



## **Putting men in sheds**

You're likely to have heard of the jokes around men becoming a nuisance to their wives when they retire as they are suddenly at home a lot more. Little is said though about the impact of retirement on many men's mental and physical well-being. For some, the freedom allows them to take up new hobbies or spend more time on something they already enjoy. For others, the sudden lack of having something to do each day can lead to isolation, loneliness and depression as well as a sense of no longer having a purpose.

Concerns over the health of older, especially recently retired, men brought about the Men's Shed movement, which originated in Australia. It was noticed that physical and mental health issues were often being caused by problems with social well-being. The saying goes that women socialise face-to-face but men do it shoulder-to-shoulder and, as a result, clubs and activities for older people were mainly set up with the former in mind.

Older people, as well as people with dementia, have an abundance of knowledge and so many skills, both to teach and to use – they can contribute to society by fixing and restoring old household objects, bicycles, garden tools, or teaching younger people joinery, engineering or gardening skills. Older people can also share their skills with one another – peer learning can be such a rewarding experience. There is merit and pleasure to be derived from the mere experience of being taught or teaching, as well as the subject matter.

Each Men's Shed is different because it is shaped and run by its members. It can be a gardening club or art and crafts, motorbike maintenance or beekeeping – you name it! At the Helmsdale Hub we are starting a Men's Shed at the Community Centre. If you are interested in being involved or would like more information then do get in touch by email to [hello@dementia-friendly.com](mailto:hello@dementia-friendly.com) or by calling 01431 821655.