week he was in surgery and he was very lucky to survive.

Bowel cancer claims the lives of over 4,000 Australians every year.

The good news:

- 90% of bowel cancer cases can be treated successfully if found early.

The bad news:

- Fewer than 40% of cases are detected early.
- One in 12 of us will experience bowel cancer at some time in our lives.
- Bowel cancer is the second biggest cancer killer after lung cancer.
- Men are more likely to get bowel cancer than women - 55% of sufferers are men.
- Bowel cancer risk increases with age.
- In 25% of cases, there is a family history or a hereditary contribution.

The other good news is that there is quite a bit we can all do to reduce the risk of bowel cancer. The right diet and lifestyle choices can reduce the risk by up to 75%!

- Keep physically active.
- A diet high in fibre helps quite a lot.
- Garlic, milk and calcium probably protect against bowel cancer.

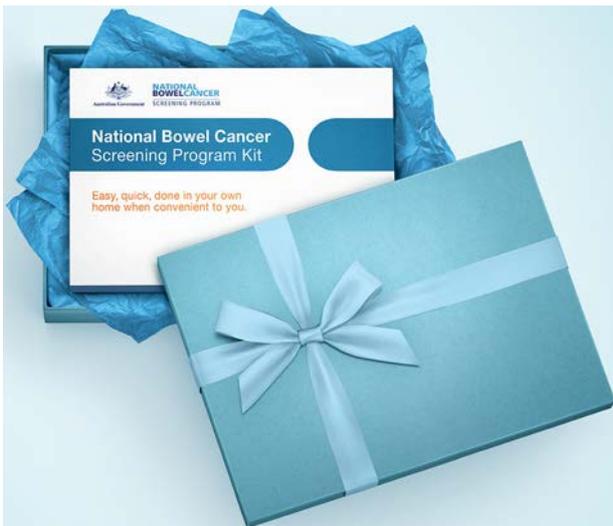
- ❑ Regular screening for bowel cancer improves the chance of early detection and this greatly increases the chance of treatment being successful.

The simplest form of screening is a faecal test. You collect the samples at home and send the samples away to the laboratory. If the screening test is positive, you will probably be referred for a colonoscopy.

Ever since my friend's close call in Orange, I have arranged a bowel-screening test every few years as part of my annual check-up.

Rotary run a BowelCare program that aims to provide an affordable annual screening program. BowelCare kits are available now from participating pharmacies in the Blue Mountains and cost only \$15. There are also other screening kits readily available from pharmacies or online.

The Australian Government also operates the National Bowel Cancer screening program which sends out free screening kits to specific age groups.



The National Bowel Cancer Screening kit is promoted as a 'gift for living'.

Colonoscopy is a procedure to look inside the colon and rectum for polyps, abnormal areas, or cancer. A colonoscope (a thin, tube-like instrument with a light and a lens for viewing) is inserted through the anus and rectum and into the colon. You are sedated throughout the procedure.

Some men who have high risk factors, such as a family history of bowel cancer, elect to have a regular colonoscopy and have any polyps removed at the same time (polyps sometimes develop into bowel cancer).

For more information see bowelcanceraustralia.org

Shedders at work on history at Tarella Cottage

John Stanley

I joined the Blue Mountains Historical Society (BMHS) in the last few years to follow my interest in Cox's Road, the first road over the Blue Mountains. I have been surprised to find quite a few members of the Shed also helping out and I am aware that there are probably many more who are less active members of the society.

BMHS is based at the historic 1890s cottage 'Tarella', which is located at 99 Blaxland Road Wentworth Falls.

Building of this historic cottage commenced in 1890 and was completed in 1892. It was commissioned by John McLaughlin, the son of Irish immigrants. John was a solicitor, having been admitted to the Bar in 1874.

John married Ada Moore in 1882. By the time they built Tarella the couple had four children. The home was originally built as a holiday home for the family to escape the hot summers in Sydney. It was situated on 50 acres of land fronting the original Cox's Road.

The cottage was built of timber with a corrugated iron roof. It was a two-storey building, with a sitting room, main bedroom, dining room and a small bedroom all on the ground floor. The upstairs level had two bedrooms for the children.

The kitchen was originally detached from the house. This was common practice at the time due to the possibility of the kitchen catching alight and burning the house down.

Additional rooms were added in the 1920s at the rear of the cottage between the original part of the house and the old kitchen, so the kitchen is now joined to the main building on one corner.

Apart from some minor modernisation of the kitchen and bathrooms in 1955 the house largely remains as it was after the 1920s extensions.

John McLaughlin died in 1918. Following his death, much of the land was sold, but 3.5 acres (1.5 hectares) was retained. John's daughters Ida and Beryl McLaughlin lived in the house for many years. They were very interested in



Tarrella Cottage was built in 1890 and is now heritage listed. It serves as a museum, containing an eclectic collection of memorabilia of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Shed member John Stanley has been working on restoration of some items for display and some minor repairs.

history and in 1968 erected a new building beside the cottage to serve as a museum.

Ida McLaughlin died in 1980. Beryl McLaughlin died in 1988, just two months short of her 100th birthday. She left the property and cottage to BHMS .

The property is now the headquarters of BMHS. The original cottage is heritage listed and serves as a museum. It was opened to the public in 1994.

Ida and Beryl's museum building has been extended and now contains the Hobby's Reach Research Centre, with kitchen, dining room, two research rooms and library.

- Hobby's Reach Research Centre is open Tuesdays and Fridays (10 am to 2.30 pm).
- Tarella Cottage Museum is open on the last Sunday of each month (December excepted) from 10 am to 4 pm. There is a small entry fee for adults.
- BMHS will celebrate its 70th birthday in August, with a birthday weekend on 29 and 30 August 2016. Non-members are very welcome.

More information

Blue Mountains Historical Society
99 Blaxland Road, Wentworth Falls 2782
Website: bluemountainshistory.com
Phone: (02) 4757 3824

History of Tarella and the McLaughlin family:
The McLaughlins of Tarella, 1890 to 1988 by Susan Warmbath. Available from BMHS.

About Katoomba Men's Shed

This newsletter is produced by:

Katoomba Men's Shed Inc.
6 Orient Street, Katoomba
Ph: (02) 4782 7433
Email: secretary@kms.org.au
Website: www.kms.org.au

The Shed is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to advance the health and wellbeing of its members by providing a place where men can share interests in the company of other men.