



Maitland Community Men's Shed  
**The Shed News**

June 2026



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Issue 120

First Published - July 2016

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The Maitland  
 Community Men's  
 Shed welcomes new  
 members!

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The Maitland  
 Community Men's  
 Shed would like to  
 acknowledge our  
 major supporters

**The Shed Report.....**

Life in the Shed meanders along. Projects come in and, in time, find their way out completed with the usual care and attention to detail. The revamping of the Shed layout is also progressing steadily. Not at break-neck speed, but with the thought and consideration needed to achieve the outcome we're aiming for.

Garden benches and picture frames are taking shape, while work continues in the painting shed and joinery shop. As always, there's a quiet sense of purpose in the work being done.

Away from the Shed, this time of year sees me assisting at a myriad of athletic carnivals across the Newcastle, Hunter and Lake Macquarie areas. I take on many roles at many events, but the real joy comes from the people, teachers, young student helpers, and the many athletes. Their stories are varied and inspiring: where they've been, what they're doing now, and where they hope to go. One thing that stands out is how they encourage and support one another.

At the end of the month, we had to say "see you again" to a member who has been with us for just over five years - Matthew.

Matthew joined us after his carer enquired about the possibility of him becoming a member. After some consideration and a few ground rules, he became part of the Shed community, and his carer an honorary member. In his early days, Matthew attended regularly but spoke very little. Over time, that began to change.

During his time with us, he endured some major challenges, including critical operations on both legs and reconstructive work on his ankles. Despite this, he and his carer took on the task of making cutting boards

from reclaimed timber and resin, eventually producing some quality pieces.

The men at the Shed also introduced him to Euchre, something he took a real liking to. He developed a fondness for a good joke and, in his own way, became part of the fabric of the place.

He will be missed around the Shed.

Who will remind us that we've dropped something, or that our shoelaces are undone?

Life goes on, but it's the people, like Matthew, who make the journey all the more meaningful.

*Kindness never goes out of style and good people make the world better.*

See you at the Shed,

*Charlie Sanders* - Chairman



### The Shed Revamp Marches On.....

As many of you will have noticed, our shed is currently undergoing a major internal reshuffle. There's plenty happening behind the scenes as we work towards creating a more efficient, safer, and more enjoyable space for everyone.

One of the key improvements underway involves the CNC router upstairs. In response to ongoing feedback about the constant noise it produces, Ian and John have taken the initiative to construct a sound-deadening booth for the machine. This is a fantastic example of members listening to concerns and working together to find practical solutions.

The new enclosure will significantly reduce noise levels, making the upstairs area far more comfortable for those working nearby. It will also improve overall safety by containing dust and sound within a

defined space, helping create a better working environment for all.

As part of the upgrade, lighting will be installed inside the booth. This will make it much easier to see what you're doing when setting up and operating the CNC, improving both accuracy and ease of use.

Projects like this are a great reminder of what our shed is all about members sharing ideas, solving problems, and making improvements that benefit everyone. We look forward to seeing the finished result and appreciate the effort that continues to go into making our shed a better place to work and socialise.

Writer: *Steve O'Brien* - Shed News Editor



### Birthdays This Month.....

Greg Anderson, Juri Bowa, Andrew Dunn, Warren Gillan, Gary Kirkman, Jim Lennon, Ken Miller, Steve Mitchell, Tessa Myee, Steve O'Brien, Michael Ryan, Graham Smith, Cheryl Sucker and Craig Tindley



**Remember, "This Is Your Shed". Be PROUD Of It And Contribute Where You Can.**



## Hearing Australia Visit.....

Last month our Shed had the pleasure of welcoming a representative from Hearing Australia, after an earlier visit scheduled for April had to be postponed. It was well worth the wait, with a strong roll-up of members coming along to hear Tracey's informative and engaging presentation.

Tracey provided valuable insights into hearing health, covering everything from the early signs of hearing loss to the supports and services available. She explained the importance of regular hearing checks and how modern technology can make a real difference in maintaining quality of life.

Members were keen to learn more, and the presentation was followed by a lively question-and-answer session where plenty of practical concerns were addressed.

Adding to the morning, Tracey and Hearing Australia kindly provided a generous morning tea, which gave everyone the chance to relax, chat, and continue conversations in an informal setting.

As many of us know, looking after our hearing becomes increasingly important as we get older. Good hearing plays a vital role in staying connected with family, friends, and the community, and can have a big impact on our overall wellbeing. Simple steps like having regular hearing tests, protecting our ears from excessive noise, and seeking advice early if we notice changes can make a significant difference.

We thank Tracey and Hearing Australia for taking the time to visit our Shed and share such important information with our members.

Writer: *Steve O'Brien* - Shed News Editor



## One Man's Rubbish.....

We all know the old saying: "One man's rubbish is another man's treasure." At Maitland Men's Shed, it's proving true once again.

A local art teacher recently reached out looking for timber offcuts for their students' craft projects. Ray has jumped in with both boots, quietly collecting, trimming, and sorting suitable pieces so the kids have a steady supply to work with.

So here's a simple request to all members: When you're working on your next project, don't toss your offcuts add them to Ray's pile.

It's a small gesture that does a lot of good. The students get hands-on experience with recycling and repurposing, instead of the usual "use it, bin it, buy another one" cycle. And for us, it's a practical way to support the circular economy while also clearing

some space during our Shed reorganisation.

Good for the kids, good for the environment, and good for our shelves. Not a bad outcome from a few bits of "rubbish."

Writer: *John Williams* - Men's Shed Reporter



### Procrastination.....

We've all had those jobs around the house that never feel urgent - the ones that get overlooked, overtaken, or quietly pushed aside for "another day". "If there's one thing humans have truly mastered, it's procrastination."

We can build bridges, split atoms, and send rockets to the far side of the moon... but that dripping tap or squeaky hinge? Yeah, nah, tomorrow sounds better.

And it's not laziness. It's optimism. We genuinely believe that 'Tomorrow Us' will wake up energised, motivated, and ready to conquer the world. 'Tomorrow Us' is a legend, strong, organised, disciplined, and strangely enthusiastic about cleaning windows or clearing gutters. Meanwhile 'Today Us' is just trying to get through the day without losing our glasses. "It always seems to me that tomorrow... is always the busiest day of the week."

Recently, one of those "round-to-it" jobs arrived at the Shed: twenty badly decayed, swollen, splintered veranda post surrounds. No wonder it had been put off - it wasn't a small task.

The homeowner, recently widowed and preparing her house for sale, recognised that the front veranda needed a spruce-up. With the Shed's equipment and

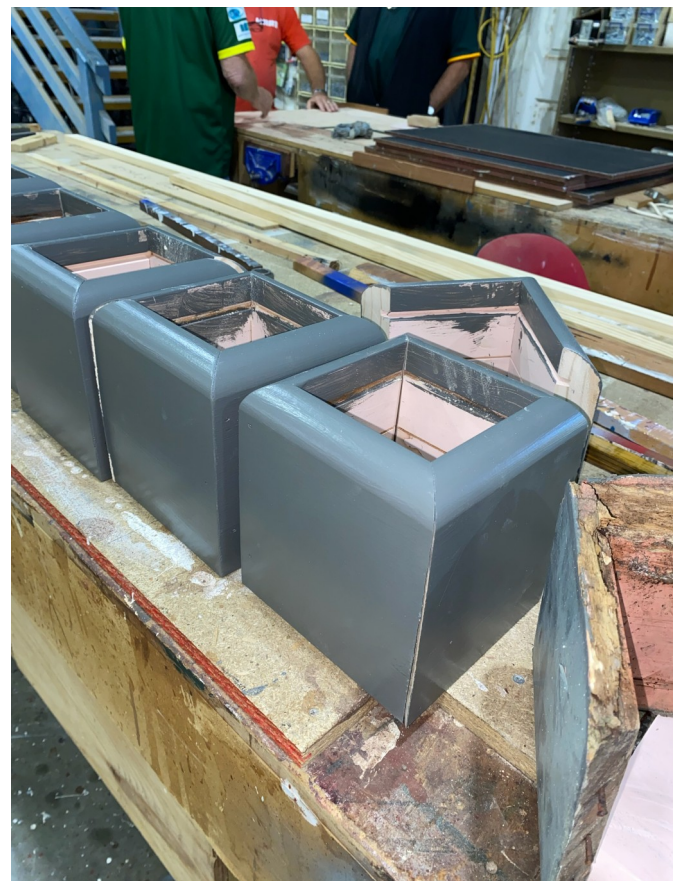


the steady hands of Ray and Jim, new mouldings were custom-made, delivered, and fitted. A small job for the Shed, but a big help for someone starting a new chapter.

There's a certain charm in procrastination. It means we're human. It means we're juggling life's joys and challenges, enjoying a cuppa, having a yarn, and occasionally choosing comfort over chaos. And sometimes, that's perfectly fine.

If our little contribution helps this homeowner move forward with her downsizing, then that's a job well worth doing, even if it took a while to get there.

Writer: **John Williams** - Men's Shed Reporter



## Remembering Maurie Price.....

It is with great sadness that we share the passing last month of one of our early members and a valued mate of the Maitland Community Men's Shed, Maurie Price.

Maurie joined the shed in January of 2013, not long after moving to Maitland from his home in Queensland. Like many who walk through our doors, Maurie was looking for something more and a sense of purpose, connection, and community. It didn't take long for him to find it.

A retired BHP height-safety worker, Maurie first came to the shed after being encouraged to look for volunteer opportunities in his new town. As he often recalled with a smile, he "wandered in, paid his \$20, and was put straight to work fixing lawn mowers and pushbikes." From that moment on, he became part of the fabric of the shed.

Maurie quickly embraced everything the Men's Shed stands for. He spoke often about the companionship, describing it simply as "what makes the place special." He valued the way members looked out for one another, something he experienced firsthand during a time when he was unwell, and fellow shedders rallied around to support his wife when she needed help.

During his time with us, Maurie also took on the role of Vice-President, contributing not only with his practical skills but also with his encouragement



of others. He was a strong advocate for the shed and often urged men in the community, particularly those feeling isolated, to come along and give it a go. He believed deeply in the positive impact the shed could have on wellbeing and mateship.

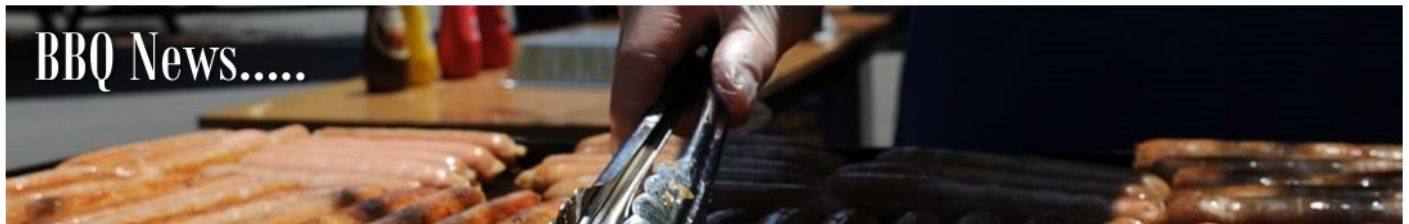
Although Maurie's time with our shed, leaving in June 2016, was relatively short before returning to Queensland, his impact was lasting. He was one of those members who helped shape the welcoming, supportive culture we are proud of today.

Not everyone may have known Maurie personally, but his contribution helped build the shed into what it is now, a place where men can find friendship, purpose, and support.

We extend our sincere condolences to Maurie's family and friends. He will be remembered as a good man, a willing worker, and a true shed mate.

Writer: *Steve O'Brien* - Shed News Editor

## BBQ News.....



### *MCMS Fires Up the BBQ at Bunnings - A Fresh Start Under New Management*

The Shed kicked off its first Bunnings BBQ under new management in May, and the result was nothing short of a sizzling success. With a strong turnout of volunteers, steady crowds, and plenty of good humour, the team proved they're stepping confidently into a new chapter.

Both the morning and afternoon crews showed up in force, bringing energy, teamwork, and that familiar Shed spirit. The BBQ ran smoothly from the first sausage to the last... with only a few classic "Men's Shed moments" along the way.

One small hiccup - someone forgot to buy mustard. But in true Shed fashion, the team laughed it off, adapted, and kept the snags rolling. And when the

crowds kept coming and the supplies started running low, a quick "sneaky shop" run ensured no one missed out. By the end of the day, the BBQ had completely sold out - a sure sign the community was hungry for more than just sausages.

The event wasn't just a fundraiser; it was a reminder of what makes the Men's Shed special. Community connection. Teamwork. A bit of chaos. A lot of laughs. And a shared commitment to supporting each other and the wider Maitland community.

With this first BBQ under new management now behind them, the message is clear: onwards and upwards. If this weekend is anything to go by, the future of the Maitland Community Men's Shed is looking bright, busy, and full of good food and good company: *Karen Sanders* - BBQ Organiser

## Howard's Art Class - Why Not Give It a Go!.....



There's a great opportunity coming up at the Shed for anyone who's ever thought about trying something a little different.

Our very own Howard, an award-winning watercolour artist who recently took out First Place at the Morpeth Annual Art Show, is offering a relaxed, hands-on watercolour taster session for members.

This isn't a formal class or anything too serious. It's simply a chance to sit down, pick up a brush, and have a go in a friendly, no-pressure environment.



Whether you've never painted before or you've dabbled a little in the past, this session is all about giving it a try and enjoying the experience.

Howard will guide you through the basics, and who knows, you might just discover a hidden talent! If there's enough interest and everyone enjoys themselves, there's even the possibility of running a regular series of classes down the track.

The session is open to:

- Complete beginners.
- Curious dabblers.
- Those who reckon they can't draw a straight line.
- And those who think they can!

Best of all, everything is provided, paper, brushes, and paints, so all you need to do is turn up and join in.

*When:* Monday the 1st of June (right after the Toolbox Meeting).

*Where:* Upstairs Meeting Room.

Places are limited, so make sure you add your name to the sign-up sheet if you're interested.

And remember... If you don't give it a go... you'll never, never know!

Writer: **John Williams** - Men's Shed Reporter

## Just a Little Joke.....

A thief enters a house at night, intending on robbing the entire place. In the dark, he starts hearing:

"Jesus is watching you... Jesus is watching you..."

Panicked, he looks around for the source of the whisper, when he finds a parrot in a cage, with the name "Moses" pinned on it. Relieved, he says:

"Who's the idiot who named a parrot Moses?"

The parrot answers:

"The same idiot that named the pitbull Jesus".



## Friends of Grossman & Brough House - A Shed Story with Heart



Every job that comes through the Shed seems to arrive with a good story attached, and the latest request from Steven Abrahams, volunteer gardener at Grossman and Brough House, was no exception.

Grossman and Brough House are a pair of beautifully restored, mirror-image Victorian Regency townhouses in Church Street, Maitland. Built in 1870 for English traders Isaac Beckett and Samuel Owen, the houses have served as private residences, Maitland Girls' High School, and now as a National Trust museum. They're a reminder of Maitland's prosperous Victorian past.

Steve approached the Shed with a dilemma: three historic garden benches on the property were in a sorry state. Their exact age is unknown, but the heavy cast-iron ends and ornate back frames suggest they're genuine Victorian landscape pieces. The timber slats, however, were long past their prime.

Enter the Shed team. Mick, Barry, Ken and Jim took

on the careful job of crafting new hardwood slats, all while preserving the cast iron's aged patina. As usual, they were supported by a sizeable "advice committee" of onlookers.

Funding was limited, the National Trust could only cover materials for one bench, so Steve personally paid for the second and then donated the completed bench back to the Trust. He also made a generous donation to our Shed.

At the handover, Steve put out a call for any surplus garden tools to help maintain the grounds. Shed members responded, and earlier this week Steve reported from the Rose Garden that the tools are already hard at work.

This project has been a great example of what the Shed does best: practical help, community connection, and preserving Maitland's heritage one job at a time.

Writer: **John Williams** - Men's Shed Reporter



## Staying Connected: Using Technology to Keep in Touch.....

In today's world, staying connected with family, friends, and the community has never been easier, thanks to the technology many of us already have at our fingertips. Whether it's a smartphone, tablet, or computer, these devices can play a powerful role in helping us maintain relationships and stay involved, no matter our age.

For many seniors, one of the greatest benefits of technology is the ability to keep in touch with loved ones. A quick video call can bring grandchildren into your living room, even if they live hundreds of kilometres away. Messages and emails allow us to share photos, stories and everyday moments instantly. Social media platforms also make it easy to follow what family and friends are up to, helping us feel part of their lives in a meaningful way.

Beyond communication, staying connected through technology can have a positive impact on our wellbeing. Feelings of loneliness and isolation can sometimes creep in, especially during quieter times or when mobility becomes more limited. Being able to reach out with a simple call or message can make a big difference. Even a short chat can lift your mood and strengthen those important social bonds.

Technology also helps us stay involved in the groups and activities we enjoy. For members of Men's Sheds, this might mean keeping up to date with events, sharing project ideas, or staying in contact with fellow members between visits. Online groups, newsletters, and messaging apps make it easier than ever to remain part of the community, even when you can't be there in person.

The good news is that you don't need to be a tech expert to enjoy these benefits. Learning a few basic skills like making a video call, sending a message,

## Shed Tech Time - Tools for Today.....

Our "Technology in Everyday Life - Making It Work for You" classes are continuing to roll along, with members turning up each Monday morning keen to learn how their devices can make everyday life that little bit easier.

Technology isn't about keeping up with the latest gadgets. It's about using what you already have to make life simpler, safer, and more connected.

Each time you learn something new on your phone, tablet, or computer, you're building your independence. Simple things like paying a bill online, booking an appointment, checking the weather, or having



or browsing online can open up a whole new world of connection. And remember, there's always someone at the Shed willing to lend a hand if you need a bit of help getting started.

Staying connected isn't just about technology, it's about people. Our devices are simply tools that help us maintain the friendships, family ties, and community spirit that are so important to all of us.

So, if you've got a phone, tablet, or computer sitting nearby, why not give it a go? Make a call, send a message, or join an online group. You might be surprised just how much closer it brings you to the people who matter most.

Writer: *Steve O'Brien* - Shed News Editor



a video chat with family all make a real difference.

These small skills quickly add up, helping you feel more confident and in control of your day-to-day life.

Writer: *Steve O'Brien* - Shed News Editor

### The Quiet Achiever Keeping Us Connected.....

Most Shedders know Neil Horne by sight, but far fewer know just how much he quietly gets done around the place. And that, in many ways, tells you everything about Neil - steady, capable, modest, and always working away in the background to make the Shed run better.

Neil grew up in Georgetown, attending Waratah Public School before completing his HSC at Newcastle Boys High in 1977. His mum was a bit of an activist, protesting against the school going co-ed as she, like the other mothers, was concerned that those mischievous teenage girls would distract their sons from their studies. His dad worked at the State Dockyard as a pattern maker, so practical skills clearly run in the family. His dad assisted to establish junior girls cricket in Newcastle.

After school, Neil joined Davies and Cannington Printers as a sales clerk, gaining hands-on experience in estimating, job costing, accounts receivable and payable. He tried his hand a various roles including factory Production Manager - the first sign of a career built on curiosity, competence, and continuous learning.

And learn he did. Neil completed four years of accountancy and three years of computing studies, earning a NSW TAFE State Medal for topping Data Processing Certificate. He sat in on a couple of university lectures for his wife Karen and thought, "I could give this a go." He did, enrolling in a four-year IT degree which he cut short to undertake a Master of Business Administration at Newcastle University, completed at age 40.

Along the way he taught himself computer programming and built a career spanning roles as programmer, IT Manager, Project Manager, Enterprise Architect, and even Credit Union Chairman. He retired from Newcastle City Council in 2019.

Neil and Karen married in 1987 and now enjoy three children and four grandchildren.

A couple of years ago, Neil joined our Men's Shed to avoid what he calls the "Retiree Rut." True to form, he didn't sit still for long. He resurrected a long-idle 3D printer, mapped and upgraded the Shed's entire network, documented every cable run, and installed the now-famous black patch-panel box above the photocopier.

Thanks to Neil, our network is tidy, future-proofed, and ready for everything from CCTV to new workstations.



He also tackled the mountain of old computer leads, chargers, and dead laptops that had been breeding upstairs. You may not have realised the scale of the job until you saw the forklift lowering wheelbarrow loads of e-waste from the mezzanine. Neil never mentioned it, we only found out because we asked him for this profile.

These days, he's deep into an open-source radio-control project EdgeTX, writing code for radio handsets and associated computer app because of course he is currently doing.

Neil likes to tinker. He likes a challenge. He works quietly, purposefully, and always leaves things better than he found them. The Shed runs smoother because of him, even if he'd never say so himself.

Writer: **John Williams** - Men's Shed Reporter

# June Picture Gallery.....



## Maitland Luminous - Fire & Light Returns This June.....

Get ready for a spectacular winter experience as Maitland Luminous - Fire & Light lights up our city on June 19 -20. This much-loved event transforms Maitland into a glowing celebration of creativity, warmth, and community spirit.

Visitors can wander through stunning light installations, enjoy the flicker of fire displays, and soak up the vibrant atmosphere that brings people of all ages together. From colourful projections across buildings to interactive displays and live entertainment, there's something to capture everyone's imagination.

It's also a great opportunity to get out and about with family and friends, enjoy the crisp winter evenings, and experience Maitland in a whole new light. Local businesses and food vendors will be part of the festivities, adding to the lively, welcoming feel of the event.

If you're looking for something a little different this



winter, Maitland Luminous is well worth a visit. Rug up, bring your sense of wonder, and enjoy one of the region's most visually stunning events.

Writer: *Steve O'Brien* - Shed News Editor

## Maitland Heritage Fest - A Celebration of Our Past.....

The much-loved Maitland Heritage Fest returns in 2026, with a highlight Family Fun Day on Sunday the 14th of June in the historic Church Street precinct.

This vibrant community event celebrates the rich history of Maitland, from its deep Aboriginal heritage through to early European settlement and the development of the region we know today.

Running from 10am to 3pm, the Family Fun Day



will feature interactive displays, live entertainment, arts and crafts, food stalls, and plenty of hands-on activities for all ages.

Visitors can explore historic buildings and surrounds, including the beautiful Church Street precinct, with special activities, tours, and demonstrations bringing the past to life.

There will also be unique experiences such as heritage tours, workshops, and even old-fashioned carriage rides, giving everyone a chance to step back in time and experience Maitland's story in a fun and engaging way.

Maitland Heritage Fest is a wonderful opportunity to connect with our local history while enjoying a relaxed and friendly community atmosphere. It's a great day out, so mark Sunday 14 June 2026 in your calendar and come along to celebrate what makes Maitland special.

Writer: *Steve O'Brien* - Shed News Editor

### Wellbeing: Get More Out Of Your Daily Walk.....

Walking is one of the best forms of exercise. It's simple, free, and something most of us already do. But a few small changes can make it even more beneficial for your health.

Most of us have been walking for the better part of six decades. So, it may come as a surprise that a few simple adjustments to how and when you walk could unlock serious health benefits.

#### *Pick Up The Pace*

Walking at a brisk pace can make a big difference. What counts as brisk? Roughly 100 to 135 steps per minute, or a pace where you can talk but not sing. A fitness tracker or smartphone can help you check. This level of walking has been linked to better overall health.

#### *Stand Tall And Walk Easy*

Good posture helps you move better and with less effort. Try to stand upright, look ahead, and let your arms swing naturally. Walk lightly rather than heavily, this can reduce strain on your body.

#### *Take A Short Walk After Meals*

Studies have found that a 10-minute walk immediately after eating may be a practical and effective option for controlling blood glucose levels. Why does this work? Your muscles use glucose for fuel when they move. Intermittent light walking throughout the day reduced glucose by an average of 17 per cent compared to prolonged sitting.

For those managing or preventing type 2 diabetes, this is powerful. Studies have also found that an after-dinner walk may have the greatest relative benefits for overall daily glucose control. This is a simple habit that can make a real difference. Even a potter around the house after meals counts. Some-



thing is genuinely better than nothing. Walking also improves coordination and balance, reducing the risk of falls, a critical benefit as we age.

#### *Little Walks Add Up*

You don't need to do it all at once. Three short walks a day can be just as good as one longer walk. Regular walking also helps with balance and can reduce the risk of falls.

#### *Walk With Your Mates At The Shed*

Don't forget about our Monday morning walking group. It's a great way to stay active, enjoy a chat, and keep motivated. Whether you're a regular or just thinking about joining in, everyone is welcome. It's not a race, just good company and a steady walk to start the week.

#### *Before You Start*

If you have any health concerns, it's always a good idea to check with your GP before changing your exercise routine.

#### *Key Message:*

Walk a little faster, stand tall, and keep moving, especially with a few mates from the Shed. Small changes can lead to big health benefits.

Writer: *Steve O'Brien* - Shed News Editor



### The Historic Arnott Bakehouse - Where an Australian Icon Began.....

Most of us have had an Arnott's Biscuit with a cuppa at some stage but not everyone knows that the whole story started right here in our own backyard at Morpeth.

Tucked along Swan Street is the Historic Arnott Bakehouse, a fairly simple-looking old building that actually played a big part in Australian history.

#### *Where It All Began*

Back in the 1840s, Morpeth was a busy river port. Ships were coming and going along the Hunter River, and the town was buzzing with trade. That meant there was plenty of demand for basic supplies, especially food that could last the long sea journeys.

Enter William Arnott, a Scottish baker who set up shop in Morpeth around 1847. He wasn't making fancy biscuits back then. Instead, he was baking what were known as "ship's biscuits" - pretty plain, rock-hard, and built to last!

They might not have been much to write home about taste-wise, but they did the job, and they helped Arnott build a solid reputation.

#### *From Humble Beginnings*

Like a lot of good stories, this one didn't happen overnight. Arnott worked hard, built up his business, and eventually moved to Newcastle in 1865 after a few floods made life difficult in Morpeth.

From there, things really took off, and the Arnott's name became one of the most recognised in Australia. Not bad for something that started in a small bakehouse by the river.

#### *A Bit of Old-School Craftsmanship*

One of the real highlights of the bakehouse is the old wood-fired Scotch oven, which is still there today. It's a great reminder of how things were done



back in the day, no fancy machines, just skill, experience, and a fair bit of hard work.

It's the sort of place that makes you appreciate the craftsmanship that went into everyday jobs in the past.

#### *What's There Today?*

These days, the bakehouse has been brought back to life as Morpeth Sourdough, and it's well worth a visit. It's not just something to look at, you can actually:

- Grab some freshly baked sourdough.
- See traditional baking methods in action.
- Take part in bread-making classes.
- Have a look at bits of history connected to the Arnott family.

It's a nice mix of history and hands-on experience.

#### *Worth a Visit*

For those of us around Maitland and the Hunter, it's a great reminder that big things often start small. What began as a simple bakery supplying ships has turned into a story known right across the country.

Next time you're in Morpeth, it might be worth stopping by, having a look around, and maybe grabbing a loaf while you're there.

After all, it's not every day you get to stand where an Aussie icon first got its start.

Writer: *Steve O'Brien* - Shed News Editor