

THE SCOTTISH SHEDDER



SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION

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"In Scotland, For Scotland"

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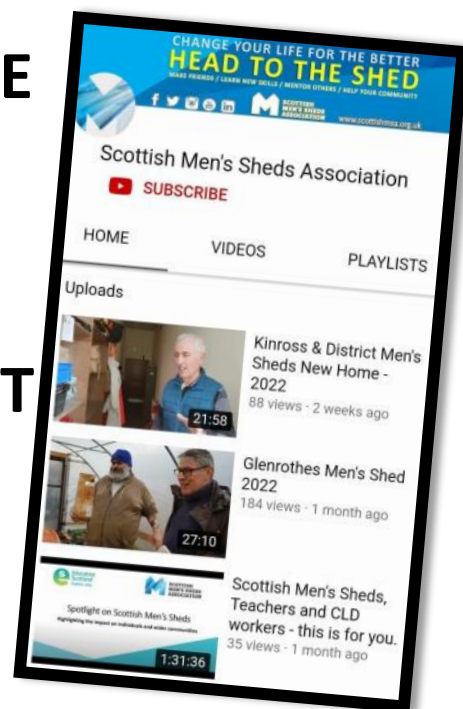
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The Scottish Shedder (the official FREE magazine of the Scottish Men's Sheds Association) promotes news from Men's Sheds across Scotland to showcase their successes (and challenges)—in addition to highlighting funding opportunities, DIY projects, recipes and much more—to inform and inspire. Each six-weekly issue is sent digitally to over 2,800 Individual Member subscribers and supporters of the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement.

Contribute to The Scottish Shedder

We want to hear all about your Shed, its latest developments and exciting projects and are therefore asking for your contributions for the next issue (June 2022) by Friday 10th June 2022. We urge you to maximise the potential to raise the profile of your Shed and the Men's Sheds Movement in Scotland. Email Michelle Wibrew, SMSA Communications & PR Officer, at comms@scottishmsa.org.uk

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To subscribe to receive 'The Scottish Shedder', you must become an Individual Member of the SMSA. It is FREE to join at www.scottishmsa.org.uk/join-smsa

Past issues

Archived editions available in the [SMSA online library](#) (log-in required)

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TALKING SHEDS

by Jason Schroeder

Greetings fellow Sheddies and Shed supporters. Unfortunately, COVID has finally caught up with me and it sure is a nasty debilitating experience. I am hopeful that soon, my energy will return to normal and will be back to full steam ahead. Saying that, since the last issue of the Shedder—as you will see in this edition—there is much going on.

Myself and SMSA Chairman David Gardner attended the inaugural Global Men's Sheds Forum which is an alliance of international Men's Sheds associations on the 28th February 2022. Hosted by Professor Barry Golding in Australia, it was great to hear from the 12 countries representing an estimated 3,500 Men's Sheds worldwide.

The forum plans to meet quarterly. It is not a worldwide association and does not have capacity to make policies or rules for Mens Shed associations but together—through the sharing of international experiences, knowledge and resources—we can improve on what already is an effective means of preventing the social isolation of men.

I think we can now safely say that the Men's Sheds movement is a positively recognised health movement across the globe.

Social Prescribing is becoming quite the buzz word in many Sheds with some wondering—well, what does it mean? A cross-nation online event was held on the 15th March 2022. The recording of the event 'Demystifying Social Prescribing for Men's Sheds' can be accessed by [clicking here](#). It is something that Sheds are going to have to watch out for and not feel pressured into supporting if it impacts negatively on their existing Shed members.

While on my travels to various Shed Network Meetings, I always try and make the most of the trip and create mini-documentaries of the hosting Sheds' facilities. Firstly, this is very useful to inspire others and secondly, it might encourage local men to attend when they see what they are missing.

Two new films are now available for you to watch on the SMSA YouTube Channel: a film update of [Glenrothes Men's Shed](#) (since my last visit filmed in September 2018) and [Kinross and District Men's Shed's new home](#).

Better late than never, our partner [David Young Training](#)—who has been laid up as well this year and then incredibly busy becoming a TV celebrity in BBC Scotland's 'Loggerheads'—got the mini runner-up 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' 2021 target made and we could then present them to Dunoon, Dumfries and Aboyne. Thanks David, great job and much appreciated!

The Orkney Men's Shed certainly have had a rough ride over the years in seeking premises and I am thrilled to report that it finally looks like the goose who lays the golden egg has arrived on their island. Watch out in the next issue (June 2022 edition, 'Shed in the Spotlight' feature) for all the thrills and spills these guys have endured together over the years.

Lastly, it looks like Summer is slowly making its way forwards and that means it's Cartie Race season at the Royal Deeside Motor Show in July (see [page 7](#)). Is your Shed going to enter this year? I do hope so and look forward to seeing you there and at our stall over the two-day event.

Tally ho lads, there is a need for speed and high jinks to be had inside and outside the Sheds this summer.

Jason Schroeder
SMSA Executive Officer

Figures as at end of March 2022



143
SMSA SHED
MEMBERS

2,899

SMSA
INDIVIDUAL
MEMBERS



127
OPEN SHEDS

70
DEVELOPING/
PROPOSED SHEDS



32
LOCAL
AUTHORITY
AREAS

UPDATE YOUR DETAILS WITH THE SMSA



New email address?
Moved house?



Change of Office
Bearers? New Chair?



Not sure if you are a
member or not?

If any of your information has
changed, don't forget to let us know

[Click here to notify the SMSA](#)

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WORKING TOGETHER

Men who are involved in Men's Sheds report living healthier, happier and more connected lives. That's why we're committed to working together with SMSA to provide support for sheds and their members.



SUPPORT

Talk tools, machinery and projects with our knowledgeable team of experts. Whether you're building a new shed or simply want to build on your knowledge, our friendly team are on hand to help.

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*Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Excludes power tools. Individual members must order through their shed to receive the discount.

WOODWORKING WISDOM

LIVE on YouTube at 3pm every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. One stop video destination for woodturning, machinery, hand tools and craft brought to you by our resident woodworking experts.

Can't make the live stream?

Don't worry, they'll be available on our YouTube channel to watch whenever you like! Shedders are welcome to share Woodworking Wisdom videos during meetups.



OUR ADVICE IS PRICELESS

We're focused on inspiring woodworking communities and supporting them in building a sustainable future. We will never charge for advice, whether that's in person, by video or over the phone. Simply get in touch...

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SMSA hits the road...

Taking full advantage of Shed's reopening across Scotland, the staff team and board members of the Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA) have been busy hitting the road to reach as many Sheds as possible for visits, official openings, new premises viewings, offers of support, regional Shed Network meetings and 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' trophy presentations.

SMSA Development Officer Tim Green has got off to a flying start in his new role by visiting Sheds in Barrhead, Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy, Govan, Springburn Park, Biggar, Inverclyde, Clydebank, Milngavie and Bearsden, Pitlochry and Moulin, Kinross and District, Inverness and Cromarty Firth and this is just the beginning. Read more about Tim's activities on [page 6](#).

SMSA Executive Officer Jason Schroeder has called in on Sheds in the Aboyne, Glenrothes, Kinross, Stonehaven and Westhill areas and also created films of some of his visits. Check out the Glenrothes Men's Shed video and see Kinross & District Men's Shed's new home on the [SMSA You Tube channel](#). While you are there, don't forget to subscribe so you don't miss out on any future content.

SMSA Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Garnock Valley Men's Shed, David Gardner was delighted to host the first physical meeting of the Ayrshire Shed Network meeting in over two years and also treated guests to a tour of the Shed facilities. Face-to-face and hybrid Shed Network meetings have also been taking place across Scotland including: Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire; Highland, Islands and Moray; Fife; and Perth, Kinross and Clackmannanshire.

David hand-delivered SMSA's 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' 2021 runner-up trophies and prizes to Dunoon Men's Shed and Dumfries Men's Shed. Jason also popped in on [Aboyne & District Men's Shed's learning visit from Dunfermline Sheddies](#)—funded by the Scottish Community Alliance Community Learning Exchange—to also present them with their targe trophy and Axminster vouchers.

If your Shed is interested in receiving a visit from the SMSA or hosting an upcoming regional Shed Network meeting, please contact Tim Green, SMSA Development Officer, on 07493361003 or email Dev1@scottishmsa.org.uk

Upcoming Shed Network Meetings include: Perth and Kinross on Tuesday 31st May at Auchterarder Men's Shed; Highlands and Islands on Friday 10th June at Cromarty Firth Men's Shed; and Fife on Monday 13th June at St Andrews Men's Shed.



Pictured (left to right): SMSA Chairman David Gardner presents Dunoon Men's Shed with their runner-up trophy for coming in third place at the SMSA 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' 2021 awards; Jason Schroeder presents Mike Brooks, Chairman of Aboyne & District Men's Shed with their runner-up trophy for coming in fourth place; and David Gardner hands over the trophy to Dumfries Men's Shed for coming in fifth place.

SMSA NEWS—DEVELOPMENT OFFICER UPDATE

It has been fantastic getting back into Sheds and witnessing the resilience of both fledgling and established Sheds. The recovery is tangible with small but growing numbers of folk returning. Negative lateral flow tests before visiting the Shed are also increasing confidence.

It is great to see exciting projects and partnerships starting up again and to see Sheds do their bit for the circular economy by reusing the timber from COP26.

A round of face-to-face Shed Network Meetings took place. Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire at Aboyne; Highlands and Islands at Inverness; Perth and Kinross at Kinross; Ayrshire at Garnock Valley meetings were all well attended. The host Sheds were able to display their impressive facilities, talented management and warm hospitality. A number of issues were discussed:

Dishwashers

Rather than relying on the mug fairy, top of many Shed wishlists are donations of, or funding for, dishwashers. Being able to wash at high temperatures demonstrating Sheds' commitment to balancing hygienic working and energy efficiency.

Shed attendance numbers

Garnock Valley Men's Shed carried out a phone survey to understand why participation isn't at pre-pandemic levels and found that ill health, family commitments and fear of COVID were the main factors. They found no evidence of the Shed failing to engage members and the callers were warmly thanked for being in touch.

Surplus Tools

One of the great contributions Sheds make to their local community is enabling bereaved people to put their loved one's tools to good use. An unintended consequence of this kindness is that Sheds end up with a lot of tools surplus to requirements and taking up valuable space. Sheds want to continue making this contribution to grieving neighbours and some of their solutions include:

- Donating tools to other Sheds, [Tools for Self-Reliance](#) or [Tools with a Mission](#) or to tool libraries like: [Stirling Tool Library](#); [\(Glasgow\) Southside Tool Library](#); [Glasgow Tool Library](#); [Edinburgh Tool Library](#); [East Linton Tool Library](#); [Recykillin](#); or [Transition Linlithgow](#)
- Selling them: at regular tool sales; for scrap to, for example, [Old Tools](#); or using them in sculpture and signage.

Office bearer fatigue

A small number of Sheddors in office bearer/Shed supervisor roles carry a great weight of responsibility on their shoulders. Public health decision-making has amplified this. There is a need for careful succession planning to take away some of this stress and anxiety and to future-proof Sheds. Sheds shared some creative solutions including:

- Encouraging the use of joint office bearing (vice chair, vice secretary and vice treasurer)
- Delegating, to separate committees, specialisms like for example: social media, machine competency, projects, shed management and supervision, digital activities, community relations and shedder welfare.
- Encouraging folk to shadow office bearers to learn the ropes to build up confidence and motivation to take up the roles in the future
- Using new guy days, mentoring, evening/weekend opening, links with sports clubs and savvy use of social media to encourage involvement by men looking for third sector governance or shed management and safety experience: to include on their CV.

Links with health and social care professionals

- Some of the Perth & Kinross Sheds have good links with the Social Prescribing Team who know how Sheds work, will do the necessary ground work to ensure mutual satisfaction and chum folk along to the Shed.
- Springburn Park Men's Shed has a close relationship with local Health



Improvement Practitioners.

- As the [Demystifying Social Prescribing Webinar on 15th March](#) demonstrated, there is a need for dialogue and expectation management so the maxim '**we care but we are not carers**' doesn't exclude new potentially valuable Shed members whilst maintaining Shed ethos and the safety of all concerned. There is a widespread mistaken belief outside Sheds that because Sheds are so successful they must be run by paid and trained staff. Remembering that no Shed is the same, it is important that people—thinking about referral, signposting or connecting—visit their local Shed and develop a close working relationship if that is what the Shed wants.

Tim Green, SMSA Development Officer
Tel: 07493361003



SHEDS, ARE YOU READY?

Cartie race return set to be a runaway success

Community teams across Scotland are gearing up to take part in a unique race, bringing the thrills and spills of cartie racing to Royal Deeside, when it returns this summer.

The Royal Deeside Cartie Race—part of [The Royal Deeside Motor Show](#) organised by Etiom Events—is currently gathering pace as groups of enthusiasts design and build their carties to get them race-ready. The only event of its kind in Scotland, the downhill dash race is set to draw the crowds back again to Kincardine Castle on Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd July 2022 for a second year.

Last August saw Sheddars from Cumnock & District Men's Shed and Brechin Men's Shed unite to join in on the fun and battle it out whilst a design team from Aboyne & District Men's Shed got to grips with the ramp build.

Up to 10,000 visitors will flock to watch dozens of carties reach speeds of up to 40mph as they race in a time trial format, negotiating the twists and turns of an extended course and powered only by gravity – and a wee push start from team mates. As they hurtle towards the finish line, each team will be accompanied by their chosen race theme tune which will be played alongside live commentary.

As well as providing fast and furious family fun for spectators, the efforts of designers and drivers are also on track to boost the coffers of the cartie race's chosen charities, the Scottish Men's Sheds Association and Charlie House.

A maximum of 40 vehicles will compete in a junior category (for drivers aged 12-17 on the date of the race) and an adult category (for drivers aged 18+ on the date of the race). Rounding off each day of "wheely" great action will be a grand finale where the top teams from each category will go head-to-head to decide the overall winner.

Further explaining the format, Etiom Events' Operations Manager Adam Simpson said: "Building on last year's inaugural cartie race, we have extended the racetrack which will allow for greater speeds and we've added even more obstacles to tackle. This year, we are encouraging entrants to let their imaginations run wild with their designs, the crazier the better! There is a prize on offer to the best themed entry."

Gavin Esslemont, Etiom Events Managing Director, added: "There is no doubt that the Royal Deeside Cartie Race was one of the most popular features of the Motor Show last year and the amazing entries illustrated just how much time and effort was put into creating them. This year, we wanted to give as much build time as possible so that groups of friends, community organisations and communities themselves will come together, rise to the challenge and help steer us towards another resounding success."

Jason Schroeder, SMSA Executive Officer, said: "We are encouraging Sheds across Scotland to unite and come along for a bit of friendly competition and fun at the Cartie Race again this year. Most Sheds have access to the expertise to design and build the perfect gravity-powered, engineless carties to win this race."

[Click here to find out more about the Cartie race, design specification and the rules.](#)

The SMSA will have an exhibition space at the event—why not pop along and say hello and find out more about our vital work across Scotland.

BEAUTIFUL WOODS FROM DOWN UNDER

By Derek Keiller (former SMSA Chairman)

COVID-19 has unfortunately plagued the world for over two years now. When we last visited our son Mark and his partner Sarah in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney it was in September 2019, before the pandemic.

Little did we know then of the chaos, damage, disruption and carnage awaiting the world. Back in 2019, the flight there was effortless in the sense that we simply booked online and endured the long haul flight (24 hours).

Fast forward to September 2021 when Australia decided to re-open its borders to its own citizens stranded abroad and to close family members of residents. The return flights were now double the price and we had to jump through hoops to get all the necessary paperwork just to get on the plane. Even then we were not guaranteed to actually board the plane as we still had to pass a Covid PCR test taken within 48 hours of the flight. If we failed the test we would not be going to Australia!

Thankfully, we passed all the tests and boarded with broad smiles on our faces ready to see our son and his partner and meet our new grandson Charlie. We ordered two glasses of champagne to celebrate.

This time, instead of flying via Doha, Qantas now had a non-stop flight direct to Darwin in Australia's northern territory. On arrival, we were decanted for an hour (to refuel and clean the plane) into this small airport's transfer lounge but not before we were smacked in the face with the oven-hot extreme heat and humidity.

We were picked up at Sydney airport and whisked an hours' drive up the Blue Mountains to a lovely village called Springwood. But our travails were not over yet as we had to isolate for seven days and take two PCR tests.

For each one, we had to wait three hours in a queue. Thank goodness we had booked five weeks holiday.

A couple of weeks later, I decided to try to locate a store that would satisfy my real passion – woodturning. I had purposely left ample space in my massive suitcase for the beautiful Australian wood I hoped to return with.

I eventually found one located 50 miles away down on Emu Plains, on the way to Sydney, and set off with my son to see what was available there. And oh boy did we find a cracker. Not only was it a bona fide wood store but it supplied everything that a woodturner could dream of from lathes and tools to the most amazing collection of wood I have ever seen under one roof.

Their collection of 'burrs' was simply unbelievable and we spent a couple of hours browsing and selecting examples to bring home. The only criteria being that the wood had to fit into my suitcase. These included Red River Gum, Coolibah and Mallee, that are just not available in this country. The colours are hues of rich, deep reds, yellows and more.

And they are not expensive, for instance the Red River Gum was a mere \$59, approx £33 in our money. Some of the smaller shapes were from £9 up to £19. A real bargain.

After returning to my son's home after this amazing wood expedition, I decided that I could probably squeeze a little more into my case, so the following week we headed back to the said store and purchased even more.

Continued on next page...



BEAUTIFUL WOODS FROM DOWN UNDER (Continued)

...Continued from previous page

When the time came to pack for home I unfortunately discovered (surprise, surprise) that the various woods could not be squeezed into my suitcase and that I was therefore forced into the unenviable position of asking my wife to 'pretty please' pack some into hers. "What about my clothes" she protested to which I replied "Just wrap the wood in paper". I will not write down her response here but I am sure you can work it out. Her next retort was to say "I may as well leave all my clothes here!" I did however decide not to reply to this inflammatory statement. Perhaps very wisely.

Eventually she reluctantly agreed and the wood was packed into not only our luggage bound for the hold but also both carry on bags. She was far from happy.

The hold-bound bags were labelled 'very heavy' at check-in and thankfully being a long-haul flight we had large carry-on bags too.

The wife was still not too enamoured with me especially when I was taken aside at Heathrow customs and asked to open my very large and bulging carry-on bag. The customs officer said that there were a few anomalies in my bag and he would like to examine them.

It turned out, thankfully, that I had not broken any customs importation rules after I had explained that I was a woodturner and the wood was for my own use. Seemingly he too was a woodturner and just curious.

On returning home to Kingoodie near Dundee I could not wait to get the wood on my lathe and start turning. In just two weeks I had finished them all.

I also knew that my wife loved my creations when she said "You are not selling any of these!"

I gave some of the wood to three of my woodturning friends who have now turned out some beautiful bowls.

Hopefully, we'll be back in Australia at the end of the year when I can import

even more of these stunning woods.

Red River Gum (*Eucalyptus Camalulensis*) is the most widely distributed eucalyptus species in Australia growing along watercourses throughout the country. It lines the Murray River for most of its length.

Mallee Red Gum (*Eucalyptus Gillenii*) is a species endemic to inland Australia. It has smooth, mottled bark and linear to narrow lance-shaped leaves.

Coolabah (*Eucalyptus Coolabah*) is a tree that typically grows to a height of 20m (66 ft) and has hard, fibrous to flaky Grey bark with whitish patches in all or part of the trunk and sometimes the branches.

Of course the wood I brought back is all burrs meaning the patterns are all the more pronounced.

I believe that quite a few Sheds now offer Shedders woodturning facilities and I would thoroughly recommend it. It is therapeutic, relaxing and you have something nice and practical to take home.

I myself took up woodturning over seven years ago at Carse of Gowrie Men's Shed and have enjoyed it immensely. My garage is now a fully functioning workshop and includes a lathe, bandsaw, planer/thicknesser, sharpening system for the gauges, dust extraction (a must along with a full face helmet if you are going to spend many hours in your workshop) and so much more including woods such as oak, maple, lime, beech, elm, walnut, cherry plus a selection of more exotic species.

If any SMSA individual member or Shed wishes to contact Derek, he is available by email on derek@derekkeiller.co.uk



Handyperson Service



Turbocharging word of mouth for Scotland's older ex-service community

The [Unforgotten Forces](#) partnership offers a variety of support services to ex-service men and women aged 60 and older across Scotland. A great example of the practical help available is the [Veterans Highland Handyperson Service](#), run by [ILM Highland](#). The Handyperson does small jobs and small repairs in and around the home of older members of the ex-service community living Ross-shire, Sutherland, Inverness, and Moray.



The Handyperson Service has been part of Unforgotten Forces since it began in 2017. For its clients, this means that they not only get the immediate job or repair done to a high standard, but that they also get a handyperson with time to listen, who has empathy and understanding, and who can draw on support from other Unforgotten Forces partners where required to meet their wider wellbeing needs.

Handyperson Adam Davidson says: "It's a real privilege for me. The older veterans enjoy the banter while I help them with whatever small jobs or repairs that they need. As a veteran myself, we share a bond via a family connection which has really helped my clients, especially in tackling loneliness and social isolation made even more acute during these covid times."

Efforts to encourage uptake of the Handyperson Service are continuous. Word of mouth recommendation works wonders. For Maureen (pictured right), the widow of a National Serviceman with mobility and health problems, the Handyperson put a step and grab rail at her front door, repaired her blown-down fence, fitted a toilet seat, changed a light bulb, and disposed of an old mattress. She'd heard about the service at a lunch run by [Sight Scotland Veterans](#), another Unforgotten Forces partner charity.

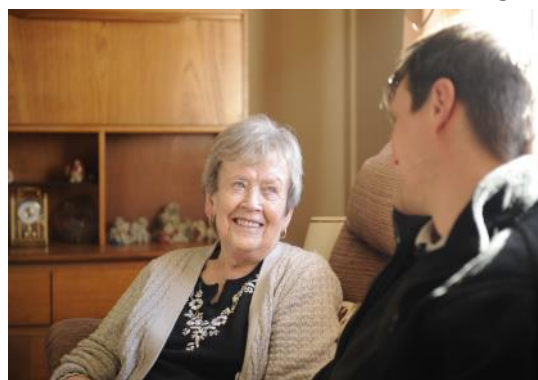
In turn, she was able to make recommendations to family and friends fitting the service criteria, who variously had grab rails fitted, shelves put up, and sheds, fences and garage doors repaired.

Shedders are well placed to help spread the word about the Handyperson service as well as other Unforgotten Forces services. You'll find details and contacts for them all online on the [Unforgotten Forces website](#) and you could put a supply of Unforgotten Forces Directory leaflets in your Shed's social area.

Directory leaflets can be ordered from Age Scotland, just scroll down the [online order form](#) to the 'Veterans' section (and why not order supplies of our other publications for your Shed while you are at it).

For more information about our Handyperson and Highland Veterans Handyperson services, call 01349 884774 or email handyperson@ilmhighland.co.uk.

Doug Anthoney, Veterans' Officer, Age Scotland



SUPPORT FOR VETERANS



SUPPORTING SERVING AND
FORMER MEMBERS OF THE
RAF AND THEIR FAMILIES

Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund Support for RAF Serving and Veterans

Could your Shed help the Royal Air Force (RAF) Benevolent Fund reach an RAF veteran in need?

The RAF Benevolent Fund has been supporting the RAF family since its inception in 1919. The fund supports approx. 60,000 people each year and this comprises serving RAF, veterans and their families, spouses or partners.

Anyone who has served in the RAF, whether regular or reserve, and completed at least one day's service is entitled to be considered for their support.

The support is grouped under five key areas:

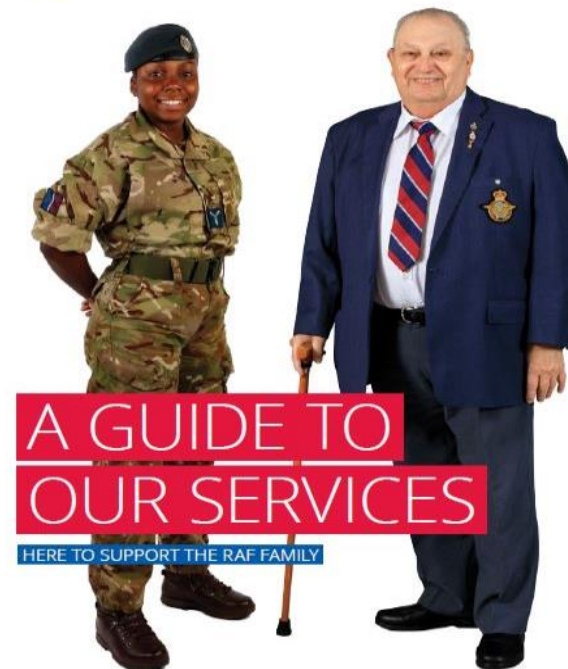
- Emotional Wellbeing
- Friendships and Connections
- Family and Relationships
- Independent Living
- Financial Assistance

You can find out more about the Fund, who they can help and the extent of the support on offer in their booklet ['A Guide to our Services'](#).

The Fund helps RAF Veterans of all ages and for all lengths of service—from National Service to present full-time regulars and reservists.

The support is not restricted to the UK and they are still helping Polish and Czechoslovak spouses whose husbands participated in WWII.

For more information, please visit the [RAF Benevolent Fund website](#) or contact Gavin J Davey, Director for Scotland, Northern Ireland & NE England, at gavin.davey@rafbf.org.uk



SHED IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Biggar and District Men's Shed just keeps getting bigger in Biggar

Towards the end of 2021, Biggar and District Men's Shed moved to its new permanent location, at the former Walston Primary School, in Elsrickle. A few months into its new home, the Shed reflects on its journey so far and announces big plans for the future.

Richard Crosse from the Shed said: "Peter Brotherstone was the man responsible for getting the Men's Shed in Biggar started whilst in his role as Beadle of Biggar Parish Church in the early months of 2018.

"He had seen many situations where men, whose wives had passed on, were at a loss as to what to do with themselves. He felt that most women, in a similar situation, handled the situation better than men as they found companionship with other women. Unfortunately, not all men open up to other men as easily.

"Initially, the meetings were mainly held in the Gillespie Centre in Biggar but some more suitable accommodation was found in Symington, sharing a corner of an industrial unit used by the Albion Foundation, leased from the Hometown Trust.

"Upon starting in Symington, it was amazing how much tools and equipment we acquired from donations. Initially, the members brought in tools that were surplus to their needs but once word spread about the Shed, the general public began making donations, including 16 surplus office chairs and surplus office desks.

"During the later part of 2018 and the early months of 2019, the search for more suitable premises continued. However, it became more focused, when the Hometown Foundation gave the Albion Foundation notice to quit the premises in Symington by the middle of May 2019. This meant that the Men's Shed would also be required to vacate.

"The search for new premises went into top gear. Various locations were identified including the old Police Station in Biggar, and Loaningdale (a former outward bound centre). Thankfully James Cameron, who owned



Loaningdale, was open to helping us and offered us the possibility of using two vacant adjoining semi-detached properties, which had previously been used as staff accommodation, to which we readily agreed.

"We moved to Loaningdale in Autumn 2019 and it took a bit of getting used to as it was completely different from the industrial unit we had just left. It did not have the large spaces that we had before and a lot of thought had to go into making best use of the space available. However, we all adapted and were eternally grateful to Loaningdale for allowing us to set up our Shed in these premises.

"We got involved in local events including The Biggar Agricultural Show and The Biggar Vintage Vehicle Show to promote the Shed and its activities and seek to increase our membership. We started 2020 with great ambition and ideas. Membership had grown to 30 and there were a number of interesting projects in the pipeline. These included working with the local Beavers to create a garden at the rear of the Legion Hall in Biggar and working with the nursery at Symington Primary School.

"Then, the pandemic hit and everything drew to a halt. The Shed was unable to meet due to lockdown but we continued the search for a better and more permanent home. After some long negotiations with South Lanarkshire Council and much hard work, we managed to secure a 10-year lease of the former Primary School at Walston.

Continued on next page...



SHED IN THE SPOTLIGHT (Continued)

...continued from previous page

"We have now been in our new premises for just over six months. So far, the woodwork shop is up and running and a ramp for disabled access is in place. We have also made a start on improving insulation and preliminary work has started on the garden area. Membership is back up to 35 and the future looks bright.

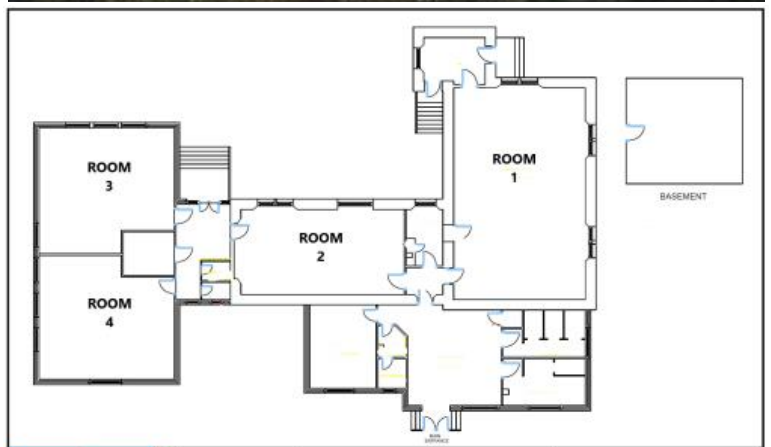
"Before our takeover, the school building was unused for a considerable period of time and had deteriorated somewhat, becoming rather cold and damp. We have big plans to update and improve matters but this will take time.

"Heating the building with its current system is proving very challenging. However, we are getting through winter and our enthusiastic membership is working hard.

"Some of the projects in the pipeline include: installing new double glazing; upgrading to ECO heating; creating an allotment area, with polytunnel, for our green-fingered Shedders; finalising the woodworking area; and clearing the middle hall to create an arts and craft area.

"We are grateful to the many enterprises and individuals for their generous donations of tools, materials etc. and for the excellent support we are receiving from the community and are confident that we will be able to create a first-class facility that will benefit all in our surrounding communities."

The Shed meets every Wednesday and Thursday, from 10am - 4pm—all visitors are very welcome. For more information, please contact info@biggarmensshed.uk or call 07471 491099. You can also visit their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#).



BIGGAR AND DISTRICT

**MEN'S
SHED**

Solar success in Aboyne

With rising energy bills becoming a major concern, Aboyne & District Men's Shed share their experience of Solar Photovoltaic (PV) systems as other Sheds explore the possibilities.

Shed Chairman Mike Brooks said: "Back in 2016, when a few guys got together to look at the possibility of a Men's Shed for Aboyne and District, we could never have imagined that a few years later we would have a brand-new purpose-built building.

"Once we realised that a new building was indeed possible, one of the design aims was to make it as inexpensive to run as possible. Being able to generate our own electricity very soon became one of the elements to this.

"The general rule imposed by the electricity companies on Solar PV is that, without their agreement, any property is usually restricted to 4kW, and this is what we thought we would be allowed. This would have meant somewhere between 12 and 16 panels on our south-facing roof, leaving plenty of space for some solar thermal panels for heating a hot water storage tank.

"At this stage of our project, we had not yet talked to SSE (our prospective electricity supply company) and our building had no services within several hundred metres. We had already decided that we wanted a three-phase power supply. This would give us flexibility to power up second-hand single-phase or three-phase machines, and would be just slightly more expensive than a single-phase supply. We mentioned to SSE that we were intending to install Solar PV and they asked if we were aware that a building with a three-phase supply is actually permitted 12kW of Solar PV.

"The reason that a building is usually restricted to 4kW is that this would normally all be exported on a single phase (like most houses/small buildings). Any export on a single phase will tend to unbalance the power on each of the supply company's three phases, hence the 4kW limit. If a building has a three-phase supply, then it is allowed to

feed 4kW onto each phase, hence retaining the phase balance. The reason for not allowing more than $3 \times 4 = 12\text{kW}$ is that for any further power increase, SSE would have to look at existing cable sizes on their network. Larger Solar PV installations often necessitate replacing cables with bigger ones, and the customer ends up with a bill for 'upgrading infrastructure'.

"Now, we knew we could apply for up to 12kW, the next step was to look at roof space. The necessary panels for something close to 12kW would fit, but there was now no room for solar thermal panels for our hot water.

"Thinking about that, a Shed doesn't really use that much hot water, and do we really need to store it in a tank, only to lose much of the heat during the times we are not using hot water? So, we decided to install an instant water heater for each of the three 'wet' areas (kitchen, upstairs toilets, workshop/downstairs toilet). Since most of the use will be daytime, the Solar PV will provide at least some of the electricity for a heater in use. There was now no need for a hot water tank or solar thermal panels, and the whole south facing roof is now covered with Solar PV panels."

Trustee Phil Lay said: "Now our building is up-and-running, we are able to look at some figures. Our imported electricity for the first full year was 4,020 kWh, costing £809 (16.14 p/per unit with a standing charge of £10.69/month). This will unfortunately increase dramatically after our fixed price agreement finishes in December this year, but to partially compensate, we should get an increase in our Feed in Tariff (FIT) as this rate increases with the RPI index. In 2021, the solar panels produced 7,903 kWh, yielding an income of £530, making our net energy cost £279 for the year!

"Our building is entirely electric, with four air-to-air heat pumps providing the heating. An analysis of our electricity costs for January (very little sun) and February (very sunny) 2022, showed that the costs halved in February. During the summer, our panels provided most of our electricity.

"It is worth noting that we are a Community Shed open six days a week for up to 10 hours a day. The Men's Shed have three sessions per week—there are currently eight other groups renting one or more of the



rooms at other times. Our demand is principally heating and lighting. As the bulk of the opening times coincide with daylight hours, we maximise Solar PV consumption, so minimising grid import. Our standing load (unoccupied) is 115w, consuming 1,007 kWh pa. Harvesting surplus Solar PV energy to a battery bank could eliminate the night time element of this demand for a large part of the year."

Mike added: "Unfortunately, FIT is no longer available for new applications however, another scheme—[Smart Export Guarantee \(SEG\)](#)—is available. This is a similar scheme to FIT, but uses a smart meter to actually measure what you are exporting, rather than the FIT scheme which paid for all kWh (units) generated.

"I would recommend Sheds talk to [Local Energy Scotland](#), they helped us obtain partial funding for our heat pumps and they would be a useful resource for finding out more about SEG.

"Local Energy Scotland runs the [Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme \(CARES\) initiative](#)—keep an eye on the website for future rounds of funding. Our Shed was able to get funds for our solar panel installation from the [Vattenfall Unlock Our Future Fund](#), one of the wind-farm companies. The fund is currently open (until 29th April) for projects in Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire contributing towards a climate smart future.

"In summary, Solar PV is worthwhile considering. Even without funding assistance, and at previous energy prices, the capital cost is well worth it. With funding help, it is a no-brainer. The next good thing for us will be a big bank of batteries so that electricity generated during the day can be used in the evenings, and to cover the standing load mentioned earlier. Aboyne & District Men's Shed will be looking at batteries before long, as costs come down and energy costs continue to rise."

Dunfermline Men's Shed's learning road trip to Aboyne

On the 10th March 2022, a group of Dunfermline Sheddies set off on a mini-bus to Aboyne for a Shed-to-Shed learning visit.

The trip, funded by the [Scottish Community Alliance's \(SCA\) Community Learning Exchange](#) and endorsed by the SMSA/SCA partnership, was an opportunity for the developing group to get a personal tour of Aboyne and District Men's Shed's state-of-the-art build in the heart of Deeside and meet with its trustees and members.

Mike Rowlinson, Dunfermline Men's Shed Secretary, said: "We may still as yet be without a physical Shed but we have come a long way in such a short space of time. We now have 23 full members and 71 associate members, with about 20 regularly turning up weekly at our temporary home in the Glass House, Pittencrieff Park every Wednesday. Recently, we had a fabulous presentation from a local master walking stick maker!

"Until we have a permanent home, we cannot yet apply for significant funding but the Scottish Community Alliance Learning Exchange grant was a very simple and rewarding process. We were granted £680 which enabled us to hire a minibus to visit Aboyne. The five-hour trip was well worth it and a day out to further develop camaraderie amongst the members and for us to learn some very useful lessons—and write down pages and pages of notes—to use when formulating plans for our own Shed.

"Mike Brooks (Aboyne Shed Chairman) and his guys could not have been more welcoming or forthcoming with vital information for us. Not to mention a table creaking with homemade cakes! Delicious. It was also great to meet Jason Schroeder (SMSA Executive Officer) when he popped in to say hello and wish us well with our learning.

"I can fully recommend use of the Learning Exchange fund, and we will certainly use it again to visit more Sheds. The more information we have from established Sheds, the less likely we are to make mistakes when designing and running our Shed. The support and information gained from our hosts is invaluable."

Mike Brooks, Chairman of Aboyne and District Men's Shed, said: "It was a pleasure hosting all the guys from Dunfermline. We very much enjoyed their visit and so glad it has been useful. We wish them all well with their Shed project—they have already achieved so much."

Follow [Dunfermline Men's Shed](#) and [Aboyne & District Men's Shed](#) on Facebook.





East Kilbride Men's Shed finds a new home

East Kilbride Men's Shed's 40-strong membership has moved to bigger and better premises last month and is now looking to welcome new members.

The Shed moved into St Leonard's Community Hall (pictured above) following the loss of their lease for their previous base at College Milton Industrial Estate that topped a long period of closure due to COVID.



Shed Secretary Paul Munday said: "Our previous base was on an industrial estate and not that easy to get to, we are now much better placed for members to get to the Shed.

"St Leonards Community Hall is the ideal location for our new start. We had a few options to look at but the hall is right in the heart of the community and will hopefully attract a bigger footfall and raise more awareness of what we do.

"The new Shed has a good social area where our members can play darts and dominoes and even has a hatch directly through to the kitchen. We also have a larger workshop area and plenty of storage.

"Down the line, we are hoping to apply for a Community Asset Transfer for the hall."

Over the years, the Shed has been involved in numerous projects including creating equipment for the charity [Remap](#) to support people with disabilities; making props for the East Kilbride Drama Group; and repairing and building items for the [Greenbank Children's woodland project](#) to name but a few. With their new Shed workshop, they are looking forward to getting their teeth into community projects once again.

The Shed is open Monday to Friday, noon to 4pm.

For more information on East Kilbride Men's Shed, please follow them on [Facebook](#).



Aultbea Men's Shed gets back to business

Following a two-year closure, Aultbea Men's Shed—with new Trustees in place—is starting to meet once again.

New Shed Chairman Phil Wild, who replaces Malcolm Purvis, said: "With COVID-19 restrictions now easing, we have started to meet again on Friday afternoons, 2-4pm in our Shed behind the Church of Scotland in Aultbea, and other times organised as required, to work on projects. We currently have a small but active membership of eight—and a long list of outstanding and exciting projects

and maintenance to get our teeth into—and are looking to raise awareness that we have re-opened and are looking to attract new members.

"One of our outstanding pre-COVID projects is the conversion of redundant church pews into shorter pieces of furniture for which there is a ready market. This is being done in association with the Aultbea Church of Scotland and the proceeds of sale will be shared between the Church and the Shed funds. The pews have been badly soiled and damaged by wild goats while in storage but the photograph shows that the Aultbea Shedders are not at all daunted by this challenge.

"If anyone (not limited to men!) in Aultbea and the surrounding area is interested in joining us then please contact [Phil Wild](#), [Peter Davison](#) or [Frank Burden](#)."



Elgin Shedders receive a royal visit

Elgin & District Men's Shed received some royal recognition when the Princess Royal popped by for a chat during the launch of their latest project last month.

Shed Chairman Pete Weatherhead said: "The Shed was approached by the charity [Earthtime for All Ltd](#) to make some outdoor educational equipment for young people at their Forest Nursery School at Duffus House.



"As we are currently without a Shed of our own, we were delighted to take up the offer of the use of a small workshop to deliver this latest project in partnership with them.

"Earthtime aims to connect children and young people with



the natural environment using creative and woodland based activities to improve self-esteem, health and wellbeing.

"It was extremely rewarding to be involved in this project and we began building benches and mud kitchens in time for launch day.

"On the day, the Princess Royal visited to see the new items in place and also plant a tree to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.

"We spent some time chatting to her and explaining our involvement and our hopes for the future of our Shed. She was very knowledgeable of the Men's Shed Movement and wished us well in our search for new premises. We are extremely grateful to Earthtime for the opportunity to become involved in this extremely worthwhile project."

Follow Elgin & District Men's Shed on [Facebook](#).

Free IT Support from AbilityNet

AbilityNet is a UK charity that provides free IT support to older people and disabled people to assist them to use technology in order to achieve their goals.

The charity has a network of around 300 volunteers—50 in Scotland—who can support most computer systems and technical devices.

Their volunteers can support people located anywhere in the UK. They are all disclosure-checked and can help with all sorts of challenges from setting up new equipment, fixing technical issues, showing you how to stay connected to family and using online services.

AbilityNet also helps individuals to source, and use, suitable adaptive software and hardware (although they do not fund the purchase of adaptive technology itself).

Recently, they have directly supported older clients with advice on buying and setting up devices to stay connected to family, access online appointments and to shop online safely.



AbilityNet is always looking for tech-aware people to join them as AbilityNet Tech Volunteers so if you are interested, please get in touch.

If you require support from AbilityNet, please call their helpline on 0800 048 7642, email enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk or complete the online form at <https://abilitynet.org.uk/at-home/request-free-it-support-home#home-visit-request>



Discounted machine competence and woodwork training courses for SMSA Men's Shed members

David Young Training has been delivering on-site woodwork training to the education and industry sector for over 20 years.

Since 2019, David Young—in partnership with the Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA)—has offered machine competence and woodwork training courses to Scottish Men's Sheds, that are Shed members of the SMSA, at a special discounted rate.

Invite David Young to your Shed to:

- ⇒ Build your members' confidence
- ⇒ Learn new skills and techniques
- ⇒ Achieve qualifications

Special price for SMSA Shed Members—£660*

Machine Competency Training (up to eight participants) includes:

- ⇒ Operating machines in a safe manner
- ⇒ Identifying all controls and safety equipment
- ⇒ Demonstrating the basic and permissible uses of the machine
- ⇒ Identifying and adjusting all guards, guides and brakes (if fitted)
- ⇒ Fitting replacement blades/cutters
- ⇒ Setting guards within safety limits
- ⇒ Setting fences and stops within given tolerances
- ⇒ How to leave machines in a safe state
- ⇒ The importance of regular maintenance
- ⇒ Good housekeeping of the machine

Woodwork Training includes:

- ⇒ Toolbox talks—hand and power tools (safe use, maintenance and good practice)
- ⇒ Joint construction—how to handcraft dovetail joints, mortise and tenons etc.
- ⇒ Basic furniture making—including carcass and frame construction
- ⇒ Furniture restoration

SQA woodwork qualifications available from £350

SQA core skill qualifications from £150

Advice and support is always free!

*If you are on the Islands, please contact David Young Training for a price.



EXCLUSIVE SMSA SHED MEMBER BENEFIT



SCOTTISH MEN'S SHEDS ASSOCIATION

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 Garden Cottage, Fingask Castle, Rait, PH2 7SA
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 Email: dyoung@youngenterprises.co.uk
 Web: www.davidyoungtraining.co.uk | Facebook: @DavidYoungTraining



Auchterarder and District Men's Shed

"This was a comprehensive day during which David used his skills and experience to explain how to set up, maintain and use several of the pieces of equipment commonly used in most Sheds. The importance of adequate safety measures and pre-inspection of equipment were explained before any item was used."

"Our Shedders all agreed that this was a valuable and beneficial day. The knowledge gained will be passed on to our other Shed members."

Garnock Valley Men's Shed

"This training gave me confidence to handle some machinery for the first time, it reinforced safe use and also gave us a knowledgeable assessment of our equipment. It highlighted what we need to do to make a more efficient and safe working environment."

"May I take this opportunity to express my appreciation/privilege to have been involved. The theoretical and practical aspects of 'best working practices' were inclusive, extensive and delivered in a most understanding manner. I took from the workshop, a broader knowledge base of the safe working operation of the various machinery as instructed. Much appreciated and recommended"

Carse of Gowrie Shedder carves out a way to raise funds

Carse of Gowrie Shedder Kevin Clayton, a retired Design Technology Teacher from Broughty Ferry, has hit the headlines recently for diverting items from landfill and turning someone's 'trash' into wee intricate treasures to raise funds for his Shed.

"I have been a member of the Carse of Gowrie Men's Shed since 2016 and always thoroughly enjoyed the woodworking and design aspect of the Shed.

"We regularly receive donations of wood from the community and one day, I came across a load of good quality tongue and groove oak flooring. I cut off the tongue and groove and came up with designs that could work with the 4.5-inch width.

"I started by making trinket boxes—rectangular and circular ones—and this then led on to key holders, coasters, house signs and clocks using the CNC machine and laser machine.

"At the Shed, we use [Vectric software](#) to cut the parts on a CNC machine. The Shed's machine was donated by a member, Jake Reid, who was in the Scots Guards and unfortunately passed away in 2019.

"I have so much to thank Jake for. At the Shed, he saw my interest in the machine and introduced me to the programmes and workings of his machine so I was able to experiment with various ideas.

"The CNC software can unfortunately be expensive, but we now use the [Makerspace Edition](#) (\$99 per annum), which enables you to install the licensed software on up to five PC's meaning we can have it at the

Shed and also offer to Sheddors to use at home.

"There were plenty of learning curves until I got the designs just right. I then started working on small details, like the animals, to add to the items to make them a little bit different. The Mouse by Robert Burns (pictured) is a very popular item. Fellow Shedder, Graeme Curr, then varnishes or paints the items to finish them off perfectly."

"Each design has been improved on as we go along. At one stage, I couldn't get the key holders to hang perfectly straight but after some research in a shop in Aberfeldy, I found the perfect hanging loop for the back of them.

"I was then driving down the A90 to Dundee with my wife when she spotted the [Tayside Upcycling and Craft Centre](#) and well...she wanted to go. She is very much into crafts herself and makes sea and beach glass creations that she sells at craft fairs. We had just missed the turn off so returned the next day to take a look.

"I got talking to Alfie Iannetta, the Centre's Founder and Director, and we spoke about my designs. It is a very competitive market for space at the centre but the next day I got an email saying that my proposal had been fast-tracked as it fulfilled all of their criteria. Within a week, I was dropping off items at the centre.

"I think I have made over 100 items so far—raising hundreds of pounds for the Shed—and we still have copious amounts of wood left. I am also currently training up two of our new Shed members on the CNC machine at the moment. So, the possibilities are endless."

Kevin's items are now for sale at the Tayside Upcycling and Craft Centre situated next door to the Inchmichael Shell garage on the A90 (Perth to Dundee side of Dual Carriageway, PH2 7RR). The Centre has diverted an estimate 12 tonnes of waste from landfill.

[Follow Carse of Gowrie Men's Shed on Facebook](#) for more Shed projects and updates.





Kirkcaldy and District Men's Shed begins £20,000 clean-up at new home

After a long four-year search, Kirkcaldy and District Men's Shed has finally found its home—at the former changing pavilion in their town's Ravenscraig Park.

Shed Secretary, Margaret Smith and her husband Sandy—who sadly passed away from COVID-19 last year—worked tirelessly to find suitable premises for the Shed.

Previously running activities for its members at three different Sheds within the park's walled garden, the Shed began searching for a new and more secure site following several break-ins where all of their tools and equipment were stolen by callous thieves.

The Shed approached Fife Council to request a lease and change of use to the common good property pavilion at the main entrance to Ravenscraig Park.

Margaret said: "We are delighted, after a very long and extremely frustrating struggle, that we have officially signed the lease and received the keys to the building we hope to turn into a comfortable home for our members. There were many occasions that we thought the group would disband but are so thankful now that we kept on going.

"The building was used as football changing facilities over the past 20 years but has not been used for many years and was declared surplus to operational requirements.

"Our first priority was to change the locks to make it secure. The building requires a fair bit of work—the building is damp and cold and we estimate that we will need to raise in

the region of £20,000 to make it fit-for-purpose—but having got this far, we are determined more than ever to reopen sooner rather than later.

"As soon as we received the keys, the cleaning and painting work began. We now require permission from Fife Council to upgrade the electrics and plumbing but things are moving ahead and we are already receiving numerous enquiries from prospective new members."

SMSA's Development Officer, Tim Green, visited the Shed (an SMSA Shed member) on the 25th February to check out the new building.

Tim said: "Kirkcaldy and District Men's Shed now have the premises they deserve thanks to the tenacity of Margaret and her dynamic committee. There is a lot to do but the spirit is strong."

Follow Kirkcaldy & District Men's Shed's journey on [Facebook](#).



Carl Luke Shedder to don tartan for Kiltwalk for third year

Carl Luke Men's Shed Treasurer, Tom Kennedy, and his wife Wendy will boost Shed funds for a third time by taking part in the [Kiltwalk 2022](https://glasgow.thekiltwalk.co.uk/fundraising/GlasgowKiltwalk2022-TomKennedy).

Tom said: "My wife and I will be taking on the Kiltwalk for the third year in a row on Sunday 24th April 2022.

"We will be walking around Balloch, Loch Lomond, to raise funds for the Shed. Every penny raised will be topped up by 50% thanks to the generosity of Sir Tom Hunter through The Hunter Foundation. Any donation you can spare will mean the world to me and my chosen charity."

You can support Tom and Carl Luke Men's Shed by making a donation at:

<https://glasgow.thekiltwalk.co.uk/fundraising/GlasgowKiltwalk2022-TomKennedy>

There is still time to sign up for the Kiltwalk 2022 with five dates and locations across Scotland:

Glasgow - 24th April
Aberdeen - 29th May
Dundee - 21st August
Edinburgh - 18th September
Scotland's Virtual Kiltwalk 7th - 9th October



One giant leap for...Finechty Men's Shed

Following the granting of planning permission in September 2021 for Finechty Men's Shed's idyllic plot by the sea, the 'big dig' has begun.

Shed Chairman Jimmy Bremner said: "We have pretty much been in lockdown since the inception of our Shed but still feel like we have come such a long way. We are progressing well, with our 35-strong membership, and have been involved with numerous projects to support our local community and spruce up the area.

"It is extremely exciting to see the archaeological survey complete and work begin to put down the hard core. Two containers that will be used as workshops will be coming on site within the next few weeks. This is just the beginning for us and we have great plans for the future.

"This couldn't have been done without the hard work of our members and supporters over the past couple of years. It is only onwards and upwards from here on for Finechty Men's Shed."

Follow Finechty Men's Shed's journey on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Shedders sing out loud

The members of [Auchterarder and District Men's Shed](#) celebrated the end of a project in style with a good old sing-along to tunes from the 1960s and 70s (and even older) accompanied by secretary John Boyd on his flute. [Click here to watch the video](#) of the members singing along to 'Danny Boy'.

John said: "We had a great day at the Shed with a big attendance once again. Why do we get so many guys coming along? Because they simply enjoy the company and have a good time.

"The Shedders had just finished our composter project and being a cold windy day, were glad to join the rest of the members to sing. Nothing better to make you feel good than music. The Shedders did fantastically well singing loudly and creating a joyful sound. Well done the Singing Shedders!"

On a separate note—it's not every day you see a racing pig! Having been restricted to their sty due to COVID restrictions, Auchterarder and District Men's Shed's racing pigs—[available for hire to other groups](#)—had a special day out at a community event in the Aytoun Hall in Auchterarder. John added: "We had a stand explaining what Men's Sheds are all about and Shedders encouraging men to become members. On our table were examples of some of the crafts created by our shed. We were very encouraged by the interest generated by our presence and we hope this translates into increasing our membership."



Scottish Veterans Commissioner visits Garnock Valley Men's Shed

Following the SMSA AGM where the Scottish Veterans Commissioner (SVC) Charlie Wallace was a guest speaker, Charlie took up the invitation from [Garnock Valley Men's Shed](#) (GVMS) to come visit their premises and see what they have to offer all men in their community.

Shed Vice-Chairman David Gardner said: "It was an honour to welcome the Scottish Veterans Commissioner to our Shed and give him a personal tour of our facilities. Through meeting some of our trustees and members (some of whom are veterans) we were able to give an insight into the diversification of activities that take place here and the impact that Sheds are making in today's societies to improve the health and wellbeing of all men."

Charlie Wallace wrote to GVMS the following day and said: "Thank you so much for such an informative and inspirational visit. I must say that what you have achieved in that Shed since it opened, is extraordinary—especially considering the pandemic has stopped any physical progress for two years."

"I very much enjoyed meeting the Shedders. There is such a wonderful diversity amongst them but each bringing something special to the group. And it is that which sticks out in my mind; it does not matter where one comes from, nor what one is able to bring—one is always welcome."

"As SVC, I am very conscious of the increasing challenges in helping veterans settle back into their communities once they leave the Service. Sheds, in my mind, offer a perfect opportunity to help those veterans that are struggling to re-integrate. Sheds offer environments where veterans can contribute without prejudice and meet non-military individuals who can help draw them into society and make them realise that they can be part of civilian life."

During his visit, GVMS Shedders gifted Charlie with a pen to which he used to sign his letter of thanks. David Gardner added: "Having listened to Charlie at the SMSA AGM, I felt that it was important that he experience a Shed and his visit was very encouraging. Charlie made time for and spoke with every Shedder during his visit which was very much appreciated by all."



Garnock Valley Men's Shed meets the OECD

Swedish, French and Belgian representatives from the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#) (OECD)—accompanied by two members of [Scottish Enterprise](#)—visited [Garnock Valley Men's Shed](#) (GVMS) last month.

The representatives received a tour of the Shed from Chairman Henry Johnson and Vice-Chairman David Gardner before sitting down to discuss the Shed's vital work and the OECD's mission to provide 'Better Policies for Better Lives'.

The OECD—a group of 37 member countries that discuss and develop economic and social policy—was recommended by North Ayrshire Council (NAC) to visit the Shed as an excellent best practice model in an area of deprivation on their recent tour of Scotland. David Gardner said: "The Shed members are delighted that NAC is so proud of GVMS that they chose us as a leading light in our local community. Each of the OECD delegates were presented with a wooden pen which had been made in the Shed by our Secretary, Steve Curtis."



Ellon and District Men's Shed expands to provide additional hobby space for members

After waving goodbye to their old static caravan and being granted planning permission from Aberdeenshire Council, Ellon and District Men's Shed is delighted to now have their new portable cabin in pride of place next to their Shed base to expand its offering to members.

Shed Chairman Andy Leonard said: "We refurbished our Shed on Hospital Road and have been here since 2017 and although we have a large social area, kitchen and garden—with two greenhouses, polytunnel and raised beds—we were unfortunately starting to get quite limited in space in our workshop.

"This new cabin, funded by the [Bank of Scotland Foundation](#), is a key part of our growth plan. In addition to this, we have also converted a container—funded by the [Co-op Local Community Fund](#) and [The Stafford Trust](#)—to increase the indoor hobby/workshop space so we can increase the number and scope of our activities. The Shed and portacabin in particular have also benefitted from the generosity of [Shell](#) who has donated office furniture and equipment to local community groups as they downsize their offices in Aberdeen.

"The Shed already offers a wide range of activities to members such as wood turning, model railways, gardening, computing, card playing and board games but once we have the electrics sorted and the cabin up and running, we plan to run mechanical activities (including bike repairs), photography and framing and specialist woodworking."

Since reopening on the 10th January, the members have been busy with a wide variety of community projects including restorations and producing items like bird nesting boxes, play equipment and benches to raise funds. We have also recently installed two computer workstations and have been helping out at Ythanvale Care Home by pruning roses, shrubs, clearing leaves, repairing the greenhouse and generally tidying up the gardens for the residents.

Andy added: "As well as receiving the planning permission for the cabin from Aberdeenshire Council, they have also agreed to modify our lease to guarantee our tenure here until 2030."

Ellon and District Men's Shed is open Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 4pm. For more information and updates, visit their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#).



Inverurie & District Men's Shed uses solar and wind energy to power community defibrillator

In September 2021, Inverurie & District Men's Shed was one of ten Men's Sheds to receive a free Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) through the Scottish Men's Sheds Association's partnership with St Andrew's First Aid.

The defibrillator was planned for the Shed's community allotment but with no access to power on site, heating the outdoor cabinet for the unit was proving to be difficult.

New Shed Chairman Alex Smith, who has taken over from former Chair Archie Peebles, said: "As the defibrillator was to be stored outside so it is accessible to the public 24/7, the cabinet has to be heated to ensure that the defibrillator can survive all weathers including sub-zero temperatures.

"Unfortunately, there was no electricity supply at our allotments at Old Port Road in Inverurie. After making a few enquiries we received a staggering estimate of £16,000 to install an electricity supply. One of our Trustees, Graeme Shepherd, decided to look at alternative options and we applied to the National Lottery Community Fund and received £1,800, made possible by National Lottery players, to help with this project and come up with our own solution.

"The funding we received, together with Graeme's ingenuity and determination, allowed us to purchase solar panels and a wind turbine. These have now been installed by Graeme, Henry Wilson and Murray Main and we are delighted to say that the defibrillator is now available for our members' and public use and is situated in the allotment car park."

The defibrillator is registered on [The Circuit – the National Defibrillator Network](#) and is connected to the [Scottish Ambulance Service](#).

For more information on Inverurie & District Men's Shed, please visit their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#).



Westhill & District Men's Shed create 'Happy to Chat' buddy benches

Westhill & District Men's Shed has created six 'Happy to Chat' benches for Kintore and Blackburn in Aberdeenshire as part of a mental health support project.

East Garioch Ward Councillor and Community Champion Glen Reid said: "The main focus for these benches is to promote good mental health and tackle social isolation by talking and being outside. A local resident, Alison Clark, made us aware of the buddy benches and we, along with [The Bothie Kintore](#), applied for and secured enough funding for six benches—four for Kintore and two for Blackburn—to take the idea forward.

"We wanted to make the benches stand out from other benches, and after asking the two communities what they wanted, we received an overwhelming response to make them rainbow colours, happy and bright. Westhill & District Men's Shed was approached and asked to make and paint the benches. They have done a terrific job and the benches will be moved to their spots—selected by the communities themselves—very soon."

New Shed Chairman Marty Kehoe said: "Our Shed was delighted to be involved in this local mental health support project. We built and painted six benches and added a plaque on each which reads 'Please sit here if you're happy to chat'. The benches are also designed to be wide enough to allow for social distancing."

For more information about Westhill & District Men's Shed, please visit their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#).





Asset Transfer success for Banff, Macduff and District Men's Shed

After a gruelling four-year search for premises, Banff, Macduff and District Men's Shed members are celebrating the news that their asset transfer request—to make a former school building their new permanent home—has now been approved by Councillors.

The former Fife Street School in Macduff, built in the 1930s, has lain empty since the previous tenant North East Scotland College (NESCOL) vacated ten years ago. The Shed submitted an asset transfer request for a proposed 99-year lease duration at £100 a year in August 2021.

Shed Chairman Bob Copland said: "We are absolutely delighted that the building is now ours. Since our inception in Autumn 2018, we have been searching for suitable premises. The building will not only enable us to return to our Men's Shed and community support activities but also, due to its size, affords the opportunity for us to grow, develop a broader range of activities and welcome new members.

"Our current temporary premises—rental of a commercial unit on North Castle Street in Banff—and our roadshow trailer severely restricts us to what we can do in terms of space and facilities. Consequently, our ability to handle the demand for projects within our community has been significantly curtailed and impeded.

"The building was originally put up for sale in 2020 and an offer was made on the property by a commercial firm who planned to demolish the building—there was a public outcry to save this iconic community building. Fortunately, with the support of our local Councillors, we managed to block the sale and are giving the building a new lease of life and retaining it for community benefit.

"The building is in excellent condition thanks to the £680,000 renovation works completed only a few years ago by NESCOL. There has just been some minor wear and tear over the last few years. We are basically in a situation that, when we get the keys, we can just move straight in with very little work to do.

"There is a shortage of premises for groups in our area so we have received a lot of interest from other community

groups including the Macduff Farmers' Market. We have discussed many plans for the future including the development of a 'drop-in' amenity or shared meeting space/community hub. For example, the Banff toy-bank looks for short-term facilities at Christmas time and cannot afford or justify having permanent premises, this space would be ideal for them.

"It is a big building so there are definitely many opportunities to hire out rooms to raise funds towards our running costs. Home-Start Deveron is also looking into the possibility of moving into the old nursery—it would be perfect for them.

"We have plans for the surrounding grounds and garden area and are delighted to have a large car park for our members and visitors. The outside of the building has been neglected so requires a bit of TLC to make the Shed more visually appealing—some raised beds and a polytunnel are on the cards for the near future.

"We are very much looking forward to getting the keys now. We are fortunate to have members with the expertise, competencies and enthusiasm to actively contribute to the ongoing maintenance of the building."

A committee Councillor said: "This proposal by the Men's Shed is a symbol of the spirit of community resilience and embracing new opportunities as we struggle with the pandemic. Ultimately, it is a focus upon the mental health and wellbeing of our local communities."

Follow Banff, Macduff and District Men's Shed's journey on [Facebook](#).



Inverness Men's Shed is open for business

Inverness Men's Shed welcomed guests to officially open their new Shed 'The Pavilion' and offer the opportunity to see the completed £115,000 renovation works that have taken place during their closure over the last two years.

Alan Michael, Founder and Chairman of Inverness Men's Shed said: "In 2014, we started looking for premises to meet and start up a Shed in Inverness. We found suitable premises on Gordon Terrace but the rent was £1,000 a month.

"I accepted the terms to get us started and two days later got a call from a lady called Izzy McDonald who told me to come down and see her. I was flabbergasted when she offered us a cheque for £12,000 for our first year's rent. If she had not done that back then; I am not sure if we would even be here today.

"We began to meet and our activities and membership grew steadily—we now had around 40/50 members. New member Dave Hendry started to highlight the need to look for new (and less expensive) premises.

"For the next 18 months, Dave and I looked at numerous different sites and buildings. We spoke to high-powered people—and got many promises—but unfortunately, nothing came to fruition.

"And then one day, our local Councillor Jimmy Gray told us to go take a look at the old 1930s sports pavilion on the grounds of Millburn Academy on Victoria Drive. We liked what we saw—it was perfect.

"A few months later, we spoke to the new rector of the site, Johnny, who was extremely supportive. With his and Jimmy's support, we acquired the building on a 99-year lease for £1 a year in January 2021. We will forever be thankful to them

and the Highland Council for helping us to make this happen.

"Early in 2020, the refurbishment began. It has certainly been challenging at times—with much of the work being carried out by our members— and COVID delays have not helped but it is also our biggest achievement to date and an exciting step to aid us in our growth to widen our offering to members old and new."

The Shed was officially opened by Highland Councillor Jimmy Gray on the 18th February 2022. To mark the occasion, members and invited guests were treated to a bagpiper and given a tour of the premises—with spacious social area, new kitchen and toilet facilities and an extensive workshop space kitted out with a wide range of tools and machinery and modern dust extraction system. The tour was followed by an open discussion on future activities and priorities.

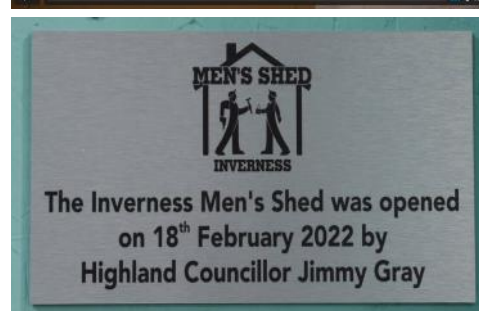
Alan added: "I had a dream that began ten years ago and that dream has now come true. This building is not only here for our current members but also for many generations to come.

"Now we are in the door, we can also continue our talks with Millburn Academy in regard to working with their senior pupils. Our story has just begun."

The Shed is open each weekday Monday to Friday from 9am—1pm. The current programme is :

- Monday – Reading and Writing Group from 10am. Singing Group from 11.30am
- Tuesday – Open meeting, often with guest speaker, from 10am. IT/iPad Group follows from 1.30pm—3pm
- Wednesday – Woodwork and Projects from 9am—12pm
- Thursday – Seniors Group from 10am. Woodwork and Projects from 9am—12pm
- Friday – Woodwork and Projects from 9am—12pm

For more information on Inverness Men's Shed, visit their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#).





Lauderdale Community Shed acquires space to build

Tony Nelson from the Shed said: “There have been quite a few changes here at Lauderdale Community Shed but we are still here...honest!

“We had to vacate the room we occupied in the Lauder Leisure Centre due to the impending renovations, so any activity has been severely limited. COVID restrictions also prevented us meeting until late last year.

“We have also had a change of office bearers and our members have now elected Robin Jeffs as Shed Chairman and Tony Nelson as Treasurer. David Budd remains as Secretary.

“With a new team at the helm, we are now meeting fortnightly on the first and third Thursday of each month at the ‘Trough’ café at the Leisure Centre at 10.30am. Whilst we can plan for the future, it is also a great opportunity to have a good chin-wag and provide a sense of belonging and community.

“We are now delighted to officially announce that we are making plans for new premises. We have been offered space and a sub-lease, beside the Lauder Leisure Centre, to build a Community Shed. We have obtained planning permission to erect a substantial wooden cabin for a new workshop (pictured). It will be almost 9m x 3m, and fully insulated.

“Whilst we have some funds, we require a considerable sum to prepare the site, connect services and purchase the cabin so we are now embarking on the task of applying for grants to fund the work and fit it out.

“Not only will we be able to take on community projects but the cabin will allow us the opportunity to pass on skills between members. The woodworking and woodturning skills will be complemented by help with computers, mechanics, small electrical repairs etc.

“Any other skills can be considered as well, like basic cooking – in conjunction with the Lauder Larder and the Trough Café.

For further information on Lauderdale Community Shed, please contact David Budd 01578 822704 and follow the Shed on [Facebook](#).

A PERSONAL STORY

The SMSA interviews Andy Lorimer, Vice-Chairman of [Stonehaven & District Men's Shed](#), who won the title of 'Shedder of the Year' 2021 in recognition of the work he carried out during the course of the pandemic to keep the Shed operating in a safe and secure manner.

Andy (73), who was in the Royal Navy for 13 years and a mechanical fitter to trade, was kept completely in the dark about the award until the surprise announcement was made at the Shed's Christmas lunch on the 16th December.

Shed Chairman Bill Allan sourced a decorative ship's wheel and transformed it into an impressive trophy. The ethos behind the award is to recognise and reward the members who have gone over and above to steer the course of the Shed.

Andy said: "I was absolutely delighted when the announcement was made. The members certainly did a good job of keeping that under wraps."

"I have been involved since the beginning and attended the first meeting at the Town House arranged by our local Rotary in 2016 when Jason from the SMSA came to present to us about the concept of Men's Sheds.

"I was enthused by Jason's talk and was just about to retire, so volunteered to become a Trustee from the start.

"I go to the Shed most days—it is a huge and important part of my life. My wife died a few years ago and it has provided me with companionship and friendship. When we went into lockdown, I wanted to ensure Shed projects, that could still run safely, kept going but also wanted to keep our members connected to support each other."

Shed Chairman Bill Allan said: "Andy put so much effort and hard work into keeping the Shed operating by organising the rotas for Shed supervisors and the duty phone holder; ensuring that we have a safe environment to work in; encouraging and helping out on all fronts on administration, organising meetings, liaising with other groups, particularly on welfare activities; issuing SMSA's Pathfindr Safe Distancing Assistants; and creating and distributing the weekly Shed newsletter to keep us all informed about what is going on.

"Andy didn't just sit and accept that the Shed was closed, he worked very closely with NHS Grampian on health and safety and risk assessments and put together robust procedures to keep us all safe. Andy steered all of that."

"To me, I just do my thing at the Shed and get on with it so I was gobsmacked to be presented with the award for our 'Shedder of the Year' 2021"



A very modest Andy added: "To me, I just do my thing at the Shed and get on with it so I was gobsmacked to be presented with the award for our 'Shedder of the Year' 2021.

"There have been so many highlights over the years—too many to cover—but the biggest has to be actually getting our Shed building. This was a monumental moment and although it then hit us that we would now have to find the funds to do up this building, it was great to be a part of that journey. Being part of the team, raising funds and seeing each milestone reached is something we will never forget.

"Painting our huge wall mural in the Shed is also a great memory. Our resident artist Paul Ralph involved the members in it. He sketched out the design and we pretty much painted it like a painting by numbers kit. He then finished off the fine details to [make it what it is today](#)—something we are all immensely proud of.

Continued on next page...

A PERSONAL STORY

...continued from previous page

"Being on the Stonehaven Farmers' & Produce Market Support Team—alongside Paul Tosh, Peter Cooper, David Lomax, Jim Mackenzie, Bill Emslie and Mike McNally—is also great. Tom Hannan has been the driving force behind this and leads the team of volunteers. When lockdown measures eased, we supported the Farmers' Market to get back up and running again with stewarding support and introduced a one-way system. It was great to be back together and supporting our local community.

"Not only is the market work good for our Shed funds but, more importantly, it is a resource for local produce and wares to be made available in our community once again and an opportunity for us to be at local events raising awareness of the Shed activities to potential new members.

"The biggest part of being a Shed member for me is the friendships made and giving back to our community. A group of us have formed a quiz team and meet on a Wednesday night in the local hotel. We recently won the quiz in early March and any money we win goes straight into Shed funds. These friendships are priceless and I thoroughly enjoy it.

When asked about what the future holds for Andy, he simply replied: "Well, I will just keep coming back to the Shed and keep doing what I do."

Stonehaven & District Men's Shed— 'Shedder of the Year' 2020 Winners

Inaugural winners of Stonehaven & District Men's Shed's 'Shedder of the Year' award for 2020 were members Peter Cooper and Tom Hannan (pictured below) and they were also recognised at the Shed's Christmas lunch on the 16th December 2021.

During lockdown, donations of bicycles to the Shed did not stop so Peter and Tom devised a process where the donated bikes could be collected in a safe manner and deposited in the Shed, temporarily.

Peter made his workshop, his experience as a professional cycle repair mechanic and his skill set available for the project. Tom collected the donated bikes, ferried them to Peter's facility where the bicycles were inspected and repaired to make them safe and roadworthy once again.

The upcycled bikes were taken back to the Shed from where Tom would advertise them for sale on social media platforms. Deliveries were carried out to customers safely or they collected them from the Shed under controlled measures. All in all, they raised thousands towards vital Shed funds.

Congratulations Peter and Tom!



'THE SHED GARDEN'

Stonehaven & District Men's Shed members have worked over 200 man-hours on an eco-friendly project with their local primary school. The project will provide opportunities for outdoor learning where green-fingered pupils plan to grow bananas (amongst other things) in their new solar-powered polytunnel.

When the Mill o' Forest Primary School in Stonehaven decided to install an 8x4m domed polytunnel, within the school grounds to promote environmental projects to their students, they knew straight away who to approach for help.

Stonehaven & District Men's Shed, who had previously completed a similar polytunnel project for Mackie Academy, quickly accepted the challenge and got a small team on the case.

Shed Trustee Duncan Cursiter said: "The task proved to be a bit more challenging than first expected but our experience of developing the horticultural facility at Mackie Academy proved invaluable.

"A detailed plan of the proposed layout was approved by the school and we could then get to work. A very important part of this project was to ensure everything was fully accessible and wheelchair-friendly to allow everyone the chance to enjoy this space.

"Like we do in the Shed, it was imperative that this project used repurposed materials wherever possible. The school managed to source 70 recycled slabs for the central raised beds and the staging was creating using the recycled wood from the pallet that the polytunnel had been delivered on. It is important to show the kids the importance of reusing and recycling and diverting items from landfill.

"The polytunnel was quite a distance from a water source so Shed Chairman Bill Allan came up with the perfect solution—to install a rain water harvesting system and make the polytunnel completely self-sufficient.

"Guttering was placed along both sides of the polytunnel which collect



rain water and feed this into four recycled external storage barrels before flowing to an internal holding tank and pumped inside into four 45-gallon storage tanks.

"The Rotary Club of Stonehaven provided funding for the school to purchase a solar-powered pump and back-up hose to pump the water up to the inside barrels."

The success of this project is a result of over 200 man-hours from Sheddies Davie Ross and Mike McNally, in particular, but also to the other Sheddies who came on an ad hoc basis and helped with the heavy lifting or those that came along with a cuppa for the workers.

Duncan added: "We were delighted to be involved in this project. Not only did we receive great satisfaction in doing something for our community but we also get to assist these youngsters to contribute to a better environment for the future."

Head Teacher Trish Martin said: "We are really pleased with our new polytunnel and so grateful to the Men's Shed for putting so much hard

work into it. All the extras, like the rainwater collection pumps, will help us to engage the children in learning about science, technology, engineering and maths as well as the environment and all of the benefits that come with outdoor learning.

"The project team has gone above and beyond in putting this together and we cannot wait to get growing!"

Debbie Thomson, President of the Stonehaven Rotary Club said: "Stonehaven Rotary was pleased it could support this project as it fits in beautifully with our objectives on helping save the planet by encouraging local schools, via a financial incentive, to initiate projects which involve the environment and nature.

"Funding items for their polytunnel as well as a solar pump system for recycling rainwater seemed an ideal way to encourage this and we are delighted to have been able to join the Men's Shed in making this happen"

Follow Stonehaven & District Men's Shed on [Facebook](#).



SHED PROJECTS

Keeping the football supporters happy

Carse of Gowrie Men's Shed has come up with an ingenious idea to keep all the football supporters happy whilst enjoying a brew with a double-sided coaster that can be turned to feature the logo of their favourite team.

Carse of Gowrie Shedder Kevin Clayton said: "Because of the banter between the two sets of Dundee supporters, one of our members Clive Skinner came up with the idea of making coasters with Dundee United on one side and Dundee on the other for the cafe area.

"We created the coasters using the laser machine and now everyone can select their side and have their team facing them."

This is just one of the many designs created by the Shed on their laser machine.

[Follow Carse of Gowrie Men's Shed on Facebook](#) for more Shed projects and updates.



The common hedgehog needs your help

The UK's hedgehog population is in catastrophic decline. It is estimated that the European Hedgehog, also known as the Common Hedgehog, now has an estimated population in Scotland of just 310,000 compared to 30 million in the 1950s —mainly due to loss of habitat and food.

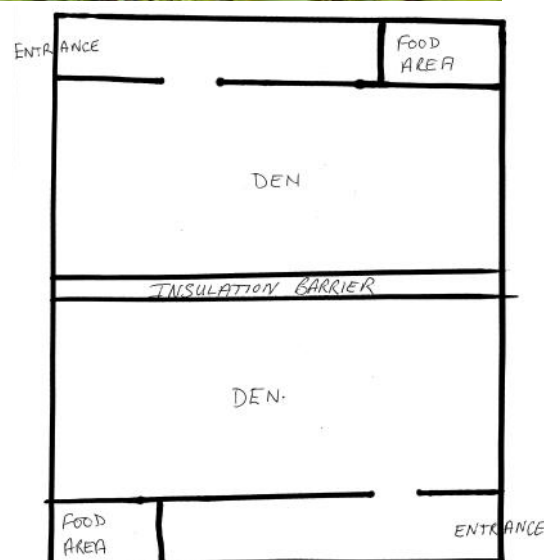
In 2020, the first official Red List for Britain's Mammals was produced and 11 species were deemed to be at risk of extinction, including the hedgehog.

Considered a 'gardener's best friend' for their ability to Hoover up insects, hogs are protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Hedgehogs love dry spaces like underneath your garden shed and hedges and it is important to be cautious when moving or disturbing such spaces.

We can all help by building hibernation dens, compost heaps, leaf piles etc to allow them to rest, hibernate and raise their hoglets at your home and/or in the Shed garden (if you have one). [Check out the RSPC's guide to building a hedgehog house](#) which can be done at any time of year.

SMSA individual member Bob Howie shares his sketch design (right) with The Scottish Shedder readers for a solution he is building himself. Bob said: "I am making twin hedgehog hibernation boxes, one accessible from my side and the other from my neighbours side to help our prickly friends.

"Another very simple way to help is to ensure there is a 130mm diameter hole in your fence into your neighbouring gardens but... always remember to ask for permission first."



SHED PROJECTS

Springburn Park Shedders delighted to be back supporting their fellow members and the community once again

Since reopening, the Springburn Park Shedders have been revelling in projects for their community.

Shed Secretary Tom Bennett said: "Recently, the members made a range of bird feeders for the garden area of our local Marie Curie Hospice and the patients have been thoroughly enjoying watching the birds and squirrels feeding. It is great to be involved in community projects like this, that make such a difference to the people in our community, again.

"Our Pyrography class, which takes place every Wednesday, is extremely popular and the creative ideas have been flowing to produce some excellent free-handed art pieces.

"We have also been working with the Hawthorn Community Action Group at the Glasgow site to make it an attractive facility for the community. On Mondays, we work in the memorial garden with other community volunteers and groups. We are currently creating new areas for planting and footpaths.

"The lads also got together to make a bench for fellow Shedder, Stevie which they placed beside his late wife's memorial at the park. Our Shedders are second to none when it comes to supporting one another.

"At the memorial garden, some members also got chatting to a lady who was visiting her late husband's memorial and rolled up their sleeves to help. They cleared the area of weeds and branches and built her a seat/planter from recycled wooden pallets and scaffold board.

"Following the recent storms, we have also been out collecting tree trunks to season for more future projects rather than see them end up in landfill. We are excited to see what ideas the guys come up with next."

Springburn Park Men's Shed is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10am-3pm. Follow the Shed on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for more updates and projects.



9 out of 10 people will survive if bowel cancer is found and treated early...

Turning 50 comes with its ups and downs. The good news is the NHS will send you an invitation. Not to a party unfortunately but to consider taking a test every two years, which could save your life.

What is a bowel screening test?

A bowel screening test is quick and easy, with just one small sample of poo to send away in the post. The test aims to pick up early signs of bowel cancer, before you have any symptoms. Not only that, but it can also highlight other changes in the bowel, such as pre-cancerous growths.

You'll be glad to know that the test can be done from the comfort *and privacy* of your own home. Look out for a test kit being delivered every two years. Once the test has been delivered to your door, follow the picture instructions on the letter, stick the label on your kit and pop it into your nearest post box.

Why should I take the bowel screening test?

Around 4,000 people in Scotland get bowel cancer every year and you're 14 times more likely to survive if it's found early. Put simply, it can save your life.

Who is invited for bowel screening?

Everyone over the age of 50 in Scotland is invited to take the bowel screening test. This is because your risk of having bowel cancer is higher. Hey, ups and downs – remember? There may be a few months delay in receiving your kit, as the programme is still catching up after the pause in the programme during the early stages of the pandemic. Please be patient – we'll get to you as soon as possible.

What happens after I get my result?

Most people will not need any further investigation. However, if this is the case, you'll be referred to your Health Board where they'll discuss next steps with you. For most people, this will be a colonoscopy. If you're invited for a colonoscopy, you'll receive information about the benefits and risks of the procedure before your appointment.

Can I do anything to reduce my risk of bowel cancer?

Living a healthy lifestyle can reduce the risk of bowel cancer. Maintain a healthy diet by eating lots of wholegrains, fruit and vegetables. Equally, limiting red meat consumption as well as processed meats goes a long way in improving your health. For tips to help you make changes to your lifestyle, visit www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living

Labelling your kit

It's important to label your kit so we can identify where it has come from. Without the label on the kit, we can't get the results back to you. When you've finished taking your sample, remove the label from the front of your letter and stick it on the side of the tube marked with the +. Write the date you take the sample on the other side.

Need some extra help with taking the test?

If you need some extra help using the bowel screening kit, or labelling the kit, then please get in touch with the Scottish Bowel Screening Centre by phoning 0800 0121 833 or emailing TAY.scottishbowelscreening@nhs.scot. Or reach out to a member of family, a friend or a carer.

Further information

Visit www.nhsinform.scot/bowelscreening for further information, including leaflets in other formats such as audio, British Sign Language, Easy Read and other languages.



Free First Aid Workshops for Men's Sheds from the British Red Cross

The [British Red Cross](#) offers free educational workshops to members of the community (aged 18 or over) and are back to taking bookings across Scotland!

The workshops are fun, interactive and cover life-saving skills in a one-hour workshop that could take place at your Men's Shed or hosted by the British Red Cross teams online.

First Aid

- Explore what first aid means and talk about different ways of helping
- Learn life-saving skills including the recovery position, CPR, how to use an AED and more
- An opportunity to ask any questions about scenarios they might be worried about

The workshops are fully funded by the British Red Cross so there is no charge.

This offer is intended to reach as many people in need as possible so multiple bookings with the same organisation are welcome.

Face-to-face workshops are available in some areas. If you are interested in booking a face-to-face workshop, please email RedCrossEducation@redcross.org.uk

If you are interested in organising an online workshop via Zoom/Teams you can do so [here](#).

For multiple bookings, please email RedCrossEducation@redcross.org.uk or call 0344 412 27344.

Free community education workshops.



WHAT'S COOKING?

When the SMSA heard that it was 'Soup Day' at Stonehaven & District Men's Shed, we just knew we had to get a hold of them to share that recipe!

When we called, we heard an amazing sound in the background—banter, laughing and intrepid hustlers at the pool table. Pots o' soup were on the bile with hungry Sheddies awaiting.

Shed Treasurer Tom Hannan said: "It's not yet habit-forming but we in the Shed are aiming for a regular soup day, usually the last Thursday of the month.

"The first soup day took place on the 27th January when Chairman Bill Allan brought along a couple of pots of Cullen Skink and I provided a couple of loaves of homemade bread. It went down very well, in all senses of the word, and I then volunteered to keep up our new tradition and keep the pot boiling by providing both the soup and bread for the next one.

"I got going on the bread while my wife, Tina, 'volunteered' to make the soup. Two varieties were on offer, both winter warmers and rib stickers, that were a huge hit with the members.

Vegetable soup (made with stock from smoked ham hough)

Cover the hough with water in a large pan and bring to the boil. Add chopped veggies (celery, potato, leek, carrot, neep and onion) to the pan and then turn the heat down to a simmer.

After simmering for around 90-120 minutes, remove the hough and set aside to cool. Blitz the soup with a hand blender before shredding the cooled ham and returning it to the pot.

Tom added: "Due to the quantity of soup required, Tina added a ham stock cube to the mix and chopped flat leaf parsley was also stirred in to bring out the flavour a bit more and the soup blitzed a tad more ready to serve. Sheddies could then season to their own taste."

Vegetable and red lentil soup

Chop your favourite vegetables i.e. celery, potato, leek, carrot, neep and onion and add to a large pot of water and bring to the boil.

Add around 7oz of rinsed lentils to the pot (or more if you like a thicker consistency) and leave to simmer gently for around two hours—stirring occasionally so the lentils don't stick to the bottom.

Two chicken stock cubes (or more – depending on taste requirements and size of pot) were then added. Season to taste (and add a wee bit of paprika also if you like it).

Serve to hungry Sheddies with some shop-bought bread or why not try making some like Tom?

Tom said: "The guys fair enjoyed the soup and bread. The soup was made the night before and then transported (very carefully) to the Shed. Second day soup is aye better.

"A couple of lucky blighters even got seconds and the soup disappeared in fine style."

Stonehaven & District Men's Shed is delighted that they will soon be restarting their cooking demonstrations at the Shed with the help of Aberdeenshire Council to cover 'Eating for One' and 'Healthy Eating' classes."

Soup day is certainly packing out the Shed's social area and bringing members together for the most important aspect of Shed life—to socialise. Why not have a Soup Day at your Shed and try out this recipe? It is guaranteed to get your Sheddies together for a chin-wag.

'Soup Day' at Stonehaven & District Men's Shed



TOOL TALK

When SMSA's Executive Officer recently visited Kinross & District Men's Shed to check out their new premises, he was intrigued to find a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machine that two Shed members had built from scratch—with parts (made from Polylactic acid, also known as PLA) created on the Shed's 3D printer. [Check out the video here](#)—approx. 6.42 minutes in.

SMSA's Communications Officer then got a hold of 'electronics guy' Jim Forbes (83)—who was also on the production team that created over 4,000 face shields using a 3D printer for key workers during a time of PPE shortage—to find out more about the machine build.

Jim said: "Myself and fellow member and electronics enthusiast Alan Tennant often come up with crazy ideas of things to get our teeth into and build together—it is what we enjoy doing at the Shed and in our homes.

"One day, I suggested that we build a CNC machine to use in the Shed, rather than purchase new. Alan, being just as daft as me, of course agreed. There are so many videos and tutorials online to make your own CNC machine, so we got to work—creating many of the individual pieces from PLA on the 3D printer.

"Together, we built all the parts and on the first try... it ran. This was then closely followed by lockdown and the machine then unfortunately sat in Alan's garage gathering dust for almost two years.

"It has only recently been brought in and installed at the Shed and now we are hoping to give demonstrations and mentor other members on how to do the detailed machining with a small router or laser.

"The intricate designs are written in G-Code—computer coded programme instructions. We have written a few basic programmes of our own, experimenting with lettering and scripts, but there are already so many great templates online. An ideal software for Sheds going down this road is the Vectric VCarve software—which runs on both 32-bit and 64-bit operating systems.

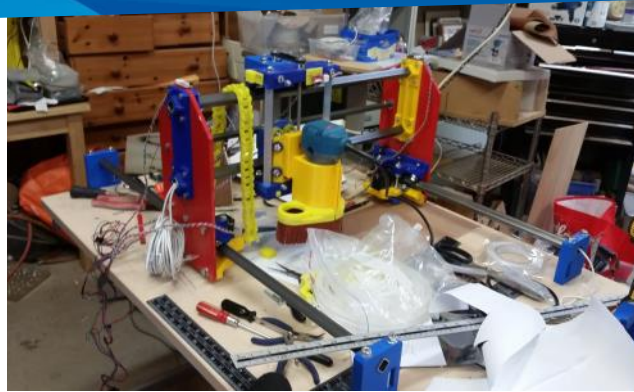
"VCarve offers a version of their CNC software called '[VCarve Pro Makerspace Edition](#)' at a greatly reduced price.

"We are so glad we decided to make our own. It has worked out a lot cheaper than buying one with that same capability. The level of efficiency and accuracy is spot on.

"The Shed is now hoping to encourage other members to use the machine to create items like name plates and signs to sell from the Shed or at the Farmers' Market to generate funds towards running costs. The world is our oyster though and [You Tube](#) today allows access to thousands of designs for free for anything from trinket boxes and toys to bespoke furniture."

Follow Kinross & District Men's Shed on [Facebook](#).

[Find out more about VCarve Pro.](#)



REMEMBRANCE

Mintlaw and District Men's Shed has sadly lost another much-loved member—Tom Anderson—just a few weeks short of his 95th birthday. Fellow Shedder and friend Sandy Thom shares his personal tribute to Tom...

Tom twice gave talks to the Shed group relating the fascinating story of his time working in Canada as a young man before returning to his native Orkney to farm.

Tom and two friends, all in their early twenties, headed to Canada for adventure after their National Service in 1950. After sailing across the Atlantic Ocean they travelled to the west by bus to Vancouver, and looked for work. There they replied to an advert for three firemen to work on a Yukon River stern-wheeler with a 20-foot diameter paddle, and as Tom said, "If you could do the job, you got the job."

The work offered good money. The trio then sailed from Vancouver to Juneau, a five-day trip which tourists now pay thousands of pounds to experience. At that time, Juneau was a real frontier city with boardwalks and with only horses for transport. From Juneau, they took the train even further north to Whitehorse, before flying on to Dawson City - and all three seeing a purely white landscape for the first time.

Their firemen work was to involve feeding the ship's boiler with cordwood, lengths of dried wood 4 feet by 6 inches through a very small hatch. They also had to keep the steam pipes clean.

The paddle boat, The Aksala, had a shallow draft and its work was to push a barge from Whitehorse to Dawson City with its supplies for winter. Dawson City in the Yukon was then 'a wooden city' where the gold rush had been just 50 years earlier. When Tom was there it still had bars from the Gold Rush days! The return journey from Dawson City then took silver ore back down to Whitehorse as there were no roads in that region in 1950, the Alaskan Highway just being under construction. Though the paddle steamers were still needed then, their days were numbered and they now serve as museums or restaurants on land.

The river ice on the Yukon River could be clear in May to allow passage, but it was a lottery as to when this would actually happen, so the men had to gauge when to buy their tickets north. Although the river might be ice free, there was still the problem of getting the boat from its winter berth on the bank of the river and in to the water past the huge amounts of thick ice still clinging to the riverbank.

To wait until that ice melted would take several more valuable weeks. The answer? ... Gunpowder - to blow up the ice sheets and allow the river open water to reach the bank. The boat was then pushed on skids to reach the river, and refloated. The annual relaunch was

necessary because at the end of each work season the boat was drained, and then pulled out of the water on the skids up on to the riverbank.

Tom informed us that the Yukon River is the fastest navigable river in the world, with its waters flowing at an incredible 16 knots. Against the current, the trip to Dawson City took six days but the return took only one and a half days. The boat stopped at three places each way to load fuel, all done with sack barrows, as was the cargo of winter supplies and silver ore.

Tom spoke about 'an interesting spot' on the river - certainly an understatement! On each trip, the ship had to pass the Five Finger Rapids where the river was forced through between substantial rocky outcrops that at one point spanned it. Here, the river speed increased. Remember, the steamer was pushing a barge through this so position and timing was vital on each occasion! Strong nerves were needed as no error would survive. A hawser pulled the boat and the paddle pushed on its way upstream, and the same hawser slowed it at this point on the return trip.

Because in the summer months it was rarely dark so far north, the operations went on for 24 hours a day. Tom and his pals obviously had free time there too and they spent time hunting bears, working in forestry for an extra dollar, recalling 'a Model T Ford with wonky steering' which was used to pull out the felled timber. They also did a bit of gold panning. No mosquitoes, recalled Tom, but plenty of 'big bugs'.

As the final trip of the year was at the end of October when ice began to form on the big paddle, Tom and his friends had to look for other work. For two winters while the boat was out of the water and the river frozen solid, they worked in gold mines. In his second talk to us Tom described how this operation was carried out and what it was like to work at '24 feet' and later at '26 feet'. Not a very impressive depth you might think, but he was using the jargon for 2400 feet and 2600 feet below the surface!

After three seasons, it was time for the travellers to return home. Tom farmed initially in Orkney before moving to Buchan where he maintained an active lifestyle, enjoying a good daily walk until only a few months ago but feeding his mind daily until the very end.

Indeed, a life well lived.



OPPORTUNITIES

The Big Lunch 2022

2nd to 5th June 2022

The Big Lunch is the UK's annual thank you celebratory event bringing neighbours and communities together to share friendship, food and fun.

There are more reasons than ever to celebrate together this year as The Big Lunch kicks off a summer of fun, and everyone's invited!

Join in with [The Big Lunch](#) and the [Month of Community](#) across June as we say cheers to volunteers, connect with our neighbours and celebrate the importance of our community.

So, let's take to our streets, gardens and neighbourhoods to have fun and get to know one another a little better. Get your free pack at thebiglunch.com and join the party that's right up your street.

[Read some inspiring 'Big Lunch' stories.](#)



Global Intergenerational Week (25th April—1st May 2022)

Global Intergenerational Week is a campaign connecting everyone who is passionate about everything intergenerational. In its third year, the campaign aims to inspire individuals, groups, organisations, local/national government etc to fully embrace intergenerational practice, connecting people of all ages especially the younger and older generations.

The week will celebrate good practice, ideas, moments, and opportunities local to us where different age groups come together, and intergenerational friendships can be formed! It provides an opportunity to plan for the future developing new ways of connecting and being creative in how we use our spaces and places, and the resources generations have to offer one another.

As we emerge from the pandemic now more than ever it's vital that we develop and celebrate relationships between generations to rebuild our communities, reduce isolation and loneliness, improve health and mental wellbeing, help young people to catch up with their learning, and to reduce ageism.

- Monday 25th April - Let's reconnect (showcasing community connecting, post covid rebuilding)
- Tuesday 26th April - Let's combat loneliness and isolation.
- Wednesday 27th April - Let's celebrate intergenerational spaces
- Thursday 28th April - Let's inform our future
- Friday 29th April - Let's celebrate intergenerational solidarity
- Saturday 30th April - Let's break down the age barriers
- Sunday 1st May - Thank you

The aim for the week is to get as many people as possible involved and talking about how they plan to connect younger and older generations to build strong connections and friendships.

Find out more about the opportunities to share ideas and inspire others on the [Generations Working Together website](#).

The SMSA urges Sheds and Shedders across Scotland to share their inspirational intergenerational stories using the [#IntergenerationalWeek](#) hashtag.



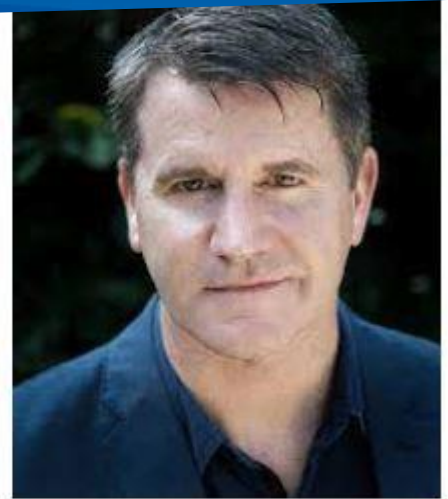
OPPORTUNITIES



Billy Mack



Dougal Lee



Greg Powrie

**A Professional Reading of
'MEN DON'T TALK' by Clare Prenton**
*A new play in development, created with
Peebles & District Mens Shed*
7th May 2022, 4pm at [Duns Play Fest](#)

A one-act play by Peebles-based writer and director Clare Prenton has been chosen to headline the 2022 Duns Play Fest play festival.

Award-winning actor Billy Mack leads a strong cast of three performing a professional reading of the 80 minute play.

The play was first commissioned in 2020 by [The Eastgate Theatre](#) and mental health and suicide prevention charity [Inspiring Life, the Evie Douglas Memorial Fund](#) and was due to be performed in May 2020. Following a postponement of almost two years, the play finally received its first public airing on the 28th January 2022 at the Eastgate Theatre in Peebles.

Sir John McEwan, Director of the Duns Play Fest saw the performance in Peebles and has now programmed it for the final afternoon of the festival. The play was written following over eight hours of recorded conversations with men from Peebles & District Mens Shed covering diverse topics including retirement, ageing, mental health, suicide, prostate cancer, PTSD and the ex-military experience.

From these recorded conversations, a fictional story was created. Writer and director Clare Prenton said: "The stories in the play are inspired by the conversations we had in the Shed, but the characters are fictional and have their own lives.

"Inevitably, there are some references and influences from the many conversations we had as a group—90% of

the text is fictional, but there are some amazing insights in there that I did feel were right for inclusion as direct quotes from things.

"I hope it reflects the humour too - there is much laughter in the Shed - the constant banter and mix of men - and women - from the most to least extrovert of members is what gives it its vibrancy."

Clare wrote the play with specific actors in mind - Powrie in particular had practical skills as a landscaper and carpenter and contributed to script discussions early on.

Greg Powrie is known for *River City* (2022), *Tommy's Honour* (2016), *Succession* (2018) and *Outlander* (2014). Award-winning actor Billy Mack won Best Male Performance at the Critics' Award for Theatre in Scotland 2017 for his role as Willy Loman in Dundee Rep's production of *Death of a Salesman*. But he too has practical skills and has worked on fishing boats, as a labourer, and on North Sea oil rigs as a roustabout. Dougal Lee has chalked up over 50 roles over two decades working at Pitlochry Festival Theatre as well as film credits include *The Advocates* (1991), *Feel the Force* (2006) and *A Risk Worth Taking* (1991). When not on a stage, Dougal is often in a classroom, great preparation for playing a retired history teacher. Actor Scott Noble will introduce the reading and add stage directions to lift the play from the page. [Book your tickets here](#).

Scotland Tour

Clare is now seeking funding and interested producers, programmers and venues to tour the three-man play across Scotland and beyond, or an Edinburgh Festival run in 2023/2024. The play is suited for minimal get in/out and can be performed in the round or end-on, in Sheds, site specific venues or theatres. Contact Clare at clareprenton@icloud.com or call 07887 932 588.



Support the SMSA

Want to help make a difference? There are many ways to support the Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA) and our vital work.

Make a direct donation to the Association:



Donate while you shop online, at no extra cost to yourself:



Fundraising and social media events

You can raise funds for the SMSA through fundraising and social media events like Facebook Birthday Fundraisers!

Legacy donation

Become a guardian for future generations of Shedders by leaving a gift in your will to the Association. Start a conversation with the SMSA to discuss the difference this could make

The SMSA is a registered Scottish charity (SC045139), its Board of Trustees—all volunteers that receive no remuneration for their time and efforts—passionately believe in the SMSA's aims and vision for the people of Scotland. The Association's small staff team of four passionate individuals work to promote and support the growth of the grassroots movement across Scotland. From speaking to hundreds of individuals requiring support to start their own Men's Shed; creating pathways and documentation specific to Scottish law; and lobbying policymakers on men's health and wellbeing.

Follow the SMSA at

