

Surprises in the Frome Men's Shed

FROME Men's Shed continues to go from strength to strength, with new members bringing a variety of interests and experiences to the group.

Shedder Douglas Insall says, "Being interested in a bit of DIY, I joined the Frome Men's Shed in November 2015. What surprised me was not only the skills displayed in executing various woodworking projects for the local council, schools, local residents and members' own projects, but the hidden skills members developed during their working lives or as hobbies.

"One member is a numismatist who is also a metal detectorist of some repute. His best find so far was a Saxon belt buckle, estimated at being from the 4th or 5th Century AD and now on display in a Bristol Museum. It contained 30 grams of silver and was inlaid with gold showing religious symbols including a swastika.

"We also have two members who practise the ancient Chinese art of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, which is very graceful and promotes mental and physical health. We have a financial adviser, an ex-RAF nurse, IT specialists and a dedicated ex-policeman of 33 years who has become a chiropractologist (not feet) who with his partner started 'Frome Bat Care' - a hospital for injured bats (not cricket). Check out his website.

"Other skills include French polishing, payroll/pension manager, police forensic scientist, electronic engineer, silver-smith, dairy farmer, royal game keeper, car paint sprayer, research boffin,



Football Association referee and a piping and layout engineer who helped to design oil refineries and offshore platforms. We also have an ex-professional carpenter whose advice is in great demand - as you can imagine!

"One member, namely Stewart Male, likes to make guitars as a hobby - see photo. Over the years Stewart has made numerous guitars, both acoustic and electric. The one shown in the photo is acoustic and made from a cigar box. To hear how it sounds refer to: <http://www.fromeshed.org.uk/community/frome-mens-shed-12888/personal-projects/> and follow the guitar link.

"The use of a cigar box promotes the Frome Town Council objective of recycling and this is further enhanced by our extensive use of recycled pallet wood. Many planters have been created, as well as little homes for our feathered friends. If you follow the link above you will notice an electric guitar being made by Stewart that also contains pallet wood.

"Apart from cutting bits of wood and hammering in nails, we also drink lots of tea, eat biscuits and put the world to right! This is very therapeutic for us wrinklies and this year we now have a Women's Shed - who are not so wrinkly I hasten to add!

"Scientific studies around the globe by various universities, have advised that playing the guitar on a regular basis, promotes many health benefits. They include, reduced aches and pains and a release of the chemical dopamine in the brain is reputed to give better mental health, deters memory loss and can increase one's IQ by as much as 7 points. These scientists claim that playing a guitar gives off an air of confidence that is attractive to the opposite gender. They also claim it improves performance in the bedroom - but not with a guitar! So, keep strumming guys and keep the gals happy!

"I wonder where I can get some lessons?"