

SHARED TIMES

Men's Sheds Cymru Newsletter

issue 08 | Feb 2021



Summit Good?

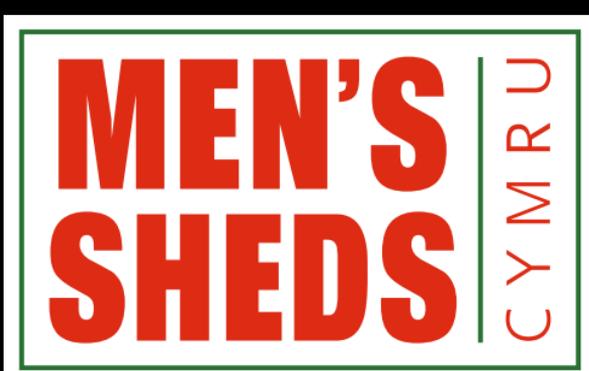
Salad sowing and
crop rotation.

Singing, Sheds and Men

Men's Sheds the Opera

Vic Brown

Finding belonging at a
Men's Shed



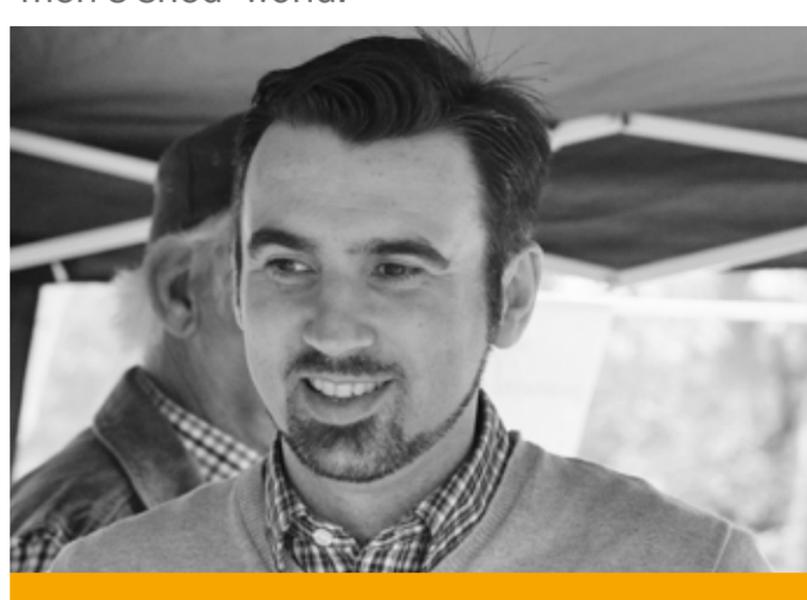
Welcome Shedders!

I am pleased that we at Men's Sheds Cymru continue to be here to support you and your sheds. Thanks to the support of Welsh Government, The Waterloo Foundation and Moondance Foundation, the team that you have come to know over the years remains in place.

Our big themes for this year are communication, connections and wellbeing. We like hearing from you, and we have had many ideas and offers of support – we will be taking you up on these.

Our new Men's Sheds Cymru reference group is an opportunity for us to hear directly from you and for us to update you on our activities.

Shed Leaders do a great job running their sheds. They also spend time passing on information on our behalf. We want to reduce this burden and be able to contact you directly when there is something, we'd like you to know. This could be when we publish our newsletters, the programme of Zoom Room events and what is going on in the wider 'men's shed' world.



In the next few weeks, we'll invite everyone to join our contact list. We'll even send you a Men's Sheds Cymru promotional pack to say thanks for joining and thanks for being part of Men's Sheds in Wales.

Like you, I am looking forward to when we can all physically be in our sheds, but until then please keep safe.



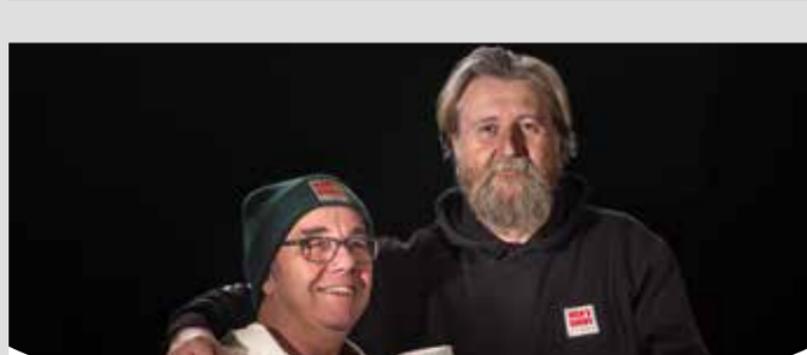
Shed News



The guys at Amlwch have made some planters for the Trecastell Hotel, with support from a Carling/Robinsons brewery Community fund.



In February we met with several sheds to find out what their sheds mean to them and what the future of shedding looks like in Wales.



We will be speaking to more sheds over the coming months and providing you with feedback.

Summit Good's 2020

Here's a snap shot of our journey through 2020!

Obviously a gutting start to the year with restrictions preventing us from meeting but it turned into a beautiful year for our shed, in the eye of a storm that seemed to keep on growing! It feels like there's a lot of shifting happening all over the planet right now, who knows what's in store next year!

We'll continue to hope for the best and right now stand on some top class memories from our first few months meeting on our friday lunchtimes in Swansea!



2020 was "The Year of Woodchip" for the Summit Good fellas in Dunvant! After a string of testing different engaging and interesting activities out from organic seed saving, Mizuna salad sowing and planning crop rotations - none of it really connected - the boys just fell in love with shovelling woodchip and chatting to some new pals!



2020 was The Year of Woodchip

Sometimes the best things in life are the least complicated, and are the things that give us the most space to do the most important thing - chat! Our chatting in 2020 was absolutely top class, don't get me wrong - the topics varied from the absolutely fascinating to the absolutely rubbish - but the point is the conversation happened.

I'm finding the most important thing I can do to run a shed requires me to do absolutely nothing...but listen. When someone listens to us we feel heard, we feel like we're worth something. So for 2021 I'm going to work on my listening! Shutting my mouth, smiling and shovelling more woodchip!

Josh @ Summit Good



Men's Sheds

Vic Brown

One of the best things about Sheds are the people you meet; interesting, original and inspiring. Each one with a story to tell! And so, we thought we might offer brief pen portraits on one or two of the individuals we've encountered and worked with. Not sob stories about hard times, just the interests and threads that have woven their lives together.



Vic Brown....



Vic is a founder member and former Chair of Llanfyllin Men's Shed, near Welshpool, but has led a colourful and fascinating life.

Born in Hampshire (or Aaampshire as he says!). He first trained as a mechanic in the 60's before acquiring a van, working as a delivery driver and then getting his HGV licence which initially led to a lot of work round London's Dockland when it was still that! Dockland. Then venturing further afield with regular trips across to Ireland.

Unfortunately, this heavy work also led to a couple of injuries and a bad back, which eventually led to him leaving the HGVs and training as a mould maker, making amongst other things Doctor Who and Gerry Anderson figures.



After a while Vic and his wife then decided to sell up and bought two narrow boats, living on the canals selling coal, diesel fuel and canal crafts.



But which eventually led him to Men's Sheds and some form of new belonging.

Following another accident when Vic slipped and was crushed between the boat and lock wall (further aggravating his back injury) they had to sell up and after numerous back ops, started a model making business before relocating to Wales, where he then learnt sign writing and clothing embroidery, before retiring.

It was then that true tragedy struck when Vic lost his beloved partner and soulmate his wife, Di... to sepsis! Which then unfortunately led him on a spiral of depression and isolation, but which eventually led him to Men's Sheds and some form of new belonging.

Upcoming Events 2021

Speaker and
Subject / Skill

Date and
Time

Brendan Wheatley
Men's Sheds the Opera 9 February @ 11am

Mike Wright
From Y Fronts to Viagra 27 February @ 11am

David Llewellyn
The Social History of
Vaccinations 9 March @ 11am

Dave Edwards
Pocket Hole Jig 23 March @ 11am

Pete Anderson
Detailje – Detail, that's
where the Devil is 6 April @ 11am

Random fact

According to Australian Men's Shed Association they have more sheds in the country than McDonalds outlets.

Australia has 1000 sheds and 970 McDonalds. In Wales there are 89 McDonalds.

We'll get there!



Prostate Cymru

Raising Awareness with
Men's Sheds in Wales



Prostate Cymru is the leading prostate health charity in Wales supporting men with benign prostate disease and prostate cancer. One of the charity's key aims is to raise awareness of prostate issues across Wales. The charity has a dedicated team of volunteers who travel around the country to deliver talks to clubs, organisations and workplaces as well as attend community events.

The free of charge talks cover topics including men's health and wellbeing, benign prostate disease and prostate cancer. The charity's presenters keep sessions informative yet entertaining, often sharing their own personal prostate health experiences.

Prostate Cymru had a fantastic time visiting Caerau Men's Shed in December 2018 to raise awareness and joined up with Men's Sheds Cymru last year at an event in the National Assembly of Wales to provide information and advice on prostate health. The charity hopes to continue to work closely with Men's Sheds groups across Wales and start conversations about prostate health. If you are interested in organising an awareness talk for your Men's Shed please contact the Prostate Cymru team via info@prostatecymru.com or phone **02920 340029**.

Men's Sheds the Opera

Swansea City Opera asked you to get in touch and tell us your stories, so that we could create a pilot piece for the opera we are writing about Men's Sheds Cymru and the great work it is doing. Well, we've completed the pilot and we are really pleased with it!



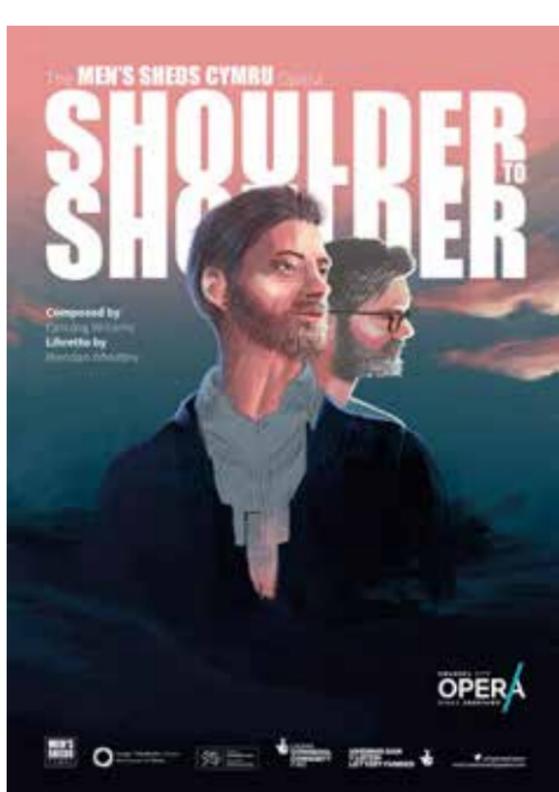
The opera is called 'Shoulder to Shoulder' and Brendan Wheatley who has written the libretto, and Caradog Williams the composer have done a great job. You can find out more and hear the two extracts we have completed on the Swansea City Opera website, www.swanseaopera.com.

They were recorded at the Acapela studios in Pentyrch which is a converted chapel with fantastic acoustics. Covid willing, we have booked the studios to give an opera concert on 11th August and we hope some of you will come!



Covid willing, we have booked the studios to give an opera concert on 11th August

To write the libretto, we have interviewed many 'shedders' and heard some humorous, and some heart breaking, stories from people who have had ups and downs, but all of them have found strength and friendship from their pals in the Shed communities.



Our aim is to spread the word about Men's Sheds and encourage more people to join, so please help us!

Our next step is to find funding for the whole work and we have already had a grant from the Community Lottery Fund for visits to different Sheds to source more stories. Obviously live visits are difficult at the moment because of Covid, but we are very happy to receive emails or have a Zoom/Skype or telephone conversation.

We realise some of your stories may be deeply personal and we will guarantee strict anonymity, with any of our conversations being treated in complete confidence should you wish to share them with us.

However, we will also need many positive stories as we want the performance to be an uplifting experience for both the audience and participants alike! We are sure you have many humorous anecdotes to tell us about your time at Men's Sheds and the new friends you have made.

Artwork by Sean Slater

General Info

For more information about us please look at our website www.swanseaopera.com
enquiries@swanseaopera.com
TI: 01874 690254

Funding

Friends of the Elderly

Friends of the elderly provide support for older people affected by loneliness and grants for those living on a low income.

Through the Grants for Older People programme they provide grants of up to £400 to older people who are of/over state pension age and have savings of less than £4,000.

Applications must be made via a third-party Referral Agent such as charities, local authority and social services representatives.

Website: <https://www.fote.org.uk/our-charity-work/grants-2/>



The Isla Foundation focuses on serving grassroots organisations and individuals that provide vital help to the most vulnerable in society.

Through the Immediate Impact Grants Programme the foundation provides grants of up to £2,000.

They can cover a wide range of projects aimed at creating positive changes in people's lives and in their communities.

Website: <https://islafoundation.com/our-grants/grants-opportunities/immediate-impact-grants/>

It's a while now since mens shed Treorchy hung up their gardening tools, but we are looking to see how we can connect with our community. Do you have old laptops or kindle you can loan us during covid 19 lock down?

can you help?



Mike from LLL Shed

It's been a while but the work hasn't stopped and I wanted to let you all know shed 2 is now complete. I think a labour of love is the best way to describe it with all the lockdowns and the very cold & wet weather doing its best to try and slow things down.



Are you 75 years or over and live in Wales?

National older people's charity, Re-engage, provides social activities for older people at a time in their lives when their social circles are diminishing.

This year, we're offering two fantastic free social activities for men and women who are 75 and over and living in Wales:

Active Together Groups

As soon as it's safe to do so, we'll be launching new groups across Wales to help you stay fit and healthy, and meet new people.



You'll be able to take part in an activity such as dancing, chair yoga, gardening, Tai Chi or boules, and there will be plenty of time afterwards for refreshments and a chat. All our groups are run by Re-engage volunteers who can also give you a lift to the venue and drop you home afterwards.

We're aiming to launch the groups in South Wales as soon as the government says it's safe to do so and will open more across Wales later into the year. All the groups will adhere to current government guidelines and measures will be put in place to ensure your safety.

Call Companions

We know a good chat can mean the world, especially in this current crisis. This is why we've set up a free call companions telephone service for older people who live alone.



You can enjoy a regular chat with one of our friendly volunteers and we'll even do our best to match you with someone we think you have lots in common with.

Whatever you chat about, it'll help lift your spirits; make you feel whole again and more connected to the world.

General Info

If you have any questions or would like to find out more, just get in touch with:

Gavin 02922 801 802
or
Gavin.stewart@reengage.org.uk

Beth 02922 790 147
or
Beth.nesham@reengage.org.uk

Vaccinations

A quick look at Vaccinations with our advocates Tony & Pete

Vaccinations and light at the end of the very long tunnel!

It's looking a much brighter 2021 and continuing good news about the availability and rollout of vaccinations to tackle the Covid pandemic.

There has, however, been much confusion at times with the devolved Government and UK Government messages and guidance/legislation, so we'd just like to remind you all to take the latest information from the Public Health Wales (phw.nhs.wales) and Wales Government (gov.wales) websites.

As I write this article, over 500,000 people in Wales have been vaccinated with the aim being that all adults over 50 in Wales will have been offered a first vaccine by the spring.



We know that a small number are reluctant to receive the vaccine and that is individual choice – however, if you initially decline the vaccine and later change your mind, you can still go and ask to be vaccinated. Remember that even after receiving the vaccine, you must still adhere to the guidance/legislation in force at that time.



the new 'norm' is likely to continue.....

Well – the new 'norm' is likely to continue evolving for a while yet, but we have seen some benefits from keeping virtual contact with many of us learning new skills for this digital age. Although daunting for some, many have wondered why they hadn't become more digitally included earlier. So, another reminder – we are looking forward to resuming our face to face contact at some point soon, but in the meantime, the Men's Sheds Cymru advocacy service, and our befriending calls can be arranged not just via a telephone call, but we can accommodate video calls should you prefer to see our friendly faces! Whatsapp? Skype? Zoom? We're not just all ears



Cyber Threats

by Tony Wan

I recall when I was just a lad – those dastardly Cybermen invading us with the good old Doctor protecting us (Tom Baker was my Doctor!).

Now, we are being invaded by Cyber Threats – this digital age brings with it great technological advances, but also some dodgy dealings to be aware of – but even without the Doctor you are able to keep yourselves safe.



During the Covid pandemic fraudsters have been taking advantage of those vulnerable or not too tech savvy, with scam calls, texts and emails claiming to be from the likes of HMRC/DWP, NHS Test and Trace, popular online shopping websites, and well known financial institutions.

Popular frauds include calls claiming to be from BT suggesting problems with your wi-fi and asking you to log on which allow the caller access to your computer to try and steal data and passwords; calls claiming to be from Amazon auto-renewing your subscription you may not have and to press a number on your keypad if you didn't want to continue with renewal which charges you premium call time; emails asking you to click onto a link which lead to fake websites or which download malicious software onto your device.

Another fraud is cheque overpayments whereby a fraudster issues a cheque unexpectedly or for services or goods provided at an amount higher than owed, then request that the overpayment is refunded to them immediately, and later finding the cheque that had been issued was fake leaving the victim the alleged overpayment amount worse off. I

had such an attempt on me when selling my caravan several years ago and received an email offering to send me a cheque for the full asking price – it was immediately suspicious as the enquirer hadn't even offered to come and look at my caravan and the grammar was very poor (at the time many scams emanated from abroad) – I just ignored repeated attempts to entice me, even with an offer to pay over the asking price!

Never give out personal information and bank details before verifying who the caller is – you can contact a legitimate organisation directly using a known email or phone number. Just remember – if, you're unsure, seek advice, and if a deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

More information and advice can be found at www.actionfraud.police.uk or call your local Police or Trading Standards office.

Newport Transporter Bridge

Proudly standing on the skyline of Newport is the Transporter Bridge. Opened in 1906 this structure has the strength of Hercules and the grace of Apollo.

A physical gateway to the city's industrial past. It evokes memories, a sense of nostalgia and civic pride for local people to have such a rare and iconic landmark on their doorstep.

The bridge is an aerial ferry designed by Ferdinand Arnodin. Other options such as swing bridge, subway and ferry service were discounted by borough engineer Robert Haynes due to cost and the encroachment on shipping lanes leading into the bustling docks. The structure took four years to complete at a cost of £98,000.



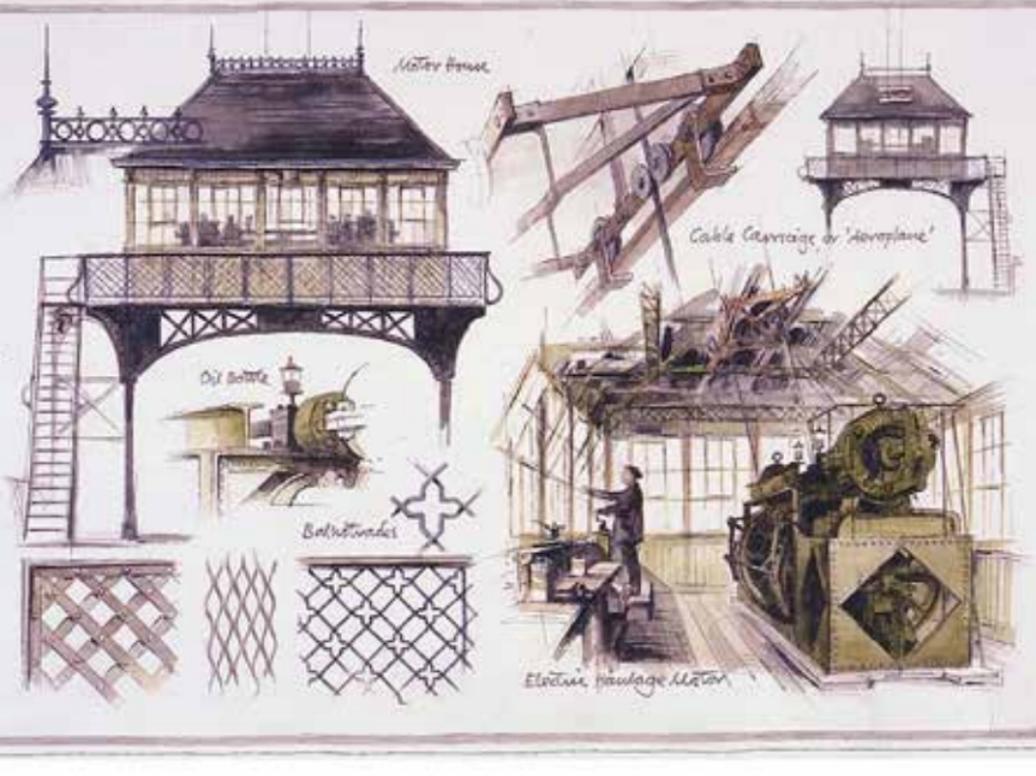
The Transporter Bridge was used daily as a commuter route for those travelling from their homes in the West to their work in the East with Lysaghts steelworks being one of the main employers at the time.

As other bridges opened across Newport, such as George Street Bridge and the City Bridge, traffic using the Transporter drastically fell and in 2012 it was transferred to the Museums and Heritage Service to be run as a tourist attraction.



A gateway to the city's industrial past.....

We are pleased to announce that we have been awarded £8.75million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This funding will allow us to carry out an extensive restoration of the bridge and construct a new visitor centre. It is a massive achievement and will ensure that this iconic structure is preserved, remaining operational for future generations.



Although the site will now remain closed to the public until Spring 2023 there will be plenty of opportunities to get involved and keep updated. We would love to hear your stories and see your photographs of the bridge. Follow us on social media @NpTBRidge or email emma.newrick@newport.gov.uk for more information.



**MEN'S
SHEDS** CYMRU

Join y clwb

There are lots of reasons to join Men's Sheds Cymru.

- ✓ Be the first to receive updates on new activities
- ✓ Be actively involved in the movement in Wales
- ✓ Get a **free** Men's Shed goodie bag.

It's easy to join

Simply email info@menssheds-cymru.co.uk with your full name and address or you can write to us at this address: Men's Sheds Cymru c/o Hafan Cymru, Stephens Way, Pensarn, Camarthen, SA31 2BG.

 **Hafan**
Cymru



the **waterloo** foundation*



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