

SHOULDER to SHOULDER

Newsletter 049 | March 2019

Thank you for your logos!

In last month we asked for Sheds to share their logos to be featured in a future *Shoulder to Shoulder*. Thank you to all the Sheds who sent us their logos—there's been a great response from you all! If you've not sent us your logo, please do for next month's newsletter.



york men's shed



Help us build a better picture of Men's Sheds

Last year we ran our big Shedder Survey which helped gather incredible statistics about Sheds, demonstrating why they're great places and the value they bring to communities.

Throughout 2019, we will be running some short 2-minute surveys online to help us better understand Sheds. Your feedback will help us get a better idea of the needs of Shedders, Sheds and communities, to guide us to what resources to develop to support Sheds.

To see this month's survey, visit bit.ly/2NuE9PF, which will be open until 21st March.

We'll publish the findings in the following month's *Shoulder to Shoulder*.

A Royal Visit!



Above: The Duchess of Cornwall chatting with Stewart Male and Ron Carver © David Chedgy

Frome Men's Shed were thrilled to have a visit from Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, to recognise the 'Compassionate Frome' programme, which connects people to support networks, groups and services throughout Mendip, and has resulted in a reduction in emergency hospital admissions.

Camilla visited Frome Men's Shed on a very cold 30th January after meeting people at the Frome Medical Centre.

The Duchess took time to meet and chat with all of the 25 Shedders there, and she shook hands with all of them.

Patrick Abrahams, Chair of the Frome Shed, said *"The Shedders commented on how easy she was to talk with, how down to earth she was, and how she was genuinely interested in what they were doing. All the Shedders commented on how welcoming Camilla, and all her staff and security were during the visit. Her staff said that they thought the Shed was full of so many wonderful characters and were pleased to see so few 'suits'. They appreciated the warm welcome and sense of community that they felt in our Shed workshops. Camilla commented on the amount of laughter she heard during her visit to Frome Shed."*

Camilla chatted to Jan, one of the Shedders learning how to re-cane a chair. Jan, one of the women who comes to the Men's Shed, said *"It was fun meeting Camilla. I explained I liked to benefit from older people's experience – she agreed that it was getting increasingly difficult to find older people to learn from!"*

Ron, the Frome Shed President, said *"She asked quite a few questions about the jewellery box I was making" adding "she was more knowledgeable on woodwork than I was expecting."*

Camilla gave encouragement and best wishes to two Shedders - Bern and Peter. Bern was making a scale model of cladding that he is hoping will be used to turn shipping containers into attractive looking low-cost housing. Peter showed the thatched dolls house he is currently making for his granddaughter – and is struggling a little with the plans.

Other Shedders were busy building a vinyl turn-table, a planter for the community, a cigar box guitar, a computer—controlled cutting machine, a seat for a mahogany veneer and fibre glass Coracle, whilst others were just chatting and drinking tea.

Camilla was fascinated by the two Coracles made in the Shed. On asking how the Shedders learnt to make the Coracles, Tony and John explained how they were made and raced against the Welsh in Carmarthen. They shared their hope for more Sheds to take part in the next Festival on July 13, 2019. Tony shared their plans to make up full—sized Coracle kits, for people to make them themselves.

On leaving, Camilla was delighted with the gift of a 1/10th scale model of one of the Coracles as a souvenir of her memorable visit to the Frome Men's Shed.



Above: Camilla presented with a model coracle by Tony Hopkins and Patrick Abrams © David Chedgy

Roving Mike...

Lifetime honorary president of the UK Men's Sheds Association, Mike Jenn, goes out and about to meet Sheds and Shedders...

Your MP may need you!

When the Vale of Clwyd MP Chris Ruane visited Prestatyn Shed a couple of weeks ago he said *"I've visited the project three times in the past 18 months and I'm always greeted with a big mug of tea and a laugh."*

It reminded me that when the Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt MP spoke at the first ShedFest he chose not to speak about health (he has previously been a Health Minister) but about the pleasure of being treated as 'just another bloke' on visiting his local Shed. He described how that in his position it was almost impossible to meet anyone who wasn't trying to influence him or get him to do something and how that could isolate him from genuine relationships.

Perhaps Chris Ruane has visited three times in 18 months because he needs something he doesn't find easily elsewhere which is endemic to, or normal, in our Sheds—the acceptance, goodwill and interest we offer each other. So if you haven't done so already, why not send out an invitation - and have the kettle ready?

To find your local MP, and their contact details, you can visit www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/



Another Shed recently visited by their MP is Mablethorpe, Trusthorpe and Sutton on Sea Shed (MTS Shed). Chairman, Alan Forman said *"MTS Shed was conceived in 2016 and received a great deal of support and advice initially from the Shed at Louth, opening up as an operational Shed in mid—2017 in a disused toilet block in Mablethorpe. Since when we've gone from strength to strength. Our members interchange skills and assistance to enable each other to make a variety of items including bird feeders, bird boxes, rocking horses and ornamental wheelbarrows, among other projects. The range of items is limited only by the space and tools we have."*

MTS Shed has been fortunate in their application for a Big Local Grant through Coastal Community Challenge and have received funding to enable them to improve their workshops and, as a result, providing a social and community hub for their local area.

In February 2019 the Shed was visited by their local MP, Victoria Atkins, who was very receptive to their aims and ethos, and complimented them on her Facebook page, saying *"Thank you Mablethorpe Men Shed for welcoming me yesterday, and for chatting to me about the amazing work you do in the community. It was great to see what you all do during your meetings, and to hear about the wonderful work you have done as a group to combat loneliness. The impact of this can be absolutely devastating and I was delighted to see what can be achieved through common interests and friendship."*

Congratulations on all the work you have done to make the Men's Shed a success, and thank you for highlighting such important topics locally."

In the future Mablethorpe, Trusthorpe and Sutton on Sea Shed aim to find a larger premises, more members, engage with the community on an ongoing basis, and be a further credit to the area which Chairman Alan says the Shed has *"the privilege of being a part of."*

Investing in your relationships

Positive relationships are good for our mental and physical health at all ages and stages in our lives. The term 'relationship' covers how we treat ourselves, our partners and other family members, our work colleagues – including fellow Shedders, and how we behave online and in the wider offline (some would say 'real') community.

Most of us would agree that being socially connected makes us feel happier, healthier and evidence suggests it also helps us live longer! So how do we maintain healthy relationships – with ourselves, with people we're close to, and others around us?

A readable free guide from the Mental Health Foundation provides some of the answers, to help yourself and those around you (remember – we're talking here about connecting with other people).

The guide to investing in your relationships includes what the authors say are 'five universal tips for maintaining healthy relationships':

Give time: put time aside for family and friends.

Be present: that means that if you're the sort of person who is always checking your phone and e-mail, switch off when you're with other people and switch on to...

Listen: actively so and in a non-judgemental way – concentrate on the other person's need in that moment.

Be listened to: do your best to share your feelings, honestly, with people you trust (not easy for many men!) and do so without feel you're being a burden.

Recognise unhealthy relationships: If we take responsibility for our own happiness and wellbeing, we have the right to avoid people who negatively affect that. Recognising this can help us resolve harmful relationships.

What might this mean for Shedders?

Self-care is about looking after yourself and your mental health by being kind to yourself. When you're feeling unloved, it can be helpful to ask yourself "*what would I say to a close friend?*" If you live with a partner, you need to support each other but it's also important to allow each person the space to maintain their independence by communicating and setting boundaries.

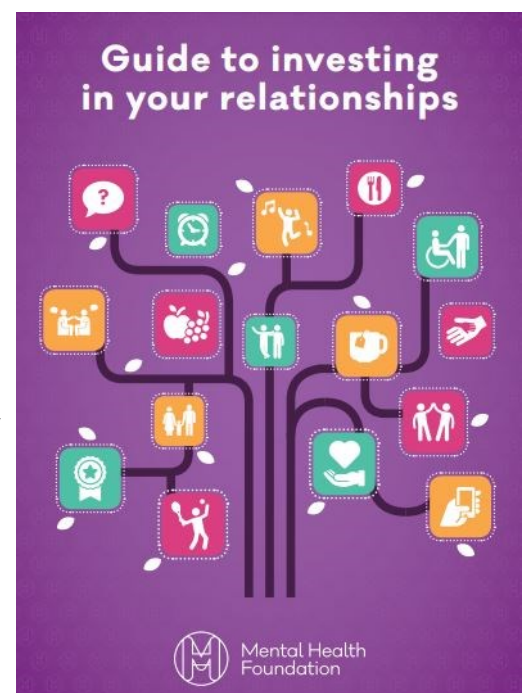
In a Shed environment – working and having fun with others is an opportunity to work on developing your social skills. 'Give and take' can help develop a workspace that's happy and healthy, and that benefits everyone.

A Shed's wider community connections are also important. The Repair Shed in Hertfordshire do the maintenance work and repairs for the special educational needs school that hosts their weekly sessions at their Redbourn site. In Ireland, Shedders volunteer each week as marshals at their local parkrun.

No one is suggesting that developing healthy relationships is easy – there are lots of reasons why it may be difficult to connect socially and to stay in touch. Which is why Shedders and those around them need to work together, and it's why Men's Sheds are so important!

To download the free guide, click here

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/guide-investing-your-relationships>





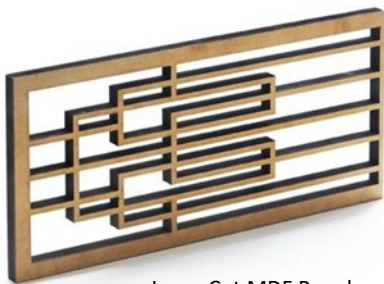
Thinklasers New Arrival!

It's not officially launched yet, but we thought that we would share the first images of our new Lightblade 3060 desktop system with the membership of the UK Men's Sheds Association. Built to the same exacting standards as the rest of the Lightblade range, the new 3060 has a couple of unique features of its own.

No more trailing cables and pipes at the back, as we have consolidated the air assist pump and water cooler into the chassis for a cleaner, uncluttered design. In fact, the only connections at the back are for the power cable and fume extraction hose.



Fitted with a 40 watt CO2 glass laser tube it will cut up to 10mm thick acrylic and engrave at speeds up to 400mm/s. Of course it's not just limited to acrylic.....



Laser Cut MDF Panel

Laser cut intricate profiles and shapes in paper; card; corrugated cardboard, MDF; HDF; plywood, natural woods, bamboo, leather, fabrics, foams, rubber as well as many plastics.

Laser engrave onto all of the above materials as well as glass, painted and coated metals, anodised aluminium, Corian, slate, marble and granite.

You can even mark bare metals using a washable "Thermark" spray coating.

The Lightblade 3060 desktop system comes with the following features:

- 12 months warranty / Free UK mainland delivery / Telephone support
- Internal air assist pump, water reservoir and cooling system
- Laser processing area 590 x 300mm (max sheet size 620 x 330mm)
- Autofocus, red pointer led and millimeter
- 100mm Z-axis powered motion.
- RDWorks Software
- USB, Ethernet communications
- Runs off a standard 13amp socket.



Laser Engraved Birch Faced Plywood



Special offer for UKMSA Sheds

With the launch of the new Lightblade 3060 Desktop laser cutting and engraving machine and following on from our Shedfest 2018 offer on the Lightblade 3040-40W, we are pleased to be able to offer an exclusive deal to all UK Men's Sheds.



Lightblade 3060 Desktop

RRP: £3600 (+VAT)

UKMSA Offer: **£3,250.00 (+ VAT)**



Thinklaser have also developed a series of over 50 videos designed to guide the laser user through all aspects of laser cutting, engraving, photo engraving, materials, software, safety, manufacturing hints & tips, as well as machine maintenance. These videos will be made available for the UK Men's Sheds Association members and accessed through their [resource library](#).

Thinklaser have been manufacturing top end laser systems for over 15 years and laser safety is a key design consideration. All our laser systems are CE approved with fully interlocked laser chambers for safe operation. If you need further information, just give a call

Funding for Sheds

The Allen Lane Foundation funds small registered charities, voluntary groups, and charitable organisations.



The Foundation aim to fund projects which:

- will make a lasting difference to people's lives rather than simply alleviating the symptoms or current problems;
- are aimed at reducing isolation, stigma and discrimination, and;
- encourages or enables unpopular groups to share in the life of the whole community.

Two of the categories The Allen Lane Foundation fund are Older People, and people experiencing mental health problems. Although not all Sheddars may fall into those categories, we know that a lot of Sheddars tend to be older and/or are tackling mental health problems. The maximum grant size is £15,000, and their average grant given is around £5,000.

To find out more about the fund, visit allenlane.org.uk/our-funding-1/

To see if your Men's Shed project is eligible for funding, you can take their online eligibility test here: bit.ly/2tGc7Yu

NEW SHEDS ON THE BLOCK

MAP

The Find-a-Shed tool on our website is the most popular page and requests to add Sheds to the map is one of the most common we receive. The map is a great way to get your Shed noticed, to get new members and attract support from individuals, companies and organisations in the community. It is also a vital tool for men across the UK to easily find and join their local Shed.

www.findashed.org.uk

Make sure you're on the map and your contact details are up to date so people can find you to join your Shed or give support.

We're wishing the following Sheds the best of luck in their development:

Nettlestone & Seaview Shed, Isle of Wight ; Men's Shed Debdale, Manchester; Blewbury Community Shed, Berkshire; Stretford Sheddars, Manchester; Sheddington, Teddington, London; Blacon Men in Sheds, Cheshire; New Milton Shed, Hampshire and Evesham Men's Shed, Worcestershire.

and welcoming the following Sheds, now open on the map:

Cambeltown Men's Shed; Jupiter Shed, Stirlingshire; Mensshed Nairn, Highlands; Grantham Men's Shed, Lincolnshire; Hawkhurst Sheddars, Kent and Scarborough MATES, Yorkshire

Men's Sheds global reach

Men's Sheds are continuing to grow in the UK, along with the reputation of Sheddars as those willing to help out others. Moss Side Men's Shed recently shared this story with us, of how they're helping other men (and women) over 5,000 miles away.

In Autumn 2018, Ann Russell, a semi-retired nurse from Stockport contacted Men in Sheds in Moss Side. Ann was going to Kolkata for two weeks to help out in a hospice. The hospice which is a refuge for patients who have been rescued from destitution off the streets



Moss Side Men's Shed, at The Boiler House



Ann and a local resident with her completed twine bowl

is supported by a small registered charity based in Manchester, 'Friends of Kolkata Bhalobashi Foundation'. Ann wanted to do some crafts with the patients in the hospice and came to a Moss Side meeting for some ideas. Jon Ross, from Moss Side Men's Shed *"We sent through some ideas for crafty things to get on with which they have been doing that over the last six months. The Shed is now 'twinned with' the Kolkata one. Small world!"*

Following her visit, Ann said *"I have just returned this week after being in Kolkata for two weeks. It was an amazing experience. I took a few crafts with me and*

the most successful was the twine bowls. The patients really enjoyed making them and then they decorated them and put them on the wall of the hospice. Another success was rag rug making. They made a heart and then decorated it. They are so imaginative and creative.

The hospice now has 21 patients including four ladies. There is a physiotherapist who attends three times a week and he has made an enormous difference to the mobility of the patients.

Many thanks Moss Side Men's Shed for your help and your interest in the hospice."

Jon, from Moss Side Men's Shed said *"What's been brilliant for the Shed since setting up in early 2018 is the amount of interest from lots of organisations across Manchester, the UK and further afield. The international aspect of it was a surprise, even for us in Manchester! It's great to build a new relationship with the group, and the Sheddars are hoping to do more to support the activities of the hospice. Men's Sheds are great for offering support for each other, and now to others across the world."*

To find out more about Moss Side Men's Shed, visit bit.ly/2Tg0OVb

To find out more about Friends of Kolkata Bhalobashi Foundation, visit bit.ly/2H79CpX



Residents proudly showing their crafts

March 2019 | N. 049

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