

# SHOULDER to SHOULDER

Newsletter 034 | September 2017

## FROME CORACLE FUN



In late 2016, Men's Sheds Cymru challenged Frome Men's Shed to make and race a coracle.

They took up the challenge and the coracle was made by two of the Frome Shedders – Tony Hopkins & Steve Gray, with lots of advice from other Shedders.

There are many different forms of the coracle across the UK, but the Frome Coracle was based loosely on the Severn-Ironbridge type reflecting its style and dimensions.

Instead of the traditional method of making a coracle

frame with cleaved laths of Ash or willow, the frame of the Frome Coracle was made from a single board of 4 mm Birch plywood, cut into 35mm strips by Avon Plywood of Keynsham. The laths were woven and shaped after soaking and applying heat. The covering is heavy calico, painted with flexible bitumen paint. The paddle was hand made by Tony.

The coracle was started in March 2017, and took about three months to complete, largely working just half a day a week at the Frome Men's Shed.

## SHARE YOUR STORIES

One of the most common requests that drops into our mailbox, pops up on Facebook or is commented on our website is "what are other Sheds up to?".

Shedders love to hear good news stories from other Sheds and like to help when Sheds are in need, and so do we!

Whether you're looking for like-minded men to open a Shed, found your first premises, have a launch event or have made something brilliant - we want to hear about it!

Send your stories with high resolution photos to [admin@ukmsa.org.uk](mailto:admin@ukmsa.org.uk) and we'll share them in here or on social media.

## THE TEST

The coracle was tested on the River Frome by Sheddars Patrick Abrahams, Steve Gray, John Philp & Tony Hopkins. It was launched, named "Glennis", and some Prosecco poured over the side. The coracle was named "Glennis" after Tony's late wife. Tony said "Making a coracle has been a lifetime ambition for me – and it was brilliant seeing it on the river – Glennis would have been very proud"

Patrick, John & Tony all trialled paddling the Coracle. It all went very smoothly – with quite a crowd gathering to watch (and perhaps hoping that one of them would fall in).

A photographer from the Frome Times came along and took some really great photographs.

The earliest record of coracles on the river Frome was when the wild Silures Tribe from South Wales came over the Severn and down the River Frome in coracles to attack the Romans at Farleigh Hungerford!

## THE BIG RACE

The team strapped the Coracle on the top of the car and headed down the M4 to Carmarthen. Patrick, John and Steve arrived in



Carmarthen to meet Tony Hopkins who had travelled separately. Malcolm & Jenny Rees from the Carmarthen Coracle Association met with the guys to witness the event as did a crew of the Ferryside Sheddars.

The Frome Sheddars met lots of people at the Carmarthen River Festival, including the Carmarthen Mayor Alun Lenny.

The race took place at slack tide. The start delayed by the passage of the RNLI rescue boat racing up and down the River Towy – making some waves that challenged the

novice Coraclers.

The race was fairly slow, with Ferryside Shed coming third, John Philp from the Frome Shed coming 4th, and Patrick from the Frome Shed last, but by no means least.

The Frome Sheddars hope to run a larger event in 2018 with more Men's Sheds involved. Get in touch if you're interested and we'll pass your details on to the guys in Frome.

Congratulations to the Frome Sheddars for making something so brilliant and putting it to such a fun use!





# WIN A SHED WORTH £250

Thanks to **Shedstore** and their love of all things sheds

We recently made friends with the kind people at Shedstore and they told us how keen they are to support the Men's Shed movement. What better way to support us than offering our very own Shedders the chance to win a **double door, 8x6 foot shed with a 10 year guarantee against rot?** You can enter for yourself or for extra storage at your local Men's Shed. It's up to you! Lewis at Shedstore shares the reasons they want to support us:

"From a young age, boys are taught to ignore their feelings, that emotions are a sign of weakness, and, in short, to 'man up'. In later life, when confronted with life changes like retirement or divorce, it's no wonder that many struggle to cope, and are faced with isolation and a loss of self worth. This is why Men's Sheds are absolutely vital; providing men with a sense of purpose, new friendships and encouraging talents like carpentry and metal work, skills perhaps unused for a number of years.

Every day at Shedstore we see evidence of loneliness, with many people ringing just to hear another person's voice, the conversation potentially being the highlight of their day. Having an outlet like Men's Sheds to combat negative feelings can be a lifesaver and we have all read the heart-warming comments of members.

Everyone in the Shedstore office can recall a touching conversation, where not only someone's joy at simply having a chat would come through, but their passion for their gardens; sheds, fence panels and greenhouses alike. This, together with UK Men's Sheds Association's fantastic support to the 'grass-roots' approach that allows Shedders to feel a sense of achievement and fulfilment as they build and develop the perfect Shed for their community, are amongst the many reasons why we are so grateful to support this amazing movement, and look forward to watching it grow."

To enter all you have to do is:

Find **Shedstore** and **UKMSA** on Facebook and **like each page, like the competition** posts



Actual prize shown

on each page, **share it on your own page** and **comment what you love about sheds** (Men's Sheds or garden sheds, we're not fussy).

Shedders not on social media can send us an email with the subject 'HAPPY SHEDDING' to [admin@ukmsa.org.uk](mailto:admin@ukmsa.org.uk) giving your name, contact number, the name of the Shed you attend, and tell us what you love about sheds.

## RULES:

1. One entry per Shedder only
2. You must be a member of a Shed in the UK with up to date contact details on our map at [www.findashed.org.uk](http://www.findashed.org.uk)
3. You must follow the competition entry requirements in full to win
4. Enter by 5pm on Friday 6th October 2017, late entries will not be considered
5. Prize will be sent to the winner's UK home address or Men's Shed if preferred (permission must be given by land owner)

The UKMSA team will draw a single winner at random on Monday 9th October and contact them to arrange delivery.

For those that can't wait, get 5% off all orders over £200 at [www.shedstore.co.uk](http://www.shedstore.co.uk). Contact us for an exclusive discount code.

Thank you, Shedstore

 **shedstore**



# SHED HEALTHY

Better ageing at the click of a mouse

Call me crazy but I love compiling resource lists. It's a thankless task, but I think connecting the right people to the right information is a noble cause – it can save time and, sometimes, lives.

Unless you've done it, you won't know the massive effort it takes – the information gathering and editing, the last-minute changes, proof-reading and fact-checking, and then the complaints from groups not included or with errors in their entries.

Congratulations then to Shirley Ayres and Jason Bergen for producing ***the click guide to ageing well***. It's a directory of online resources, written for anyone with a personal or professional interest in making 50+ the best part of growing (and I mean growing) older. It's impressive in its

coverage – from 'community connections' (where Men's Sheds get an entry) to 'sexual wellbeing', and 'income and finance'. The plan is to update the guide annually – so patient complainers can help set the record straight.

***the click guide to ageing well*** is available as an e-book or printed paperback – details at <http://clickguide.co.uk/ageing/ageing.php>

An obvious development would be to create a searchable online database. An interim version might 'borrow' from this lovely guide to men's health, recently launched by the Irish Men's Sheds Association - [www.malehealth.ie](http://www.malehealth.ie)

**Chris Lee,**  
founder The Repair Shed and UKMSA Trustee

# BROADCAST FROM BOURTON

Bourton Shedders make the big time and feature on Countryfile.



Our hearts were extra warm as we watched Men in Sheds Bourton-on-the-Water on television recently. They featured on **Countryfile Summer Diaries** on Wednesday 30th August and they were brilliant! What a wonderful display of everything Men's Sheds are about, and more. If you didn't catch it, it's available on iPlayer here <http://ow.ly/6n8b30eU9Z3> for the rest of September.

Howard from the Shed wrote to tell us a bit about the Shed:

"Conceived early in 2016 we were born on February 9th when a public meeting attracted a dozen people. We owe a great debt of gratitude to our village community who have enthusiastically backed us from the start. Our 'shed' used to be the mortuary of the old Cottage Hospital, now a Community Centre.

The old League of Friends fund our lease, and Cotswold Friends Voluntary Agency manage our insurance and legal matters. After eighteen months of weekly Shedding we have about 30 members and a regular Friday attendance of 15.

We were delighted to be voted New

Shed of the Year at the last Association Conference (much to our astonishment). Thank you, Shedders! It has increased our ability to attract support and funding, resulting in the recent donation of two 32 foot Portakabins which we have Planning Permission to erect on our local British Legion land where we shall have room for lathes and bandsaws that the mortuary is too small for.

We welcome members with a variety of disabilities, including early dementia, referred to us from local GPs through the Social Prescribing scheme demonstrating to funders the breadth of our appeal.

If all this sounds very serious we would not want you to think we are a solemn gang (see our picture!). Our most loyal supporter, a cafe owner, turns up every Friday bearing cake. With tea and talk little work is done for a while, but many pallets get dismantled and reborn as planters, gates and whatnot. Our most exciting project, a trebuchet, was recently borrowed by the Scouts to hurl muffins... What will we do next? Watch this space!

Bourton Shedders, Bourton on the Water, the Venice of the Cotswold."



# JOIN US IN REDCAR

This year's **Festival of Thrift** is only a few weeks away



We'll be recreating the magic of Men's Sheds for some of the 35,000 visitors expected at the fourth Festival of Thrift in Kirkleatham, south of Redcar over the weekend of 23 - 24 September.

Local Sheddors from near (Redcar, Hartlepool and Whitby) far (Staffordshire and Hertfordshire) and locations in between will be there to share their skills, demonstrate woodworking techniques, and

direct visitors to their nearest Shed.

Men, women and children will be able to discover how to turn wine bottles and pallet wood into wall-mounted candle-holders.

We'll be displaying pallet-wood products with a chance for festival-goers to make simple items and have a go at dismantling a wooden pallet safely. For crafty visitors, there will be demonstrations of pyrography (the art of decorating wood by burning the surface) a display of walking stick handle decoration, and lots more.

The Festival is free and you'll find us in the Learning Zone.

So why not come along, say 'hello', and even lend a hand for an hour or two?

If you'd like to know more, contact Claire Shelton at [claire.shelton@ukmsa.org.uk](mailto:claire.shelton@ukmsa.org.uk) or check out the festival website at [www.festivalofthrift.co.uk](http://www.festivalofthrift.co.uk).





# TOOLS WITH A MISSION

The charity helping those in need by sending surplus tools

Tools with a Mission think Sheds are great! They support some amazing sheds and they asked us to tell you about one.

It belongs to Daniel. For someone like Daniel the shed is his workshop and family livelihood, but it wasn't always like that for him. He was making mud bricks in back-breaking conditions and barely supporting himself. After Daniel finished his training, he received a carpentry kit of over 50 quality tools from Tools with a Mission to start his business. He now looks after his entire family, providing the basics like food and schooling for his children, impacting the next generation.

Even more amazing, Daniel's business grew and he now

employs four people who can also look after their families. All this thanks to a single carpentry tool kit, just one of over 750 Tools with a Mission send out each year. There is no way Daniel could have afforded these tools to start his business without them. It costs £5 for a set of cheap screwdrivers locally and he typically earns £1 a day.

In 2016 Tools with a Mission sent 20 containers filled with 300 tonnes of tools including over 10,500 kits to people like Daniel across Africa. Their mission is to collect unwanted tools, refurbish them, sort them into trade kits and send them across the world for livelihood creation.

Unwanted tools give thousands of people each year a chance to create a

sustainable livelihood for themselves, a chance to make their move out of poverty and build resistance. Tools with a Mission manage this initiative thanks to 450 volunteers across the UK who share their passion for tools and livelihood creation. They send out tools, sewing machines and computers that they have received from the public to recipients who really want the chance to work themselves out of poverty.

If you have unwanted tools that can't be given to another local Shed that might need them, you could consider giving them to Tools with a Mission.

You can find out more about them by visiting their website at [www.twam.uk](http://www.twam.uk) or by calling 01473 210220.





# FUNDING ROUND-UP

Don't forget the RVS Sheds Grants.

Grants of between £250 and £1,000 are available from the Sheds Grant Fund. All applications need to come from constituted, volunteer led community groups and must be submitted by the deadline of Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017 to be considered.

Visit [www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/sheds](http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/sheds)

## SUSTAINABLE SHEDDING

Mike Jenn from the Camden Shed shares a tip on income generation

Many Sheds generate some income from selling items members have made but there are limits to this in covering the Shed's costs. One of these is the amount of time members are prepared to give to support the Shed and another is the realisation that you often cannot get much money for what is made.

The Camden Town Shed is about to run its 40th training course called 'An introduction to Wood-turning'. It starts at 11am and finishes at 4pm without a break and enables people who do not know one end of a gouge from the other to make and take away a 6" bowl. Up to 10 people can attend and each pays £65. The Shed has 5 lathes, sets of tools and safety gear and students work in pairs.

After a 'safety first' introduction the pattern of instruction is to explain, demonstrate and then have the students practice. They hear, they see and they do in fairly short bursts. The Sheddors do not find it necessary to explain everything about wood turning and focus mainly on getting the products made safely and in time. They start with a blank that has been centred and had a faceplate attached. The participants go away really excited at having made a superbly-finished product and the Shed gets many 5\*reviews for the course.

Camden Shed is in London which has some characteristics not shared everywhere but

other Sheds could consider courses as an income-generator.

Camden Shed's courses almost always sell out well in advance. They do not do the marketing or bookings but place the advert on to a website called [www.funzing.com](http://www.funzing.com) who take 15% of the fee. This reduces their admin time commitment to a minimum and limits their marketing costs to a known figure. They found paying for advertising ineffective. In general the participants are young, working, looking for an enjoyable experience and most are women.

The Sheddors hire a tutor since having a skill and being able to convey that to a professional standard requires practice and consistency. Other costs are the blanks and other consumables. If everything is prepared in advance the tutor can be left to handle everything on the day. They bought second-hand lathes to minimise the initial outlay.

They have developed this small enterprise over some years and have sales activity that involves very little of Shed members time but which can generate a £400+ surplus every time its run.

If your Shed is in need of sustainable income sources, get in touch with us for advice. If you have tips or stories to share, please email them to [admin@ukmsa.org.uk](mailto:admin@ukmsa.org.uk).



# PARK LIFE

## Shed looking for Shedders

The kind country parks team at Buckinghamshire County Council are clearing out some outbuildings that they had used for storage to make way for a new Men's Shed in Black Park Country Park. The UKMSA team recently visited the site to see the space and are rather envious of the Shedders that get to take it over.

The buildings are set in 535 acres of country park that boasts a huge fishing lake.

The country parks team are having a clearing day between 12pm and 4pm on Wednesday 6th September to empty out

the space and make it more usable for its future resident Shedders. They welcome anybody in the area who is interested in joining or starting the Shed to go along and help. Refreshments will be available and the team will be on hand to give information about the site and the new Shed.

They're yet to find a keen leader or group to start the Shed as a community-driven project and are appealing to locals to put their hands up to drive the Shed project forward. There's plenty of support on hand from the team there and as always from us at UKMSA.

If you live in the Iver, Buckinghamshire area and are interested in getting involved with developing the Shed, let us know.

To find out more, contact Tim Williams on 01753 511060 or [twilliams@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:twilliams@buckscc.gov.uk).



September 2017 | N. 034

[admin@ukmsa.org.uk](mailto:admin@ukmsa.org.uk) | [www.ukmsa.org.uk](http://www.ukmsa.org.uk)

[!\[\]\(b4eeff342f60cc7bcd67d869b4fedca2\_img.jpg\) @UKMensSheds](#) | [!\[\]\(7cbfaf281ed50ce10ba1259f16ecca5e\_img.jpg\) UK Men's Sheds Association](#)

---

---

UK Men's Sheds Association

Reg. Charity 1162409

---

---