

THE SCOTTISH SHEDDER

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SMSA

M SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION
In Scotland, For Scotland

Edition 36 | January 2024

The Govan Calendar Boys

*"I'm a nine-stone
cowboy"*



ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Stonehaven Shed presented
with King's Award

Shed in the Spotlight from
Shotts Men's Shed

St Andrews Men's Shed
is on the move

And much, much more...

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Start the new year right

Happy New Year Shedders and Shed supporters!

Research shows that almost a quarter of people quit their new year's resolution by the end of the first week, with just under half quitting by the end of January.

Make 2024 the year that you don't quash those resolutions. Instead, why not set yourself some small attainable goals that will make you feel great and on the road towards building a happier and healthier life for yourself and others.

Why not:

- **Try something new in the Shed.** Why not try a new activity already on offer at your local Shed? Maybe something you have always wanted to do but it feels a little out of your comfort zone? Invite a friend along too.
- **Talk to more people in your Shed.** Why not go the extra mile and chat to people in your Shed that you have never talked to before. Or, embrace a new role inducting new members? Let the conversations flow and learn more about each other.
- **Introduce new activities at the Shed.** Ask around at your Shed about any new activities that members would like to see there. Set up a sub-committee to action this together in small achievable steps that do not overwhelm.
- **Inspire others to 'Head to the Shed'.** Make it a personal mission to talk to others, outside of the Shed, about the activities that go on there in their community and encourage them to come along to take a look. What have they got to lose?
- **Set up a new Shed.** Don't have a Shed in your local area? Then [get in touch with the SMSA](#) and we can support you through the process.

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 3,600 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 (March 2024) by Friday 15th March 2024. 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

Subscribe to the Scottish Shedder

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

New Year greetings everyone! It seems like Christmas and Hogmanay were a very long time ago after being snowed in for several days and being battered about by ten storms this storm season.

I hope it starts to calm down now so you can enjoy the Sheds and there is no damage incurred with these very changeable weather patterns we are presently experiencing. Unfortunately, Stonehaven & District Men's Shed and Inverurie & District Men's Shed suffered but it is great to hear that they are both on the road to recovery—read all about it on [page 12](#).

Besides the crazy weather, we are off to a fantastic start to the year in the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement as we can see in this issue alone, there are several great stories on new Shed buildings being secured, asset transfers in action and also Scottish Sheds moving on to bigger and better sites and premises.

Here at SMSA HQ, we are busy working away on the final touches to the new and improved SMSA website which for the first time will see SMSA Shed Members having their own online accounts and the ability to keep your Shed information updated and directly change your data on the ['Find a Shed' map](#).

The map sees thousands of hits each month from potential Sheddors and their family and friends searching for their local Shed in addition to individuals, businesses and funders looking to work in partnership and/or donate materials, funds and items to Sheds.

This in turn generates new members and benefits for your Shed so it is vital as your Shed's development changes that this is reflected on your live listing. This is the biggest free shop window for your Shed! Our aim is to launch the new website in the spring for our Shed members so fingers crossed and watch this space as we will be sending out all your new log-in details for you to open your account and make sure your key information is correct and up-to-date.

I am looking forward to working with Charlie Loweth, Lecturer in the Paramedic Practice at Robert Gordon University. Charlie is focussing on wellbeing, sustainability and more specifically social prescribing with a view to studying at a Doctoral level so that he can utilise and teach the benefits to their students going forward.

Charlie reached out to learn more about the Scottish Men's Shed Movement and model and its wealth of

benefits to enhance his understanding. This behind the scenes type of work that I do for the movement is about making sure the correct information and understanding is presented which can stop problems happening for the Sheds later down the line.

The National Lottery is celebrating Men's Sheds in a new way. [The National Lottery Community Fund Scotland](#) got in touch with the SMSA last month to share some unexpected but excellent news that they have featured us on their [new webpage about Men's Sheds](#). The new section shares the positive impact of Sheds and promotes the SMSA as a resource for anyone who is running or thinking of starting a Men's Shed in Scotland.

The NLCF started the ['Learning from Communities'](#) series in response to demand to hold a Knowledge Bank of their learning with applicants and grant holders. It is fantastic to see one of the biggest national funders supporting the Men's Shed movement and men's health in this way.

In the last issue of The Scottish Shedder magazine, I highlighted some of our recent co-production work including my interview with the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland for an in-depth [Connected Communities case study on Men's Sheds in Scotland](#). Following this, Calum Clark, Development Officer (integration and Academy) at the ALLIANCE wrote a [reflective piece](#) looking at the themes included alongside other organisations utilising similar methods and we plan to keep collaborating with the Alliance on Connected Communities. I have also been invited to be involved in their Courageous Leadership series which will involve more interviews and podcasts to promote the Men's Sheds Movement in Scotland and the impact on men's health and wellbeing. Watch this space.

A new year and I wonder if that old custom of making New Year resolutions is something our culture still does? If you or your Shed does, see our story and ideas on [page 2](#) on how you can make small attainable goals that are sure to make a big impact in 2024 towards improving your own and other men's health and wellbeing.

I am looking forward to 2024 and all its challenges and successes that it will bring and I know this will also be the case in your Sheds. So do keep reaching out on both counts because that's why we are here 'In Scotland For Scotland' to solely support you being successful and having a better quality of life.

New Year blessings of prosperity and good health be with you all.

Jason Schroeder
SMSA Chief Executive Officer



SMSA AWARENESS-RAISING FILMS AND ANIMATIONS

Figures as at end of December 2023

SMSA Animations and You Tube Channel



What Is The SMSA And What Do We Do Across Scotland?

Men's Sheds are set up by and run by volunteers but who supports those volunteers in our Scottish communities? This is where the SMSA and their latest awareness-raising animation comes in.



Meet Bob

In this under-one-minute film, viewers meet Bob, a 32-year-old busy professional who is finding life just a little bit dull before stumbling across his local Men's Shed to recharge his life.



What is a Men's Shed?

This film aims to answer all of the questions around 'What is a Men's Shed?' and reflects the boundless opportunities for connections, camaraderie and community for all men aged 18+.



The Three Amigos

'The Three Amigos' focuses in on men's sex lives and toilet habits to draw attention to possible health issues men can experience like the changes in the hidden 'third nut', the prostate gland.



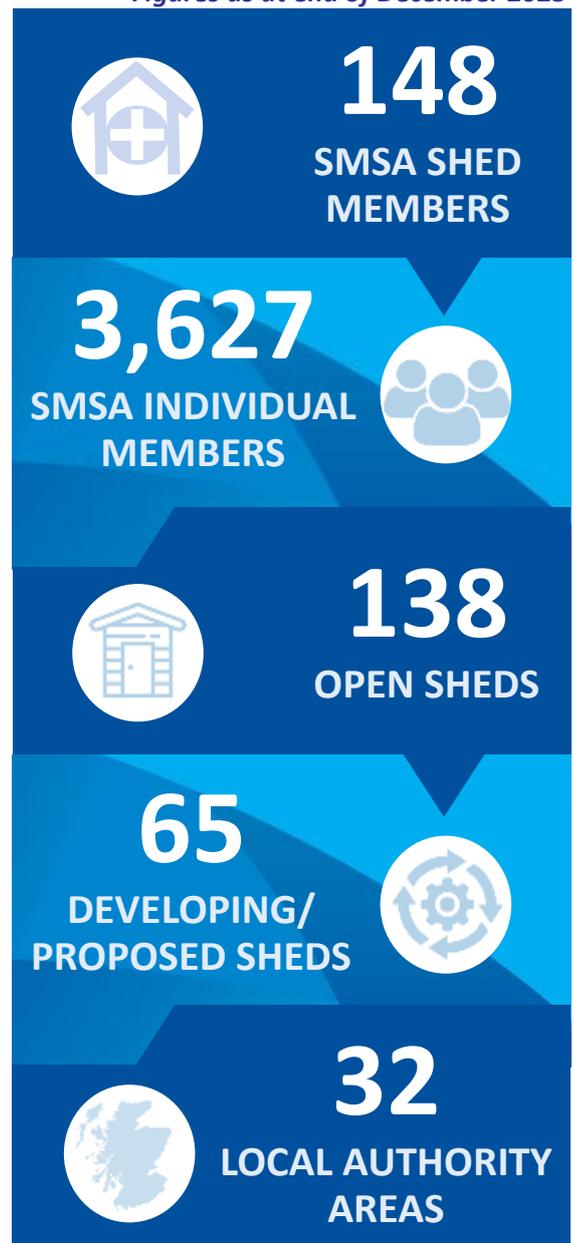
Guitar Mike

The 'Guitar Mike' film promotes that men do open up and talk about health matters in Sheds which can be life-saving.

-  **WATCH**
-  **SUBSCRIBE**
-  **LIKE**
-  **COMMENT**
-  **SHARE**
-  **SUPPORT**



Click here to **SUBSCRIBE** to the SMSA You Tube Channel

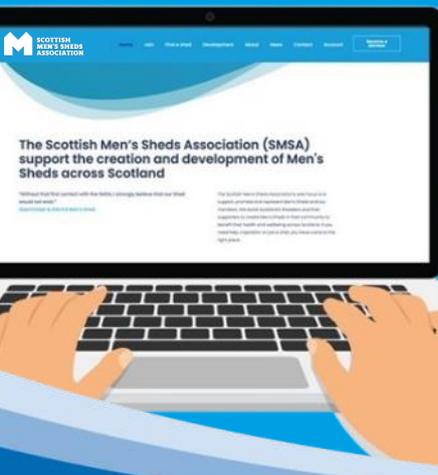


UPDATE YOUR DETAILS WITH THE SMSA

-  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](#)



Launching Soon!

- ★ **New SMSA Website & Database**
- ★ **New Shed & Map Management System**
- ★ **Improved Shed Resource Members' Area**
- ★ **Improved Design & User Features**
- ★ **More Mobile & Tablet Friendly**
- ★ **Improved Payment & Renewal Process**
- ★ **More Search Engine Friendly**



**COMING TO A
DEVICE NEAR YOU:
SPRING 2024**

scottishmsa.org.uk

Give Shedders a problem and they will find a range of solutions

On Shed visits and at regional Shed Network meetings, I have the privilege of experiencing the wonderful work of Shedders, office bearers and trustees. Most of the time the gargantuan voluntary effort and dynamism of the folk who keep Sheds operating regularly, safely and effectively isn't always fully recognised.

Occasionally, as in the case of Stonehaven & District Men's Shed this month, it is acknowledged through accolades like the [King's Award for Voluntary Service](#) (see page 10). That is why The Scottish Shedder magazine is so important in highlighting, to Shed supporters and policy makers, the rich and diverse activities of Men's Sheds across Scotland and the massive difference they make to their members, families and communities.

In keeping their Sheds afloat there are challenges that trustees, office bearers and Shedders must navigate to keep their Shed kind, healthy and sustainable. Some challenges Sheds tackle with a solutions focus include the following:

People attending the Shed to work on their own commercial projects

Whilst part of the purposeful ethos of the Shed is that they conduct projects for their community, it is also important that men can attend and work on their own projects in a social environment.

These should only be for interest and not for private monetary gain. Sheds try to avoid the nuclear option of excluding individuals if they continue by: charging a higher membership for people working on their own commercial projects and asking for full cost contributions for materials and consumables; and allowing Shedders to continue with their business interests by making a sizeable contribution to Shed funds from any sales.

All this activity would be of interest to the HMRC so probably best avoided to maintain the values of the Shed. All these solutions involve some difficult conversations.

Balancing the needs of those who attend the Shed for the social aspect and do not use the workshop

This is especially acute for those Sheds under pressure to produce items for sale by donation to help in meeting high rental payments and running costs. This can come from two perspectives—feelings of guilt from those not being productive and those who feel that some folk are enjoying the benefits of the Shed without pulling their weight.

Both positions fail to recognise that the opportunity to attend purely for social reasons is a cornerstone of what Sheds are about. Nobody should be left to feel they don't have parity of esteem with those who enjoy the productivity of the workshop. A Shed's primary purpose is to bring people together to socialise and whether that be in the workshop or social area, every Shedder should be able to choose their activity and be fully supported in exercising that choice. Again, difficult discussions are sometimes entered into, but Sheds find a range of ways of bringing Shedders together through social events like tea breaks, quiz nights, speakers, meals out, trips and visits.

Medical conditions and safe working

Shedders not disclosing or being asked about health conditions that could put themselves or other Shedders at risk in workshop area is another hot issue.

Balancing inclusion and safety is a daily challenge committees find themselves addressing. Sheds are developing policies, procedures and documentation to address this including recording some safety critical medical information and storing it securely and maintaining confidentiality whilst making it accessible to duty supervisors.

Sheds are also seeking training from organisations to give them more confidence in evaluating whether the Shed is safe or an unsafe environment for those with complex needs and what can be done to accommodate people more safely. For example, segregating social areas from workshops. Organisations providing support include: Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland, Epilepsy Scotland, Alzheimer Scotland, Dementia Scotland, Age Scotland and the Scottish Association for Mental Health.

Sheds coming together at Network meetings is a way of enabling Shedders, office bearers and trustees to continue to find collective solutions to shared problems.

Check out the upcoming dates for Regional Shed Network Meetings below and on the [SMSA Website](#).

If you wish to attend a regional Shed Network meeting in your area, please contact Tim Green, SMSA Development Officer, on 07493361003 or email Dev1@scottishmsa.org.uk

Upcoming Regional Shed Network Meetings

- Lothians – Wednesday 31st January 2024 at Forth Bridges Men's Shed from 11am
- Moray – Tuesday 13th February 2024 at Cullen Men's Shed at 10.30am
- Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire – Tuesday 20th February 2024 at Bridge of Don Men's Shed at 11am
- Angus and Dundee – Thursday 7th March 2024 at Gable Endies Men's Shed (GEMS) Montrose at 10.30am
- Perth and Kinross – TBC



SHED IN THE SPOTLIGHT—SHOTTS MEN'S SHED



The SMSA talks to Veteran Royal Engineer Commando Ray Elliott nicknamed the 'Magpie', one of just three Shedders at Shotts Men's Shed—all aged between 63 to 84—who have transformed a run-down 18x18ft hut into a Getting Better Together (GBT) Men's Shed to meet their needs.

Ray said: "The Springhill, Shotts Men's Shed, started just over a year ago, after I fully recovered from a near-death experience due to Covid. My fellow member Simon had tried on his own to get it all started a few years earlier but with no support, he lost interest. Then we met up and started pushing things forward again and supporting each other. We worked together, utilising each other's strengths, skills and experience and over a short period of time, we have become friends and a great team.

"Having worked for several charities in the past, one can assume the charity would do all of the advertising and fundraising but that is not how Men's Sheds work – the members are all volunteers and run all aspects of the Men's Shed themselves. We began visiting factories and sites to fill our empty Shed with pallets and discarded wood. The Shed now had timber to get us started and brought in our own metal vices and tools - the space was now looking like the beginnings of a Men's Shed.

"The Shed started to get a bit swamped with our timber donations so we fitted shelving and cupboard storage for the tools. We could now start using the wood and pallets received to build planters and other items to sell to raise funds and the good wood was used to make child storage boxes.

"When the new local community hall started up, we asked if we could make use of the remaining pallets and off-cuts of timber to save them going to landfill and this worked really well for

the Shed. Simon would regularly chat with their Site Manager and Foreman and I approached workers who had timber in their hands. After a short chat, I ended up walking away with the timber and earned my nickname. Lads would shout to their colleagues "Here comes the Magpie". I would just see wood and take it.

"One day, shortly after the build began, a van stopped and asked if we could use some pine timber which were off-cuts from coffin making through [Co-op Funeralcare](#). To make something with the pine, it had to be glued together with biscuits holding the strips inline. As the months set in, timber came to us from various places and Simon and I would regularly drive to Glasgow to fill our two cars and my roof rack with the valuable wood.

"The old community hall was to be pulled down and a wide and deep ditch between the hall and the Shed was opened up for water and electricity. During this time, SMSA's Development Officer Tim Green visited and saw the Shed in action. Tim was a great help as he explained the reason for Men's Shed's around the country and also pointing out safety factors, which we took important note of.

"Before the old Community Hall was to be bulldozed, myself and Simon's grandson went into the hall with permission and set about ripping out cupboard (solid) doors, large boards and long timbers. The building foreman had his digger driver pull out the fence posts from around the old hall, plus the driver removed the concrete from the posts to support us. There was huge respect between the contractors and the Shed.

"As the new build neared its end, the contractors put up security fencing 12ft from us and transferred every pallet, timber of all types, gravel bags, bricks and Mono blocks to the safe storage. With so much timber,

donations of old tools, screws and much more, a lean-to Shed was built using the fence posts, extending 8ft and running 7ft high and 18ft long. This was shelved to separate the timbers, plus lights to see inside the shed and electricity socket. All the timber within the security fence was sorted into different sizes, de-nailed and stored and the excess timber still in the Shed was moved out, making the Shed seem massive again.

"We secured a grant for new and improved tools for our projects. We now have a mitre saw, table saw, band saw, jigsaws, electric scroll saw, router, plunge drill, planer, grinder, rotary sander, lathe, push-through planer, drills, small sanders to 2-inch rotary sanders, grinder, orbital saw and Brad/Staple tools.

"We still like our old tools though, and in my working bay there are lots, as old as me from the 1950's & 60's, such as a wooden vice, wooden mallet, hand planers and much more. On the shelves we built, was all the exterior and interior paints, plus my small tools hanging up. A new extractor fan was also installed beside the big saws.

"No job is ever turned away, we have orders for bespoke items and are currently working on a corner cabinet with six glass shelves, an all-weather Gazebo and also transforming furniture for low-income families.

"The Christmas period was extremely busy, we started making festive items in October including a large snowman, wooden Christmas trees and countdown clock to Christmas and some of the items also became prizes for a very popular raffle. On top of our Christmas wares, we were also finishing off orders for a large hedgehog box, a children's toy storage box, planters and a large L-shaped bench seat."

Continued on next page...

SHED IN THE SPOTLIGHT (Continued)



...continued from previous page

Simon and Ray have also become local radio celebrities as they chat about their workshop goings-on Listen Lanarkshire community radio station (107.7FM) which runs from the Springhill Community Hub in Shotts. Ray said: “Simon and I are on every Thursday for an hour from 1.30pm, chatting about the workshop. I write up the general gist of what we are going to talk about but sometimes we make it up as we go along and play some tunes in between.” [Check out their show on the 7th December 2023 here.](#)

“The radio show gives us the chance to raise awareness of the Shed and the opportunity to advertise things like the Charity Cycle Shop Lottery and the Charity ‘Switching the Lights on’ and the Sale Fair, which was booked for the Shed. To further increase awareness of the Shed and community events, we also built and mounted noticeboards at the hall entrances.

“With a successful Christmas period now behind us, we cleared up the Shed and serviced all the machinery, Simon has also put-up piping near the roof, with two-inch piping coming from it to the Mitre Saw, Table Saw and Router, into the large industrial hoover. Guttering was fitted to also allow the water to run off into a water butt, to water our plants and we also have composting facilities to make good compost for our planters.

“To stop people coming up and looking in, but not coming in, we also fitted a reflective sheet to the windows and doors which not only prevents some heat escaping in winter but also reflects the heat and

bright sunshine coming in, in the summer months.

“To keep our area tidy, Simon’s son laid a monoblock path from the storage shed to the front doors, which meets a 12ft platform with a ramp security edge and a wheelchair ramp to the central pathway. To finish off the path, Simon gathered soil from the new skating park being built behind the Shed. Simon used a barrow to collect soil from a heaped pile 300 yards away to form a slope to the path and then sowed some grass seed. Stakes were put all around the new lawn, with plastic carrier bags cut up and attached, to scare the birds away.

“To increase sales, we showcase the items we make such as bird boxes by fixing them to the external walls above the main doors, our planters surround the main Shed and a double planter bench seat is also on display. More items, like our 7ft-long steam train will also be added to the display to tempt potential buyers.

“We unfortunately cannot expand our Shed, the trees around us are protected however one of our plans for next Summer—subject to timber available—is to erect a temporary structure/gazebo next to the Shed. Without full length sides, this will be ideal for any messy jobs and to gain more space to work outdoors in the fresh air.

“The Shed can currently hold a maximum of five people – we currently have three members and on Thursdays, we welcome along up to five men with cognitive impairments and their carers to work on projects with us. Therefore, the gazebo will allow us to cater for more people and to put more items on show including the ‘caravan’ for toddlers that I am currently working on.”

The SMSA covered 72-year-old veteran Ray’s personal story in The Scottish Shedder back in [May](#) last year as he encouraged veterans out there to get involved in the Scottish Men’s Sheds Movement. Ray said: “I am used to leading and talking to people from all walks of life but in the Shed, we are all equal. Without a doubt, joining this Men’s Shed has been life changing for me.

“I find the Shed ideal for veterans, by keeping yourself busy building items,

and chatting to others.

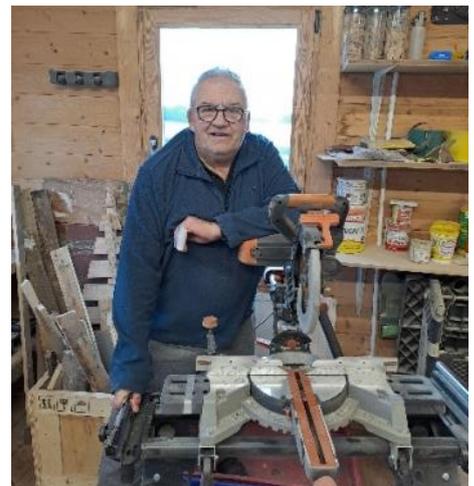
“Any veterans reading this and wish to chat can reach out to me at condorray59@gmail.com. One of my former Royal Engineer Commando Troop is involved with the Men’s Shed in Arbroath—keep it up Steve Charlton and thank you for staying in touch for near on 30 years now!”

“I had Follicular Lymphoma in 2019 and received the all-clear in 2021 but the cancer has stated back up again. The year-long fight starts again but it will not stop me going to the Shed. The Shed and my friendships there take my mind off the cancer and treatment.

No need to worry about these things, I get clear or die. I obviously prefer to carry on a little longer and get the Shed fully set up and use the Army motto ‘Mind over Matter’. I do not mind and the injury does not matter.

“When I caught Covid, I was so ill, I was pretty much going to die on that ward. Then another Army Veteran consultant came along, seeing ‘Commando’ on my t-shirt he said ‘that man is going to make it’. It was a tough few weeks and touch and go for a while but I pulled through. My son says I have used up more lives than a cat! Thankfully, my Commando training taught me to fight, never give up and smile in adversity.

“Veterans with any illness or injury are more than welcome in the Shed - I would certainly encourage you all to join. And, let us not forget the non-veterans, again all types of men, even if you just want to chat with the lads, just call in to your [nearest Men’s Shed](#), you will certainly enjoy the warm welcome, fun and camaraderie.”



St Andrews Men's Shed is moving!

Just before Christmas, [St Andrews Men's Shed \(SAMS\)](#) announced that, after a lengthy process, they have received the green light of planning permission to erect a new larger donated building at Craigtoun Country Park in St Andrews on land secured for the next 20 years.

Shed Chairman Henry Paul: "The building, a redundant single-storey steel barn (pictured right) which was situated on a local farm, was gifted to our Shed by Scott Wallace of [Wallace Homes](#) and is much larger than our current facilities on Wallace Street.

"The Shed is now appealing for helpers with the skills and expertise required, applying for grants and fundraising through [JustGiving](#) to erect the building—which has been dismantled and is in situ at the new site.

"Once we are in, our Shed members can fit out the interior and develop a large workshop, coffee bar, computer room, kitchen and disabled toilet.

"We currently have a membership of 50+ and although there is a wide range of skills there, this project will require the services of a professional contractor with the right experience and equipment. We will also need to dig out drains and connect mains services, water, electricity and sewage."

SAMS has also been given access to a plot of land adjacent to the new site to

develop an allotment with polytunnel and orchard.

SAMS Trustee Adrian Snowball said: "The site for our new gardening project is on a redundant part of the Duke's Golf Course. We have plans for growing beds, polytunnel, orchard and a wood store.

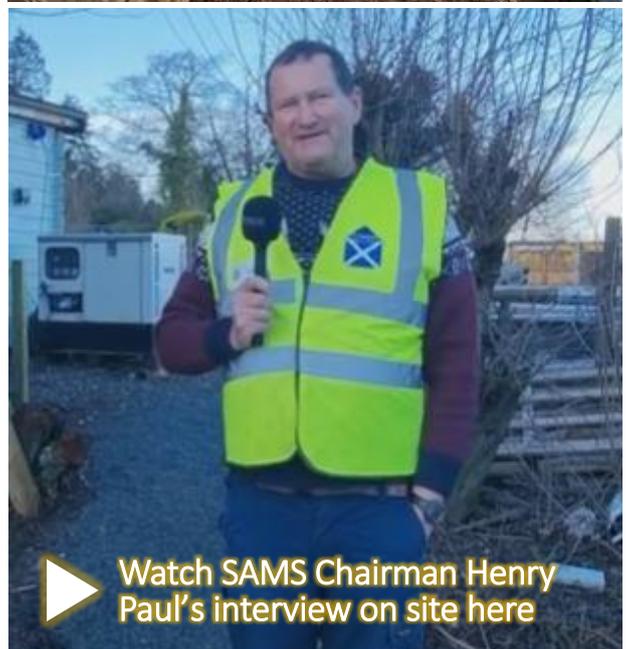
"We have already received support from the community including a garden room which we are using as a site office, the local farmer came and cut all the grass for us, a polytunnel donated from a local firm and a rigid telescopic swimming pool cover from a local resident who was removing their pool from their garden. We have been using the pool cover as a dry working area to paint the steel for the new building under the pool cover (pictured right).

"We are now currently appealing for local people and businesses to volunteer to help erect this barn, install concrete floors and help move us in. We need help—people's time and expertise—and come along and show us what to do so we get it all right.

"Construction of the barn must be done by a professional team but we will fit it out and build an insulated accommodation area for all the electrical wiring. We can help with a lot of the labouring too but really need the professionals in. We are also keen to hear from volunteers interested in developing the community garden."

If you can help, or know of someone who can help SAMS, please get in touch with Henry via the [St Andrews Men's Shed Facebook page](#).

Henry was recently interviewed by Jim Parker from [Fife Properties](#) about their new venture and had a walk round the site—[check out the video here](#).



▶ Watch SAMS Chairman Henry Paul's interview on site here



Stonehaven Shed presented with King's Award

The SMSA was delighted to join trustees, Shedders and guests of Stonehaven & District Men's Shed this month for the official presentation of their King's Award for Voluntary Service by the Lord-Lieutenant of Kincardineshire.

[The King's Award for Voluntary Service](#) celebrates the outstanding work of local volunteer groups across the UK. Stonehaven & District Men's Shed is one of only 262 charities awarded this prestigious award for 2023 and it recognises the huge contribution and impact made by the Shed to community—something King Charles hopes to be a cornerstone of his reign.

The Lord Lieutenant of Kincardineshire, Alistair MacPhie, presented the award to Shed Chairman Bill Allan in an informal ceremony at the Shed attended by the Provost of Aberdeenshire, Julie Whyte, other members of the local authority and community groups as well as an appreciative audience of Shedders and supporters.

Mr MacPhie, in his presentation speech, mentioned how impressed he was with the activities on offer at the Shed and how his regard had risen on each of his returning visits. He mentioned particularly, the efforts of the Shed in supporting the [Legs4Africa](#) charity and other community projects ranging from the polytunnel at Mill O'Forest School to the provision of picnic seating on the boardwalk.

Bill Allan, who thanked the Lord Lieutenant and accepted the award on behalf of the Shed, said: "Firstly, let me say on behalf of the volunteers of Stonehaven and District Men's Shed, how honoured we are to receive this very prestigious award. We are immensely proud that our nomination was accepted in the first year of the reign of his majesty King Charles III not just for what the Men's Shed Movement stands for but for what it means for the Stonehaven community.

"I would like to express, on behalf of my colleagues, our sincere thanks to the Lord-Lieutenancy for choosing Stonehaven Men's Shed and for all the effort which we know goes into the awards process and, of course, for taking the time to come along today for this presentation. Thanks also to Jennifer for the many hours spent putting the nomination together.

"We, the volunteers, have many to thank for us being in this position: the original trustees who got the Shed organisation set up with its constitution, business plan and charitable status leading to finding premises and funding to renovate the shed and make it fit for purpose; the SMSA, in particular Jason Schroeder, who assisted us by inspiring us with his drive and enthusiasm for the concept; and the council and councillors who gave us tremendous support and encouragement from day one, in particular the Area Management team, but special mention to Willie Munro, and Diane Henderson who were behind us all the way and helped immensely with advice and encouragement.

"We also wish to thank our local sponsors and companies for donations which enabled us to raise crucial match funding. This allowed us to obtain major funding from the South Aberdeenshire Local Action Group which resulted in a final tally of £65,000 for the renovation of the facility. And, over the last four to five years, to the many local organisations and individuals who have contributed funding, materials, equipment and machinery to enable us to run the operation for the benefit of the community in general.

"We derive great pleasure in being part of a community whose groups work so well together for the benefit of the town and the surrounding area. This award will inspire us to continue to contribute to the welfare of Stonehaven and its residents and we look forward to working with all local organisations in the future. Finally, my personal thanks to all the trustees and volunteers who have put in so much effort to make this Shed such a success."



The Govan Calendar Boys

A group of empowered Shedders from Govan, inspired by the 2003 movie Calendar Girls, have posed nude—with some strategically placed items—for their 2024 Men’s Shed calendar to raise funds for the charity.

The confident dozen—Del Bissett, Frank Murphy, Charlie McGreevy, James Brown, Martin Haddow, David Marks, Gordon Anderson, Billy Love, James Dempster, Jim Poole, Laurie Stewart and Ricky Urie—all stripped off for their latest fundraising campaign. Each month features a different Shedder as naked as the day they were born but all done in the best possible taste.

Sarah Everett, Funding Manager of Men’s Shed Govan, said: “The Shedders are always coming up with new ways to raise funds and we all thought the calendar was a great fundraising idea.

“We got to work on the calendar way back in February 2023. Some of the guys were up for it straight away. When 89 year-old David Marks put up his hand to volunteer, the rest quickly followed.

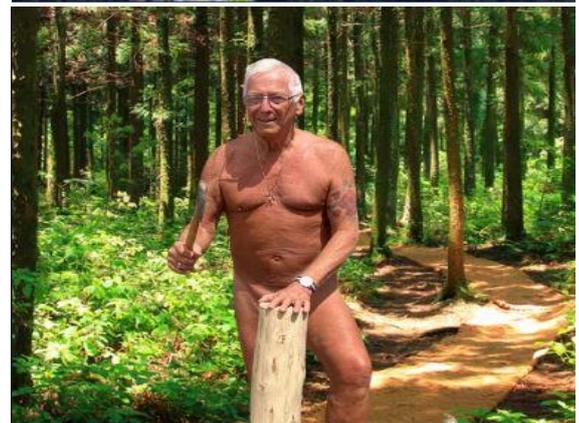
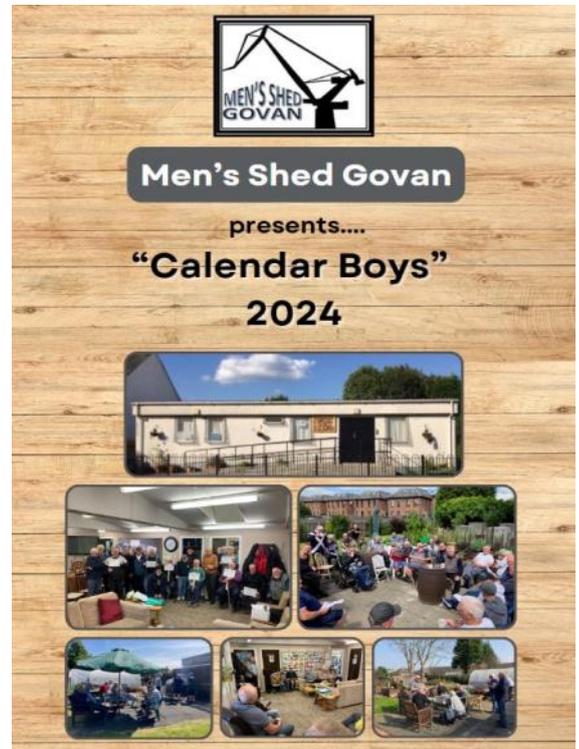
“The men were able to set the scene that they wished to appear in for their month. Once they were totally comfortable with the set-up, I would then come in with the camera to take the photo so I didn’t see anything I wasn’t meant to. I think it really made them feel empowered to do this for such a good cause and I am so proud of them.

“We are all delighted with the final product, printed by Owl Design. The quirky calendar costs just £10 and was a popular Christmas present. We have sold 225 copies so far and will continue to sell it to raise as much for the Shed as possible.”

Buy in the Men’s Shed Govan [online shop](#) - an absolute steal at £10 each and all proceeds will go to help meet the running costs of the Shed.

Pictured (top to bottom): The Men’s Shed Govan Calendar 2024; Del Bissett (Mr January) who loves to celebrate Burns Night; Billy Love (Mr August) who can be found amongst the logs using his chopper; and James Brown (Mr April) who likes to sing to his fans.

Our cover boy: James Brown, a self-confessed nine-stone cowboy, graces the cover of this month’s Scottish Shedder magazine!



Sheds battered by storms

With the 2022-23 storm season only reaching the letter B, with Storm Betty in August 2023, the 2023-24 season has already reached its tenth Storm in five months (Jocelyn) with some Scottish Sheds being significantly impacted.

Back in October, Storm Babet wreaked havoc causing flooding and extensive damage across the country followed by Storm Isha with up to 168mph winds earlier this month and Storm Jocelyn last week.

Storm Babet caused disruption to [Stonehaven & District Men's Shed](#) located on the seafront of the coastal resort beach. The Shed was hammered by strong winds, stones and sea foam ([see video here](#)) and suffered some minor water ingress which bypassed flood gates and sandbags (see top three photos). Thankfully, the Shed is not new to these adverse weather conditions and had prepared by fitting a sheet metal water barrier behind the wall cladding during the refurbishment. They had also just spent a week cladding the temporary road barriers along the promenade outside the Shed and mounting plant boxes but this was unfortunately all washed away by the sea.

It seemed like most of Stonehaven beach was washed up by high tides to the road outside the Shed—affecting access—and the clean up by council workers took around three days to clear tons and tons of gravel and debris. The Shed members were on hand to help—assisting the Council workers with the clean up and resetting the barriers along the prom.

Once the water in the social area and workshop had been mopped up, the blow was softened as the Shed was announced as an awardee of the first King's Award for Voluntary Service (see page 10).

Stonehaven was not the only Shed to be hit, Inverurie & District Men's Shed's roof also took a battering. Inverurie & District Men's Shed Treasurer Geoff Binfield said: "Half of the roof of our social area was completely blown off. The heavy rain also damaged the plasterboard on the ceiling.

"A group of the Shed members gathered to try to salvage what they could but unfortunately nothing could be saved. Everything is now stripped out ready for repairs to be made and we were delighted to receive a significant donation towards the work which we will carry out ourselves."

Let's hope that Jocelyn is the last storm to visit us for a very long time—in the meantime, batten down the hatches lads!



Finechty Men's Shed features on the Touring Toolshed!

An upcoming episode of [David & Jay's Touring Toolshed](#), filmed last summer in the seaside town of Cullen, will feature [Finechty Men's Shed](#).

The series sees the pair park up their toolshed across the UK at air shows, steam rallies, county fairs and vintage festivals to meet some of the most talented crafters, makers and tinkerers – as well as people who could use a little help!

Presenters Sir David Jason and Jay Blades MBE caught up with Jimmy Bremner and John Begg from Finechty Men's Shed for the final episode (episode 15) of the show to work on a boat donated to the Shed.

Jimmy Bremner from the Shed said: "The boat was previously used by its former owner to fish for seabass but when it stopped running, it lay covered up for years in a field.

"The owner donated it to the Shed to give it a new lease of life. The motor has not run for years and it would be great to clean it up, learn how to service it and get it back on the water.

Engine expert Alan from the Touring Toolshed team, who has been turning his hand to any engine since the age of 15, stepped in to work with Jimmy and John to take the two-stroke engine apart, check it over for rust and decay, replace parts and service it. A new skill that can be shared with and utilised by other Shed members to maintain the boat in future.

Chef-by-trade and Shed Chairman Jimmy had never worked on an engine before and took to it like a duck to water with Alan's guidance to replace the spark plug and clean the carburetor float chamber bowl.

Enough said—we won't spoil the ending for you. So, did they get it fit to set sail? Watch the episode when it broadcasts on the 9th February 2024 on BBC2 at 6.30pm or [watch it now on BBC iPLAYER](#).

Lovely jubbly, you know it makes sense!



Auchterarder's WWII unsung hero

A large audience of 30 members and visitors turned out at [Auchterarder & District Men's Shed](#) to hear a talk by Dr Jim Grant OBE all about Alastair Donald Mackintosh "Sandy" Gunn (27th September 1919 – 6th April 1944)—a WWII unsung hero who was born and raised in Auchterarder.

Sandy lived on Auchterarder High Street in the house called Allandale. Sandy's father was the senior GP in Auchterarder for over 40 years and when war broke out, Sandy joined the RAF as a Scottish Supermarine Spitfire photo reconnaissance pilot.

Stationed at Wick, he set out to photograph the Turpitz German battleship and was shot down over Norway. Although badly burned, he was captured and sent to Stalag Luft 3 in Poland. Gunn took part in the "Great Escape" when 70 prisoners escaped from Stalag Luft III in March 1944 (the Steve McQueen film was based on it) and he was one of the 50 men re-captured—he was captured after three days and subsequently executed by the Gestapo.

Auchterarder and District Rotary Club is now raising funds to construct a memorial garden in Auchterarder near Sandy's former home and the talk was an excellent way to shine a light on Sandy's story.





The Auchterarder ukulelists hit the high notes and headlines

Auchterarder and District Men's Shed's newly-formed ukulele group hit the headlines last month following their inaugural practice session when 12 Shed members stepped up to the plate, some picking up a ukulele for the very first time, to play this fun musical instrument together to entertain themselves and others.

Shed Secretary John Boyd said: "The fame and notoriety of our new ukulele group knows no bounds. We were delighted to be contacted by a reporter and photographer from the Dundee Courier who were very interested to hear all about this new local group and how the Shed is bringing together men from our community who are lonely or feel socially isolated.

"Men's Sheds exist to improve men's health and wellbeing and quality of life and what better way to do that than by having a group who play an instrument and sing together, maybe not terribly well at the moment but we are improving each week and have even received our first request to perform in public. For now, we have turned down the request from St Margaret's community hospital but hopefully we can revisit that offer in the near future.

"Our group was expertly guided through the initial basics by our tutor Flora Mathieson, who has previous experience with several other ukulele groups. Despite the inexperience of many of the Sheddies, by the end of the session we were able to play our very first song. Practice sessions will continue every Tuesday from 2-3pm at Auchterarder Parish Church. The photographs shared clearly show the absolute joy of the members, who are mostly retired and/or widowed, as they show off their ukuleles and enjoy belting out a tune. We did plan to make our own ukuleles however we received funding from the Community Investment Fund for new ones and we are extremely grateful for the assistance from Perth and Kinross Council in awarding us this grant to get us started.

"This new offering at our Shed is a wonderful and fun activity to be a part of and we are encouraging more locals to come along and see for themselves. For those not interested in the ukulele group, they can come for the chat, camaraderie, a cuppa and to make friends whilst others want to tinker in our workshop. We also occasionally have guest speakers and events.

"Make it your New Year resolution to try something new and go along to your [local Shed](#)! You can pop into our Shed and you will be made to feel very welcome and instantly make 20+ new friends. We meet every Tuesday and Thursday 2-4pm in Auchterarder Parish Church Community Centre."





Winter warmers served up at Milngavie and Bearsden Shed

The [Milngavie and Bearsden](#) members have been enjoying warming, comforting and tasty meals together which are made by members who are also sharing their cooking skills with their fellow Shedders.

One week, Sandy W prepared a lunch of mince pie, beans and chips (pictured above) with donated pies from their local butcher and the following week, Brian C served up nutritious and hearty bowls of leek and tattie soup. Brian offered up the opportunity for members

to join him the afternoon before the lunch to learn basic soup making—because, of course, soup is always tastier the next day.

The following Tuesday, Craig A created a firm favourite of mac n cheese with chips all made from scratch (pictured right) and invited members to come along at 11am on the day to help out and learn how to make it. John O’N volunteered to serve up sweet potato and red pepper soup and the Shedders also enjoyed a Christmas Lunch together at Bearsden Golf Club.

Last week, the group devoured a delicious Burns Lunch prepared by Bobby S and Brian C and were treated to some entertainment.



A fitting tribute to former Barrhead Shed Chairman

Former Chairman of [Barrhead Men's Shed](#) Alex Locke sadly passed away from a heart attack last May and his fellow members invited his family members along to the Shed earlier this month to unveil their tribute to him—'The Alex Locke Workshop'.

Alex's son John Locke said: "It was with immense pride

that I took my mother along to Barrhead Men's Shed to raise the curtain to reveal the plaque arranged for by, what I can only describe as, my Dad's great friends at the Shed."

"At the unveiling event, the Shed's founder Alex Storrie told stories of my father's time at the Shed and how he was introduced and became a big presence here."

"As a family, we feel really humbled that the Shedders decided to name the workshop after my Dad and would like to thank them all for being a big part of Alexander the Great's life."



Garnock Valley Shed receives continued support from crematorium

On the 9th January 2024, the newly-appointed Chairman of [Garnock Valley Men's Shed](#) (GVMS) Andy Cooper was presented with a cheque for £550 from Jennifer Hamilton, Manager of Clyde Coast and Garnock Valley Crematorium.

Andy said: "We are delighted to receive this continued support from the crematorium. Back in December 2021, we received a significant donation towards Shed funds from donations left by mourners at services where no formal collection has been requested by the families. The crematorium then match the funds to support local charities close to their heart."

"Following the handover of the cheque, Jenny was given a tour of the Shed and had the opportunity to meet and chat with the members. Jenny, and the company she represents,

are great believers in what Men's Sheds are doing throughout the country."

New Shed Chairman Andy took to his first cheque presentation like a duck to water after taking over the helm from former Chairman David Gardner after six years at the helm (four and a half years as Vice-Chairman and one and a half years as Chair) and will stay on as a Trustee.

Steve Curtis from GVMS said: "David has been instrumental in the development of Men's Sheds across Scotland in his role as Chairman of the national association, the SMSA, and none more so than at his home Shed, GVMS. Having been one of the driving forces behind opening the first Men's Shed in North Ayrshire, and being a very proactive Chairman, David now hands over to Andy."

"There was a great gathering of members to share a brew and a bacon roll or two to say a sincere thank you to David for all that he has done for GVMS."





The foundations are in at Midmar Mens Shed!

Whilst enjoying some valuable fly time, the phone rang to let the Midmar Shedders know that the concrete for their foundations was enroute and would be with them in half an hour and it was time to get on the wellies and grease up the wheelbarrows.

Jim Allan from Midmar Men's Shed said: "Midmar Men's Shed is delighted to announce that work has commenced on the construction of our purpose-built Men's Shed building next to the Midmar Village Hall.

"Through the last half of 2023, groundworks commenced with excavation and levelling and then pouring of foundations for the walls.

"All of this would not have been possible without the fantastic support and generosity of our private and commercial sponsors—of which we are extremely grateful.

"Miller Plant helped us get started—clearing the ground for the foundations and Hunter Construction donated a host of materials. Not only that, Hunter also enlisted the help of Breedon, Jewson and JKR Contractors Ltd to assist us with the supply of blocks, sand and concrete. Truly wonderful support from a group of local companies.

"Our plans for 2024 include proceeding with the staged building as and when funds and resources allow and managing and facilitating further repairs and part renewal of the Comers path footbridge when weather and water levels permit."

Watch this space for further updates, check out their website at www.midmar.uk and follow the Shed on [Facebook](#).





Dunoon Community Shed building secured

Over the course of the last 18 months, [Dunoon Community Shed](#) has been working tirelessly to raise funds for the purchase of the building that it occupies on Hamilton Street.

Previously, the Shed rented one half of the building but more space was much-needed to enable them to grow with their thriving membership. The Shed Trustees are delighted to confirm that the purchase of the whole building was finally completed on the 24th October 2023 and they would like to thank everyone who contributed to this process including the Scottish Land Fund which provided a generous grant from Lottery Funds, Community Enterprise Ltd who helped with the grant application, the Trustees of the Dunoon Ceramics Directors' Pension Fund who supported the charity in the purchase and the people of Dunoon who enthusiastically engaged in the process.

Work has begun on the renovation and refitting of the second unit and the office section of it is already in use. Repairs to the roof are required before fitting out of the main space can commence but the Trustees and members of the Shed are making plans.

A huge job of work has been carried out by Matthew Larmour and his team at [Lamower's Gardening](#) to clear the grounds. One of the ideas being explored is to establish a community garden with raised beds for locals to grow fruit, vegetables and flowers.

The main driver for the purchase of the premises has always been to develop facilities for the community and about a year ago, when the business plan and the application to the Scottish Land Fund was being prepared, an extensive consultation was carried out with Dunoon residents and organisations to find out what potential users would like to see.

A wide range of ideas were put forward including arts and crafts facilities, an exercise space, model railways, book clubs, music facilities, and much more. The Trustees are now returning to these consultees to identify what facilities and activities they would like to proceed with.

To that end, the Shed plans to hold an open day early in 2024 to afford the opportunity for visitors to see the space and talk to the Shed members and Trustees directly. A date will be announced soon, follow and keep an eye on the Shed's updates on [Facebook](#).

Community spirit shines for Carluke Men's Shed

It has been another few busy months for [Carluke Men's Shed](#) after claiming the Silver title for SMSA's 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' 2023 and they have been overwhelmed by community spirit and donations.

CMS was blown away by the support in full force from their community for the awards process and the prizes received—as they narrowly missed first place by only a few votes.

On top of their £300 cash prize from the SMSA—paid from SMSA Shed Membership Fees to give back to Scottish Sheds—Treasurer Tom Kennedy has been receiving all kinds of goodies for the Shed members to enjoy thanks to the SMSA award event sponsors.

Tom collected a hamper from Community Champion Liz Reynolds at [Tesco](#) in Carluke and the £150 of [Scotmid](#) vouchers were raffled off to members at the Christmas party. Scotmid then continued their support for the Shed by also donating sandwiches for CMS events including the Christmas party.

The Shed also received a £75 voucher from [Axminster Tools](#) and are entitled to discounted packages from [David Young Training](#) and [Thyme Accountants](#) to benefit the Shed.

At the end of November, a group of 21 Carluke Shedders including six lady partners boarded two barges on a lovely sunny day—donning their best festive jumpers—to sail on the Union Canal over at Ratho on the outskirts of Edinburgh and had a visit from Santa himself!

This event had to be cancelled last year so the members were well and truly ready to enjoy every second of it.

In December, four Shed members were invited to attend the Carluke High School Christmas Concert and CMS members volunteered to keep drinks topped up and serve lentil soup, turkey and all the trimmings followed by ice-cream to over 60 members of their community at the Motherwell Football Club's Christmas Lunch which took place at Fir Park Stadium.

The Shed also held their second Christmas party on the 15th December 2023 at Carluke Leisure Centre with 42 people in attendance entertained by Stonehouse Men's Shed's band 'Simply Shed'.

CMS received support for the event from their local Scotmid store in Law village when they were gifted several baskets of soft drinks to enjoy at the party and Ramsay of Carluke supplied delicious Scotch pies.

In mid-December, the Shed was donated a number of Winter Wizard shakers from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in the Lanarkshire area to keep the Shed and surrounding area safe for the members and local community to use in adverse weather conditions.

On returning in 2024, the Shed was quick to start working on proposals to build a boat and a sandpit for the young pupils at the local High Mill Primary School to replace their irreparable kit in the playground. The school will purchase the materials required for the design and the Shedders will provide the labour. CMS also gathered for another enjoyable Burns Night on the 26th January at Carluke Golf Club with 35 members and their partners in attendance.

The Shed has many plans for the year ahead including a return visit to the local women's guild and another bucket collection at Fir Park Stadium, both in February.



Pictured (top to bottom): Tom Kennedy at the Scotmid Co-op in Law; Tom collecting goodies for the members at Tesco Carluke; CMS Members on the barge; Motherwell FC Christmas lunch; and 'Simply Shed' performing at the CMS Christmas party.



Biggar and District Men's Shed's request to purchase former school

Biggar and District Men's Shed submitted an asset transfer request to South Lanarkshire Council last month to purchase and transform the former Walston Primary School which they are currently leasing.

In October 2021, the Shed was granted a ten-year lease from the local authority and have since carried out substantial repair works on the building which now boasts a large well-equipped workshop and popular garden and social area for members to undertake their array of activities and hobbies.

Progress has been slowed however due to the poor condition of the building, mainly dampness and the floors in the rear extension now being in a dangerous condition. Having this area improved would enable them to further develop their workshop as well as provide a space to host events and generate income for the Shed. The Shed currently has only one usable toilet which is not large enough to accommodate wheelchair access and the kitchen facilities are poor. Purchasing the property would enable the Shed to really make the space their own, fundraise and carry out works to maximise its full potential and adapt it to meet the needs of current and new members with full accessibility for all. The asset request is currently at the community consultation stage with a decision expected late May 2024. In the meantime, here is a round-up of what has been happening at Biggar and District Men's Shed:

- The Shed's additional Monday 10am to 4pm opening trial is continuing
- A giant wooden toadstool chair and toy train repaired and returned to Biggar Primary School
- The Shed received a Defibrillator Awareness/Cardiac Arrest Response Seminar from the Community Heartbeat Trust charity (pictured below) on how to use their newly-installed Automated External Defibrillator (AED)
- Another garage of tools have been donated to the BDMS to check out/reuse
- Strengthening of the workshop (old classroom) floors are well underway. 50% plated with the aim of 100% shortly and then just to be covered with non-slip paint
- Individual wood lathe work classes have started
- The auto watering polytunnel irrigation system will be progressed once the weather improves
- The Shed was contacted by S3 pupils from Biggar High School to participate with them in the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) Scotland
- The Shed's 3D-printed fidget widgets have been distributed to third parties as therapeutic gadgets. Additional batches are in progress
- Member Stuart McKay delivered a well-received talk to Biggar U3A about the Men's Shed Movement and Biggar Shed. The presentation is now to be turned into an induction presentation for new and potential members.



Castle Douglas Men Shed's growth following relocation

Castle Douglas Men's Shed has been steadily growing in popularity since its move just over a year ago.

Founding member James Robertson said: "We moved from small beginnings to our new larger premises and are delighted to share that membership has grown impressively with the space.

"Before we moved, we had up to ten members attending, now we have 35+ members with around 20 coming along regularly on Wednesdays and a few coming in on other days to do their own thing. Another contributing factor to our growth has been through the launch of our own [Facebook](#) group which already has 180+ members and is raising our profile with the local community and become a place to sell our items.

"In our new Shed, while one chap fixes old bikes in one space, another will be turning items on the wood lathe and some are busy making cutting boards and special flower planters and a team are making bird nesting boxes, bird feeding tables and squirrel feeders (pictured right). One member Alistair, on his first attempt with the wood lathe made a beautiful and simple wooden shallow dish with a small foot (pictured right) with a little help from a friend.

"During the past summer, a team renewed styles down by the river for the angling association, later on some men painted the finger post signs in town, a task long overdue, and it is now all looking super.

"In November, Andrew Best (pictured bottom right) of the Southwest Scotland Grassland Society visited the Shed and asked if we could restore their treasured rose bowl trophy by making a plinth to replace the original. We turned a new one from a nice piece of oak and was delighted when he collected it and left a kind donation towards our funds.

"Membership is growing every week and we are receiving more and more support from the community including donations of wood and pallets. A very interesting donation came when our local fire brigade volunteers approached us with the idea of taking, restoring and caring for a 160-year-old beautiful fire engine (pictured below left) built and bought for the princely sum of £145 by Castle Douglas Burgh Fire Brigade between 1851 and 1866. Some funding will be required for a couple of specialist jobs but it will certainly make a very interesting project for our members.

"Men enjoy coming along to join in with the happy bunch where everyone is welcome, providing they are willing to get on with others. Our rules are simple and straight forward and each new member is read the rules on entry. Our Shed is a place where men enjoy the company along with the tea breaks. Exciting times are ahead."

[Castle Douglas Men's Shed](#) on 1/2 Carlingwark Street is open on Wednesday afternoons from 1-4pm.



It's all go at Ellon Men's Shed...

With a busy festive period now done and dusted at [Ellon Men's Shed](#), the members are approaching the new year with more ambitious plans whilst always prioritising a bit of banter and downtime at the Shed.

Andy Leonard from Ellon Men's Shed said: "It has been an extremely busy time of late—with wooden Santas and reindeers coming out of our ears—as our activities were slightly dominated with creating Christmas items to sell at our pre-Christmas open day and in Annie's Tearoom but this has really boosted our funds.

"The open day took place on Saturday 2nd December 2023 and was a great success. The event afforded the opportunity for us to hold a craft show and sale of tools, artwork and handmade items as well as offer CNC router demonstrations, a tour of the facilities and our model railway as well as offer food and refreshments to our guests.

"We continue to have items for sale or by order at Annie's Tearoom including house signs bespoke plaques, chopping boards etc. all made on our CNC machine.

"In November, we held another popular and fun fundraising quiz at Ellon Golf Club. A good time was had by all, with 21 teams competing and we raised £700 towards our running costs and to buy supplies to support our activities.

"In December, we were also preparing for and running a Men's Shed Winter Café which is open to all adults and began on the 6th December 2023. It will run on alternate Wednesdays from 11am-3pm throughout the winter months.

"The café is a great new initiative for us—a free drop-in for our community offering a welcoming and friendly space to socialise and grab a cuppa, read the paper, use the computers and/or play games."



"We are also currently running a training programme for men wanting to use the CNC router which is progressing extremely well and we now also have a 3D printer which is proving very useful for repairing equipment, making decorative and other handy items.

"We were delighted to receive £500 from Age Scotland's Wee Grant scheme to help supply hard wood, metal (for metal forming) and workshop supplies and we continue to refurbish garden furniture and we are restoring other more unusual items including an antique children's metal pedal car.

"We receive a good number of bikes which we repair and sell for a modest price. We are often asked to make bespoke items for people. One such item recently was a wooden replica of a curling stone to be used as a presentation piece.

"The IT training initiative in conjunction with Aberdeenshire, Community Learning and Development (CLD) is proving to be very popular. The drop-in sessions take place every Thursdays from 1.00-2.30pm to help local people improve their computing skills. Attendees can bring along their own electronic device (laptop, tablets, Ipad or smartphone) or use the computers available in the common area.

"We are open for new members from all walks of life to join the Shed no matter what their interests. We look forward to welcoming new people who want to socialise, play cards, browse the internet, read a book and those who want to get stuck into the workshop or garden or even start up a new activity at our Shed."

Gala Men's Shed Chairman goes walkabout

Whilst on his travels visiting relatives in Perth, Australia, the Chairman of the [Gala Men's Shed](#) just had to get his 'Shed fix'.

The [Melville Community Men's Shed Inc.](#) was delighted to welcome John through their doors. This is the second Men's Shed that John (pictured on the right of the photo) has visited with only another 28 to go in the Perth area!

It's hard work but somebody's gotta do it.





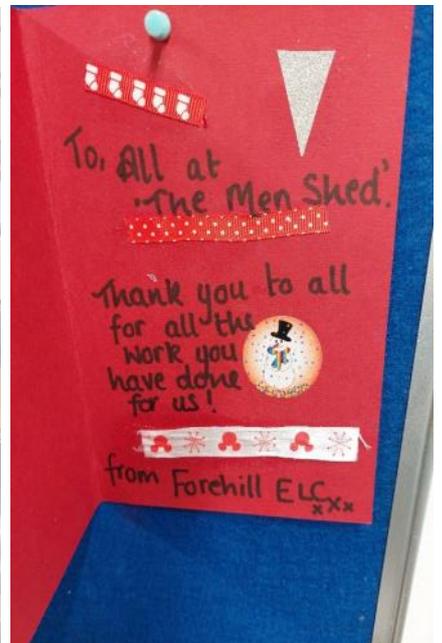
Bridge of Don Shedders re-live their childhoods

Over the festive period, four members from [Bridge of Don and District Men's Shed](#)—Sandy, Ian, Kenny and Shed artist Alex—had an absolute ball creating fun santa and elf face-in-the-hole boards and a wooden sleigh and reindeer which proved a big hit with the local community and nurseries.

Gary McLeod from Bridge of Don Men's Shed said: "The members have enjoyed making the boards along with all of our popular Christmas wares which are sold from our Shed.

"The boards were made available at many of our community events including an appearance at our monthly Farmers' Market in December where not only did the children and parents have a great time, the members did too. It was great to see members having fun reliving nostalgic childhood memories.

"The boards' last appearance for the festive period took place at Forehill School Nursery, situated right next to our Shed, for their annual Christmas party. They were a great success with the children and we have already been asked to return with them again next year."



Kinlochleven Men's Shed - 'Engaging Community'

Concerned with the increasing number of men in South Lochaber suffering from loneliness, isolation and mental health issues, a small group of Kinlochleven guys got together to look at ways they could change the situation. Based on the SMSA model, they sought to provide a building for local men to meet and pursue recreational and social activities. This was achieved with local support and [Kinlochleven Men's Shed](#) officially opened in December 2022. Initially, activities focussed on Shed renovation but they have now moved on to their next mission to 'Engage the Community.'

Trustee Donald Davidson said: "From the word go, we aimed to gain support from local charitable organisations who were keen to partner up with us and shared our goal. Although we initially struggled to get support, we have been pleasantly surprised with the number of requests to work with us over the last year. Our membership has also grown to ten active members who are committed to several community projects involving adults and young people.

"We were approached by the local secondary school asking us to help pupils who are studying for a '[John Muir Award](#)' which encourages people of all backgrounds to connect with the environment to enjoy and care for wild places.

"Following a visit from the teacher to explain the brief, we have committed to making a series of wooden structures to house birds, bats, insects, and butterflies. In addition, they also required bird and squirrel feeders. Our members will construct the items, then dismantle them into flat packs and deliver them to the school. The pupils will then assemble their chosen item, ready for siting in the community.

"The pupils have since visited our workshop facilities to tell us all about the project and this provided a great opportunity for us to explain what the Shed is all about and connect with the next generation.

"Then, we heard that parents in the village had nowhere to sit when their kids are using the play areas. We needed to produce a plan to resolve the issue.

"After first seeking advice from the Chairman of the Kinlochleven Community Benefits Trust, we then applied for and received funding for the cost of new timber and materials to construct five benches to position around the village.



"This model of circulating resources enables the community to provide the funds; those funds enable construction of the benches; this meets the Shed's objectives to provide projects for isolated men to re-engage with community; and the people in the community benefit from the result."

Shed Secretary Tony Walters added: "We have received so much help and support from funders, including several grants through the Co-op Local Community Fund. The SMSA was also able to help us overcome the hurdles most groups experience during the start-up period. As well as providing valuable support and experience, they helped us with £1,500 which enabled us to fund vital equipment and construction materials to get the Shed ready to open. And it's not just funding that's important, we have also received specialist help and advice from individuals to help us get started.

"We recently had the pleasure of donating the first of our community benches to The Glencoe Outdoor Centre (pictured below). The Centre director provided valuable support to us relating to charity application and financial issues during our start up, for which we were very grateful. The bench will be used by youngsters attending outdoor adventure courses throughout the coming year."

"We are now involved in practical and social activities that affect the community. We receive invites to community meetings because the opinions of the Men's Shed are valued when considering planning etc. There are so many great initiatives taking place at the Shed, but we must admit, some days there isn't a lot of work gets done and we just sit down and put the world to rights and have some great banter over several cups of tea.

"The future looks bright for our Shed—we have so many ambitious plans including opening a repair centre by Spring 2024. We urge others to head to their Shed to be a part of something pretty special."

The Shed, based at the end of Riverside Road in Kinlochleven, is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am and on Wednesdays, 2-4pm. Call in and say hello, you will be made very welcome.

A PERSONAL STORY



Picture courtesy of the Ross-shire Journal

George Garscadden, one of the founding members and a Trustee of Dingwall Men's Shed, sadly passed away peacefully at the age of 74 in the care of the Highland Hospice in Inverness on the 8th November 2023 after losing his battle with cancer.

It was George's dying wish for his story to be shared at his funeral and with others. Most importantly, he wished to reflect on the day that changed his life forever—UK's deadliest terror attack, the Lockerbie bombing which claimed the lives of the 259 passengers and crew on board the Boeing 747's Pan American flight 103—which had set off from London and was bound for New York—in addition to 11 Lockerbie residents.

Born in Glasgow, the eldest of Geordy and Peggy Garscadden's nine children, George spent time in Ardrossan before moving to Lockerbie.

There were two George Garscaddens, the man that existed before the Lockerbie incident on the 21st December 1988 and the other, who went on to be influential in setting up Dingwall Men's Shed to benefit the

health and wellbeing of the men in his community.

On hearing an explosion, George immediately sprang into action to help. He optimistically grabbed a hot flask and some biscuits only to be met with the horror that had unfolded. On that fateful day and the days that followed, George volunteered to help with the unthinkable task of moving the bodies of the victims to cold storage and the attempts to rectify the devastation that fell on their small town in Dumfries and Galloway.

George and his family moved to Dingwall in 1992 for him to begin a new job as a Food Hygiene Inspector. George had a full and varied life, enjoying his career, travel and hobbies including mountaineering, sailing, gardening, curling and supporting Ross County FC. He was also a founding member of the East Kilbride Mountaineering Club and a community councillor.

George also took up Tai Chi, yoga and spent hours walking with his beloved dog, Blue in the great outdoors on his quest for inner peace. After learning about the Men's Sheds Movement,

George worked alongside Founder Andy Foley from the very early days to get Dingwall Men's Shed up and running. Following his own experience and knowing the importance and benefits of men gathering to open up and talk, he was a huge advocate for Men's Sheds being set up in communities.

His only child and the apple of his eye Fiona Garscadden (pictured below) shared with the SMSA: "In June 2022, Dad was diagnosed with a slow-growing lymphoma. At Christmas 2022, he received an optimistic prognosis and we were delighted but then only a few months later, he started experiencing severe back pain.

Continued on next page...



A PERSONAL STORY (CONTINUED)



Picture courtesy of the Ross-shire Journal

...continued from previous page

“Right up until my father’s final moments, he was always thinking about the tragic events that occurred in December 1988. While he was in the hospice he wanted his partner, Mary (pictured with George below), to write everything down to record his memories. He never wanted anyone to forget the people who died and remembered every single detail of what happened to him 35 years ago.

“He changed that day in Lockerbie and the Shed was a safe place for him to work through the things he had seen and heard. It was everything for him to leave a legacy of sharing the reality of what happened at Lockerbie and being an instrumental part of creating this space for other men to come together shoulder-to-shoulder.”

Dingwall Men’s Shed Chairman Brian Liddle said: “George had a fantastic sense of humour and was extremely well-respected by everyone at the Shed and we are all saddened by his loss.



“He was always enthusiastic and a team player who was interested in every aspect of the Shed. He was especially keen on the gardening side and used his experience to help others in the polytunnel. He was also an avid collector of tools.

“Personally, I will really miss attending the games at Ross County with him. He was just a fantastic bloke to be around—always smiling, even through his diagnosis. He tackled his troubles bravely and was an inspiration to others. He will be sorely missed at the Shed.”

Fiona added: “The Shed was extremely important to him. He wanted it to be there for many generations to come. He always talked about how he wanted the Shed to be known for being fully inclusive—for everybody, no matter what their background, interests or struggles.

“He felt strongly about it not just being a place for those interested in woodwork and that was part of the reason he set up the polytunnel at the Shed. He was a keen gardener and loved growing produce, the excess of which was donated to the local community fridge.

“He enjoyed working with the local nursery children (main photo above) and sharing his skills and experience with others. He was also a dab hand at making Christmas decorations - he liked to try out every opportunity that presented itself to him and live life to the full.

“Lots of Dad’s tools and gardening equipment will be donated to the Shed and I have found immense comfort in knowing how loved and well-respected he was amongst his fellow Sheddors and everyone who knew him.”

[Click here to read the words of George Garscadden which was distributed at his funeral service.](#)

SHED-TO-SHED VISITS



Fraserburgh Shedders' coach trip to visit and learn from Nairn Men's Shed

Following many years of uncertainty, [Fraserburgh & District Men's Shed's](#) future now looks bright with their new permanent base to call home at the former Brethren Hall on Albert Street. With their larger premises offering so much potential to its members, the Shedders embarked on a Shed-to-Shed visit—fully funded by the Scottish Community Alliance—to visit [Nairn Men's Shed](#) with three very important learning outcomes on the agenda.

Shed Secretary Sandra Marshall said: "During our journey to establish Fraserburgh & District Men's Shed, we have become close friends with the Nairn Men's Shed members. Throughout the pandemic, regular Zoom meetings kept us motivated to carry on with our vision of one day having a space of our own. Now that we can move around and socialise again it is good to get out and meet other Sheds. Last summer, a group of Nairn Shedders came to visit us at our previous premises, and I think it's fair to say a good time was had by all.

"The distance between us is just too far to pop in so to enable a large group of us to maximise the potential of a visit to Nairn, and as members of the SMSA, we were eligible to apply for a grant through the [Scottish Community Alliance's Community Learning Exchange](#) to pay for the hire of a coach to take us there and back on the 21st November 2023. It was a quick and simple process with our proposal being firstly endorsed by the SMSA and then sent through to the Scottish Community Alliance who granted the full amount required, £749.25.

"Our three learning outcomes for the visit were – workshop protocols, workshop layout, and energy savings. In terms of workshop protocols, we were

interested in how Nairn uses a booking system to allocate space for members who wish to use the workshop. As their workshop is away from the social area, a booking method ensures that supervision is in place and the space doesn't get crowded. It also makes sure that the space and machinery are used efficiently and members are focused on the work they are doing. It is something that we will definitely be considering for our Shed.

"With workshop layout, we are currently in the process of planning a bespoke building for our workroom and tool store and we went to Nairn to help us visualise our final layout. We saw that Nairn makes good use of space and the tools are stored and easily accessible when needed. With our third outcome, energy savings, we were interested in Nairn's lowered ceiling project because our social area is quite large and has a very high ceiling. We are still evaluating our energy costs and looking at whether lowering the ceiling would be a cost-effective option. We will keep in touch with Nairn on this project to see how it has worked for them.

"We left Fraserburgh at 9.30am and arrived in Nairn at 12.30pm after stopping for breakfast along the way. The Nairn members made us feel very welcome and they proudly showed us their facilities and discussed their future plans. We had a fantastic lunch which was much appreciated – especially the homemade shortbread! We arrived back in Fraserburgh around 4.30pm and everyone agreed that the experience was extremely enjoyable and productive.

"The visit provided us with valuable insights into workshop protocols, layout, and energy-saving initiatives. We are grateful for the warm hospitality and their willingness to share their experiences with us. The knowledge gained will undoubtedly contribute to the success of Fraserburgh & District Men's Shed."

The Scottish Community Alliance's Community Learning Exchange is an opportunity for Sheds that are members of the SMSA to visit fellow Sheds or community groups and learn from their experience. The programme funds 100% of travel and subsistence expenses (up to £750) including a fee for the host organisation that you want to visit. Funding is also available to develop and deliver a virtual learning experience. Hundreds of communities have already taken advantage of this fantastic opportunity. [Click here to find out more.](#)

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SHED PROJECTS



Can't source a replacement part? That's never an issue for a Shedder!

The metalwork bandsaw at [Milngavie and Bearsden Men's Shed](#) had a broken blade guide and the Shed was unable to source a replacement.

Step forward Shed member Kenny who utilised his metalwork skills to manufacture the new part.

Well done Kenny!



Seated exercise and mindfulness at Dunfermline Men's Shed

Dunfermline Men's Shed's members had a great session on mindfulness and seated exercise from [Alice Rainbow Yoga](#) in the comfort of the Shed.

This type of exercise—focussing on movement, breathing and meditation—aims to promote relaxation, reduce stress and improve mental clarity.

"Our meeting room has never been so peaceful and quiet despite every seat being taken!"

Has your Shed delivered exercise and/or mindfulness classes in your Shed to your members? If so, we would love to hear more, please contact SMSA's Communications & PR Officer, Michelle Wibrew at comms@scottishmsa.org.uk



Singing in the Shed

[The Inverclyde Shed](#) has secured funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to enable them to offer a series of songwriting workshops to its members with musician [Yvonne Lyon](#) (pictured below left) leading on songwriting, recording and arranging.

Yvonne has been writing songs professionally for over 20 years and has shared the stage with the likes of Beth Nielsen Chapman, Dougie MacLean, Eddi Reader and Boo Hewardine to name but a few.

Bruce Newlands from The Inverclyde Shed said: "Yvonne is considered one of the UK's brightest and best singer/songwriters—this is something pretty special for our members."

Earlier this month, the Shed also launched a new gathering for its musical members interested in playing and learning the Ukulele in addition to their popular bass guitar club. [Click here](#) to check out and sing-along to the Shed's bass guitar club's chance meeting with the song writing club last month.



SHED PROJECTS

Cutty Sark project at Stonehaven Men's Shed

This Cutty Sark build was completed by Stonehaven Shedder Mike McNally whose patience knows no bounds!

The Cutty Sark, a British clipper ship, was built on the River Leven, Dumbarton, Scotland back in 1869 and this model was passed to [Stonehaven & District Men's Shed](#) by local citizen Bill Wiseley. Bill had assembled the main hull but unfortunately, due to arthritis, he could not complete the main deck and the rigging.

Shedder Mike McNally took up the challenge. Mike said: "The deck completion was straightforward but the rigging and fitting of the sails proved to be a mammoth task.

"This was the first serious rigging that I had attempted and I learned that it was better to work from the inside out, otherwise you can unravel the work already complete. The task took five months to complete and the finished model has now been kindly gifted by the Wiseley family to the Shed where it will take pride of place in our social area."

[Hear all about Stonehaven Shed's other news and projects in their latest audio newsletter here.](#)



The Inverclyde Soup Shed

[The Inverclyde Soup Shed](#) met over the festive period to create and sample delights including pumpkin and kale creations including pumpkin bread and a spiced smoothie, a kale stem humous and different pumpkin soups ranging from traditional, spicy, thai and coconut.

They also tackled the 'marmite' vegetable—brussels sprouts and tried boiling, grilling, roasting and using as much of the stalk and leaves as possible so nothing from their community garden goes to waste.



Milngavie and Bearsden Shedder is a cut above the rest!

[Milngavie and Bearsden](#) Shedder Sandy demonstrates his razor-sharp hairdressing skills on fellow member Alan!

'WHAT'S COOKING?'



Age Scotland launches guide to help older people navigate the cost of living crisis

The cost of living crisis is forcing many older people to make incredibly difficult financial choices between powering and heating their homes and the food they can afford to buy.

Age Scotland's **Big Survey 2023** really highlights the stark reality and toll that the cost of living crisis has taken on older people's financial and physical wellbeing. The charity's latest research reveals that 43% of over 50s in Scotland are cutting back on food spending, while 1 in 10 pensioners are skipping meals and 18% eating less healthily due to financial pressures.

In response, Age Scotland has produced a **free guide** packed with advice on energy bills, tips on how to shop smart and eat well when food prices bite, recipes from top Scottish chefs, including Tom Kitchin and Tony Singh (below) and where to go for help.

Age Scotland marked the launch with a demonstration of cost-effective recipes, kindly hosted by chef Fiona Burrell at Edinburgh's New Town Cookery School. [Click here to download Age Scotland's 'Help with the Cost of Living' Guide \(PDF, 3MB\)](#)



Cooking on a tight budget



Tom Kitchin
Scottish Chef and owner of Michelin starred restaurant

Smoked Salmon, pea & red onion frittata

Everyone seems to enjoy this quick and easy dish, says Tom. It tastes just as good when it is cold the next day. Smoked salmon and dill give the frittata distinctive flavours, but you can adapt the recipe to use tinned fish, showcase seasonal vegetables or use up whatever vegetables you have in the fridge or the freezer – peas and broad beans are used in this recipe, but you can add asparagus, or broccoli etc. Feel free to vary the herbs and cheese too. Have fun creating your own versions!

Serves 4

Ingredients

150g smoked salmon
2 red onions, peeled
1 courgette
½ large red pepper, cored and deseeded
100g freshly podded peas or broad beans
8 free-range eggs
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon chopped dill
100g cheddar, grated
Olive oil for cooking
Snipped chives to finish

Method

- 1 Heat the oven to 160°C / Gas 2-3. Cut the smoked salmon into strips. Cut the red onions, courgette, and red pepper into small, even-sized dice.
- 2 Add the peas or broad beans to a pan of boiling salted water and blanch for a couple of minutes, then drain and refresh in cold water; drain and pat dry.
- 3 In a large bowl, beat the eggs with a fork until lightly foamy. Season with salt and pepper and then add the peas or broad beans, chopped dill, smoked salmon and grated cheese.
- 4 Heat a little olive oil in a non-stick (or well-seasoned) overproof frying pan, about 23cm in diameter, over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook gently for 2-3 minutes to soften slightly, then add the courgette and red pepper and cook together for 2-3 minutes.
- 5 Pour the egg mixture over the vegetables in the pan and cook over a low heat for 3-4 minutes. Now transfer the frying pan to the oven and cook for 6-8 minutes until the egg is set and golden on the surface.
- 6 Sprinkle the frittata with snipped chives, cut into portions and serve with a salad.

Time: 25 mins approx.

Average cost: £6 approx.



Tony Singh
Scottish celebrity chef and restaurateur

Spiced tomato sauce recipe

This recipe is versatile and full of healthy nutrients, like lycopene, carotenoids, and polyphenols. It is also gluten-free and dairy-free, making it vegan-friendly, says Tony. It can be poured over different dishes throughout the week: chicken, rice and pasta.

Ingredients

500g of tomatoes, roughly chopped
1 red onion, finely chopped
8x garlic cloves, chopped
1 thumb size bit of fresh ginger, peeled and chopped
2 teaspoons garam masala
¼ teaspoon turmeric powder
½ teaspoon chilli powder
½ stick of cinnamon
2 sprigs of fresh thyme leaves
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Canned coconut milk
2 tablespoons coconut oil

Method

- 1 Put a medium saucepan onto a medium flame and add the coconut oil
- 2 When the coconut oil is hot, fry off the cinnamon stick and thyme until fragrant
- 3 Then fry off the onions
- 4 Once golden brown, add the garlic and ginger and fry for one minute
- 5 Then add the dry spices and chopped tomatoes with half a pint of water
- 6 Bring to the boil, then turn the flame down to let simmer
- 7 Cook without a lid until the sauce is very thick, stirring occasionally
- 8 Now add the coconut milk and bring to boil
- 9 Taste and season with salt and pepper

Time: 30 mins approx

Average cost: £4 approx

OPPORTUNITIES



Guitar Landfill Rescue Programme

It is crazy to think that anyone would ever throw away a guitar but this is unfortunately happening all over but social enterprise [12 Guitars](#) has cemented a strategic partnership to provide an eco-friendly solution that is also changing lives.

12 Guitars has teamed up with waste recycling company, [WEEE Solutions](#) in Linwood, who kindly collects the discarded guitars they find in communities across Scotland and North England, saving them from landfill, and passes them to the team for refurbishment.

Billy O'Hara from WEEE Solutions saw guitar after guitar being picked up from council sites and skips and thought that there must be a charity out there that could put these to good use. Billy said: "Most of the guitars found are of a reasonable standard—they are not the top end but once refurbished, they could be a guitar for life."

"It was heart-wrenching to see guitars going to landfill so, I researched the charities out there and quickly got in touch with 12 Guitars, and they really ran with the ball after that."

"We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with 12 Guitars and see these items go to people to give them a wee start—an opportunity they may not have had otherwise without this scheme."

Gerry Thorogood from 12 Guitars said: "This partnership is helping to save guitars from the scrap heap and bring them back to life for others to enjoy for years to come."

"We regularly come along to WEEE solution to collect the latest batch of guitars, refurbish them and then rehome them in communities across Scotland."

"Our ethos is reuse, recycle, upcycle and through this work we can see the wonderful life-changing benefits a guitar can bring to some people's lives."

"Our tech team, guitar technician and apprentice overhaul and refurbish the guitars ready to donate to young kids in schools and youth groups and adults. Huge recognition and a massive thank you must go to our volunteer Billy who started this all up and continues to make it work month after month and to John Gregson and his team at WEEE Solutions for this collaboration."

"Donations like these allow us to continue on its mission to create opportunities, deliver new skills and build confidence in others."

Would your Men's Shed be interested in working with 12 Guitars to refurbish guitars?



[Click here to express an interest.](#)

Research into frailty and fear of falling in over 65's

A team from the University of Edinburgh and NHS Tayside are investigating the links between frailty, fear of falling, psychological flexibility and activity restriction in adults aged 65 and older.

They are inviting people to take part in an online survey about these topics which will take around 20 minutes (you do not need to be experiencing frailty or have a fear of falling to take part).

As the population is ageing, further understanding of the psychological influences that are related to activity restriction and falls could be important for future falls prevention interventions which mostly recommend physical rather than psychological changes a person can make.

This is important because falls represent a significant health and wellbeing risk for older people and previous research has found that fear of falling can actually increase the risk of having a fall!

If you would like to take part, [please click here](#). Alternatively, you can scan the QR code to take you to the survey.



If you have any questions about the research, please email [Mairi Lawson](#), Trainee Clinical Psychologist.

The SMSA acknowledges and expresses our sincere thanks to our current partners and funders for their support for the development and growth of the Men's Shed Movement in Scotland:



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 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

