



# BENCH TALK

(The East Tamar Men's Shed Newsletter May 2021)

Supported by



Welcome to the inaugural issue of the East Tamar Men's Shed newsletter. This newsletter is aimed at keeping all members up to date as to what is happening at your Men's Shed. Hopefully it will rekindle interest in members who do not attend often. You don't need a project; you can always just pop in for a cuppa and a bit of a chat!!

The shed is under-utilised being used only two days a week. There is the potential for members to use the shed for purposes other than working with wood or metal. Some members may have an interest that they would like to share with others, maybe a day for card players, chess, or starting a discussion group. If any members would like to form any type of group and use the shed, or if you want to share an article about anything, contact us on either of the email addresses at the end of this newsletter.

We now have around 35 members and will profile a member each issue. So I hope you find the first issue interesting.

George Murray, President

## An Interview with the Foundation President: Jeff Wynne



After finishing his apprenticeship as a fitter and turner, Jeff was conscripted by the National

Service ballot into the army. He felt his training would well equip him to a technical or mechanical role, but alas, the army medical uncovered a previously un-diagnosed colour blindness issue. This discovery excluded him from many careers in the army including active duty, driving army trucks and vehicles as well as many of the technical or mechanical roles. One of the few positions left in the recruitment round was an army medic which obviously suited him, as on completion of his service, he continued his training to become a registered nurse.

He progressed through various roles in nursing, eventually becoming Director of Nursing of the Medical Unit of the Launceston General Hospital in 1991. In 1997 his career aspirations took him to Pambula, however, after 12 months working in NSW he found his wife loved living in Tasmania more than NSW, so fortunately he moved back to a career which he found extremely fulfilling, that of nursing in Aged Care, and eventually his current very enjoyable role of Community Nursing. Originally from Victoria, he moved to Tasmania to take up the Director of Nursing role in 1991 and has been a resident of Windermere since 1992 where he lives with his wife Margaret and 2 black cats. Back in 2010, Jeff noticed some significant inactivity, and lethargy amongst some of his retired neighbours which inspired him to commence a process which has resulted in the formation of the East Tamar Mens Shed. (see history detailed below)

His practical training has resurfaced as an interest and subsequent training as a watch maker (which has the unlikely title of horologist) which he continues as small business from his home, (so if you have watches that need fixing or cleaning, he is your man.)

None of his 3 children have followed in his footsteps, there being a CSIRO scientist, an interior designer and a medical technician.

If you were Prime Minister for a day, what would you do?: ....**FIX AGED CARE!!!**

Favourite Music: Obviously a child of the 60s .....**Jimmy Hendrix and the like. (No! He can't remember Woodstock).**

# THE HISTORY OF THE SHED

A Short History of the East Tamar Men's Shed by  
Jeff Wynne

Interest in Men's Sheds was beginning to be seen around the country in the late 1990's with many news interest articles reporting on the rise of the humble shed as a place where men could meet and communicate over workbenches, tools projects and coffee. This was seen as being greatly beneficial to men's health both mental and physical and was enthusiastically embraced by government and the fledgling men's health movement.

In November of 2010 we started discussing the concept of the shed with some men in the area and there was general acceptance that a Shed was a good idea, and we should try and get it off the ground. Our first public meeting was held in the Dilston Hall on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2011, the meeting was attended by 15 men. As a result of the meeting the East Tamar Men's Shed name was accepted, and a committee was elected to get the shed going. Incorporation was gained in May of 2011 and at the time we had 30 members. The Launceston City Council offered us land to build on where the shed is now situated and so we commenced a fundraising drive to get enough money together to build a shed. Our fundraising efforts through 2011 to 2013 included various sausage sizzles at Bunnings and elsewhere, a very successful golf day at Georgetown and our Xmas in July dinners held in the Dilston Hall.

Throughout this period, we were the Shed without a Shed but by keeping up the social activities and fundraising the enthusiasm for the Shed was maintained. We were well supported in those early days by the wives of our members who contributed enormously to every fundraiser.

In 2012 the state government announced they would be building a new fire station for the Dilston Brigade and at the suggestion of a couple of members we approached the Tasmanian Fire Service with the aim of taking over the old building. This was finally achieved in 2015 when the building

was gifted to us by the Fire Service and the Launceston City Council leased us the land it sits on. Our formal opening was on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2015 and at that time we were open on Saturday mornings only. The Shed also received several important grants for equipment from the State Government which set up our workshops and enabled us to start working on projects.

The limited size of the workshop soon became apparent and in 2016 we applied for a major grant of \$50 000 to build a larger workshop. Our application was rewarded with success in 2017 and so we commenced building the extension which would double the size of the shed and allow separation of the woodwork and metalwork areas. The shed extension was completed in 2018 and is indeed a shed to be proud of, further grants have enabled more equipment purchases for project work.

Development of more storage space within the shed has become vital and the addition of a shipping container in 2021 for storage is an important addition to enable more space for equipment and projects. Throughout 2019 till now the shed has gone through a period of consolidation. The Shed is a permanent part of the community now and people are frequently calling in with projects.

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## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Our shed is going ahead in leaps and bounds since it was founded 10 years ago. We added an extension 2 years ago, which gives us a lot more room to do projects.



We have been extremely fortunate in acquiring grants from various sources which have enabled us to purchase some new machines and equipment. Our latest addition is a twin head sander. This was purchased from a Bell Bay Aluminium Community Grant. (Just recently installed by a couple of good ex-sparkies and the odd ex-tradie).



We have also recently purchased a container, thanks to a Dept. of Communities Tasmania grant and this now sits at the back of the shed waiting to be filled with materials.

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## FEATURED SHED PROJECT

(By Ian Farquar 2021)



We were challenged to create a seat which referenced a church pew AND respected the clients wabi-sabi\* aesthetic, the team at East Tamar Men's Shed elected to use recycled Oregon planks. These large timbers measuring 300 mm x 50 mm and originally 8 metres long came into the possession of a farmer member from N.E. Tas. when the Legerwood Hotel was demolished in the 1980s. That site is now occupied by farm merchandise suppliers. The hotel had been built when the rail service came through the district in about 1914 and demolished as mine, forest and farm labour demands reduced. The planks had served as joists

between the first and second floors. For the next 20+ years they served as scaffold planks as needed and as seats on social occasions on the farm, after which they found their way to the Tamar Valley.

“Oregon Pine” is the commercial name for the timber from “Douglass fir”, “*Pseudotsuga menziesii*” which is native of the west coast of North America and is neither a pine nor a fir! Great forests grew in Oregon and Washington States from where quantities of sawn timber were exported to Australia and many other destinations. Huge trees which may have been 1000 years old yielded large construction framing.

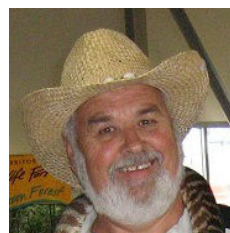
At about the time our planks came to Australia the Columbia Valley was being linked to the deep water port at Seattle on the Puget Sound. Up to then they may have been transported from Portland by barge down the Columbia River, over the bar, and thence onto a steamer. I like to think that the latter was the journey of our planks. As recycled materials they have been damaged, nailed into and painted. Great caution was needed to avoid tool damage from hidden nail pieces. The subsequent result is not what one might find in a church but we think have honoured the wabi-sabi concept.

*\* In traditional Japanese aesthetics, wabi-sabi is a world view centred on the acceptance of transience and imperfection. The aesthetic is sometimes described as one of appreciating beauty that is "imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete" in nature.*

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Remember it is YOUR newsletter so please feel free to contribute either your story or anything that other members may find interesting or humorous. Just email us.

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