

NEWS ON PROGRESS WITH ORGANISING THINGS AT THE SHED

Our MenzShed Kapiti operation has flourished way more than anyone could possibly have expected. That's led to a fantastic sense of camaraderie and real drive to develop our facility to suit our needs. Throughout the coldest days of this past winter it has been uncommon for the numbers arriving to take part and help out to be less than 20 people and more often than not nearer 30. Some just wish to socialise and the less physically able might simply be there to make sure the dishes are done while the teams of members get on with completing their projects, but generally there have been up to 5 major projects happening simultaneously on any day.

It's only possible to supply the tools and materials for this number of things through the generosity of our community; both local business and the general public. We don't just have hammers we have many HAMMERS all donated; some good some not so good. The same goes for almost any tool we might need that is imaginable. Hardware, the same. Things like screws, nails, bolts, nuts, washers, spacers, plugs, timber, plywood, perspex, scotia, etc, etc, etc. Making sure that everything we need is there when wanted is a major challenge. In your own workshop, (eg. Mine is a classic) you can just pile everything in a box together and you know exactly where to find it when needed. In our MenzShed workshop that just leads to frustration and a lot of wasted time and energy.

So the challenge was there to sort out all the tools and boxes of bits we have been given into an order that means we can find things easily. Workbenches and workshop organisation are similarly work in progress.

Up steps James. Now James is a quiet man who thinks hard before saying "How about we try this." Of course nobody was going to turn down an offer to make some sense of our boxes of "stuff" so James with assistance from Chris, Ross and anyone who might stop to ask about what was happening, has spent months organising a special corner of the storage area so we can find the right bits. The shelves are now organised, labelled, tidy and you can find what you need. BUT NOW THE STORY REALLY STARTS we need to keep it that way.

James has completed his end of the deal and he's now taken a break to explore another interest for a while. So unless we carry on where James left off he won't be there to rescue us and very soon the chaos will return.

To help us understand what has been achieved in the hardware storage hardware area, James prepared a short article that describes his observations, what he's done to change things, how the system works and what needs to be done by us all to keep the area functioning properly. Please take the time to read this and through understanding the system keep the place tidy plus the hardware where it should be so it's easy to find what's needed.

Cheers
Nigel Clough

STORAGE

By James

I was pleased to note that the pavers laid outside the Old Shed improved the drainage and, combined with a small step, has stopped rainwater flooding the FASTENINGS area. This may have reduced the rate of corrosion but it will not stop it. Bright Steel will still become Rusty Steel in open topped pottles. They are open so that you can see what is in the pottle easily and in the hope you will put fastenings away in the right place. Another danger of open tops is that when you wrench a drawer out and the whole lot falls on the floor, YOU have to pick 'em up and re-sort them.

Kapiti MenzShed has grown beyond all expectations and very rapidly. With over a hundred members and more than a million dollars worth of equipment and facilities at its disposal, organisation and communication start to have problems.

As a group gets bigger, the business of communicating gets more difficult. The Romans found that their city got so big they could no longer meet in the market to make decisions, and democracy failed. They had to resort to bureaucracy. So there had to be rules and order. When one fails to keep the rules, the system crashes.

When you worked alone in your garage, you could afford to throw all the nails, screws and bolts into one pottle on the bench. With a large number of people all looking for small items like hinges, brackets, cotter pins, biscuits, etc, the "one pot fits all" no longer works. There has to be order. This demands that we all put used materials and items and tools back in the right place. I have noticed that the members who wander around muttering that they can't find a tape measure are often the same ones that never put stuff away.

I do not spend hours standing next the screw shelves because I have nothing better to do, but out of my interest in TAXONOMY*. I regards it as a challenge to get it right and have tried several systems to find out which works best. Did anyone notice that I changed the order of the contents a couple of times? Well the labelling of shelves should be complete by 10th July. No more changes. It's up to each to read the label. If the labelling is inadequate, I'd be interested to know about it.



The WHITE shelves carry NAILS. The SILVER drawers carry SCREWS. The GREEN “nest boxes” carry BOLTS, NUTS & WASHERS. I hope the system can communicate to speed up the search and replacement. In case you have not discovered it, the silver drawers easily fall out. They have to be treated gently.

An important outcome was the opportunity to observe members’ behaviour. Having spent several months on the re-organisation of the FASTENINGS storage, I am very aware of what is available and where it is kept. I notice that some members take an entire container away and do not return it to the shelf when finished. In childhood you had a mum to clean up after you, but now you are a man and should have cast aside the dependency of childhood. If you don’t care for your own environment, it won’t care for you.



Another habit springing up is to dump a boxful of fastenings and fittings on the floor in front of the shelves, no doubt with the assumption that “someone” will sort it out. Well “someone” will not be there to do it for you. He has done the job he set out to do. He applied his knowledge to the job of classifying the fastenings using the resources available. It is now the best you will get. Mistreat it and you will be back to sorting through buckets of mixed nails, screws and bolts for every project.

Another area that needs attention is the SCRAP. Buckets were labelled but now contain all sorts of rubbish. We need a volunteer to tackle this.

Another application of taxonomy* I should like to see applied, is to label the “sheds” “rooms” or “bays” so we can describe easily where something is. Now we have eight closed rooms in the row plus several external storage areas, it is becoming taxing to explain where any long lost item might have been last seen. My suggestion is to give each space a letter-name in the way that is done for buildings on a university campus. Using letters avoids putting any value or ordinal on them. It also allows up to 26 before we have to double up. I was prepared to paint these on boards or on the doors. I liked the suggestion to cut them out of metal sheet and mount them as relief sculptures.