

# THE SCOTTISH SHEDDER


THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SMSA

Edition 41 | December 2024



SCOTLAND'S LARGEST  
MEN'S HEALTH & WELLBEING CHARITY

*In Scotland, For Scotland*



**'SHED IN THE SPOTLIGHT'**  
Midmar Shedders lay foundations  
together for permanent new home

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Support the Men's Sheds Movement in Scotland, follow the SMSA at:



## SEASON'S GREETING FROM ALL AT THE SMSA

SMSA Shedquarters will close for the festive period on Friday 20th December 2024 and re-open on Monday 6th January 2025

We look forward to working with you all in 2025!



*The SMSA Team—Jason, Michelle, Tim, Stewart, Ross, Sue and our Trustees —wish all of our members, staff, trustees and supporters of the SMSA and the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement a Shed-tastic Christmas*

We wish to take this opportunity to recognise our partners and funders for supporting us and we look forward to working with you all in 2025

**Happy Holidays. Have a fantastic time!**

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 4,200 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 (February 2025) Friday 14th February 2025. 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](mailto: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](http://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

Ho ho ho, it's that time of year already! Although we do hear a lot of belly laughs throughout the whole year—every day is Christmas abounding with unexpected gifts to brighten your lives—that's a Scottish Men's Shed for you.

As always, lots of stuff going on in the Association and in the Scottish Men's Shed Movement and its never a dull day I can tell you.

Some great news for us with our funding challenges is that the Bank of Scotland Foundation decided to fund us for a second year to continue our work which was a most welcome reprieve from some quite fraught times we have faced over the year. See [page 9](#) for more info.

The first SMSA Shed Open Doors Day initiative marking International Men's Day was a great success from the feedback we have received so well done to all those Sheds who managed to get involved. Hopefully next year more of you will take the opportunity to showcase your Shed to your community and attract new members.

Congratulations to our winner of the Open Doors Giveaway—a £50 voucher to Joe Greenhorn from Rosyth Men's Shed. The voucher was donated by a new supporter of the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement, TotalEnergies.

We received an invitation from Impact Funding, who handles the Social Isolation and Loneliness Fund for Scottish Government (which funds our SMSA Highland Officer post), to showcase one of our animations on International Men's Day and of course we try to never miss an opportunity to promote the movement – another national PR success story.

We have also submitted an awareness-raising article on the benefits of Sheds for the first 2025 issue of the magazine of The Retired Police Officers Association Scotland. We are always trying to reach as many men as possible and keep building the movement.

I received a lovely surprise at our AGM in October which was a beautiful oak plaque with deer antlers, metal studs and pyrography created by Jim

Paterson of Aberchirder & District Men's Shed celebrating my founding of the SMSA ten years ago. Thank you Jim for your thoughtfulness, kindness and the incredible journey Sheds have taken us on over the many years.

I had a quick run up the road to Banff, Macduff and District Men's Shed to take them the SMSA Scottish Men's Shed of the Year target trophy for a consecutive year which is a first for a Shed to win it twice in a row. We had a full house of proud Sheddors, local Councillors, local business supporters and several young people from the local school who had chosen the Shed as their choice for the Youth Philanthropy Initiative.

Fantastic to see our youth getting behind their local Shed and they interviewed the Shed Chairman and myself to use for their presentation later in the school term. We wish them the best of luck and if they win the Shed will receive the £3,000 prize. The Shed also received recognition from Scottish Parliament for winning the award second year in a row. Let's keep our MSP's in the loop with your local Shed – invite them to visit and become the champions we need to make this Movement reach its full potential with their financial support – we can't do it without you.

Talking of financial support, did you know that when you sell items on Ebay that the SMSA could also benefit too? You can [add our charity](#) and pick your donation percentage before finalising your listing. Thank you to all our supporters who have been doing this.

The Men's Shed Movement has had an interesting set of promotions recently which started out with the *Men Don't Talk* play (which we have been supporting since 2020). This year, they took the very successful play with three great actors and a Men's Shed set on tour. I was part of the special presentation of the play held in the Scottish Parliament for the first time and on the Q&A panel afterwards with Paul McLennan MSP representing Equalities Minister Ms Kaukab Stewart and hosted by Craig Hoy MSP.

When the show came to Banchory in Aberdeenshire, I also hosted the Q&A with the actors with some great conversations between the audience and the four of us. A great success all round and I hear that they are hoping to get more funding to take it to the areas they couldn't cover this year. Make sure you don't miss it in 2025.

Hot on its heels was the fantastic film

by the young Scottish Bafta award-winning film maker Duncan Cowles called *Silent Men* which debuted also on International Men's Day across Scotland. Our Chairman David Gardner handled the Q&A session in Glasgow, Allan Hogg, Chairman of GEMS did Montrose and I did Edinburgh and a few days later I was back at The Barn in Banchory with Duncan.

Andy's Man Club also supported the launch and I am hoping that our two associations can work much closer together in the future. This is a film which is made in Scotland and deals with the universal struggles of men and their emotions.

I am trying to see if we can arrange a screening or DVD's in 2025 for our Shed members. However, I believe it's not only a film for the men of the Sheds but for all the people of Scotland, the whole family to be able to identify with the struggles particularly it seems the Scottish culture with the masculine emotional conformity of the 'Strong and Silent' type man.

Funny, deep, challenging and enlightening – if it shows in a community or art cinema near you – don't miss it and bring along friends and family, it might change your life or the life of someone you know and let you understand those around you much better – highly recommended.

We again had deep discussions with the audience afterwards and in one of the performances I attended, two different 14-year-old boys were with their parents and everybody else from age 20 up. The boys chatted to Duncan afterwards and asked if the film could be shown in their schools.

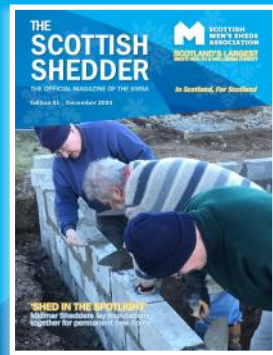
A new film initiative which came out of these conversations we hope to support with Duncan and Education Scotland in the new year is to create a series of 'chapters' around certain topics the film explores which teachers can use in the classroom to discuss these issues we face in our society. Groundbreaking stuff – but then that's what we do best in the Scottish Men's Sheds Movement.... isn't it.

So as you can see the cogs of the SMSA and the movement never stop turning, so I wish you all Shedloads of fun and laughter over the festive season and look forward to working with you all in 2025!

**Jason Schroeder**  
SMSA CEO

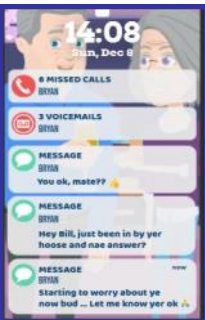


Figures as at end of November 2024



## PRINT A HARD COPY OF THE SCOTTISH SHEDDER MAGAZINE FOR YOUR SHED'S SOCIAL AREA

The SMSA recommends that Scottish Men's Sheds have a hard copy of The Scottish Shedder magazine available in your social areas for members, that are not online, to read in the Shed and also have a library of past issues.



## New 'Checking in' Text Chat Animation from the SMSA

*All year round—not just at this time of year—we need to make time to check in on our friends, family, neighbours and members of our communities. Let's change the narrative—no matter how busy life gets, let's start conversations even just to say 'hey, how's things?', it could even save a life!*

The [under-four-minute animation](#) from the SMSA aims to get people to think about someone they have not spoke to or heard from for a while. Start a conversation with those around you and make sure they are ok. Many of us often say we are too busy, but taking the time to check in and even make plans to meet up in person soon, once things die down, can be a lifeline to many.

The text chat animation between two men, one of which has been feeling really low lately, bored and isolated in early retirement, and his concerned friend who is trying to get a hold of him and starts thinking the worst. Thankfully, the conversation takes us on a new path as his pal is excited to share that he has found support in his local Men's Shed and life is changing for the better.

But it could have easily gone down another dark path and highlights that every single conversation we have—no matter how small—can contribute to a culture of offering support, being mindful, openness and understanding to those around us whilst also improving our own lives at the same time.



## Has your Shed got what it takes?

**Free Registration for Scottish Men's Sheds for the 2025 Soap Box Derby**

The next [Castle Douglas Soap Box Derby](#) date has already been announced as the **13th July 2025** and the SMSA has been offered **FREE REGISTRATION** to Scottish Men's Shed teams for 2025 (usually £50)!

Check out [Glenkens Men's Shed](#) and [Kirkmuirhill and Blackwood Men's Shed's](#) updates on the 2024 derby that they competed in, in the [October 2024 edition](#) of The Scottish Shedder magazine (page 26).

Set your Shed members the challenge and **SIGN UP FOR FREE** today at <https://cdsoapboxderby.co.uk>



# 162

SMSA SHED MEMBERS

# 4,224

SMSA INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS



# 138

OPEN SHEDS

# 65

DEVELOPING/ PROPOSED SHEDS



# 32

LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS



## UPDATE YOUR DETAILS WITH THE SMSA



New email address? Moved house?



Change of Office Bearers? New Chair?



Not sure if you are a member or not?

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

[Click here to notify the SMSA](#)

## **SMSA charity and founder mark ten-year anniversary**

***The SMSA charity celebrates a decade championing men's health and wellbeing and the growth and diversification of the Men's Sheds movement in Scotland.***

SMSA Chief Executive Officer and founder Jason Schroeder said: "We are extremely thankful to be where we are today thanks to our main drivers, supporters and 4,200+ members over the years believing in this life-changing and life-saving men's 'health by stealth' model since day one. Without them, the Association would not exist and men's health would not now have a platform to be more readily spoken about openly. Everyone wins through this model and we hope the support for this grassroots movement long continues."

At the SMSA's 10-year anniversary celebrations and national gathering, hosted with civic hospitality from Perth & Kinross Council, Mr Schroeder was presented with a surprise Men's Shed style commemorative plaque from James (Jim) Paterson from Aberchirder & District Men's Shed, which was the first-ever Shed to claim the 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' title back in 2019. The unique plaque - created from whisky oak barrels and featuring deer antlers, a sgian-dubh (skene-dhu) with Damascus steel blade and the national association's membership pin badges and metal studs and engraved with the anniversary dates using pyrography - was presented to the charity founder during the event proceedings.

Jason said: "We are extremely grateful to Jim from Aberchirder & District Men's Shed for this very special plaque to mark such a huge milestone for the

SMSA and myself. The plaque will take pride of place at the SMSA's HQ in Banchory. As we reflect on how it all began and how far we have come - we are immensely proud today to be now known as Scotland's largest member-led men's health and wellbeing charity and that is thanks to our members, funders, partners, committed staff team and Board of Trustees, past and present.

"I wish to thank and recognise our three chairmen over the years - the late Brian Mackay, Derek Keiller and current Chairman, David Gardner. Inaugural trustees Willie Whitelaw (our first Secretary) and Charlie Miller, who is still on the board today, who signed up as our first Treasurer. Trustees, Harry McVeigh, David Searle and Jo Hobbett, were also pivotal to get the Scottish Men's Shed model and Association off the ground.

"My own story is what started me on my path to find something more for the men of Scotland. Back in the financial crash of 2008/9, I found myself working two jobs yet still unable to pay my bills. I was divorced and trying to be a single parent and a better dad to my teenage son, I had a breakdown which resulted in several months off work and even contemplated suicide. I began to look for elders, men who had been through a similar situation, to guide me. After emigrating from South Africa to Scotland in 1997, I could not find men of that calibre in my community and felt I had nowhere to turn.

"So, I started a men's group, called the Suns of MAC in 2009, which began slowly meeting at my house once a month and we would gather, create, cook and talk around a campfire. We kind of built my own temporary rustic Men's Shed and began to really understand how men work shoulder to shoulder and how this, and taking rest breaks, builds connection and heart to heart communication. Then I heard about a talk being delivered by Dr Neil Bruce, a retired GP and Chairman of the New Zealand Men's Sheds Association, taking place in Inverurie in Aberdeenshire and it changed everything.

"After the phenomenal success of the first Men's Shed which opened in February 2013 in Westhill, Aberdeenshire after four years of development, I moved from my role as Aberdeenshire Council Development Officer to become the first employed Men's Shed Development Officer



hosted by Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action in Scotland. I was a founding member of the United Kingdom Men's Sheds Association (UKMSA) which is based in England but due to funding never coming to Scotland in September 2014, I created the SMSA charity. I became the first Chairman and then in 2016, the Association received Scottish Government seed start-up funding for the first time and I became the CEO.

"Since the charity's inception, we have created a tailored and unique solution-focused step-by-step pathway for new Men's Shed groups to successfully tackle the developmental requirements of keeping a voluntary group of men engaged month after month. Today, the movement has evolved so much - we are now supporting men's health promotion, suicide prevention, documentation and policy, representing the movement and being the voice of 'Shedders' locally and nationally and much more.

"There is however still much work to do and now an estimated 10,000+ Men's Shed volunteers (and growing) across Scotland that require our support so they do not get overwhelmed with running a Men's Shed in their local community. The Sheds that are currently in development require our assistance, the open Sheds need to remain sustainable and to grow and thrive for future generations and even more new Sheds are required in communities where there is disadvantage and social exclusion."

"Although the movement has grown significantly, unfortunately due to a lack of any increased core funding since 2016 from the Scottish Government - as we see for our counterparts in countries like Ireland - I truly believe we have unfortunately only reached a third of Scotland's full development potential. It is our vision that one day, every man aged 18+ in Scotland will have access to, and the opportunity to attend, their local Men's Shed if they choose to do so to improve their quality of life and we will strive to achieve this aim for as long as it takes. Here's to the next ten years."



## Scottish Men's Shed of the Year targe trophy returns to Banff

*Déjà vu hit as Banff, Macduff and District Men's Shed celebrated the return of the esteemed Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA) targe trophy after being announced as 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' for the second year in a row.*

The announcement was made by the SMSA – the national support hub for 200+ Scottish Shed groups and Scotland's largest member-led men's health and wellbeing charity – at its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations and awards ceremony in Perth earlier this month which also featured a day of learning and networking for guest Sheds from all across the country.

Also reaching the final were Maryburgh Men's Shed who claimed the silver trophy and Breadalbane Men's Shed took bronze along with a wealth of prizes for all three finalists including cash prizes from the national Association - from Shed membership fees to give back to Sheds - and vouchers, discounts and goodies to help with the day-to-day running of the Sheds.

SMSA CEO Jason Schroeder travelled to hand-deliver the unique trophy – now engraved forever marking Banff, Macduff and District Men's Shed as the 2024 winner - to the Banff Shedders at their premises on Fife Street to proudly display for another twelve months. Shed Chairman Bob Copland said: "We really didn't expect to win again but we are absolutely thrilled! Out of over 200 Scottish Men's Sheds eligible to apply for these awards, we are immensely proud to say the least to receive this recognition for the difference our Shed volunteers are making in our local community.

"We congratulate the other Shed finalists, Maryburgh and Breadalbane. The most important part of this process is not the winning but of raising awareness of what the Men's Shed model is all about and the impact it has on the men in our local communities.

"We would also like to encourage other Scottish Men's Sheds to apply next year, we have got so much out of winning – the whole awards process has really raised our Shed's profile both locally and nationally and we have even had motions in parliament, not to mention that the accolade has aided

our funding applications. But the biggest and best added bonus is that we have recruited a lot of new members, as a result of people hearing about our success, and we are extremely grateful for that.

"A huge thing for us is really driving it home that Sheds are not just for retired men. Often, we hear from local men that they are not old enough to attend the Shed but we stress that it is an age 18+ model and offer activities to attract more young men with time on their hands along. Let's continue doing what we are doing – it obviously works - and aim to reach even more men to encourage them to head to the Shed and check it out for themselves."

Mr Schroeder said at the trophy presentation: "Banff, Macduff and District Men's Shed are the first former winner to ever reapply and we are delighted that they did and they really got their community behind them as evidenced in the public vote. When we launched these awards back in 2019, it was never about winning – every Shed is a winner in terms of the array of health and wellbeing benefits they can deliver to the men in their local community.

"The purpose of the awards is not to say one Shed is better than another – they are all unique and life-changing in their own way. The aim is to raise awareness, celebrate, recognise and reward Scottish Men's Shed volunteers for the work they are carrying out to improve the quality of life of men and the impact that they are making in their local communities."

Also present at the trophy presentation were pupils from the local academy who have all selected the Shed to support through this year's Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) Scotland – a programme which aims to raise awareness of social issues and local charities and engages students to develop skills and confidence through a contextualised learning experience.

The Banff Academy pupils, who attended the event during their summer holidays, chose to champion their local Men's Shed through their teams as part of the unique programme of teamwork and research. One team took the opportunity to interview Mr Schroeder as part of their presentation that will be shown at the finals. They have already made it through to the semi-finals and if one of the teams representing the Shed goes on to win, the Shed will be awarded a grant of £3,000.



Along with the title and trophy, Banff, Macduff and District Men's Shed receives prizes and discounts including:

- a £500 unrestricted cash prize from the SMSA (paid for through SMSA shed membership fees);
- a £150 voucher from Axminster Tools;
- a £250 voucher from Scotmid Co-operative to keep the members going for a while in tea and biscuits;
- a free Machine Competency and Woodwork training day from David Young Training worth £638; and
- a year's free accounts package from Thyme Accountants worth £360 to support the group's treasurer

## SMSA supports release of 'Silent Men' Film at Scotland Screenings

The SMSA supported the release in Scotland of 'Silent Men', a feature-length documentary from award-winning Scottish filmmaker Duncan Cowles, with its staff and regional ambassadors being present for post-screening panel discussions at venues across Scotland - when it hit cinemas from the 19<sup>th</sup> November as part of its International Men's Day promotions.

*Silent Men* is the debut feature documentary by Scottish BAFTA and Royal Television Society Award-winning director Duncan Cowles, known for his numerous short films and TV projects over the last 10 years. The film was produced by Duncan's own Scottish-based production company Relative Films with support from Screen Scotland and The Whickers and is being distributed in the UK by Cosmic Cat.

Part therapy, part road trip, *Silent Men* follows Duncan as he tackles the awkward art of expressing emotion. Duncan travels around the country asking men (both loved ones and strangers) how they open up in order to directly address his own difficulties in being intimate and open with his parents, partner and friends.

With profound honesty and deadpan wit, *Silent Men* intertwines candid conversations and the filmmaking process, asking what makes men tick, and more importantly, how to come to terms with all aspects of health, both physical and mental. Exploring elements of men's lives that are often rarely discussed, *Silent Men* opens the door for other ways of being, communicating and healing, as well as attempting to define masculinity.

Following its World Premiere at Sheffield Documentary Festival in June 2024, where it was awarded a Special Mention by the jury in the International First Feature Competition, the film was released in UK cinemas from 19<sup>th</sup> November on International Men's Day. *Silent Men* partnered with the SMSA and Andy's Man Club, with special regional screenings.



SMSA CEO and founder Jason Schroeder said: "We were delighted to join men's suicide prevention charity Andy's Man Club to support the release of this thought-provoking and eye-opening film.

"Members of the SMSA team were on-hand to answer questions from the audience after some of the Scottish screenings and are grateful for the opportunity to raise awareness of the Scottish Men's Shed model, its wealth of health and wellbeing benefits for men aged 18+ and to encourage more to 'Head to the Shed' to check it out.

"One man in his 30s came to speak to me after one of the screenings and this resulted in getting him hooked up with his local Andy's Man Club. I reckon that evening saved his life...it was very moving.

"Now there are Andy's Man Clubs and Men's Sheds to go to and connect safely with other men. Men no longer have to go on the journey alone with no route map out of the inner bad lands. Together, our two charities can help men connect in a healthy, emotional and supportive way and change the lives of men in Scotland for the better."

Allan Hogg, Chairman of the GEMS Shed, who covered the Montrose screening said: "The evening went very well, with an attendance of 35, and many questions were asked about the Men's Shed following the film. There were many reflections as to how it related to some of the guys there. One of our younger members shared his story and how much the Shed has changed his life."

Duncan Cowles, Director of *Silent Men*, said: "I'm really excited that

*Silent Men* will be reaching audiences across the UK and beyond. I started this film back at the end of 2016 and it's been a long journey with lots of hurdles to get it finished.

"My hope is that *Silent Men* resonates with audiences, making them think, smile, talk, and feel a deeper sense of empathy towards one another. I believe the issues explored in this film affect everyone in some way, and it's my hope that *Silent Men* does some good in the world."

Mark Thomas from Screen Scotland said: "Screen Scotland is proud to have supported *Silent Men*, Duncan Cowles' award-winning debut feature documentary.

"Duncan brings a warmth and sensitivity to the subject matter of male mental health with disarming humour and empathy. Fresh from its success at Sheffield Doc Fest in June, it is fantastic that the film has received a theatrical run through Cosmic Cat."

SMSA member Jim Hiddleston who went along to watch the film said: "My brother and I took advantage of the discount for Scottish Sheddies and went along to see the film at the Cameo in Edinburgh. It is a really thought-provoking film and very much spot on in regards to us men folk and our emotions. We loved the elements of humour and satire also in parts.

"And, yes, as brothers we hugged at the end and we will try to say 'I love you' more often. It is absolutely brilliant that the SMSA and Andy's Man Club are working together to promote this."

## SCOTTISH MEN'S SHED OPEN DOORS DAY 19th November

## TO MARK INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY 'Head to the Shed'



### ***Scotland first 'Shed Open Doors Day' hailed a success!***

### ***Get the date in your diary for next year—19th November 2025!***

***The SMSA charity facilitated its first ever 'Open Doors Day' with great success with participating Men's Sheds across Scotland on the 19th November 2024 (International Men's Day) to afford the opportunity to reach a wide audience and raise awareness of what Sheds have to offer and encourage more men to 'Head to the Shed'!***

SMSA CEO Jason Schroeder said: "With the Shed doors swung wide open to mark International Men's Day, it provided the opportunity to raise the profile of Sheds and the age 18+ model, show people around Shed premises, tell them all about what happens there, meet and talk to other members, see activities in action, highlight the potential health and wellbeing benefits and answer any questions they may have.

"Obviously the Shed's have their own opening times and people can go along then to check out the Shed but with local and national promotion of this event, we aim to get the word out to as many people as possible including local GP's, social prescribers, schools, businesses, politicians, charities, police etc along for group tours.

"This event, which will now be an annual affair, has huge potential year-on-year to inform and inspire new, wide and varied audiences along to Scottish Men's Sheds—so please get the 19th November 2025 (and every year after that) in your Shed diary, [register your Shed](#) and get planning and promoting early."

Newton Stewart Men's Shed held a very successful Open Doors Day event with four of their visitors signing up and paying their dues and four others taking membership forms away and expressing that they were very likely to join in the near future! Graham Curtis from Stonehouse Men's Shed also shared: "Three of the South Lanarkshire Sheds participated in Open Doors Day. Our open day went really well, we had 25-30 local people visiting us. A lot of this was due to promoting it at a recent presentation we gave to the Women's Guild the previous week and they brought along their husbands, partners and home baking!"

As part of Open Doors Day promotions, the SMSA ran a social media competition to help spread the word. Congratulations to our winner, of the Open Doors Giveaway £50 voucher, Joe Greenhorn from Rosyth Men's Shed.

Joe said: "What a brilliant wee surprise....I'll be buying biscuits and other munchies for the Shed.....to share my winnings with the guys!"

**[REGISTER YOUR SHED FOR  
OPEN DOORS DAY 2025 HERE](#)**

**Pictured right:** Fraserburgh Community Men's Shed had its full range of Shed activities on display for Open Doors Day 2024 including model making, 3d printing, war gaming, the Shed Singers choir and model railway.





## SMSA receives Bank of Scotland Foundation boost for second year



*The Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA) charity – the national support hub for 200+ Scottish Shed groups and Scotland's largest member-led men's health and wellbeing charity – has secured a second year of grant funding of £20,000 from the [Bank of Scotland Foundation's REACH funding programme](#).*

The grant will contribute towards the salary of one of the SMSA's regional Development Officer's on the ground to support existing Scottish Men's Sheds to remain sustainable and set up new ones in communities where there is disadvantage and social exclusion.

SMSA CEO Jason Schroeder said: "The SMSA, since its inception in 2014, has created a tailored and unique solution-focused step-by-step pathway for new Men's Shed groups to successfully tackle the developmental requirements of keeping a voluntary group of men engaged month after month.

"There are an estimated 10,000+ Men's Shed volunteers across Scotland and with this excellent announcement of continued financial support from the Bank of Scotland Foundation, we can continue to support the Men's Shed model and ensure that these highly-valued volunteers are not overwhelmed by the task of opening and sustaining a Men's Shed in their local community.

"This grant will help provide vital one-to-one localised support face-to-face from a Development Officer in real time which we have found significantly lowers the anxiety in those holding the positions of voluntary responsibility in the Sheds as they feel less alone in having to deal with their challenges. These challenges are often unique to working with men's groups and by 'speaking their language' the solution-focused results have been remarkable and encouraging in keeping the Sheds open and the groups continuing to grow and thrive.

"Although we have grown the movement over the last decade to where it is today, unfortunately due to a lack of core Scottish Government funding, as we see for our counterparts in countries like Ireland, I believe we have only reached 30% of Scotland's full development potential. It is our vision that one day, every man in Scotland will have access to—and the opportunity to attend—their local Men's Shed if they choose to do so and we are delighted that the Bank of Scotland Foundation is continuing to support this aim."

Donald MacKechnie, Chair of the Foundation's Board of Trustees and Insurance & Wealth Transformation and Strategy Director, Lloyds Banking Group said, "We are delighted to award the SMSA with this funding for a second year. The cost of living crisis means many charities are struggling with increasing expenditure, at a time when the demand for their services is as great as ever. Our grant awards will help charities through the challenging months ahead."



## First aid kit advice for Sheds

*A question we are often asked at SMSA HQ is for advice on being prepared for medical emergencies and which first aid kit to purchase for Sheds that have tools such as bandsaws, circular saws, routers and the likes that could cause a serious injury and/or major blood loss? Here, the SMSA consults the Health and Safety Executive and British Red Cross guidance to better inform your Shed.*

The SMSA recommends, at a minimum, that a Scottish Men's Shed environment provides sufficient first aid equipment (a first aid kit) and first aid trained supervisor(s) at all times in addition to access to a Shed-owned or local defibrillator. The SMSA also advises that lone working should not be permitted under any circumstances and suggest these requirements are highlighted at registration/induction.

Whilst, the [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#) guidance cannot tell you what first aid provisions you should make—as your Trustees and members are best placed to understand the exact nature of your activities and decide on your requirements—first aid provision must be 'adequate and appropriate in the circumstances'.

To help you decide what provision you require, you should undertake the HSE's first aid needs assessment to consider the hazards and risks that may present themselves. You should consider points such as the:

- nature of your activities e.g. woodwork, metalwork etc
- hazards and risks
- size and skill level of your membership
- opening times and holiday/absences of first aid appointed persons (a rota for appointed first aid persons)
- history of accidents/incidents e.g. review of accident log book
- Location/accessibility of site for emergency medical services
- visitors/guests/members of the public accessing the Shed

For many, if not all Men's Sheds, a standard First Aid kit might simply not be enough in case of an emergency. The HSE has published [further guidance \(PDF\)](#) on all the factors above that will help you carry out your Shed's first aid needs assessment.

Whilst, the SMSA helps signpost Sheds to the experts such as [British Red Cross, St Andrews First Aid](#) and various other suppliers for the best advice—and recommend a chat with their sales team to discuss your requirements—the SMSA thought it would be useful to highlight two kits that they would recommend for a Shed environment:

### Site First Response Kit in Green Rucksack (£59.99+VAT+P&P)

A compact first aid rucksack that opens fully offering easy viewing of the products required in an emergency. Elasticated loops, sealable pockets and a removable compartment, hold all the contents securely. Intended for 25-100 people in a low hazard environment or for 5-25 employees in a high hazard environment such as a warehouse.

### Critical Injury Pack in Bag (£84.99+VAT+P&P)

Designed to provide immediate, life-saving first aid to someone who has sustained a severe bleeding injury. The Critical Injury Pack is also intended for Drop/Throw distribution in the event of a mass casualty incident.

Denny & Bonnybridge Men's Shed was one Shed to recently reach out to the SMSA. A representative from their Shed said: "We looked into it and following an assessment of the potential risks from our woodworking machines which could cause pretty serious injuries, we decided to purchase the critical injury first aid kit—which contains haemostatic wound dressing to stop bleeding quickly and a tourniquet to apply pressure—to safeguard our members and supplement the normal first aid kit that most people have.

"We became aware that our first aiders also required training on how to use the new kit as basic first aid training does not cover its use. Your local Scottish Ambulance Service station may be in a position to offer some support and guidance, its worth a try about the specifics around major trauma/ blood loss."

The British Red Cross offers a non-certified [FREE Basic First Aid workshops](#) where Scottish Men's Sheds can learn through a practical first aid training workshop, available both online and face-to-face.

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# SMSA DEVELOPMENT UPDATE—HIGHLANDS

Almost two months with the SMSA and it's been a fascinating and inspiring few weeks. I've been to a Shed in the woods (Cromarty Firth Men's Shed), a Shed in a train station (Nairn Men's Shed), a Shed upstairs on a main street (SpeyShed), and a Shedder's own shed because the Men's shed had no leckie that day! (Ullapool Men's Shed).

I shadowed my colleague Tim Green (SMSA Development Officer for the East Coast) for a couple of weeks with trips to Nairn and Muir of Ord in the Highlands. Also, to Fraserburgh and new Shed development meetings at Portsoy in Tim's patch. I have also sat in on Tim's delivery of the MOT4Men preventative men's health sessions. Learning from Tim has certainly made things a lot less daunting!

Two weeks in post, I attended the SMSA AGM in Perth and met loads of Shedders including some who have quickly become familiar faces; guys from Banff and Nairn sheds. Building existing relationships and making new ones on the day – nothing beats a good blether!

On that note, the commonality in all the Sheds I have visited is the banter, the craic. Amongst the skills, creativity, problem solving and all the other activity, what is really noticeable is the social interaction. The laughs, camaraderie, taking the mick and being with pals.

Some quotes I've recorded – "the craic is brilliant", "this place is a life saver", "I didn't think this was for me, but I'm glad I gave it a go." and "If this place closed, I'd be gutted."

In my travels to the north east, I've made contact with some movers and shakers in Brora and Golspie—the community council, NHS Mental Health team and potential Shedders. A public meeting was held in Brora last week on the 5th December 2024 where ten potential Shedders attended, with a further ten apologies and notes of interest. Several potential Shed venues were identified. So, it looks hopeful that there will be a Brora Shed soon! A big thanks to Steve Miles from Cromarty Firth Men's Shed who helped out during the question and answer session at the public meeting.

Latheron, Lybster & Clyth Community Development Company (LLCCDC) is now an official SMSA Shed member, and will be holding a public meeting in the new year. And, a spin off from the contacts in Brora/Golspie has led to possible contacts in Lairg, Bonar Bridge and Lochinver!

A big thank you to all the Sheds that hosted a visit from me. Each of you made me feel very welcome and you are insightful and inspiring. To the Highland Sheds that I've still to visit, I look forward to seeing you soon!



# SMSA DEVELOPMENT UPDATE—WEST COAST



Out and about on the West Coast, there are so many Sheds to visit and not nearly enough time! I said when I started this job that I would try and visit every Shed in my patch over the course of my first year. It's a mammoth task, but after six months I may have to revise that aim as other just-as-important jobs come in like area network meetings and MOT4Men sessions, but more of that later.

Firstly, let's start at the tail end of October, when I was kindly invited to the Glenkens Men's Shed's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. A wee trip down one of my favourite roads to the Catstrand Arts Centre in New Galloway. The place was packed with Shedders, partners and friends, all thrilled at the huge impact this Shed has had in their area. There was live music, dancing (yes, I did strut my stuff on the dancefloor), merriment, an amazing buffet and a lovely birthday cake. Happy birthday Glenkens, here's to the next ten years.

Even later in October, it was my pleasure to accompany my colleague Tim Green to the Three Towns Men's Shed in Ardrossan to take part in an MOT4Men session, with a view to start running my own sessions very soon. A large number of their Shedders gathered to talk about men's health, and some great discussions were had around a table that was loaded with much 'food for thought.' We tried to remember the section on diet when we tucked into another excellent buffet, but unfortunately, I'm not in a position to confirm or deny the rumours about our chocolate consumption that day.

The MOT4Men programme is available **FREE OF CHARGE** to SMSA Shed Members. It educates and informs on key men's health issues like heart disease, smoking, alcohol, cancer (testicular, bowel, prostate and skin) – enabling men to increase their awareness and prioritise their health needs. Why not get in touch with me and book a session for your Shed?

Into November and some local sheds, firstly Kilwinning—a Shed in development. A committed group of men have been gathering, attending local events, hosting games nights and

generally putting their backs into getting a Shed for Kilwinning.

With the support of an ex-colleague of mine from North Ayrshire Council, Community Development Worker Euan Lees, the group has been successful in obtaining some start-up funding, adopting a constitution and working with the Council to look at local buildings to use as shed premises. It's an exciting time for Kilwinning and we are all looking forward to another town having the sort of facilities that can make a real difference in men's lives.

Just around the corner, in the town of Irvine, two great Sheds are making an impact in men's lives at opposite ends of the town. Irvine Harbourside Men's Shed and Irvine New Town Men's Sheds made me most welcome on recent visits. On a freezing day at Irvine New Town we sat around a table drinking tea, shooting the breeze, and talking about men's health and how the Shed has changed lives for the better. Amongst many other things, some fantastic wooden benches are being lovingly crafted for gardens and memorials. Again, much evidence on display of a Shed that is dedicated to doing their bit in their local community.

The warm welcome was duplicated at Irvine Harbourside Men's Shed, where I bumped into an old colleague from my Council days, Steve, who is making intricate models in their bespoke scale model building facility. In the workshop, men were busy making a huge contribution to their local community. Thanks guys. See you again soon!

A hop, skip and a jump away is Men's Shed Dalry. Situated in a former sports pavilion in a beautiful public park which is making some unique pieces of art that are helping local community groups with signage and interpretation. Local beauty spot, Lynn Glen, has a beautiful bench dedicated to a famous historical character, Bessie Dunlop, who was tried and sentenced for witchcraft in 1576. The Shed has restored the slats on the bench and made two signs, one for each side of the Troll Bridge (pictured right), the work of 'Sheddy' at Dalry. Take a bow, Andy Beagrie.

On now to our regional Shed networks.

Ayrshire and the Greater Glasgow & Clyde Networks met again this month, hosted by Three Towns Men's Shed and Inverclyde Men's Shed respectively. These meetings are so important for sharing our wealth of skills, knowledge and experience, and both network meetings provided an ideal opportunity for the great and the good of West Coast sheds to connect and cooperate. Additionally, I attend Dumfries and Galloway Sheds Network, facilitated by Age Scotland, keeping this vast rural area in the loop and plugged in to what's happening there.

I attended Paisley Men's Shed's Open Doors Day event, where the place was absolutely jumping with new and old faces, partners, locally elected members, supporters, and most of all - guys who have just discovered this wee gem in the grounds of St. Mirren Football Club. Very well supported by the STAR Project, an anti-poverty charity based in Paisley, this Shed is going from strength to strength, and SMSA has been able to assist with a model constitution and paperwork and procedures. Onwards and upwards Paisley Buddies!

Overall, it's been a great period for West Coast Sheds, and always an absolute privilege to be a part of the growth of the Scottish Men's Sheds movement. 2024 has been a vintage year and we look forward, with great anticipation, to see the movement spread to every town and village across the country, and to see Shedders thriving, enjoying life and making a difference in their communities.

**Stewart Beck**  
Part-Time SMSA Dev Officer (West Coast)  
Tues/Wed/Thurs  
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# SHED IN THE SPOTLIGHT

***Together, the Midmar Men's Shed members laid the foundations of their new permanent home. Every single one of the members playing a part of building a resource for their community for this generation and many more to come.***

Back in 2020, we featured a 'Shed in the Spotlight' on [Midmar Men's Shed](#) which had been meeting since October 2018 and was on the verge of officially opening a temporary Shed—four portable cabins donated by a local farmer joined together—to address the lack of facilities for social activities in Midmar, 18 miles west of Aberdeen.

The Midmar Shedders have been happily located there beside the Midmar Hall upper car park ever since whilst also moving forward with the build of a permanent facility to future-proof their offering to the men in the local community.

Shed Chairman Gordon Gauld said: "With our current premises, two of the cabin areas were left open plan for a workshop, one cabin for storage and lathe and the remaining area is the kitchen and social area, which can get quite crowded with six to eight members. Our optimum capacity for the workshop area is about four or five. If we all want to meet together, we use the public hall next door.

"We are a fairly small community and currently have a dozen members ranging in age from mid-40s to late-80s—with a few occasional social members that drop in for a chat. One of our social members now has a mobility scooter whilst awaiting a hip replacement and cannot access the Shed, so we meet at the hall for a coffee and a chat or he comes on a fine weather day when we can catch up outdoors. It will be great when we have our new fully-accessible-for-all Shed!

"The new Shed premises will allow for additional much-needed space for our current membership with the added bonus of our own toilet, a meeting room and hot and cold running water finally! We will also have scope for a few more new members and have opportunities to advertise to surrounding areas that do not have a Shed on their community notice boards and invite new members to join us.

"The initial plan was to build a 80m<sup>2</sup> timber-framed Shed close to our current site but we realised after using the temporary shed that a separate workshop area was needed. Additional space was made available by the removal of trees so the building has grown slightly. I am a former architectural technologist from the construction industry and we are also fortunate to have a wide range of skills on our membership. We also knew tradespeople in our community that could assist the project whilst also training the members to help.

"In November 2023, we dug the trenches for the foundations for a 100m<sup>2</sup> Shed and inserted the pins to set the levels ready for the steel mesh. Every member had a part to play and each lay a block—it was a full team effort. It was important to us that every member had the chance to get involved and we ensured a high standard of health and safety, risk assessments and many a toolbox talk took place. The building inspector has been round and we are delighted to report that all works are satisfactory.

*Continued on next page...*



## SHED IN THE SPOTLIGHT (Continued)



*...continued from previous page*

“Through our risk assessments, we identified that when the Midmar Hall has popular events, the car park can get extremely busy and this could impact on access for medical attention such as an ambulance if require—so we had to take this into account. We are fortunate that the hall has a defibrillator that we can have access to and are also exploring a critical injury first aid kit for our Shed.

“On top of the build, we carry out recycling projects where we repair and sell on items which generates a reasonable income for us. Thankfully, our expenditure is not high, around £1,000 a year which mostly covers our insurance.

“This year, we have also taken on quite a few community projects such as clearing paths for local walks and replacing the pedestrian footbridge over a local stream for the local community which suffered from rotting post ends, handrail supports and broken treads. Our Sheddors do a tremendous amount for our community including raised beds for the school, maintenance work for the village hall and grounds and also repair of the canopy for the local well.

“Like all Sheds, we are always trying to source materials and are delighted to say that we have not had to fundraise for any materials to date. We have been overwhelmed by the support shown for our Shed through donations from local businesses and our community.

“Hunter Construction donated a whole host of materials from some of their suppliers to get us started with the new Shed’s foundations. They also enlisted the help of Breedon, Jewson, Grampian Steel and JKR to assist with the supply of block, sand, steel mesh and concrete. Miller Plant supplied us with excavators and

hardcore. It was wonderful support from a group of local companies.

“We are now at the stage of sourcing money through donations and grant funding for the next stage of the build. The timber kit walls, roof trusses, metal sheeting for the roof and doors and windows to make it a wind and water tight structure.

“We plan to source materials as much as we can over the winter period and take time to research and source what funding is available and to start applying for grants. We have many decisions to make in the future in terms of types of under floor heating, dust extraction systems and equipment (through Axminster Tools) and solar panels with battery storage that will feed surplus energy back to Midmar Hall. We should then be in a position to commence construction in the spring. Watch this space.”

**Midmar Men’s Shed is open on Tuesday evenings from 7.00-9.00pm and Friday mornings from 9.30am—1.00pm. Follow the Shed’s journey through their [website](#) and [Facebook page](#).**





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## Foggie Shed swings its doors open to the public

***Aberchirder & District Men's Shed, better known to locals as 'Foggie Men's Shed', has held several recent events swinging their doors wide open for open days, a coffee morning, soup luncheons and a new popular evening opening to both members and guests with a view to reach more potential new members in their community.***

Shedder Jim Paterson donned his pinny to get a fine spread together for SMSA's Shed Open Doors Day to mark International Men's Day on the 19th November. Kathleen Saxelby from Aberchirder & District Men's Shed said: "Despite the snow, we still had a few visitors who braved the conditions including a lovely visit from Andrew Simpson, Lord-Lieutenant of Banffshire, and his wife Louise. The next day, I received an email from him saying they thoroughly enjoyed their visit and hope to visit again soon."

"Our new Wednesday evening openings from 6.30pm-9.00pm, are an additional opportunity for members and guests to come along, learn a new skill or just have a cuppa and a chat. In October, Jim was delighted to also mentor a local teenager on wood turning machine."

"We are attracting would-be modellers and turners and more people interested in the new

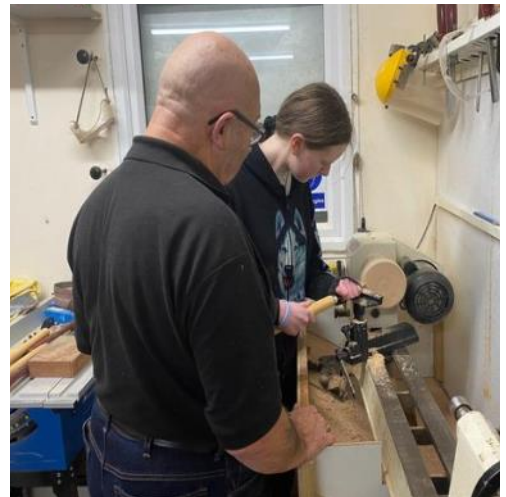
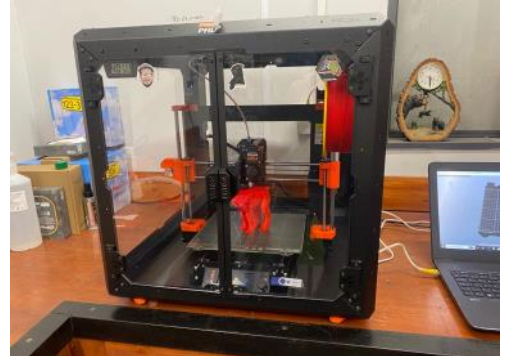
precision lathe and 3D printer, funded by the Deuchries Wind Farm. Attendees enjoy the relaxed evening doing various activities—try something new or a game of darts or cards—along with a substantial amount of blethering!

"Our Macmillan Coffee Morning was also a big success—we had lucky squares, raffle and homebakes. Our Trustee Kenny Christie has had cancer so we are all passionate about raising funds. He donated a handmade quilt and got various vouchers donated from trades people including our local Chinese, Celebrations in Turriff, butchers and lots more. We raised over £1,000 for the worthy cause."

"We have also had a presence at the local Foggie Neuk Producers' Market serving teas, coffees and fine pieces from 10 am till 1 pm which is another great opportunity to raise awareness of what is going on at our Shed."

"The 'Foggie Friday Soup Luncheon' is also going down a treat with the locals. Every Friday from 11.30am to 2pm through the winter months, the Shed offers a free hot bowl of delicious soup, bread, a cuppa and a blether to our community. We are indebted to our volunteers and visitors for their outstanding support to make a success of this venture. Our first day back in November was nothing short of amazing!

"Our plan to raise our profile seems to be working and the word is getting out there. Long may it continue."







## Stonehaven & District Men's Shed reflects on a year of triumph

*Stonehaven & District Men's Shed Secretary Douglas Knox reflects on 2024—a year of immense expansion, diversification and achievements for the Shed and its members.*

2024 began with a bang with the immense accolade in the award to the membership of the King's Award Voluntary Service. The presentation was made by the King's representative, the Lord Lieutenant of Kincardineshire to recognise the Shed's success in growing its membership and providing local men with the opportunity to benefit from a safe social environment where activities and community and personal projects can positively impact on their health and wellbeing.

Shed Secretary Douglas Knox said: "We have been conscious of the increasing age of the membership which has made it necessary to find ways of attracting younger people. They are generally still in work, so we have opened the Shed one evening each week to give them access to our facilities. Our established Health and Safety procedures are applied with adjustments as necessary.

"Major additions to our facilities have been three desktop computers and three computer numerically controlled machines (or CNC for short) installed. The fascination in learning how to use the latter to produce unique items has attracted Shedders of all ages to learn from other Shedders with experience in these technologies.

"The creative talent in members has come to the fore with numerous proposals for using these machines with the added benefit of also creating a new revenue stream for the Shed. The desktop units are being used with the help of an experienced coach to develop uses for members' personal benefit.

"Traditional activities in the workshop—making wooden ornaments, toys, planters and Easter and Christmas items—continue with the highest standard of quality recognised by our new and returning customers.

"Our environmental emphasis has grown with increased involvement of diverting items from landfill. This is

mainly refurbishing bicycles, lawnmowers and particularly prosthetic limbs. The limbs are collected from hospitals all over Scotland, stripped down to their essential struts and joints then shipped to a charity in Bristol which has bases in Africa to build new legs for amputees there.

"Community involvement is a major part of our strategy of offering members social involvement but also an outlet for their physical energies. In addition to supporting town fairs this year, we have handled a few refurbishment and erection projects. We restored a gazebo at the community hospital to make it available to the staff and patients to relax in the open air. We also continue to manage and maintain the polytunnel at the local academy.

"Our Alternative Energy Project is now complete and has massively reduced our electricity costs while improving the heating in the Shed for our members. The project's aims were threefold – environmental, economic and efficiency.

"Electricity generated using fossil fuel has been minimised helping efforts towards net zero carbon. In addition to minimising our electricity costs, our budget has been further helped by including storage batteries in the system so we can now sell surplus energy back to the grid, increasing our income at the same time.

"Progress was also achieved in the Board of Trustees with our Chairman and Vice Chairman exchanging responsibilities. The founder of the Shed, Bill Allan, has taken the long view for our organisation and handed the reins of leadership to Vice Chair, Duncan Cursiter. Bill will still participate in Shed projects and also be available to give counsel to the Board if needed.

"The climax of this exceptional year will be at our upcoming Christmas Lunch when we traditionally present the "Shedder of the Year" award – a recycled Ship's Steering Wheel."



## Carluk Men's Shed raises some eyebrows with latest projects!

*Of late, [Carluk Men's Shed \(CMS\)](#) has held a successful coffee morning fundraiser, several birthday celebrations, an inter-Shed visit to Forth Bridges Men's Shed, nights out and more boat trips for members, been involved in the Motherwell FC Memorial Garden project and have now even delved into haircuts and eyebrow trimming!*

Tom Kennedy, on behalf of CMS Members, said: "Our Shed is well-known for making a big fuss of our members on their birthdays—complete with gifts, cards, fanfare and harmonies to know their pals at the Shed care about them— but it was still a lovely surprise when they remembered my 21st (ahem) Birthday! The lads surprised me and even sang Happy Birthday in perfect harmony. It really is heart-warming to know we have so many friends

"Not many Sheds raise eyebrows, but CMS member John Gemmell was treated to a hair cut from fellow member Carolyn Ashburn—including eyebrow trimming! John looked like a new man afterwards!

"We held a very successful Macmillan Coffee Morning at our Shed on Saturday 12th October 2024 from 10am until noon. The damp and dreich weather did not deter a good turnout and laughter resonating through the Shed.

"The coffee morning raised money for a great cause and I would like to give a special mention to the wives and partners of our CMS members and the hours spent baking and preparing the Shed for the event.

"CMS members also had a thoroughly enjoyable day out on the 16th October when we visited our fellow new friends at [Forth Bridge Men's Shed \(FBMS\)](#) situated practically under the iconic world-

renown Three Bridges in South Queensferry. What a location! "We received a fantastic warm welcome from the FBMS members present in their local Community Centre. They filled us up with piping hot homemade Scotch broth then thick burgers followed by a fine selection of cakes and biscuits rounded off with plenty of tea and coffee. I think we left the Community Centre nearly half a stone heavier!

"We later also visited their workshop portable cabin located about a 10-minute drive away in Kirkliston where we were shown the facilities there and all the tools that they have acquired over the past two years since their Men's Shed was set-up.

"A very big thank-you to all the FBMS members we met on the day for their brilliant hospitality, especially Bill McKay, Mike Ross, Ross McLare, Ross Storie and Tony Jones. We will be back and, before we departed, we agreed to arrange a suitable date for a reciprocal visit to our facilities.

"In true CMS-style, following our visit to our new friends, we managed to squeeze-in an exhilarating 90-minute Three-Bridges boat-trip on the MV Forth Belle. We do love a boat trip.

"Our members have also enjoyed a trip to see 'The Illegal Eagles' show at Lanark Memorial Hall on the 26th October and a 'Best of Queen Tribute Show' in Lanark on the 9th November—a fabulous time was had by all.

"We were also humbled to be invited to attend the landmark opening of Motherwell FC's Memorial Garden at Fir Park on the 6th November. After helping in our own small way (including making half a dozen wooden planters for the project and have offered to help maintain the gardens going forward.

"On the 4th December 2024, all 21 CMS members and their wives/partners attended our annual Christmas Santa barge trip on the Union Canal at Ratho with lots of seasonal banter! As always, it's onwards and upwards for CMS!"



**Pictured (top to bottom):** Tom being surprised by his fellow Shedders on his "21st Birthday"; haircut time; CMS members visiting Forth Bridges Men's Shed; the CMS wives/partners who prepared a lovely spread for the Macmillan Coffee Morning; the Santa barge trip; and the opening of the Motherwell FC memorial garden.

## What a year for Kinross Men's Shed!

*As we near the end of 2024, [Kinross & District Men's Shed \(KDMS\)](#) reflects on an exceptionally busy twelve months.*

Bob Ballard from KDMS said: "Our Shed prides itself on our connection with our local community and we are delighted that our building is designated as an official local 'warm space' offering a free and welcoming space where people can stay warm and socialise. We also host the local 'SPARKS' group and an art group and engage fully in local events such as fairs and farmers' markets and always look to take part if we are able to do so.

"In the spring of 2024, we saw feverish activity with the replacement of fairway signs at Milnathort Golf Club and the construction of over 50 bird box kits in conjunction with the Scottish Wildlife Trust and a local primary school. The kits were assembled and decorated by the children themselves who added their own personal touch! With the help of the Trust, the boxes were then all installed in local woodland to appeal to different nesting birds.

"KDMS has over 80 members so there is always a wide variety of activities and projects on the go. This year, we formed a new music group and we now have our own band (not quite up to receiving an invitation to Glastonbury just yet!). A 'bikers' group is also in the process of forming as we have quite a few serious riders amongst our membership. And, this group isn't to be confused with our other group of 'rockers' who are building seven rocking horses— constructed to the highest standard and on completion one will be donated to a local charity.

"Our Shed base in Swansacre is an old school building and much work has gone into making it suitable for our requirements. This year has seen us renew our central heating system, upgrade insulation, improve our windows as well as ongoing work on exterior brickwork repairs. A major project this autumn also saw us redesign our workspaces to accommodate recently purchased machinery. We now have two good sized workshops, full kitchen, office space and a generous recreational area. There are plans for 2025/26 to build an outside extension.

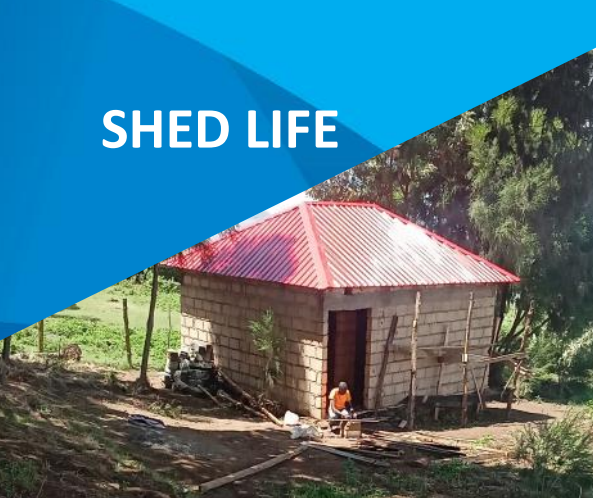


"In terms of our operating equipment, we now have a professional bandsaw, saw table, planers, lathes, laser etcher, CNC machine and a 3D printer. We have also installed a full filtration unit as we adhere to the strictest health and safety standards in our workshops.

"KDMS funding is well resourced, and we are particularly grateful to The Arthur and Margaret Thomson Trust and also the Community Investment Fund (CIF) grant we receive from Perth & Kinross Council.

"Finally, back to our members. We aren't a bad bunch and are lucky to have much talent in so many areas amongst our ranks. Disingenuous perhaps to mention one particular member—as we are proud of each and every one of them—however, Duncan McIntyre has recently become a Scottish national champion in the sport of Boccia. Duncan has been playing boccia for seven years but has only been competing for the last three. He brushes disability and ill health aside to enjoy his beloved sport and all of us at KDMS couldn't be prouder of him – well done Duncan!"





## Hello from Kenya!

**Stephen Kungu, a member of [MENSHERD KENYA Naivasha sub county](#), reached out to the SMSA to share an update on what's happening with their Men's Shed in East Africa.**

Stephen said: "Our Men's Shed started in May 2017 as the mother of another Shed called Sisioni Mensherd Kenya (pictured below right). Sheds worldwide suffer from challenges and here, we struggle to change our living styles and support our community—especially youths and our vulnerable elderly people.

"The Shed is wellbeing to men suffering from mental health issues. It is so true that men don't talk face-to-face but shoulder-to-shoulder. Our Shed has 15 active members who always commit to the project and cover the costs to run the Shed from our own pockets.

"We normally do small group farming, mentoring young boys in games and

sports in addition to supporting vulnerable bright children in our community and our elderly.

"We have been journeying together with the 15 guys and youths trying to raise them as people you can depend on and currently we have that team who are now off to university level with others being good footballers and champions in running.

"We humbly ask if anyone is willing to help or support our cause, to get in touch, to ensure we continue to enjoy the Men's Shed."

**Follow [MENSHERD KENYA Naivasha sub county](#) on [Facebook](#) to keep up-to-date with their journey.**

**For more information, please contact [Stephen Kungu](#) or the [Shed Chairman](#).**



## Clyde Coast and Cumbraes Men's Shed hosts Largs SWI workshops

[Clyde Coast & Cumbraes Men's Shed](#) and the Largs branch of the Scottish Women's Institute (SWI) have linked up for a series of joint skills-sharing workshops.

Back in February 2024, the Shed held its first collaboration evening with the [Largs SWI](#) which was a great success in addition to hosting an intergeneration evening for the Largs Boys Brigade to pass on both traditional and modern woodworking skills.

The Largs SWI members are now becoming regulars at the Shed which has been open for less than two years and already has an 80-strong membership and good rapport with the community.

The aim of the workshops is for people in their community to gather and share their skills and abilities with each other—a win-win situation!



## Bridge of Don Shed pulls no punches with their range of member activities

*On top of their jam-packed programme of activities for members, Bridge of Don and District Men's Shed welcomed freelance journalist, broadcaster and veteran boxer Frank Gilfeather for a motivational talk and to hear the story of his life so far.*

Frank Gilfeather, born in 1945 in Lochee in Dundee, moved to Aberdeen in April 1969 and started working for the Press & Journal (P&J) and Evening Express as a general news reporter. Later, when personnel were allocated to each paper, he became a news reporter for the P&J before moving to the evening newspaper's sports desk as chief sportswriter and deputy sports editor.

Frank's broadcasting career began in 1980 with the launch of Grampian TV's (now STV North) regional news programme, North Tonight. Gilfeather joined the programme as a sports correspondent, although he later worked on news coverage. Gilfeather fronted the North Tonight spin-off Summer at Six and local quiz show Top Club which ran for nine years. He also worked on general election coverage for ITN and has been featured in out-takes on LWT's It'll be Alright on the Night. Gilfeather fronted STV and Grampian TV's shinty highlights coverage between the mid-80s and early-90s.

Eric Bisset from Bridge of Don and District Men's Shed said: "One of our members invited Frank to come and give a talk at the Shed. Not only did many of us watch him on the news on the telly, he is also a popular former Scottish amateur boxing champion that has recently gone viral on [TikTok](#) with his son Paul's help. Frank has had over 200 amateur fights and boxed representing Scotland and is now a world-wide social media sensation at the age of 78 with hundreds of thousands of followers and over a million views on his boxing tutorial videos.

"Being into his fitness, Frank shared some really interesting advice on how the men could incorporate some light exercises into our Health and Wellbeing programme to increase activity. Our members thank Frank, and his son who accompanied him, for his motivational, funny and witty talk, which was very much appreciated by all our men. This talk is just one of the wide and diverse range of activities we strive to offer our members (and attract new

ones) and it was extremely well attended and well received.

"Our other recent activities have included a Rock & Roll Bingo session, which saw a lot of head scratching trying to recognise the Karaoke Classics tunes! The local Rotary Club of Balgownie also joined us for an entertaining evening of Desk Top Board Games and in remembrance of one of our late members, Willie Sim, we also hold an annual Sports Night, when our men are challenged to a round robin of darts, pool and table top football, with the winner receiving the Willie Sim Memorial Shield. These events not only get the members together but also help raise vital Shed funds.

"Other events happening at the Shed include our participation in SMSA's 'Open Doors Day' on the 19th November (International Men's Day) and Tim Green from the SMSA delivering an MOT4Men session to our members where we examined important issues such as testicular, prostate, skin and bowel cancers and discussed risk factors and symptoms that should act as flags for us to go and see our GP.

"Every day at 10am in the Shed is our most important activity however—tea time! It is such an important time at the Shed, when we all sit down together and put the world to rights, partaking in some friendly banter and quickly devouring homemade bakes and biscuits and on a Friday, it's softies with bacon, egg, sausage, hash browns and more!

"We do however, also encourage our members to eat healthy! Our Autumn harvest from our 16m-long polytunnel, which we ventured into a joint intergenerational training programme with our neighbour Forehill Primary School, included courgettes, rainbow carrots, beetroot, tomatoes and potatoes and the pupils took them back to the school kitchen, where a variety of healthy seasonal soups were cooked up and even some delicious carrot cakes, which were very quickly devoured. There was even enough spare vegetables to share with parents and teachers and also a very special delivery by the children to the residents of Jesmond Care Home, who were delighted to receive a lively visit by the children, it certainly cheered everyone up that day.

"We are just about to plant dwarf fruit trees and fruit canes soon and then next year, the school children can pick the harvest off of them and enjoy fresh apples, pears and plums, tasting fruit as it should be tasted, with no pesticides being applied, no air miles or plastic wrapping either! And, using some of this year's harvest, we also produced a tasty variety of pickles, jams and chutneys, that we sell at our Monthly Farmer's Markets (third Saturday monthly, in Gordon Barracks, Ellon Road). The polytunnel project is funded using income generated from selling our wares like planters and benches and from our social events."



## Renfrew Men's Shed's plan to grow

**SMSA Development Officer for the West Coast Stewart Beck visited [Renfrew Men's Shed](#)—a bustling, vibrant and welcoming wee hub situated behind the town centre, with some great local characters creating a laugh-a minute environment.**

Stewart said: "Over a cuppa with the Shedders, former techie teacher and all-round good guy, John Carty outlined how after just over a year in existence, the banter the guys experienced previously in their workplaces is being replaced by the camaraderie and jokes of Shed life.

John said: "The Shed is a place where men WANT to be. All the benefits of being with your mates, and a tangible sense of belonging, without the pressure of employment. What's not to like?"

Santa's little elves have been busy making Christmas products to raise Shed funds and they also have many projects on the go including guitar repairs for the local school (see below) and helping local film students.



Stewart added: "The Shed has ambitious plans for a Community Asset Transfer for a much larger building located nearby in the public park.

"This will enable the Shed to grow and have space for many more potential new members to do what Shedders do – to build stuff and relationships beyond the workplace and give men meaningful and engaging activities. Exactly what every locality needs.

"We look forward to seeing you grow, guys – exciting times."

## Renfrew Men's Shed brings the joy of music back to local young students 'Repair-Shop style'!

**[Renfrew Men's Shed](#) is giving back to their local community 'Repair-Shop style' and spreading the joy of music one fix at a time, through the repair of musical instruments for young students at their local secondary school.**



Shed founder John Carty explained "Renfrew Men's Shed has been up and running now for just over a year and we have been successful with craft-based projects, building up the skills of our members and creating a safe space in our community for local men, who may be feeling lonely or at a loose end, to seek friendship and connections and to achieve things 'shoulder to shoulder' through our Shed facility.

"One of the goals of the Shed is to encourage community links and to that end we have taken part in many small and large scale local events to raise our profile.

"A wee while back I contacted Graham Ness, the music teacher at

our local secondary school Trinity High, and asked him if there was any equipment that needed repairing.

"As a result, we have since taken in guitars which were no longer being used due to major faults and broken parts. Fellow member Ted Mullen and I were both engineers and between us also have over 80 years' experience in the local music scene.

"Using our combined skills, we have managed to repair and rebuild these guitars and are now in the position to hand them back for the music students at Trinity High School."

Music teacher Graham Ness, upon receiving back the repaired instruments, said: "What the Men's

Shed has done is tremendous. These instruments were wasted and no longer in use, they have now turned them back into fully-functioning quality instruments saving us valuable resources.

"We are extremely grateful and hope to continue our community link with Renfrew Men's Shed and rescue some more valuable instruments for repair and reuse."

**Renfrew Men's Shed is open three days a week (Tuesday to Thursday) from 11am to 2pm and is located in Room 1 of the Anderson Business Centre on Anderson Drive in Renfrew. Contact [John Carty](#) by email or call 07960154541 for more information.**

## UNLOCK THE FULL POTENTIAL OF YOUR EXTRACTION!

Over the past few months, I have had the pleasure of visiting numerous Sheds, where I've been warmly welcomed and treated to a decent cuppa. These visits have been invaluable in my learning journey, helping me understand the unique needs and challenges faced by each Shed.

It's been a joy to share this knowledge with other Sheds during my travels. I've witnessed some truly exciting developments, including new workshops and engaging Networking meetings in Three Towns and Inverclyde.

During my recent visits, the primary focus has been on extraction systems. While extraction might not be the most exciting aspect of a Shed workshop, it is undoubtedly one of the most crucial. Often, setting up an effective extraction system can feel like solving a jigsaw puzzle without a picture, requiring careful consideration to ensure it is both efficient and cost-effective. I'm always happy to offer advice to help you get the best value for your money.

To assist with this, I've put together an overview of tweaks that can be made to existing extractors and systems to reduce dust levels in workshops. This will help keep your workshops safe and efficient.

It's been wonderful getting to know so many of you, and I wish you all a Merry Christmas. I look forward to catching up with you in the New Year!

**Mark Bloomfield | [b2bnorth@axminstertools.com](mailto:b2bnorth@axminstertools.com)  
Axminster Tools UK B2B Technical Consultant**



### CARTRIDGE FILTERS

These filters can be purchased individually and the idea is to replace the cloth bags seen on so many of the older extraction machines. They come in various sizes to suit our extractors however some are compatible with other brands. The cartridge filters improve the

efficiency of the extraction unit, give a higher level of filtration so better protection for the end user and the paddles on the top can be manually cleaned improving the life span of the machine.



### AIR FILTERS

These filter units are fantastic especially in smaller workshops. They pull air in through the front filter and pulls out the airborne dust through the double cartridge filter.

They are remote controlled and can be left to run for a few hours once you have finished in the workshop continuing to pull the dust out after the shop has finished for the day. Ideally suspended from the ceiling centrally but can be fixed to the side of a wall also if head clearance is an issue. Not to be mistaken for a dust extractor this is a unit to be used with a good extraction system. Axminster Tools do three different models of this and would certainly recommend.



### CYCLONE EXTRACTION

Cyclone extractors are becoming more popular over recent years. The technology separating dust and heavy chippings. The dust filtered through the heppa filter on the left and the chippings into the drum on the right.

This gives super efficient air flow and can be used on small duct systems connecting workshop machines to this including lathes table saws and planer thicknessers. Some of the sheds I have visited have had these installed on self install ductwork and provide a good extraction solution without the huge prices of a full LEV external system.

Axminster currently have six cyclone extractors available at varying prices and suitability depending on the workshop needs.



### LATHE EXTRACTION

Two of the extraction solutions for lathes. A 100mm diameter hose connected to a duct system or directly into an extractor or powerful portable

extractor. The solutions are designed to sit behind the headstock pulling the dust away when sanding or finer work.

The shavings from woodturning will still drop to the floor as they are clean cut and would just sweep up.

## St Andrews Men's Shed's former Chairman receives Local Hero accolade

*Henry Paul, the former Chairman of [St Andrews Men's Shed](#) for six years before stepping down earlier this year, received a well-deserved 'Local Hero' accolade at the Scottish Parliament's 25 year special commemorative anniversary event.*

Every Member of the Scottish Parliament was asked to nominate one of their constituents who have made an extraordinary contribution to their communities, their local hero, and Henry was nominated for the Mid Scotland and Fife Region by Roz McCall MSP.

Roz McCall MSP, on visiting the Men's Shed following the event, said: "It was amazing to visit St Andrews Men's Shed and see the incredible work being done. It was a privilege to present Henry Paul with a certificate as my Local Hero, for all of his work masterminding the new site. It was also great to hear about the success story of Levelling Up funding for solar panels on the site!"

Henry flew as a navigator in RAF Phantoms and Tornados and served in both Gulf Wars before retiring when RAF Leuchars closed in 2015. After hearing about plans from the care sector in St Andrews to launch a Men's Shed for the area, he volunteered to help and has been involved ever since!

Henry has been instrumental in steering the course for the Shed to move to its new site at Craigtoun Park with ambitious plans for a bigger and better site and gardens for its current 50-strong membership and room for more.

The St Andrews Shedders are thrilled that Henry's vast community efforts, not just with the Shed, have been recognised and rewarded. "Henry, you are a legend! Thank you for all you do."

Henry has been the driving force for the Shed for over eight years now and made the decision to pass over the reins to new Chairman Keith Haynes as he looks forward to enjoying the fruits of his labour and being a Shedder and learning some new skills which he simply did not have the time to do before.



**Pictured (top to bottom): Henry Paul (left) of St Andrews Men's Shed meeting with His Majesty King Charles at the Scottish Parliament 25th Anniversary event; Henry with Roz McCall MSP and his 'Local Hero' certificate; and Henry enjoying a brew with his fellow members.**



**"Henry, you are a legend! Thank you for all you do."**



# A PERSONAL STORY



***The SMSA interviews father-of-five, armed forces veteran and Comrie Shedder Tom Hollins (53) who following medical discharge from the army found his local Men's Shed and is now embarking on a new venture—to set up a veterans' hub a stone's throw away from the Shed base at Cultybraggan Camp.***

Tom, originally from Belfast, had a military upbringing from day one, his dad was in The Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) providing recovery and engineering support to British Army vehicles from land, air and sea and his brother was also in the Royal Air Force.

Tom said: "I joined the Army Infantry Division and then in 1989 moved to the 1st Battalion Wessex Regiment as a mortarman and then a few years later transferred to the Royal Logistics Corps as a railhead operator.

"In 1996, I moved to the Territorial Army (TA) for four years before serving for 14 years (2000-2014) with the Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) in an armed security role as a section commander/guard commander with a 14-man security section for the 1 Royal School of Military Engineering Regiment in Kent.

"In 2018, I moved into a recruitment role with the TA and then had a short spell back at MPGS before being medically discharged in 2022 as a result of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which my father and brother also suffer from.

"I thoroughly enjoyed military life. I really missed the lads, the banter, the lifestyle. People say I am very regimental—of course I am, it is all I have ever known, we even have our own language, and I loved it! After 33

years in the army, I didn't know what to do with myself—I had travelled all across the world, seen so many good things and a lot of bad but I still missed it. I had to find a way to move on.

"With my complex PTSD, I attended the Veterans First Point in Dundee and received great support from them and was also put on a 28-week Peers-to-Peers course so I could also help others.

"Life following discharge has been a roller coaster ride—both mentally, emotionally and physically. But then we moved to Crieff and I heard about Comrie Men's Shed and quickly joined desperately seeking my get-up-and-go and comradeship.

"The Shed helped me to talk to other men and make connections. There were some veteran members and it was great to talk to people that could relate. Even though I am one of the youngest members, I have had the opportunity to meet a lot of great Sheddors with good life experiences to share and learn from.

"The Shed changed my life for the better and helped me feel at ease. I have met so many amazing people and it was a place I could concentrate on my own health and wellbeing.

"[Comrie Men's Shed](#) is based at Cultybraggan Camp—a former WWII prisoner-of-war camp in one of 80+ Nissen huts (Hut 65) which was constructed to house up to 4,000 prisoners (formerly known as PoW Camp 21) and then became a training camp for the Ministry of Defence in 1948. The camp is now a thriving multi-use community resource run by the Comrie Development Trust.



*Continued on next page...*

## A PERSONAL STORY (CONTINUED)



*...continued from previous page*

“The Shed offers activities ranging from woodwork to bird watching including personal and community projects, repair/restore service, arts and crafts, IT skills, book clubs, leather-craft, photography and ham radio.

“I found however, meeting veterans in the Shed that they were all saying the same thing—there was no support in our area just for veterans and their families. Somewhere to go for help, advice and support.

“A lot of veterans come back shellshocked and/or with disabilities and struggle to readjust to society and find employment and don’t know where to turn. Many feel like an outcast, and suffer anxiety and feelings of loss and just need somewhere to go to chew the fat with someone who can relate to military issues. So, I decided to do something about it.

“The camp is such an ideal location with many opportunities and huge potential. In addition to the huts, there are 40 allotments, a community orchard, woodland, a gym, shops and local businesses too. There are also many volunteering opportunities including gardening, maintenance and offering tours at the museum. In the Shed and at the camp, you meet a wide mix of all lives and I had now made the decision to add a veterans hub to the list!

“I have undertaken many courses including Mental Health First Aid and my past made me experienced to offer integrated support to veterans and their families including health and wellbeing support, funding advice, social activities, connections, advocacy, access to services and pension, employment, relocation and housing advice. I can also signpost veterans to programmes and partner agencies that I have built close links to.

“It has now been over a year trying to set up the veterans hub as a charity, piggybacking on the Shed. I have ‘pestered’ everyone in my path to get the hub up and running.

“The hub is now open and located in Hub 1 at the camp and open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays but the

long-term plan is to be open five days a week. The hub is really informal—like walking into a living room—and is somewhere veterans and their family members (whether they have served one month or 40 years) can come and chew the fat with someone relatable and access support.

“We can also send veterans on day trips such as the Wolverhampton Multi Sports and Activity Camps where they can do anything from wheelchair basketball to rock climbing. There is something for everyone.

“I say to people who are struggling—feeling withdrawn and pushed to one side—don’t look at the pavement, when you go out for a walk, look up, look around you and see new things. Say good morning to people you have never spoken to before on your daily walks, try something new. As we know in the Shed, it can take a while for people to open up. Take the time, build up trust and they will talk.

“On Remembrance Sunday 2024, we opened our doors and invited veterans from the armed forces and families to come and join us and had a buffet and refreshments. It was a great success.

“Chris from the Shed has been fantastic helping me out with the hub. We opened a little later than planned due to waiting on funding. We have a benefactor who has offered to pay our rent which will keep us going for the next five to six years.

“The Shed has such a great rapport in our area and as word gets out about the hub and its Scotland-wide service, we are hearing the same. We aim to reach and help as many people as we can.

“But, I said from the start of this venture, if I can help just one person feel happier and valued in themselves and move on at their own pace, then it has been a success.”



**Please follow and support [Comrie Men’s Shed](#) and the [Cultybraggan Veterans Hub](#) on Facebook.**

# SHED-TO-SHED VISITS



## Govan Shedders hit the road to visit East Kilbride Men's Shed!

*On the 23rd October 2024, a squad of 16 [Men's Shed Govan](#) members hopped on a minibus and headed to [East Kilbride Men's Shed](#) for a learning exchange visit.*

The visit, which was fully funded by SMSA Shed Member partner the [Scottish Community Alliance's Community Learning Exchange](#), provided the opportunity for a large group of the Govan Shedders to travel to another Shed to share experiences and learn new approaches to bring back to their Shed.

Sarah Everett, Funding Manager at Men's Shed Govan, said: "We received a lovely warm welcome and were all given an in-depth tour by their Chairman Paul Munday. They have a very productive Shed which has also set up a shop—we were very impressed. They have a much bigger workshop than ours so we were blown away with their whole set up.

"Our Shed is very busy at the moment getting ready for our Christmas Fair fundraiser which can generate a lot of income for us so we particularly enjoyed seeing the different ideas they had for their many creations.

"We were over the moon when the East Kilbride Shedders very kindly agreed for us to 'steal' some of their ideas! One of our members Bobby has created some reindeers to sell at our fair, thanks to some creations he saw there. We loved the caricatures that one of their members had created—they have some very talented members indeed.

"We enjoyed hearing the story of how they had started up and the trials and tribulations of their previous premises. They have a great set up now and it seems to be very well run. All in all, it was an extremely enjoyable and informative visit. All the members really enjoyed it and learned so much."

**Have you got an idea for your Men's Shed but aren't sure how to go about it? Don't want to reinvent the wheel? SMSA Shed members can apply for funding—travel and subsistence expenses up to £750—through the [Scottish Community Alliance Community Learning Exchange](#) to visit fellow Sheds or community groups and learn from their experience. Visit the [SMSA website](#) for more information on the process.**



# SHED PROJECTS

## Peebles Shedders set the stage for *Men Don't Talk* play

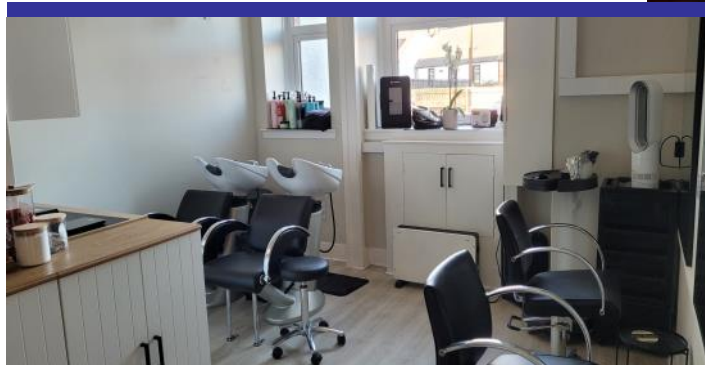
*From a few bits of timber in the back of a hire van to a stage set, just like that!*

It took eight Peebles Shedders, over a period of about three weeks, to 'knock together' the stage set for the *Men Don't Talk* play's tour of Scotland during which time they laughed, cursed, said 'ouch', drank tea, ate Jaffa Cakes, learned new skills, found muscles they had forgotten about long ago and most importantly they talked... a lot!

A representative from Peebles Shed said: "The *Men Don't Talk* play has put our humble wee [Peebles and District Men's Shed](#) well and truly on the map. It was such a privilege for our members to be involved in what we can now say was a roaring success of a production.

"More importantly though, the way our stories have been dramatised and portrayed has reinforced the simple message we try and get across every day—bring men together in a Shed and great things will happen!

"While some of us were working on this project, others stopped by to admire our work or quietly got on with their own projects in our workspace. This is why we take on these challenges. Men don't talk face-to-face—men talk shoulder-to-shoulder."



## Maryburgh Shed's latest fundraising initiative is a cut above the rest!

*With no hair salon in their village and local hairdressers having to rent chairs in Inverness or Dingwall, Maryburgh Men's Shed—SMSA's silver 'Scottish Men's Shed of the Year' 2024 winner—has come up with a hair-raising plan to offer a great community resource whilst generating additional income towards their running costs.*

Shed Treasurer Andy Barnett said: Our Shed has three large classrooms and a staff room and engaged with a local community hairdresser, who we are delighted to say has now become a tenant, to utilise the old staff room as a hairdressing salon.

"This not only brings a welcome rental income to our Shed but also generates some further activity around our school building, which has lain dormant and unused for so long in our village."



## DIY clay pot heater

*Whilst on his travels, SMSA Development Officer Stewart Beck spotted this wee contraption beating the cold and energy bills at [Irvine New Town Men's Shed](#)!*

Stewart said: "It was such a cauld day but I was greeted with a veritable haven of warmth as I

entered the Shed. They utilise the cheap and efficient sustainable heating solution of a terracotta pot heater!

"It is a very simple set-up. Simply place tea lights or candles (never leave unattended!) in an upside down terracotta pot, light the candles and the pot absorbs the heat which radiates back into the room—heating the room for a good few hours!

# SHED PROJECTS



## Barrhead's Shed's Dafty Crafty's

*Barrhead Men's Shed's new "Dafty Crafty's" group is meeting every Tuesday afternoon to make greeting cards but hopes to branch out into other avenues in the future.*

Shed Secretary Robert Humphrey said: "After the pandemic, our membership has been growing and diversifying—we are now approaching 70 members! There was a keen interest to start a craft group and they are presently creating greeting cards— birthday, get well, engagement, marriage, sympathy etc—and plan to explore other crafts in the future. It is lovely that we now have a small display stand in the Shed for members to choose a card to send to a loved one."

## Glenkens Men's Shed Poem

If it wisnae for the Men's Shed,  
where would I be?

I'd be in ma bed or the infirmaree

Wood working skills are  
something new to me

Friendship, mugs of coffee  
and good companee

That's what Glenkens  
Men's Shed means to me



## Reciprocal intergenerational support in Armadale

*At the last Lothian regional Shed Network meeting, Armadale Shed shared their reciprocal intergenerational working and mentoring journey with their local secondary school.*

Armadale Shed is mentoring two pupils—a young lady and gentleman—from [Armadale Academy](#) on a weekly basis and one recent request for them was to create a cross holder for a private Remembrance Day Service at Heatherfield Nursing Home in Armadale.

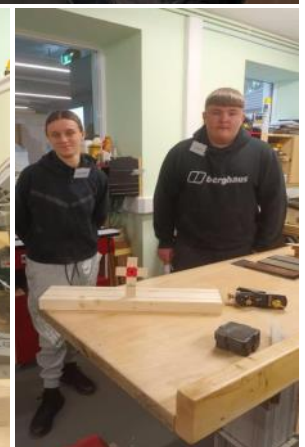
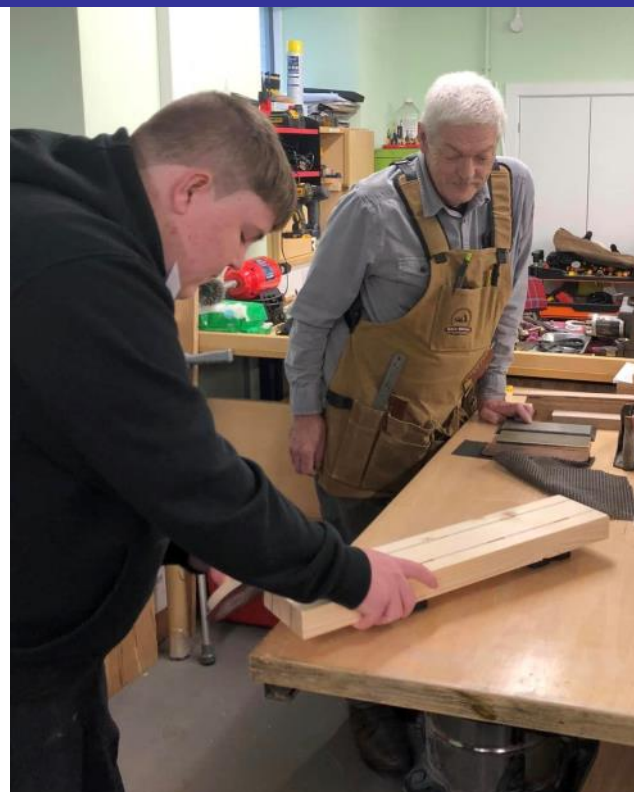
Jan Pateman from Armadale Shed said: "The cross holder was requested by Marion

Hutton from the Armadale and Blackridge War Memorial Association as we had previously created larger versions of this holder a few years ago for use at the Armadale ceremony and they are still in use to this day.

"The students, Shalinn and Cooper, were pleased to be of help to the local community for such an important event—and a small token of thanks from Marion (Haribo) also went down a treat!

"In October, we were also delighted to work with the Academy when we utilised the skills of a group of extremely talented pupils who filmed the re-opening of our Shed following its renovation after the fire."

[Watch the film here.](#)



# IN REMEMBRANCE

***A founder and former Chairman of [Carse of Gowrie & District Men's Shed](#) sadly passed away on the 10th August 2024.***

Roy Garland was born in Berwick in October 1939 and was a time-served Blacksmith/Farrier and had his own metal working business.

During his working life, he had a variety of jobs all around the country—one of which was a member of a local band playing the drums until he found employment in the prison service in Castle Huntly in Perthshire where he taught the residents all aspects of metal work and welding.

Shed Secretary Bill Beckers said: "Roy's eyesight began to fail him and he had to retire from regular work. However, every cloud has a silver lining and this is what spurred on Roy's passion to launch a Men's Shed for Carse of Gowrie and the surrounding areas.

"Roy was one of the founding members of the Carse of Gowrie Mens Shed which started 12 years ago here in

Dundee and was the Shed's inaugural Chairman—a position he held for three years and saw the Shed begin to transform into the success it is today.

"Roy ran the metal workshop and taught all aspects of metalwork including welding. Despite his deteriorating eyesight, he could still detect the sound of good welding practice! He kept in good health until a few years ago when he reluctantly had to cease his regular attendance at the Shed but of course we all still kept in touch.

"Our members gained so much from his wise council and expertise. He was extremely well respected and is still talked about and missed in the Shed. His invaluable skills and knowledge will be passed on to many others and generations. May he now rest in peace."



***On the 6th November 2024, we said our final goodbye to 97-year-old Stonehouse Shedder, veteran, toolmaker and golf club manufacturer John McGhie—the oldest active Shedder in South Lanarkshire.***

**[Stonehouse Men's Shed](#)** Chairman Graham Curtis said: "With a large turnout of John's family and friends and his pals from Stonehouse Men's Shed, a local piper—another friend of John—helped with an emotional farewell at John's funeral.

"The last year of John's life was full of events and activities with the Shed including a recent visit to Moffat Men's Shed which he thoroughly enjoyed. He never missed a day at the Shed until a recent fall and hospital stay.

"His cheeky chappy side was clear to see when interviewed by SMSA Communications Officer Michelle Wibrew for his personal story. His article in 'The Scottish Shedder' magazine ([July 2024 issue](#), page 26) highlighted his fulfilled and interesting life through to finding his local Men's Shed for companionship. Following this, he became a local celebrity and was also interviewed by Avondale Radio ([click here to listen](#)) and featured in the South Lanarkshire Shedders magazine!

"The Shed has been donated two of the golf clubs made by John in his factory unit in the village and these will be proudly mounted in the Shed and we will keep his memory alive with this talking point. Memories of John will remain with his Shedder friends and a tribute plaque has been donated and will be located in 'Rob's Back Yard' at the rear of our Shed. It's not goodbye, it's a see you later, John."

John's Grandson Scott said: "I will be keeping in touch with my Papa's friends at the Men's Shed to maintain a link. I genuinely think the Shed is one of the best communities going right now. Us men do not have a lot outside of our daily lives that's relatable. When I retire, I will absolutely be looking to join such a community but I also appreciate it right now—if only my busy working hours weren't in the way. I will be along to visit the lads though—I hugely appreciate them for my Papa's involvement and acceptance these last few years.

"It's a guy thing, that's forgotten in expectation of strength. My papa let me see the importance of course and put it into perspective. Now, I get it! For men in general, we need like-minded people to relate to in modern society where we tend to become relied upon or forgotten entirely with expectations and presumptions. I just appreciate that my auld Papa was not forgotten and had an amazing and supportive community around him."





# MOT4MEN

## BODY TESTING STATION

The MOT4Men preventative men's health programme candidly educates and informs on key men's health matters including diabetes screening, heart disease, alcohol, smoking, blood pressure and cancer (testicular, bowel, breast, prostate and skin) – enabling men to increase their awareness and prioritise their health needs.

### What does the MOT4MEN programme cover?

- **Electrics** Learn about the risk factors and ways to reduce your risk of diabetes
- **Exhaust Fumes** Reasons to quit smoking
- **Fuel Additives** Excessive alcohol intake can throw a spanner in the works.
- **Manifold** Bowel cancer screening could save your life
- **Oil Level** Don't blow a gasket! discuss ways to keep your blood pressure healthy
- **Paintwork** Rust on your paintwork? Check your skin regularly
- **Shock Absorbers** Stress discuss coping skills and contributing factors to mental health
- **Spark Plugs** Keep your spark plugs firing! Check your testicles
- **Timing Belt** Be aware of the risk factors and symptoms of prostate cancer

**Free to SMSA Shed Members**

*SMSA - supporting real health one Shed at a time*

**Interested?** Contact the Scottish Men's Sheds Association Team  
on 07493361003 or email [Dev1@scottishmsa.org.uk](mailto:Dev1@scottishmsa.org.uk)



## Make 2025 the year you go smoke-free with the NHS

*Are you a smoker who wants to quit? The SMSA sat down with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Quit Your Way Service to talk about the support on offer to men who want to stop smoking.*

Quit Your Way is the **free** NHS national stop smoking support service available across Scotland.

**Martin Lever** (pictured below) is the Health Improvement Lead for Tobacco at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, which covers Glasgow, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire and Inverclyde Council areas.

In our Q&A, Martin talks through the help on offer as he encourages Scottish Sheddars to *Quit Your Way* for Christmas and go smoke-free in 2025.

### What is *Quit Your Way* and who is it for?

*Quit Your Way* is the official NHS support for people who want to go smoke-free. Whether you've tried ten times before or you're trying for the first time it's totally free and is one of the best things you can do for your health and your finances."

### What support does *Quit Your Way* offer?

"We offer free information, advice and support, including nicotine replacement therapy, to people who want to stop smoking.

"A lot of our support is community based, either through your local pharmacy or local support groups, but we also offer one-to-one support, help over the telephone and help if you're a smoker who's coming to hospital - even if it's not for a smoking-related procedure."



### Is smoking still a big issue for men?

"It remains one of the single biggest causes of ill health in Scotland. Around 25% of the population in Greater Glasgow and Clyde still smoke and men tend to make up those numbers more than women.

"It can be hard for men to quit for a whole host of reasons, but we don't judge. We're only interested in helping you find the best way to quit, and we really want to get that message across this Christmas and New Year."

### What's it like for a man trying to quit?

"Men can find it harder to reach out for support but last year, we helped almost 4,000 men across Greater Glasgow & Clyde start their quit journey.

"As a former smoker myself, I know how hard it can be to quit. I thought I'd never be able to quit, but I did it at the third attempt with NHS support and I haven't looked back since. I feel great and have lots more money to spend on the things I like doing.

"If you're reading this, I'm telling you - I know it's hard, but I know it works."

### What tips do you have for someone thinking of going smoke-free?

"The most important thing is that you actually want to do it. It doesn't matter the reason - health, money, family, new year's resolution - you just need something to hold on to.

"If you have that desire, we've got something to work with and with our support you're three times more likely to quit and quit for good."

### And where can Sheddars find out more?

"The easiest thing to do is go to [NHS Inform](#), type in your postcode, and see what's available in your area.

"If you live in Glasgow, Renfrewshire, Dunbartonshire or Inverclyde, go to our website at [www.nhsggc.scot/your-health/quit-your-way](http://www.nhsggc.scot/your-health/quit-your-way) and have a look at the information there.

"Outwith this region, [Quit Your Way Scotland](#) is an advice and support service for anyone trying to stop smoking in Scotland. You can contact Quit Your Way Scotland for free by phoning 0800 84 84 84 (helpline is open Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm) or [chat online with an advisor](#)."

**"Get in touch and we'll give you the best chance of quitting smoking by finding a way that works for you."**



## Helping you find the right care

A guide to our services



nhs24.scot

NHS 24

## Accessing the right mental health care from NHS 24

Anyone can experience a mental health issue, at any point in their life. You do not have to deal with these problems alone.

<p><b>NHS Inform</b> At <a href="https://nhsinform.scot">nhsinform.scot</a> you will find information, guides, and video stories to help look after your mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>GP Practice</b> Your General Practice (GP) can offer talking therapies, local services, prescribe medicines or online courses. If needed, they can refer you to another professional.</p>
<p><b>Breathing Space</b> Support for people who are experiencing distress in their lives. You can contact Breathing Space on: <b>0800 83 85 87</b> or the wechat service at <a href="https://breathingspace.scot">breathingspace.scot</a> 24 hours at weekends (6pm Friday to 6am Monday) 6pm to 2am on weekdays (Monday to Thursday) 16 years and over, living in Scotland.</p>	<p><b>111</b> For urgent mental health support, phone 111, day or night. No age limit.</p>
<p><b>Living Life</b> Assessment for a short series of telephone appointments with a Cognitive Behavioural Therapist. Call <b>0800 328 9655</b> Monday - Friday, 9am to 5pm 16 years and over, living in Scotland.</p>	<p><b>If you are unsure what to do, find out at:</b> <a href="https://nhsinform.scot/mental-health-support">nhsinform.scot/mental-health-support</a></p>

NHS 24

## Caring for someone

NHS 24 provides a range of services to support carers



Many people do not recognise themselves as carers. A carer is anyone who is unpaid for their caring and looks after a friend, family member or neighbour due to old age, physical or mental illness, disability or addiction. There is no minimum amount of time you need to support someone for you to be considered a carer.

NHS 24

## New NHS 24 information resources – free to order copies for your Men’s Shed

If you need to give people information about which NHS service to use when they need help with their physical or mental health, NHS 24 leaflets can help.

Visit [www.nhs24.scot/publications/leaflets](https://www.nhs24.scot/publications/leaflets) to view or download:

- [Helping you find the right care](#) a guide to NHS 24 and other services that can help and support your health
- [Accessing the right mental health care from NHS 24](#) about the mental health services NHS 24 provides
- [Caring for someone](#) about the services NHS 24 provides to support carers

The leaflets are available online in English, British Sign Language, easy read, large print and translated in 11 community languages. To order copies of these leaflets (English only) and other printed resources, use our [online order form](#) (there is no charge for this).

## GET PROSTATE FFIT!

Following the fantastic success of the recent programme, Prostate Scotland is delighted that Aberdeen Community Trust has agreed to host another **Prostate FFIT programme** at Pittodrie in 2025!

This unique exercise programme is based on the hugely successful Football Fans in Training (FFIT) delivered by football clubs across Scotland in conjunction with the Scottish Professional Football League Trust.



10 YEARS  
CHANGING LIVES  
FOR THE BETTER

## GET PROSTATE FFIT!



Join us for our next **FREE 12 week exercise programme** which kicks off with **ABERDEEN FC** at Pittodrie!

PFFIT has been running for nearly two years with programmes at Rangers, Hearts, Kilmarnock, St Johnstone and Aberdeen. It's open to all men affected by prostate cancer and is a great opportunity to meet men in a similar situation, share experiences and improve fitness levels.

Starting on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025 from 2-4pm, the free programme will be split into two halves – learning and exercise – then there's exercise videos for homework!

There are just **16 places** available and men can register at <https://spfltrust.org.uk/prostateffit> or contact Elaine Stewart on **07816 408429**.

The SMSA acknowledges and express our sincere thanks to our partners and funders for their support in 2024 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:**



**Donate while you shop online:**



## 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 Sheddors 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

