



## Business of the Month



Jonathan Steele and Susan Shepherd

## COBDEN FLOORS AND FURNISHINGS

Established on Friday 13th February 1953 by George Crawford, this business has proved a good luck story with ownership taken up by Geoffrey and Gwenyth Steele in 1975 and, subsequently, by their children, Susan and Jonathan, in 2001.

After more than 60 years of catering for the needs of Cobden, Heytesbury Settlement and Corangamite Shire residents and businesses, Cobden Floors and Furnishings continues to be an important and respected member of the town's business community. Certainly, not just 'part of the furniture' but an institution in its own right!

The business is acclaimed for its floor sanding and polishing, its carpets, vinyls, floating floors, blinds, bedding and furniture.

### Ten things you may not know about Cobden Floors and Furnishings and the people behind the business:

1. Known in 1953 as Crawford Furniture, the business was situated in the well-known market opposite Cobden Kitchens and Joinery (which was the Cobden Theatre at the time).
2. George Crawford built the present shop in the 1960s.
3. The west side of the building belonged to Frank Northeast who conducted a very traditional gentleman's hair salon and pool hall. The undercover stand at the Cobden Recreation Reserve is named after Mr Northeast, a champion sportsman.
4. Geoffrey and Gwenyth Steele purchased the hair salon/pool hall area in the 1980s to house new carpet-cutting equipment.
5. Crawford Furniture also had shops in Camperdown and Timboken for many years before consolidating them in Cobden.
6. Employees who have worked in the business over the years have included Jim Creece, David Smith, Alan Clementson, Trevor Nelson, Bill Taylor, John Rix, Philip Smith, Neal Simmonds, Jamie Alexander, Sandra Cobbledick and Sam Rix (as a floor covering contractor).
7. Gwenyth Steele came to Cobden from Melbourne and worked as a registered nurse at Cobden Bush Nursing Hospital before joining husband Geoffrey in the business.
8. Susan Shepherd began working in the shop after completing an Arts degree at Ballarat College of Advanced Education (now Federation University). Husband Rodney is a keen fisherman who writes a fishing column for local papers, articles for fishing publications including online blogs as well as working in the business as a flooring contractor.
9. Jon Steele attended Cobden Technical School before completing a fitting and turning apprenticeship at Ford in Geelong between 1987 and 1991. A ten-year member of Cobden Apex who served one term as president, Jon was also on the Cobden Football Netball Club committee for eight years, three of them as secretary. He has been a Cobden Sports Club vice-president too.
10. Cobden is almost certainly the smallest town in Victoria with a dedicated carpet and furniture business.



Natalie Pekin

### My favourite Christmas:

All Christmas days are fun and exciting.

### A special Christmas gift:

Having family and friends together is the most special gift.

### A Christmas mishap:

I remember one year when we had Christmas at my uncle's place. He had forgotten to empty the pan in the outhouse which was amazingly close to the dining room. There were 40 of us! You can imagine the . . .

### I'm hoping Santa will bring . . .

A first grandchild. My daughter Sophie's baby is due on Christmas eve. It's very exciting!



Ashley Couch

### My favourite Christmas:

It was probably when I proposed to my now wife Sarah. We had been in our new home for about five months and I proposed to her on Christmas morning after putting the ring in a new wheelbarrow.

### A special Christmas gift:

My first cricket bat was my pride and joy when I was a young fella. I had to "break it in" which takes hours - but I enjoyed it.

### A Christmas mishap:

I was young and my sister was home from Melbourne and she brought her new dog down. It ran out on the road and was hit by a car, a pretty sad way to start Christmas.

### I'm hoping Santa will bring . . .

Hopefully, a new set of golf clubs. Fingers crossed!



Gemma Kelly

### My favourite Christmas:

A couple of years ago when my family and I got a wii.

**A special Christmas gift:** Back in 2010, Santa brought my brothers and I a portable DVD player so we could take our DVDs to Queensland.

**A Christmas mishap:** Fortunately, most of my Christmas days have been great and, hopefully, this year will be great too.

### I'm hoping Santa will bring . . .

An iPod touch.



Andrew Wilson

### My favourite Christmas:

Any Christmas when I was a kid. The surprise of opening presents was special. That's if I hadn't already hunted them down and seen what was in the parcels.

### A special Christmas gift:

When I was a kid I got a SS cricket bat, just a kids' bat but I thought the world of it and tried to keep it in perfect condition for years. Also anything Geelong FC too, especially the last couple of years as it gives me an excuse to remind anyone of 07, 09, 11!

### I'm hoping Santa will bring . . .

Pretty simple, just to enjoy the company of family and friends and watch a bit of cricket.



**EXTRAVAGANZA!**

Keith Britain (left), Anita Chivell and Jamie Lund were proud winners of the Cobden late night shopping hampers on November 28th. The event was hailed a great success by the community and the participating Cobden Business Network members.



Peter Lee

### My favourite Christmas:

Any Christmas spent with family has been good. It's a time of year that gets very hectic in the lead up but, on the day, you can wind down and relax.

Watching my children in their younger days getting very excited when they see their gifts was great too.

### A special Christmas gift:

It's the thought that counts. I've never been given a gift that I didn't like because someone has got it for me. All gifts are gratefully accepted.

### A Christmas mishap:

A few years back I sat out on Christmas Day having a few drinks with my wife's family and my arms and legs were badly sunburnt. At the Lee family get-together on Boxing Day, I was the laughing stock.

### I'm hoping Santa will bring . . .

Health and happiness for all family and friends will do just fine!



Tom Molloy

### A special Christmas gift:

My birthday and Christmas are pretty close together so Santa and my parents normally decide I get something special for my birthday.

### A Christmas mishap:

Just before Christmas, when I was 3, a gate that Dad was putting up fell on my head! No harm done . . . I think.

### I'm hoping Santa will bring . . .

A new motor bike but I might have to ask Santa if I can trade in my old one.



Chloe Gibson

### My favourite Christmas:

When we got our wii, we were so excited. We still enjoy it but the best part is when I beat my sisters Paige and Rachael and they get angry.

### A special Christmas gift:

The cubby house - we have had many fun times in there. Now the chooks live in it!

### I'm hoping Santa will bring . . .

A fun day with family with lots of yummy food . . . especially the roast.



Laurie Telford

### A Christmas mishap:

My wife and I were living in Geelong in late 1973 when we got the travel bug. We thought Geelong was getting over-populated so we purchased a caravan, gave notice to our employers and set off to Robinvale where our parents lived - with the idea to work our way to Darwin. We did the grape harvest on my parents' property.

Dad asked me if I wanted to buy the farm but I declined due to the amount of manual work involved and lack of day labour to remove the crop. I got work in Mildura assembling a machine that made feed pellets out of orange peel.

We wanted to start our trip to Darwin but I was offered work at Nyah, near Swan Hill, with the Rural Water Commission, a job I accepted for six to eight months. A Darwin Christmas in 1974 was still our target.

Then, the work in Nyah was extended so we had Christmas in Nyah instead of Christmas in Darwin. Might have changed our life forever. As we know, Cyclone Tracy hit Darwin on Christmas morning and, 38 years later, I retired from the Water Authority in Camperdown.

COBDEN CALENDAR	
DECEMBER	
Monday 16th:	7.30pm Cobden Primary School Grade 6 Graduation, Civic Hall.
Wednesday 18th:	7.30pm Cobden Technical School Presentation Evening, Civic Hall.
Friday 20th:	5pm-8pm Christmas in Curdie Street.
Sunday 22nd:	7.30pm Carols by Candlelight, Civic Hall.
Tuesday 31st:	Cobden Rotary Club's New Year's Eve Family Fireworks Extravaganza, Railway Park.

**Christmas in Curdie Street**  
**Friday December 20th**  
**5pm - 8pm**

Lots of fun and games with Santa, kids' rides and treats, music, competitions . . .

New this year, three hampers to be won, value \$2000, but you must be there!

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