

A FILM BY DUNCAN COWLES

Silent Men

The Awkward Art of Expressing Emotion



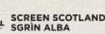
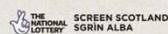
Who is Duncan Cowles?
(the guy you're listening to)



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SCREEN SCOTLAND presents a RELATIVE FILMS production supported by THE WHICKERS
a film by DUNCAN COWLES produced by SANDRA LEEMING, REBECCA DAY, DUNCAN COWLES
original music RICHARD LUKE additional music BELLA ASKEW sound design KEITH DUNCAN
colourist JON BRUCE editor ERIKA IESSE executive producers MARK THOMAS, JANE RAY



Why did I make this film?



The conversations I had on/off camera.



The reception of the film

🏆 **2 Festival Awards** — Sheffield DocFest + SMHAF

🎬 **100+ Screenings (& counting...)**

🌐 **10+ Countries**

GB **60+ UK Cinemas & Venues**

📺 **UK Theatrical Release** — International Men's Day

2024

★ **Top 10 Audience Film** — Sheffield DocFest (6th)

🏆 **2× BIFA Longlisted**

📰 **National Press** — Guardian, Times, Scotsman, GQ

🎓 **Educational & Community Screenings**



Interview
'I couldn't tell my parents I loved them': documentary-maker Duncan Cowles on giving silent men a voice
Catherine Bray



Attempts of emotional openness... Duncan Cowles. Photograph: © Duncan Cowles. Photograph: © Duncan Cowles. Photograph: © Duncan Cowles.

All Sections

THE SCOTSMAN

Most viewed

Theatre and Stage

Men Don't Talk: Taking on the epidemic of male silence

By Andrew Eaton Lewis

Published 16th Oct 2024, 00:00 BST



Film-maker Duncan Cowles, main, explores his own and others' mental health in Silent Men

Silent Men review — affable doc about why men can't emote

The documentary-maker Duncan Cowles explores his own emotional reserve in this Louis Theroux-like investigation



The documentary film-maker Duncan Cowles, Edinburgh's Louis Theroux, here graduates from making BBC Scotland shorts about millennial angst (his *Scars: Adult Things* series) to a full-length feature about male emotional constipation.

SUBSCRIBE



Best documentaries to watch at cinemas:

Silent Men



NEWS

Home UK World Business Culture Politics Health Tech InDepth BBC Verify Climate

England Local News South Yorkshire

Silent Men film asks why so many still struggle to open up



s of the "old fashioned man" is still a "reductive idea" to some

NewScientist

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Health Space Physics Technology Environment Mind Humans Life Mathematics Chemistry Earth Society

Health

A personal investigation into the crisis of men's mental health

The issue of men's dangerously bottled-up emotions finds a fresh and personal voice in *Silent Men*, a documentary that is at its most powerful when director Duncan Cowles turns the camera on others

By Elle Hunt

13 November 2024



Duncan Cowles, pictured, explores the crisis in men's mental health in his new documentary

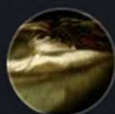




★★★★½ 🍷 Watched by **PBLIX** 11 Feb 2026

type of film you would make secretly wishing people will hug you more often as a joke

🍷 Like review



★★★★★ 🍷 Watched by **mikeoleman** 08 Feb 2026

Incredibly moving and funny film that all men no matter where they are should watch. Duncan is the UK Ross McElwee



★★★★★ 🍷 Watched by **V** 03 Feb 2026

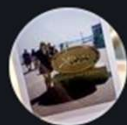
Had a very important message and was done in a very honest style, made me think of the important male figure in my life who had similar issues, RIP, very good

🍷 Like review 1 like



★★★★ Watched by **Rhianne** 22 Oct 2024

A documentary that somehow captures raw vulnerability and honesty in a uniquely entertaining way, without ever detracting from its serious subject matter.



★★★★½ Watched by **Ash** 20 Oct 2024

Serious, fun & inspiring.

♥ Like review 1 like



★★½ Watched by **ijohnny** 18 Oct 2024

A bit too self indulgent for me, but quite entertaining

♥ Like review

My hope for this film.



Community Screenings



No cinema required....

**Just a screen, a room and
some people.**

Screening package includes

- Full HD film
- Community screening licence
- Discussion & reflection guide
- Promotional materials

🎤 Optional extras

Online filmmaker Q&A / discussion with director
Duncan Cowles

Proposed - Educational / Discussion Guide

A PDF guide, for educational settings such as schools, community groups and orgs, sheds...

Silent Men
The Awkward Art of Expressing Emotion

-  **Full film or selected chapters**
-  **Before & after screening discussion questions**
-  **5 themed sections** exploring vulnerability, masculinity, family, communication & emotional expression
-  **Optional activities & reflection exercises**
-  **Discussion of documentary & storytelling**
-  **Guidance for handling sensitive conversations**

**Discussion
Guide**



Sample Pages (in progress)



Contents

Filmmakers Introduction
Learning Goals
Safeguarding
Suggested Chapters for
Classroom Use
Before Watching
During Watching
After Watching
Activities
Extension Ideas



After Watching – Discussion Prompts

1. On Duncan's Struggles

"Why can't I even express myself by telling my parents I love them to their face?"

Why do you think Duncan finds this so difficult?

Did you relate to his discomfort with vulnerability?
Why or why not?

2. On Generational Influence

"Interviewing my dad... helped me understand where I'd maybe learned to keep my emotions hidden."

What patterns did you notice between Duncan, his dad, brother and grandfather?

How does the film explore the idea of emotional inheritance?

What behaviours might have been passed down in your family?



Chapter 2 - John's Story - Hidden Struggles

Duration: 5mins

Link: <https://vimeo.com/1161457423/a8c052fe55>

Themes: Secrecy, fear of vulnerability, illness, parenting

Description: John describes keeping his cancer diagnosis from his family for a year and being unable to cry in front of his children. Quiet, reflective and very moving.

Use: Ideal for discussing the cost of emotional suppression and how masculinity affects openness.

Discussion Prompts:

1. John kept his illness a secret to protect his family. Do you think that helped or hurt his relationships?
2. What stops people, in particular men, from crying or showing emotion in front of others?

Optional, Johns' story continues and develops in scenes two and three over a year and a half time period, showing the impact his decisions have on his life, and then how he has changed as a result:

Link to John's second scene:

<https://vimeo.com/1161459643/7165265e15>

Duration: 5mins

Link to John's third scene:

<https://vimeo.com/1161461694/56befb1090>

Duration: 8mins

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**The moment that
made it worth it.**

Could Silent Men come to your shed?

*Sign up if you are interested with me
today at my stall.*

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Contact:
info@duncancowles.com



Relative
Films

THE
WHICKERS



SCREEN SCOTLAND
SGRìn ALBA

FILM
HARBOUR



SCOTTISH
MEN'S SHEDS
ASSOCIATION