



# The Midland Line Midland Men's Shed Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2020  
ISSUE NO 108

*Blokes, jokes, mates and more*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:



Attendance for Social Tuesday numbers are about the same for this month as has been the trend of the last couple of months. Actual membership is increasing which is very good. We are looking for suggestions as to how we can improve Tuesday mornings – do you have any ideas, please? Numbers at the workshop have been good so keep up the good work guys.

Some clarity for the status of the future workshop was reached with the City of Swan deciding not to get involved with the old Railway Workshop site so it means we are to stay where we are for the foreseeable future. This takes us back to the existing workshop and the stalled extension we were planning. The latest on this is the requirement to supply electricity is going to be very expensive as it requires a completely new supply. This is a problem we will be working on over the next period.

That's about all for now and look forward to happy MMShedding going forward.

*John Griffiths*

President

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## COMING EVENTS:

- November 14th Community Day - Centrepnt Shopping Centre
- November 17th "Cape Horn or Bust" - Fran Taylor
- December 15th Christmas Lunch - **Cancelled**

## COMMUNITY DAY:

Date: Saturday 14th November 2020

Time: 11am to 2pm

Centrepnt Midland Shopping Centre

We will have a stand at the Community Day and if you can help out on the stand please let Kevin know.



*Midland Men's Shed Social Tuesday every Tuesday 9.30 to 11.30a*

*in the Baptist Church Hall Bellevue.*

*Contact - Kevin Buckland 0417 961 971*

*PO Box 1035 MIDLAND DC 6936*



## MEMBERSHIP STATS:

TUESDAY MORNINGS	OCTOBER
Average Attendance for month (Members)	54.5
Visitors for month	6
Av Weekly Attendance (Inc Visitors)	56
Best Week Attendance	58
New Members	3

### MIDVALE WORKSHOPS:

Total attendance for the month	259
Average daily attendance	13.6

## GREETING FROM EDINBURGH:

- **Michael Davies**

These are strange times and I should have more time on my hands but "its Friday again" and another week has gone!

We are as a family all well and covid free thank goodness but we did have a little scare this week. Rhian my daughter has recently gained a position of head teacher at a local Edinburgh school and so I took her out like a good and proud dad to a local restaurant. Alix, my dear wifey became the taxi driver and picked her up and later drove her home as she didn't want her to use public transport. A pleasant afternoon/early evening was had but the day after, Rhian rang me up to say she was unwell and had flu like symptoms. Oh dear, a COVID test was done and both Alix and I got a bit worried too. 48 hours wait was what was in store for all of us and finally the result came in -. negative!! She has the flu, what a relief all round but now we could see clearly how this awful virus is just hiding around each corner.

Today, from Glasgow across to Edinburgh (the central belt) bars, restaurants and cafes which sell alcohol shut down again for 2 weeks. Poor Nicola Sturgeon, she is being pulled from pillar to post, as most people agree to localised lockdowns but that partygoers (young people) are spreading this virus as they think that its only us oldies catch this virus. Businesses however, are up in arms as they say they will go bust if these lockdowns continue. What should we do then? No answer!! It was typical as well as this weekend was the first time we as a bowling club was going to have our first internal competition in our 150th year. The year has now been cancelled and it looks like Halloween, Guy Fawkes night and Christmas will also be cancelled! What a year. My greenhouse has kept me sane!

Hope that all Sheddars, Musos, Ping pong lot etc. are all well. I miss you all, especially now in a place I can't really do anything. Hope 2021 will open up for all of us, I miss my family too as I can't even be with my grandkids here in Edinburgh. Gareth my son and family who live in the Vale of Glamorgan, Wales, can't even leave their area and we can't visit them!

Ah well, enough of my ramblings I need to think about dinner now, what shall I cook? I'm off to my books, I think I fancy a curry and a nice bottle of wine to close the week with my dearest - well we can't go to the pub or restaurant can we?

Bye for now, take care, hello to the boys.

Meic



## COMPETITION:

- **Pete Arnell**

Is competition good? Well if it is carried out in a fair and equitable way, with no malice or vindictiveness involved. In some cases a degree of bitterness, even hatred of a rivals work, might rear its ugly head, but this is just Human nature at work, and can be accepted. But in general; competition is in my opinion GOOD!! In all walks of life, the Arts, Science and Sport, competition gets the creative juices flowing. It allows our imaginations to flourish, it produces greater physical excellence, so we run and swim faster, jump higher and longer and throw things further, all part of Sporting rivalry. But sometimes a rival can become a vicious adversary or antagonist to their competitor. They will go to any lengths to better their rival, by breaking or bending the rules, and some go even further this happens rarely, but it does happen. For example, Tonya Harding, the Ice Skater, was implicit in having her rival Nancy Kerrigan's leg broken, fortunately this didn't happen, but it ruined Harding's career, To a lesser degree this rivalry can be a genuine dislike of the competitor. In the Arts for example, the rivalry between Michelangelo and Raphael, and to a lesser degree, Leonardo da Vinci turned rather bitter, but the competitiveness between them, produced some Wonderful Masterpieces and laid the benchmark for the likes of Caravaggio to emulate or even better them. In the Musical World, the so called bitter rivalry between Mozart and Salieri, the bitterness was not about their respective compositions [Salieri admired Mozart's work enormously] it was Salieri's blocking Mozart's approaches to sponsors, which he relied upon for a living, a case of no Sponsor, no Money. Then in the Literary World, there were the vindictive nasty insults that the Playwright Robert Greene heaped on William Shakespeare, calling him amongst other things a "Upstart Crow". This in complete contrast to the good natured rivalry between Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe, who fed off each others work, and in turn leaving to the world a wonderful legacy. Robert Greene, with all his bitterness has disappeared into History.

In the World of Science, the genuine bitterness and even hatred, between Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla, even George Westinghouse became involved in this feud, Where Edison was accused of stealing the ideas and discoveries of his contemporaries, patenting them, then using the excuse for his actions, especially in the case of Tesla, that as Tesla was working for him. Tesla's ideas belong to him. All this in complete contrast to Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace who willingly shared their ideas on Natural Selection. Darwin of course receiving all the kudos, because he published his Theory of Evolution first, but I suspect Wallace was not really interested in the acclaim, as long as the theory was published and accepted as a fact. This is what I call a wonderful example of GOOD competitiveness. In Sport of course many rivalries have occurred over the years Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi, In the 1990's Chris Everett and Martina Navratilova, in the 1970's and in recent times Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic, and who can forget the bitter rivalry between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky [Yes, Chess is a Sport!!!!] Then there was the wonderful rivalry between John Landy and Ron Clarke, where during a Mile race in 1950, Landy, who was leading the race, stopped to help Clarke, back to his feet, who had tripped and fallen, Landy then went on to win the race. This showed the best in the human spirit and that competition when carried out in the right way can be GOOD.

Turning back the pages of History, to the late 1800's in Australia a rivalry developed between two Bush Poets and short story writers. Henry Lawson and Edward "Banjo" Paterson. Both men were complete opposites. Paterson being born into a Middle Class Farming family and educated by a Governess, was given a high standard of education, even though he failed the entrance exam to attend Sydney University. He did become a Solicitor, and by the late 1800's became a well known and successful published writer, with works like "The Man from Snowy River" "Clancy of the Overflow" "Mulga Bill's Bicycle" "The Man from Ironbark" and "A Bush Christening" amongst others. He even penned the words to Australia's Un-Official National Anthem "Waltzing Matilda" In his poems and stories he painted a picture of a idealistic outback, with heroic horsemen and women in abundance. In complete contrast, Henry Lawson came from a lower economic background, poorly educated [this was due to an ear infection causing partial hearing loss], which meant he found it difficult to hear the lessons, by his late teens he was totally deaf. He also failed his exams which would have taken him to a higher learning, So he was reduced in his working life, to mainly labouring jobs, even spending time as a roustabout on a sheep station in Queensland,. Here I suspect he learned the Australian vernacular of the time, which he used to good effect in his poems and short stories. He too, by the 1890's had become a published writer with stories like "The Drovers Wife", "Past Carin", "While the Billy boils", "On the Wallaby", and "Andy gone with cattle". Grim ,Dark stories of the Bush, in complete contrast to Paterson's highly Romantic idyllic view. Then in 1892 Lawson had published in the Bulletin a poem entitled "Up the Country". The opening line was "I'm back up from the country, very sorry that I went" ...Paterson replied with his poem "In defence of the Bush", the final lines read "The bush will never suit you, and you'll never suit the bush". Lawson responded in a rancorous way by calling Paterson a City Bushman, and suggested that they should debate the merits or otherwise of the Bush in a series of Poems to be published in the Bulletin. So with the encouragement of the Founder and Editor of the Bulletin F J. Archibald [Who also founded the Archibald Prize for Portraiture] The "Bulletin Debate" began. It lasted well into 1893, [other authors of the time also entered the fray]. But by 1894 it was all over. But the Debate resulted in some Wonderful purely Australian poetry. For those who have the time and the inclination, all the Poems and short stories including those of the Debate, can be found On-Line, and are well worth the read.

So is Competition Good? If it is done with the right intentions, most definitely YES!!! Its a pity we can't have a good hearted non vindictive, Literary Debate, on lots of subjects, Rugby Union v Rugby League, Chinese Cuisine v Italian Cuisine, Ford v Holden, Red Wine v White Wine, Star Wars v Star Trek.

The options are endless, So here is a challenge, pick a subject [NO Religion, Politics or Sex] wax lyrical about it, in a short article or even a poem, and wait for a response. **HEY PRESTO** a Literary Debate.

\*\*\*\*\* **JUST A THOUGHT** \*\*\*\*\*

## QUENDA:

- **Bob Lawson**

Southern Brown Bandicoot (Quenda) SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Isoodon obesulus*

There are around 20 species of Bandicoot. The South West sub-species (*Isoodon obesulus fuscivente*) that you see throughout the park is also known by its noongar name; Quenda.

Bandicoots are often mistaken for rats/rodents. Aside from being a marsupial, the bandicoot also differs from a rodent with its short-tapered tail and fewer whiskers. They are also unable to climb like rodents can.

Males are typically larger than females, with males weighing on average 800-900 grams, and females on average 600grams.

### DISTRIBUTION & HABITAT:

Bandicoots are native to Australia and widely distributed.

Recent documentation states that there are now 5 sub-species of the Southern Brown Bandicoot:

- *Isoodon obesulus fusciventer* (south-west Western Australia)
- *Isoodon obesulus obesulus* (south-eastern mainland Australia)
- *Isoodon obesulus peninsulae* (far north Queensland including Cape York)
- *Isoodon obesulus affinus* (Tasmania)
- *Isoodon obesulus nauticus* (Nuyts Archipelago, South Australia)

They are found in scrubby, often swampy, vegetation with dense cover up to 1 m high,

The South-West Quenda is found only in the south-west of Western Australia. Quenda will thrive in more open habitat subject to introduced predator control. On the Swan Coastal Plain, Quenda are often associated with wetlands.

The quenda is active mainly at dusk, although can be seen day or night when weather conditions are mild and predation risk low.

Bandicoots usually live solitarily although some home ranges can overlap.

### DIET:

Being omnivorous, their diet includes invertebrates (including earthworms, adult beetles and their larvae), fungi, plant material, and very occasionally, small vertebrates. The diet changes seasonally as different foods become available. When searching for underground foods, they dig into the soil with their strong fore-claws to produce a characteristic conical hole and, with their eyes shut, use their nose as a probe.



### LIFE EXPECTANCY:

Average 3 years in the wild; a little longer in captivity.

### BREEDING:

Quenda breed throughout the year with a peak in spring. The backward opening pouch contains eight teats arranged in an incomplete circle, and accommodates one to six (usually two to four) young in a litter. Two or three litters may be reared in a year, though this is dependent upon food availability. It has been found that older females produce more litters. The gestation period is approx 12-15 days. The mortality rate is fairly high, so usually 2-3 joeys are weaned at about 2 months of age. Oestrous can occur during lactation, with a new litter being born immediately after the pouch is vacated.

### CONSERVATION STATUS & THREATS:

IUCN Red List – Least Concern 2012

Major threats to the Quenda include fragmentation and loss of habitat on the coastal plain and in the Wheat belt, fire in fragmented habitat, predation by foxes (particularly in more open habitat), predation of young by cats and predation around residential areas by dogs.

*By the time you realise your parents were usually right,  
you have children who think you are usually wrong.*

## TECHIE TIPS:

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This month I thought I would look at **preventable defects** in the timber we store. Firstly, a quick **overview** of how we get the timber we use.

Timber comes either from old growth forests or renewable plantations and all are subject to yearly climate variations as they grow. Most of you will know about the 'growth rings' visible on the end grain but are you aware that the climate history during the growth period is also recorded by the width between the rings?

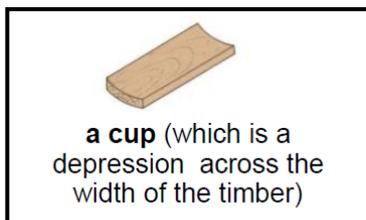
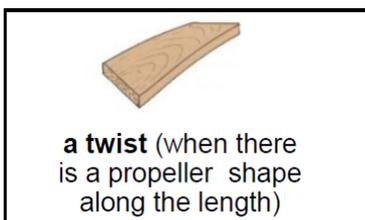
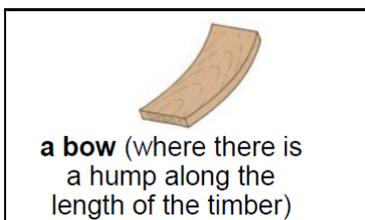
Generally, the closer the rings: the drier the season, the wider the rings: the wetter the season, but with a caveat. Plantation-grown timber is watered to achieve maximum growth to a commercial size in the quickest time. The end grain of plantation-grown timber generally shows a wider uniformity in the spacing. Typically, this is the case with the pine we purchase.

Once logged, a tree is taken to a saw mill to be cut to shapes and sizes suitable for making the finished wood products. Between the milling and making stages the timber must be processed to reduce the **moisture content** to a stable level. When it is growing, a tree takes up water to assist its growth. To make it usable, this 'green' timber must be dried until the water content reaches a stage of equilibrium with surrounding atmosphere (called **seasoning**). If you aren't in a hurry you can use **air drying** by leaving the green timber stacked under cover in the open air. This is the traditional method.

Because we are mostly in a hurry to market the finished product (and make our profit), a process called **kiln drying** is used to speed everything up. Either way, the timber we buy from the timber merchant is at equilibrium (seasoned).

Now to **preventable defects**.

A **defect** is taken to be any irregularity occurring in or on the **timber** which may affect its utility value or diminish its appearance. Preventable defects (as distinct from defects like fungal attack) can occur due to poor storage practices. They are typically in the form of

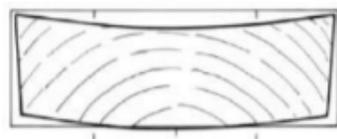


Timber should be stored flat on a shelf with the longest lengths at the bottom. Access should preferably be from the end. Different sizes should have vertical dividers.

**Bows** and **twists** are caused by sloppy storage-it’s that simple. Look at the differences here. The photo on the **left** shows timber has been **stacked evenly** and repacked after a piece has been accessed. The photo on the right shows timber in mixed sizes and **stored haphazardly**.



It is pretty easy to see how **stresses can be induced** in the timber on the right and it is surprising how quickly serviceable timber can be made unserviceable.



**Cupping** occurs when timber with rainbow-shaped growth rings seen on the end grain **becomes too dry** and shrinkage is greater across the milled surface than across growth rings. Keeping this sort of timber away from excessive heat should help maintain flatness until you need it.

**BOTTOM LINE:** If you don’t want to waste \$\$\$, then pay attention to how you store your timber

## JINGLE BELLS:

Jingle Bells is one the better known and more popular Christmas songs. The song was written in 1857 by James Lord Pierpont. Did you know that it was NOT intended to be a Christmas song? When written, Jingle Bells was meant to be a song for the Thanksgiving holiday.

## THE BEGINNING:

- **Harry Barden**

The date was August 18th 1931 in the middle of greatest depression the world had ever seen. I was born in a house opposite the main gate of the Royal Marine Barracks in Storehouse, Plymouth, the city from where the Pilgrim Fathers set sail in the 17th century. Little did I know that I would follow in their footsteps crossing not just one ocean, but three. It was not long before my family moved to the rear of the Barracks—a portent perhaps of my life to come - up one minute and down the next, like a yoyo on a see saw.

Looking back to the 1930's what a vast difference between then and now in the 21st century—it seems like another planet. I was checking the Internet Google Earth, etc. researching the years 1931 to 1939 when World War was declared in September 1939 to jog my memories of my childhood days - we lived in Storehouse, Plymouth, very close to the sea and the river Plym. River Plym flows together with the river Tamar into the Plymouth Sound, past Drakes Island and into the English Channel. Just across the river was Devonport the largest naval base in Western Europe at the time and you could cross by ferry to Cremyll a holiday place. Everything was within easy walking distance including the dockyards and as kids we would walk to Plymouth Hoe where Sir Francis Drake played the notorious game of bowls before acknowledging the existence of the dreaded Spanish Armada.

As you can guess by now my dad was a Royal Marine who must have met my mum in Valetta Malta which was a well known British port. My mother and her sister were Armenian and were born at the beginning of the 20th century. They must have escaped the Turkish genocide and made their way to Malta. My older brother Bill was born in Malta. They returned to England in about 1930 to Plymouth where I was born. It must have been really tough trying to make ends meet in the depression years of the early 1930's for most of the population. We were lucky that my dad was working as a steward in the officer's mess, by hook or by crook always scavenged some extra food to bring home. It was one of the few perks of the Catering Industry, which I learned myself when I was doing my National as a Batman/Waiter learning the trade which came very handy later on in my life. I could get a job in the hospitality industry.

My early childhood would have been the same as most kids, everything was new and exciting plenty of places to explore, one adventure after another. The imagination had a whale of a time, one minute you were Captain Drake, the next you would be Bluebeard the Pirate running up the Jolly Roger. The talking movies were really getting their stride in the Thirties we all wanted to be our screen heroes Captain Blood or Robin Hood (Errol Flynn), Flash Gordon (Buster Crabbe) in outer space or Tarzan of the Apes (Olympic swimming champion Johnny Weissmuller) swinging from the trees with his famous Tarzan yell and also Sabu from the thief of Baghdad with towels wrapped around our heads. Plymouth Sound there were pockets of calm waters where we built rafts just like Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

Sunday mornings were always something to look forward to as the Royal Marine Band would exit from either the main gate or the rear. I was lucky enough to have lived at both ends of the housing block, the hoses are still there, but more modernised. The Marine Band specialised in marches with a nautical theme "A life on the ocean waves" etc. and they looked very smart in their navy blue uniforms and white pitch helmets, the band master leading them with his leopard skin wrap tossing a shiny brass baton way up in the air, never missing to catch it in time with the marching band.

Sunday was also the day when we had to wear our "Sunday best" and dress up to go to church and Sunday School. I was even in the choir at St Paul's Church and wore a cassock and stiff white collar which nearly choked me. As I invariably sang off-key it's a good job I didn't want to be a singer. No way was I the little angel that my mother wanted. Not with a catapult in my back pocket. To day I could be pop star, an idol. I had all the right qualifications couldn't sing, but could make a lot of noise mouthing words that make no sense and dance around like a chimpanzee on LSD. The only thing missing would have been the tattoos and tattered clothing. I attended St Paul's Junior School, which has now been demolished, but it was there that my young artistic talent began to show itself. After I left junior school I attended High Street Primary School, which has now also been demolished, but it was there that my young artistic talent began to show itself more than my ability with reading. My English being way below par. I didn't really get much of an academic education plus having dyslexia which wasn't picked up, yet with subjects like History, Geography and the Arts I did well. I could always add up and especially count money when there was any to count. In 1938 I was now seven years old and I started attending High Street Secondary Modern. That's when I was introduced to the cane - I copped a couple of whacks!

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