

Bayswater Community Men's Shed Newsletter

March/April/May 2025

Autumn

Shed Organisation

A lot has happened this year to make the workshop more user friendly, Andy, Bert, Bob and Bill have organised the sheet metal area shown in the photo below so that all the machines are easily accessible. They also modified the metal rack, a donation that Lloyd organised. The Tool/Project store started with the purchase of very cheap shelving from Apollo Bearings which was bolted to the floor and panels fitted to the shelving. Thanks to David, Craig, and Michael and others who helped along the way.



We need a door! Michael and David are here deciding how the door will fit. (At present, the door is fitted, only the door lock needs to be installed)



Councillor Steve O. from the City of Bayswater, dropped in to discuss capital works for the shed which include evaporative airconditioning for the workshop and a covered area outside the entrance door and roller door. Unfortunately we were too late for the 2025-6 financial year, but we are on the list for the following year. In the photograph, Steve, Bill and Michael admire the new panel saw. Many thanks to Clive for writing the grant submission to the Bendigo Bank, David doing the research on the most suitable machine and making the presentation to the Bendigo Bank.

A huge thank you to the Bendigo Bank for their ongoing generosity.

Community Bank
Bayswater

 **Bendigo Bank**

New Panel Saw

Member Profile

Henk's Story

I would like to share Henk's life story, as a Holocaust survivor, Henk suffered terrible injustices of prejudice, racism and discrimination. Henk wrote at the age of 70. At the age of 70 Henk wrote "His Story" which he used in educational programs for high school students. Telling 'His Story' to promote awareness on the lessons of the Holocaust, its history and relevance today



I was named Isaac and was born to Reintje and Mozes Piller in Amsterdam on December the 10th, 1932.

The second child, and oldest son, I had an older sister Betje. After me came Esther, Ben Hartog and Judith - who was born in November 1940. Our baby brother Ronald was born later - in June of 1943.

My early childhood was a happy one, in a close and loving family.

I was particularly attached to my mother, who was warm and very kind, and who had a lovely singing voice. One of the things I remember most about her was that she was always singing. My father worked as a baker in a factory making matzas for Passover.

Ours was a traditional Jewish home, and I can recall pleasant Friday nights with the candles lit and a special meal. The Jewish festivals-with extended family, are also clearly stamped in my memory.

We had a very large extended family, with grandparents on both sides whom we often visited. I remember my paternal grandmother always giving me a cent with which to buy something sweet, The money came from a pocket from under her petticoat.

Both sets of grandparents were very loving, and we used to get lots of love and cuddles. I also had lots of aunts and uncles, for both my parents came from large families. This meant we had a lot of cousins, and we were a close knit family.

The school Betje and I attended was a Jewish one, and I was happy there, good at my schoolwork and enjoyed learning.

My mother was very caring and protective, and on cold days she would come to meet us after

school, and bring socks with her to put over our shoes, so that we would not slip and fall on the snow and ice on the way home.

Our lives were those of a normal family and sometimes I would play on the street with other children from the neighbourhood.

Early in May 1940, the war began, when Germany invaded Holland. I can remember hearing the planes go overhead, but had no idea of what the war would bring. Everyone was saying "this is war", but I was too young to comprehend.

The children in the neighbourhood were mostly my friends and we often played altogether in the streets.

One day I was playing innocently in the street with a friend, I was very shocked when his father came up and slapped me in the face. He said angrily " stay away from my son, you little Jew". This was my first experience of being made to feel different. I had done nothing wrong and I just did not understand his behaviour.

I was so upset that I ran to my parents.

Although they consoled me, they could not make waves for fear of reprisals.

A few weeks after my pet cat called Joopie was killed, and its mangled body was left on our front doorstep, We were all very distressed, and upset that anyone could be so cruel to a helpless animal. Again my parents could do nothing, because we were Jews, and they were petrified that more was going to happen to us. As time went by the Jewish people began to be more and more isolated. We were made to wear the yellow star of David, to readily identify us as Jews and to set us apart.

This made us the target for more ridicule.

Also in the parks there were signs which said "no entry for dogs and Jews".

Food in war time Holland began to be rationed, and we were not given coupons. I can remember that we lived around the corner from a bakery, and sometimes my mother would send me to get bread. Often I was taken out of the queue of waiting people - I did not understand why I was pushed out of line.

Sometimes the woman in the shop took pity on me and gave me bread.

The corner shop was vandalised and looted - it had probably been owned by Jews. I was there, when I saw a man hit, he called to me to go home (for my own protection).

Father was still working, and he brought food in for the family - I am not sure from where.

The round-ups of Jews began in mid March in 1942.

Children and teachers were taken from the Jewish schools, and if parents went to collect them they were also taken away. Most people were initially taken to the concentration camp in Westerbork, in the province of Drenthe - near the German border.

Our school was closed, and my education in the classroom stopped - I was 9 years old.

This was the beginning of the time when fear ruled every day of our lives.

Holland has always been a traditionally tolerant country. The Germans knew this, and they had formed a very strong Dutch Nazi party to help them with their 'work'.

We lived in a first floor apartment, and I have vivid and terrifying memories of loud boots coming up the stairs to our door (the memories still haunt me). The Germans came noisily up the stairs in groups of four or five - to collect the Jews from their homes.

I used to be so scared, because when the doorbell or knocking came, as the oldest boy in the family, I was the one who had to open the door. My parents would duck quickly into bed, and I had to tell the German soldiers that my parents were very very sick. The Germans were afraid of contagious diseases, so they would give me a kick on the backside and leave.

I still remember the fear in the eyes of my

parents every time we heard the Germans on the stairs, and we had to keep our little siblings quiet. Early each morning my father would slip out of the flat to go and check on family members who lived nearby. Both my parents came from large families, and they were particularly concerned about the safety of their parents. When he returned with bad news, the family became increasingly fearful and apprehensive. One morning he came back with the news that his parents had been picked up by the Nazis. His mother, who was partly blind had been pushed down the stairs and hurt, and also his parents had been separated at this time, and sent to a concentration camp. For almost a year we lived in our home which had become like a prison. We had no school, no entertainment, and very little to do. Our radio had been confiscated and we had to be quiet at all times. There was no heating in our three bedroom home, and we had very little food. We were not allowed to go outside or look out of the windows, I remember always being hungry, but more than that we suffered from the cold. I never saw my mother eat, and I think that often her share of what little there went to the children. She used to sing softly to us, and taught us songs - in Dutch, Yiddish and Hebrew. I still remember many of these tunes and songs today (I knew a bit of Hebrew from my time in school, and my parents used Yiddish expressions in their speech. The grandparents were Yiddish - speaking).

With little children in our home, I do not know how my dear mother managed with the washing, for it could not be hung outside and we had no heating in our flat. Our lives were governed by fear, and we became very afraid when we heard anyone on the stairs, for we knew that the people coming up were not from the family. For most of this time my mother was pregnant, and when she gave birth to Ronald in June 1943, we all had to leave the house while she was giving birth. This was the only uncircumcised boy in the family. Life was becoming more and more precarious and more dangerous.

Daily we heard stories of whole families who

had committed suicide by gassing themselves. My parents found someone in the Dutch underground who agreed to take and hide some of their children. When Ron was only 6 weeks old, and my little sister Judith was two and a half, a man from the underground came and took them away. My parents were absolutely beside themselves when their little daughter and new-born baby Ron were taken by this scary man. The hugs and kisses did not stop, until the man they did not know hurried away. The man who came for them had a frightening and fierce appearance, and we children were very afraid of him. When they left our home the crying was terrible. We were all grief-stricken, for we were not allowed to know where they were going and we were afraid that we would never see them again. For my mother, to have her tiny baby taken away must have been a real tragedy. We heard no news of them at all. A relatively short time later the man returned, and this time he took Hartog and Benjamin. Nobody knew whether they were going to safety or to their deaths. Again, the separation from the rest of the family was heart-wrenching, and we all wept bitterly. Two or three weeks later, the same man returned again and Esther and Betty were taken away. I will never never forget the screams of my parents as they stood against a wall and saw their beloved children taken from them. Each parting was so traumatic. Shortly afterwards - a day or two before I was taken away, a neighbour called, and I was asked to go with my parents to his place early in the morning. The neighbour lived around the corner in the next street, and people were hidden there on the first floor. Even before we had reached the corner of the street, people were in our home, dragging out the furniture - like scavengers. In the evening the same man returned to collect me - the last of the children. (after the war we learned the man's name was Boogart, and although his appearance was so frightening, he took every one of the children to safety). I was 10 years old. I did not want to leave my parents, and I made a fuss. They talked and

cuddled me and my mother said "It will be alright. We will be together on your birthday". I could take nothing with me, but my mother gave me a little rubber, and said "You keep that - it is a lucky one" (To this day I still have it). She said to me, "go with this man. Go and don't turn around". I did turn around of course, and my last memory of my parents was to see them crying uncontrollably, for now there seven children were gone. I was told not to speak, and as we walked along the man gave me an apple, which I ate ravenously - in a few bites. We then travelled on a bus, and again told not to talk, but just look straight ahead. I was in a completely strange and unknown place, and was taken to a young married couple. The woman did not want to risk taking me at all, but was talked into doing so - just for the night. I felt unwanted, alone, and very frightened. The following morning my rescuer returned, I was given another identity - Henk and another surname. Then I was taken to another family, a husband, wife and three children - about three kilometres away. I was there for three weeks, and the husband was kinder to me than the wife. This happened throughout my time in hiding - the men were more sympathetic. I found this very difficult, as I craved a little warmth and affection from the women. I was completely separated from all members of my family, and at 10 years of age I badly missed my mother. The father of the man I stayed with had a farm, and a little Jewish girl called Judith was hidden there. On my second visit there Judith and I were given separate hiding places, in case the Germans came, and we had to drill and practise hiding there. The Germans did come, and Judith began to cry in her hiding place. She was discovered and was taken away and never seen again. This incident made me more afraid and more unhappy and abandoned. After this I was hidden in the attic for six or seven weeks. There were no stairs leading to the attic, and it was small, dark and I was unable to stand up. I could do nothing and see nothing and I cried bitterly every night, and was

so miserable that I just wanted to die. The days were endless. I was allowed out of the attic only once a day in the evening to go to the toilet, and the woman brought me a little food. While I was in the attic, my eyes were badly affected, and I had difficulty adjusting to the daylight. My body was unnaturally bloated - from malnutrition and lack of exercise. In early December I was again moved, and was taken on the back of a woman's bicycle for many kilometres to place called Hoofddorp. It was such a relief to be outside and in the fresh air again. The woman was Beppie Geerlings, and her husband was called Fred, they had three sons and a daughter. Auntie Bep as she wanted to be called, was tactless and unkind, and made fun of my bloated stomach. I had a rope put around my pants, as this was the only way I could keep them up with my poor malnourished stomach. The new family had a good laugh about my stomach. Auntie Beppie was a cruel and insensitive woman, who was always ready to belittle me. I so badly craved a little warmth or affection. A kind word or a hug would have made such a difference. On my first night with the family I went to cover my head, (for I had no yarmulke) when they said Grace, and they all laughed at me, for this was not allowed. There were prayers before and after meals, and I had to go to church with the family. One day I saw my sister Betje while walking to church, I was not aware that my sister was living so close. I was not allowed to speak to her or acknowledge her presence. It gave me hope that she was alive. Nobody was interested in me, and I was never asked about my family - I felt so very much alone, There was no way to find out about how they were. To be fair to Aunt Bep, I shared the food that the family had. My eleventh birthday was on the 10th of December - soon after I went to live with the Geerlings, but I told no one. I was eleven years old, and my mother never came as she had promised. Little did I know that she had already been gassed. In my childish way I thought she doesn't want me,

they are all together at home and forgot about me. I did not want to live, or to celebrate my birthday ever again. I am now 70 and never celebrated my birthday since then. On that birthday I just went to bed and cried. Naturally I could not go to school, and when people came I had to go into my special hiding place on the second floor of the house, between cupboards. I had to practice going into this spot a few times, and to be quiet and not move while I was there. It was not easy. In the weekends I was sent to various members of the family, Auntie Bep's parents, to Fred's mother, and to his brother. I was sent from one to the other some were kind and others were not. I was unwelcome at Fred's mothers place, and his sister was also unkind to me. One night Mr Geerlings woke me up suddenly, and told me that I had to run quickly and hid in the wheat field (Germans appeared in the street and there was shooting). I was in my pyjamas and it was bitterly cold, and I also had bare feet, I was told not to show my face, or to stand up in the wheat. I must just wait until he came to collect me and be as quiet as a mouse. I kept bobbing up to see and I was so scared, and wet, and very cold. After two hours Mr Geerlings fetched me, and I cried and cried. He said "Don't worry - I cry too sometimes". I could not believe this big tough man would have ever cried. I still have nightmares about running, and the chill I received then has given me long term problems with my lungs. While I was living with the Geerlings, the woman across the road threatened to betray me. Fred went to her and told her he would kill her if she did so. I was sent away for a few days until the trouble blew over. At the very end of the war I discovered that my baby brother Ron was living not far away. I borrowed a bike, and secretly rode down to where he was living. The woman who was looking after Ron was afraid, and told me to go away. I pleaded with her, and she relented, and let me in. I played with him, and he did not want me to go- of course he did not understand. I went back once more - I wanted to see him, and felt responsible for my little brother.

Early in 1945, I was outside and won a game. The boy with whom I was playing said spitefully to me "You will never see your mother and father again". This shocked and upset me. After the war finished I had discovered that my mother had been gassed at Auschwitz on the 19th of November in 1943. Not long - before her thirty third birthday. My father survived Auschwitz , and returned at the end of 1945, but he had lost both of his feet, was an invilid, and only lived for a few years. I have lost close to 300 family members in the Holocaust - counting the extended families of both my parents. After the war we children were told to meet up in Amsterdam, and I met Betje and Ron, who had lived not far from where I lived with the Geerling family. I met up with all my siblings, when my father returned from hospital. This was the first time in two and a half years since we had all seen each other. At this time - straight after the war we children had nowhere to go. Ron stayed with the family who had him almost from birth, Betty at the age of 15 or 16 got a job with a doctor, where she was badly treated, Esther and Hartog came together at Hilversum at a Jewish orphanage. Judith was taken in by a family connection, and Ben remained in a Jewish home in Appledoom. I remained with the Geerling family because I was less than 13 years of age, and I had no choice, and nowhere to go. They told me I could remain with them if I became a catholic, and thus they forced me to become one because I really had no choice. I recommenced school. I had lost three and a half valuable years of my schooling, and I worked very hard

to catch up.

Aunty Bep never encouraged me in any way, and never wanted to see my school reports. I was in the same class as one of her boys, and when I did better than he did at school, she told me that I must have cheated. After four years in high school I joined the army for eighteen months.

I was encouraged to come to Australia, and the Geerlings hoped that I would marry their Daughter. After the war I came to Australia, and shortly afterwards I met my lovely wife Wilhelmina, who was always been there for me. We had three lovely children and now have six grandchildren and two great grandchildren. We have both worked hard to provide well for our children, but my health has been affected by the early deprivations of my life.

I would like to express my thanks to all those people, who looked after my brothers and sisters and myself, for they were very brave people.

All seven children of one Jewish family were saved through the war- the only family were all children survived.

The biggest thank you, goes to my mother and father, for if they had been selfish we would not have been here.

It would not have been an easy decision for them, but we have all been able to have a family.



We are in the process of upgrading the power in the wood machine area. Trevor has drawn up a plan of the upgrade and provided a list of materials required. We once again approached D&W Electrical & Data Suppliers and with the help of Sneider, provided nine Clipsal industrial power points. The committee has committed the funding to complete this work making the workshop safer.

Electrical Upgrade



Electrical & Data
Suppliers
Bassendean



Helping Hand



The Shed is a place of acceptance, mateship and activity for men. This is evidenced when we see skills being passed on to others. Harry a recent member, is being mentored in welding by Bob a former TAFE lecturer in Boilermaking.

Cyber Security

David, Ed, and Bill attended the recent Cyber Security conference in Australind. After a very pleasant drive we arrived to an abundance of food and three excellent presenters. Presentations from Stuart Torrance, the Hon. Nola Marino and Dr David Cook from ECU-Cyber Security, were very informative in understanding how clever the criminal element can be in their endeavours to fleece you of your money.



Stuart Torrance - Mens Shed Development Coordinator -Wellbing and Health

Text or SMS scams

Scammers send messages pretending to be from the government, law enforcement, trusted businesses, or even your own family or friends.

These messages will sound urgent and try to get you to act quickly. They will often have a link which will take you to a scam website. Scammers can steal any personal information entered on these scam websites and use it to take your money or commit fraud in your name.

To make these messages seem real, scammers copy or disguise their phone number behind the phone number and caller ID of legitimate businesses or people you know.

Scam messages can even appear in the same message chain as real messages from the organisation, making them even harder to spot.

Steps to protect yourself from messaging scams



1. If someone you know sends a message to say they have a new phone number:

- a. try to call them on the existing number you have for them, or
- b. message them on the new number with a question only they would know the answer to, to check they are who they say they are.



2. Never click on links in messages.



3. If a message links to a website, don't click the link. Instead, search for the website yourself online, or use the official app.



4. Don't respond to a text message using the phone number provided.



5. Call the organisation or person back on a phone number you have found yourself, such as from the organisation's website.

Signs a message might be a scam

The message:



Asks you to take immediate action, make a payment, or transfer money.



Asks you to click on a link or call a number provided in the message.



Asks you to log on to an online account with your username and password or to provide other personal information.



Is from a family member or friend saying their contact details have changed.



Threatens to stop a service or charge you if you don't act.



Suggests you or your accounts have been hacked or involved in fraud.



Suggests that there is a problem with your payment or your package delivery.

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The true cost of scams is more than a dollar figure. Scams can have a devastating impact on victims' lives. The above information comes from *The Little Black Book of Scams*, produced by the ACCC, National Anti-Scam Centre program. A copy of this book is in the Member Lounge and can be accessed online.

Selling Our Excess

The committee made a list of machines that we did not require, Craig used market place and sold these machines, greatly helping out our bank account. A number of donated railway sleepers and tree stakes were also sold, though some of the stakes were used for wood turning.

There are still a few railway sleepers left, see Craig for a special deal.

A new batch of used Jarrah tree stakes arrived, donated by the City of Bayswater, I have turned a few and the quality of the wood is superb.

We will be having a silent auction soon to delete some of the excess tools from our inventory.



Oliver's Grandmother reached out to the Shed seeking help for her Grandson, Oliver who wanted to learn about a little more about electronics. Lloyd offered to help out, offering Oliver to come in and learn a little about soldering. Our 3D printer was the perfect practice piece with a few of the wires requiring resoldering. Oliver is mad keen to come in for some more tinkering.



From left, Lloyd, Oliver and Ed

Work Benches

We have been asked many times what this pack of timber is for, being moved many times to make space for another task. This the timber for new benches, we hope to have a total of 8 woodworking benches, all the same height. Many thanks to Michael Q who hand planed the timber seeking any foreign objects and to Ian Herbert who is now constructing the benches.



The blue machine to the right is a laser engraver. Retired Design & Technology teachers, David and Bill have done some relief teaching at Hale School and during this time it was mentioned that they were upgrading the Laser. David put in a plug for the Shed and they very generously donated this machine. We are modifying one of the mobile dust extractors and will need to have pipework to extract outside. Hopefully this roof penetration can be done at the same time as the welding extraction.

Laser Engraver

