

Somerset Levels and Moors Shed

March 2019 newsletter

Welcome to the March 2019 members newsletter. February has seen a lot of work going on in the shed, notably with a number of donations of useful tools from Ron Rudd. Pictures have been a little harder to come by since I began my new job.

Since starting I've driven our future favoured on school runs, transported people on railway replacement work between Taunton and Exeter and I've completed my first private hire job in a Ford Transit minibus to an outdoor adventure centre near Bideford.

This job has now turned full time during school terms, though I hope to be coming to the shed for some time to come!

If you're working on a project and want it included either on our facebook page, newsletter or the Slams website then feel free to email me with material so I can print it here. With my new job I'm now in the shed for less sessions than before and I'm very aware I'm not covering everything that goes on. So if you want to share what you've been up to please please get in touch.

As always with the newsletter, your contributions are most welcome. Keep it clean and legal and I'll be happy to include it here. My contact details are at the back of this newsletter.



Some of you will have noticed our Chairman, Colin undertaking what he describes as 'proper work for the first time in 4 years' on the scroll saw during February cutting out a number of small letters. This has manifested itself in this sign which, when completed will be fixed to the side of our shed for all to see. Next bit of work is a border before fixing.

Colin writes....

Its already March (what happened to February? - it shot by!) and the days are growing perceptibly longer, brighter and warmer. And its not just the spring bulbs bursting into life and the birds getting busy nest building, but SLaMS' Shedders too.

Lately the Shed has been a hive of activity; indeed if you come on Tuesday you have to fight for bench space or a seat in the Snug. And we've had a steady stream of enquirers and one or two new members. One of the highlights of last month was a visit by Diogo Rodrigues, Mayor of Bridgwater who came to do a video report on SLaMS.

Regrettably his visit coincided with a particularly cold and wet day, so shed attendance that day was low. However we got some really good publicity, mainly thanks to Mike Dando's excellent interview. If you haven't yet seen the video you can find it here <https://www.facebook.com/diogobridgwater/>

The wider community is waking up too, and lots of commissions are emerging for SLaMS members to get their teeth into. We have two wooden chairs requiring partial renovation (see me for info), a book case to build, a swan enclosure and a dovecote, both for our nearby neighbour Lee (in Rose Cottage on Canal View).

The swan is a rescue cygnet that Lee and Louise took in, and which has settled to live inside their cottage. As it is getting much bigger it now needs a secure outside enclosure, so Bert and Marcus have been busy getting this built to Lee's specification. The dovecote will follow on in due course, under Cherrill's expert guidance (she's previously built one).

A bit further afield, Kilve Parish Council has been in touch, asking us to build 5, yes 5!!, picnic benches to be located at their beach car park. These are not just your standard run-of-the-mill picnic benches, but need to have a metal top or insert to accommodate the use of portable BBQs.

Apparently their previous picnic benches have been scorched by indiscriminate use of BBQs, so KPC is looking for an innovative solution - and of course that's where SLaMS comes to the rescue. Tom is knocking up some costed designs which we will discuss with them prior to their next Parish Council meeting at the end of the month.

And if that is not enough, Tom and I have been in discussion with The National Animal Welfare Trust at Heaven's Gate Animal Rescue Centre near Langport. They are very keen to collaborate with us on two fronts; firstly for us to make recycling bins, planters and other items to improve the appearance of their public spaces, and secondly to make a range of wildlife-related and other wooden items that can be sold at their monthly barn sales, starting around Easter. This arrangement is still at a very early stage, but if it comes off, should give us a very good outlet to raise funds for our Shed as well as helping the Heaven's Gate charity.

Meantime Dave and Stu have been getting in touch with their Scandinavian roots and are making a series of Viking chairs to sell on e-bay, again earning us some much needed funds. A simple design from two pieces of wood, they are extremely comfortable to sit on. Try one if your knees are strong enough!

But don't sit around for too long - there's too much to do!

Happy Shedding

SLaMS 2019 AGM 26th March 2019 10:00 at the YMCA Friarn Avenue, Bridgwater

Please note that the Shed will be closed on the morning of Tuesday 26th March. Instead we will be holding our Annual General Meeting at the YMCA, just a 10 minute level walk along the canal (car parking is available at the YMCA for those who would rather not walk that distance).

The AGM will start promptly at 10:00 and we should be done and dusted by 12:00 latest, hopefully before then, thus allowing some Shed time afterwards. The Purple Spoon Cafe at the YMCA serves very good tea, coffee and other beverages and the cakes are good too. So get there early enough to place your order and get to the meeting room (upstairs) by 10:00.

Although we would all much prefer to spend time in the Shed, as a properly constituted organisation with the intention to become a charity in 2019, we do have to go through some formal business - receiving brief reports on our 2018 activities and future plans - voting on 2019 membership and session fees, electing your committee and the main office holders (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, H&S Officer) as well as giving each and every member the opportunity to raise proposals on how your Shed is run and what we do there.

Your Committee has put and continues to put in a lot of unseen work to ensure your Shed is viable. Your attendance and participation at the AGM is one way to demonstrate your support and encouragement.

If you have any proposals to make, you are encouraged to let your Committee know in advance so we can ensure adequate time is given in the meeting to discuss this among the members. Ordinarily you should contact the Secretary, William, but as he is recovering from serious illness, please can you either email info.slamshed@gmail.com or given your written proposal to one of the Committee **no later than 8th March**.

The AGM agenda will be circulated to members by email, and pinned up on the Shed Notice Board for those without an email address by 12th March.



Before his recent holiday to Australia, Tony completed this woodturned bowl. Regrettably, I managed to miss the big reveal but Tom emailed in this photo of the finished product.

And now from the UK Mens Sheds AssociationInvesting 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>

Earlier this week, I received the following email from Ted with some more background history of our shed. I thought the contents may be of interest given Ted's work to put together the history of our building.

Dear Stephen,

Further research into the history of the Shed Building has revealed it was NOT built as a drying shed, as first thought, but stables for the horses that pulled the carts from the clay pits to Hamp Works. Some of these pits still exist in Hamp Street, now known as Brown's Pond's. This would explain why the building is isolated from the rest of the works.

I am still working on the history of the Brown Family, more stories to come.

Best wishes,

Ted.

Our Social Secretary, Peter has also been in touch with some news on our planned skittles evening and an update regarding our promotional materials.

Can members please let me know if they will be attending the proposed skittle evening and if a buffet is required?

I have a number of shed leaflets (to increase membership & finance) which need to be placed in shops, doctors surgeries and community centres throughout our area. Can members please get in touch if they're able to assist?

I am proposing to have an open day probably during May in order to promote the shed also hopefully to increase membership and sell various items. It would be appreciated if members could make a few items. This will help a great deal.

We also have a gazebo which can be used for our open day, however I could not find the poles this week they are required in order to be (they are not in Poland !!)

Peter can be contacted on 01278 457577.



During February, we were contacted by Arcadia Activities who wanted us to undertake some repair work to a combat shovel. A replacement handle was turned on the lathe. This project was completed early in February and handed over to much praise. The finished project got a lot of interest on our facebook page after we were tagged in a post on Arcadia's facebook page.



Brian has been working with Mike to create a table lamp. The handle and base have been turned on our lathe. Here is the finished article.

Remember, if you've got something, be it information, or a photo of the project you've been working on in the shed that you want to see in this newsletter, you can make contact with me via email at newsletter.slamshed@gmail.com or just have a chat with me during a shed session.

*For those who don't know me I'm normally the one hiding in a corner **trying** to paint things.*

Stephen Oxbrow
Newsletter Editor

**Shed Opening Hours from 1st November 2018:
Tuesday 10.00-1500, Thursday 1300-1600 & Friday 1000-1500.**

Facebook <https://tinyurl.com/ycx8vgvh> website <https://www.slamshed.org/>