Merry Christmas and a Happy Prosperous New Year

General Information

MORPETH MEN'S SHED INC. (MMS)

Bi—Monthly Newsletter

Presidents Report.

I am pleased to inform the members that **ALL** the tickets for our Christmas raffle have been sold; this is a credit by all the members that spent time at our location in Morpeth in front of

Millies.

Thanks gents a job well done.

The Raffle will be drawn at our Christmas Luncheon 17th December.

Membership has gradually increased to nearly sixty members to which 35 to 40 attend every week..

With the 2010 coming to a close the activities around the shed have not changed much with another computer being assembled and outside work being done for a customer in cutting up lengths of timber. The sheds have been painted to make them presentable and not looking unwanted. Other members are busily making rocking horses to fill orders, bird mobiles for display in peoples the gardens and biro pens made from various timbers.

The October BBQ we had a speaker on Fire Extinguishers and fire prevention around the home advising of the correct

Extinguisher for the right fire this was received very well by our members.

The November Speaker was a Social worker and he spoke on Counseling of people and helping them through troubled times.

Keith Corcoran is organizing more trips to other locations which I am sure will be very interesting.

On behalf of the Committee and myself I would like to: -

Wish All the Members and their Families a Very Merry Christmas

And

Happy and Prosperous New Year.

The Shed will be closed after December 17th and reopen on January 14th 2011.

Keith Angel.

News From The Workshop

At last we are seeing movement towards the lockup of our 'metal working shed'. The next stage will be the insulation and setting up for the power to be connected. We hope this happens as soon as possible.

I want to thank all the guys who worked to paint the buildings and I have received many approving comments.

It was great to see a group of men completing a project of machining timber slats. For payment we have been given sheet metal to cover the insulation in the metal shed.

There has been a number of projects worked on during this year such as:- partition

screens for our hall, cupboards in the hall & toilet, car port, metal shed, a toy box, whirly birds, bird feeders, rocking horses, spinning tops, Myna Bird traps, bird boxes, jewellery boxes, boards for stag-horns, cutting boards, with the wood turners doing pens, ribbon holders, bowls etc., Other projects included fixing flyscreen doors, repairing some patio tiles, and a trailer was wonderfully repaired and registered. All this has been a great effort by all those involved and a BIG THANK YOU from me and looking forward in working with you all in 2011.

In closing I would like to wish everyone a very special Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

News from Computer Room

The second incarnation of the hardware class was held (3 classes spanning 5 weeks or so) to build the fourth of our new computers, and has been completed successfully. Some participants took written notes this time around, which was encouraging.

I am proud to report that, whilst much of the content of the hardware courses was intermediate in difficulty (and thus quite challenging for the majority), ALL participants have demonstrated an improvement in general knowledge about computers, but more importantly, most have shown an increase in CONFIDENCE in working with them, regardless of their individual levels of knowledge.

PTO

For Sale.

Minor Bird Traps - $75.00.

Saving of the Day

Wringing your hand only stops you from rolling up your sleaves

Dates Of Interest

- *17/12/10 Christmas BBQ with partners & guests. Drawing of Raffle.*
- *14/1/11 First weekly meeting of 2011*

Minutes of Committee Meetings and Treasurers Reports are available to members on request.

Robert Sucker recently presented the spoils of his own project, with a curious and keen reception. With just a little guidance, he has researched purchasing suitable components, and has built his own customised computer for the very first time, with an emphasis on function, expandability and quiet operation. As is often the case, the project is ongoing, with further additions to come as resources permit, and favourite software still to install. We know what Robert will be doing over the end-of-year break! Your enthusiasm is infectious and appreciated by many. Good job, mate!

Thanks go to Paul Lindeman and Ted Thornburrow who have looked at some older systems that were ear-marked for the MMS some time ago. I'm told some potentially useful parts were retrieved. Well done, guys. Regrettably, some components must continue to be stored off-site due to our recently reduced storage space in the hall. We thank all members and others who are kindly holding donated equipment on our behalf.

Paul and I have been discussing ways we can improve facilities/equipment for members with various disabilities (e.g. different mice for members struggling with arthritis). We are also exploring options for an internet connection some time in the future at the MMS.

Next year it is planned to have a range of courses on various subjects (yet to be decided by members), but definitely *starting* with a COMPUTER ESSENTIALS course. If you've ever done a BASIC computer course, or feel that you already have a basic level of computer knowledge, then the ESSENTIALS course will provide you with a lot of *ESSENTIAL* knowledge that I've found many of the commonly available basic courses leave out! Don't miss this one! We'll also be looking at having something in place for raw beginners, too, so next year is shaping up to be productive and packed with activities.

I wish all MMS members the best of health and happiness over the holiday break and in the New Year. See you all in 2011 J

Gary Payne

Secretaries Report

Most things have been covered by the previous reports so I will not duplicate their comments. However I am pleased to be able to confirm that we have been granted DGR Status by the Tax Office. This means that anybody who makes a donation of $2.00 or more can claim the donation on their tax return.

Also I would like to single out a couple of members for special recognition:-

Trevor Richards—Trevor has been tireless in his efforts in the construction of the Covered area and the construction of the metalwork shed. Without his work both hands on and in sourcing materials at the right price we would not be where we are with these projects. Well done Trevor and our sincere thanks to you.

Ivan Penfold—As most of you are aware Ivan was instrumental in getting our raffle off the ground. Without his efforts in supervising the project and ensuring that our site was manned majority of the time I doubt it would have been the success it has. Thankyou Ivan a Job well done.

As our other committee members have stated I also wish all our members, their families and friends and all our supporters a very happy, healthy and enjoyable Christmas and prosperous 2011

The Digital Diary

Computer Files – Part 2

In the last edition of "The Digital Diary" (a looong time ago), I started with a little interactive exercise to demonstrate in a simple way how much space a file can take up on your hard disk. I showed how a very simple text file might be just a few bytes in size, but looking at the file's PROPERTIES shows that it takes up 4Kb on the hard disk. Why is this so ?

Well, a computer's hard disk is divided up into tiny compartments called "sectors" in a process called FORMATTING. Just think of these sectors as little cardboard storage boxes. For *most* people, each box is 4Kb (4,096 bytes) in size (say, enough to store around 2 full pages of text). When you save a file, your operating system (MS Windows XP, Vista or Windows 7 for most of us now) will find an EMPTY box and place your file into it. If the file doesn't fit

completely into the box, it looks for the next empty box (*usually* right next to it on the hard disk) and puts the remainder of the file in there. If the second box is filled, and there is still more of that one file to store, the OS (operating system) goes looking for the next empty box (sector), and so on, until all of that one file is stored in as many sectors that are needed.

This is the basis of *how* files are stored on your computer's hard disk, no matter how big or small they may be. A very similar method is used on portable devices such as CDs, DVDs, flash memory cards (often used in digital cameras, phones, etc), USB memory sticks (aka pen drives, flash drives), and portable hard drives. I'll talk about how files are *organised* on your hard disk (or more accurately, how YOU can organise your files) in a later edition of *The Digital Diary*.

Thankfully, your computer remembers where each part of the file is stored, and knows where to look when we ask it to do anything with it again (open it, edit it, copy, move or delete it, etc). Sometimes, the OS might not be able to store a file with all it's parts next to each other on the hard disk. This is called file FRAGMENTATION. This means that different parts of a single file are scattered around various places on the hard disk.

This isn't something to be too concerned about, but it *can,* over a period of time, have a detrimental effect on the speed at which your computer can do things (especially when it comes to accessing those files, and it's ability to find places to store other files). But again, DON'T PANIC… it's no big deal !

Some of you may have heard of a process known as DEFRAGMENTING your hard drive. MS Windows comes with it's own little program to help sort out all those file fragments. Close any other programs you have running first, then you can find this program by clicking on **START -> PROGRAMS -> ACCESSORIES -> SYSTEM TOOLS -> DISK DEFRAGMENTER** (users call it DEFRAG for short). Simply select which drive you'd like to defragment, and click on the DEFRAGMENT button… then go and make yourself a cuppa whilst your computer gathers *all of the parts of your files* up and "tidy" them as best as it can. Once defragmented, I've seen this make a very noticeable speed difference on some computers. For folks that don't use their computers very often, I'd suggest running DEFRAG about once a month or so. For heavier users, once a fortnight or once a week can be beneficial.

Happy Computing !

Gary.

Visit Report – Sydney Maritime Museum – Wednesday 1st December 2010

Ten Shed members made a trip to the Maritime Museum on 1st December 2010. Despite the early hour and rain, we managed to catch the 7.27am train from Victoria St to Newcastle where we linked up with the Sydney train. By 10.45 we had hit Sydney and jumped on the Light Rail to Pyrmont Bridge just a short walk to the Maritime Museum.

Tickets and tour guides were prearranged so after a cuppa we toured the Museum (free) then after lunch boarded the destroyer, HMAS Vampire and the Oberon Class submarine, HMAS Onslow. Tours of the two Navy ships (one is a boat; the Onslow) cost $8.00 for a senior's group discount ticket. So combined with the 'all-day' Senior's Rail ticket, it was a fairly cheap outing.

Although our clever tour leader managed to organize a free Light Rail ride from Central to Pyrmont Bridge, he was not able to snag the same deal for the return trip to Central. So we each had to fork out $3.60!

We were all surprised by the fantastic living conditions on board, particularly the Submarine, HMAS Onslow, where the Navy kindly organizes someone to preheat your bed each night. Some of the old salts were so impressed, they attempted to join up, just for this benefit alone!

Talk about mollycoddling!

We caught the 4.18 out of Central for Hamilton, where Keith Angel flagged down a passing train (Our president still has a few contacts in State Rail) and were back at Victoria St by 7.30pm ish. The trip back from Sydney was quieter than on the way down as most managed to study the inside of their eyelids for a half hour or so. On the way down, however, we were the noisiest mob on the train as none could contain their excitement at being allowed out for a whole day, unaccompanied, with money tied in handkerchief corners! There were no significant complaints from the travelling public, however; most old ladies nodded wisely to their friends saying things like 'poor old buggers!! Don't get out much!!

The next trip to somewhere will be organized some time in the New Year; plans are to make this a monthly activity as long as members can stand the excitement, that is.

Regards,
KeithC