

Debenham Shed

An asset to local communities.





What is Debenham Shed?



Through our affiliation to the UK Men's Shed Association, Debenham Shed provides a community space for men and women to Connect, Converse and Create. All our members are unpaid volunteers, helping each other and participating in Community Projects.

It is a place where our members can use our large collection of tools and source material to make things by themselves, with guidance or with others, in metal, cloth, wood or plastic. It may be to repair or make new, the options are unlimited. It is also for social connecting and friendship building, sharing skills and knowledge, and of course a lot of laughter.

Debenham Shed is open to all adults and is located at 2 Fields Farm, a community supported farm on the outskirts of Debenham. We are currently open on Monday mornings, all day on Fridays and normally the second Saturday morning of each month.

Constructed from four joined containers, our workshop includes a large working area with workbenches and some fixed machine tools. Power tools include a range of new Makita cordless tools, wood and metal lathes, power saws, and pillar drills. A small store holds lots of hand tools for woodworking and engineering. A galley kitchen keeps us supplied with refreshments and has some cooking facilities. A woodworking area is in development to house larger machines in an extension of the main shed. Outside is a Kazuba composting toilet, suitable for disabled access.

Members work on their own projects, help other people or work on group projects including Community Projects. Potential members can attend three free sessions before joining, and after that there is a flat rate membership for a year or six months, for occasional visitors, there is a Pay as You Go option.

Please see our web site at <https://debenhamshed.org.uk> and our Facebook page for our latest news.



Contents.



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5. The future of the Shed.

Acknowledgements.

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The development of Debenham Shed.



The following pages outline the origin, formation and development of Debenham Shed from its inception in 2018.

The idea.

Whilst on a visit in 2017 to see his daughter in Australia, Les Wright, who lived in Debenham, was invited to a meeting being held at the Blue Hills Men's Shed. This was part of an organisation which had rapidly grown in Australia with the aim of providing a meeting place for men who were feeling lonely, isolated, and who needed somewhere to gather and have a chat. Also available in the Shed were tools and facilities where items could be repaired and skills which many had, could be put to good use to raise funds. Les was so impressed with the concept that, on returning to the UK in early 2018, he met up with Bernard Rose and Tony Hutt to discuss the possibility of forming a Shed in Debenham. By chance, Bernard had been having a conversation with Jeannie Buckingham of the 2 Fields Community Farm in Low Road, who advised that the container previously used by the Amateur Dramatic Club had become vacant and that this was now available to be re-let.

A notice was inserted in the local Parish magazine to assess interest in the community and a meeting was organised. Twenty-four attended, subsequently several said they would join. The Shed had no funds, so the rent for the container was offset by members of the Shed undertaking much needed work on the farm.

Membership grew as a result of publicity and through word of mouth, and work was undertaken both in the container and outside when the weather permitted. However, it was becoming apparent that more room would soon be needed. The pandemic in 2019 and the need for social distancing meant that larger premises were now urgently required.

It was quickly realised that additional containers would provide the best solution, site and building plans were prepared and submitted to the local authority (Mid-Suffolk District Council) for planning approval.

Our Benefactors.

Many companies and funding organisations were contacted, resulting in an amazing response with offers of donations and grants, but also with the gift of three serviceable containers and the loan of a digger and driver to prepare the ground. Funding was obtained and we owe a huge debt of gratitude to these organisations for their generosity and goodwill which was way beyond what we had hoped for.



Our initial Benefactors.



The development of Debenham Shed.



The premises

The original container arrived at 2 Fields Community Farm in 2016 and was put in position ready for use by the Debenham Amateur Dramatic Society.

When the Dramatic Society closed in 2017, it was agreed that the container could be occupied by the newly formed Debenham Shed with its four members.



The first container in situ.



Early days inside the container.

The second container was delivered in February 2020 on a snowy and bitterly cold day. After a further two days, all containers were in place and bolted together. In the following days and weeks, internal walls were removed, insulation, internal lining, electrics were fitted, and the outside landscaped.



The development of Debenham Shed.



Trees and foliage cleared back from farm track ready for new containers.



The last container being lowered into position.



All containers in position and painted.



Removing the internal walls.



Preparing the internal walls.



Panelling.



The development of Debenham Shed.



The next requirement was to construct a frame for a roof to extend over both sides of the containers to provide a working area for the farm and a storage area for the furniture and other items which had been given to the Shed to renovate and sell.

The open area on the West side of the container was ideal for storing furniture and other items requiring renovation prior to sale, but was prone to rain ingress. Secure storage with a concrete floor quickly became essential. Early in 2023, funding was obtained for the construction of side walls and a concrete floor. And this year we have added curtains to the front wall to add further protection.



Construction of the pent roof and wings.



The completed shed.



The exposed West Wing.



Painting the West Wing floor.



The development of Debenham Shed.



The finished shed interior.

The Environs.

Recognising the benefit of gardens to our members, the area around the Shed has been landscaped, and, following a grant an Eco-friendly toilet has been installed.

The Garden beds were kindly sponsored by Adnams Ltd. and the East of England Co-op.



Preparing garden beds.



Completed flower beds.



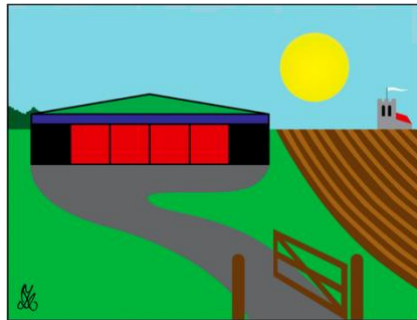
Installing the Eco-friendly toilet.



Completed toilet with access ramp.

Debenham Shed

**Involvement with
the local community.**





Involvement with the local community.



From its inception the Shed has been closely involved with the local community, especially with respect to our landlords the Two Fields Community Farm.

It is inevitable that an organisation like the Shed with experts, makers and a large number of tools is approached by local organisations to help with projects. These usually involve the Shed making, repairing and installing pieces of infrastructure to the benefit of the community at much lower cost than a commercial organisation.

These projects also benefit our members, giving them training, confidence and a sense of achievement within the social atmosphere of the shed and making a contribution to their community.



**Erection of a barn
for the Community Farm.**



**A bird table for Phoenix Counselling¹
Services.**



**Shelves built for the Debenham phone
box lending library.**



New village sign for Mickfield.

¹ Phoenix Counselling Services is a local organisation specialising in helping adults and young people with mental health issues.



Involvement with the local community.



Stabilising a statue at the side of Debenham Lake.



Repairs to Bedfield Church notice board.



Two tricycles built for an elderly couple not able to build them themselves.



Repairs and re-erection of Aspall Church notice board.



Bell ringer's halyard (rope) box for Bedfield Church.



Repairs to Bowling Green benches.



Involvement with the local community.



Recovering 20 seats for Framsdon Village Hall.



Construction of 24 flagpole finials for Coronation celebrations.



Clearing a culvert in Low Road.



Operating the fruit press in partnership with Realise Futures².

² Realise Futures provides interesting and stimulating experiences for isolated and disabled adults.



Involvement with the local community.



**Tree grafting courses with
Suffolk Tree Wardens.**



Evening for the local Beaver Scouts.



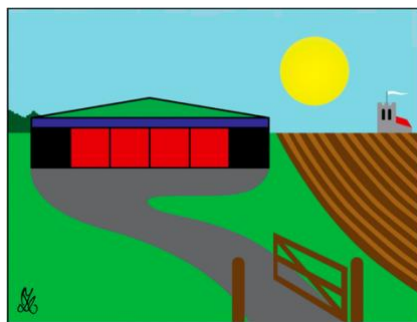
Access ramp for one of our members.



**Renovation of High School
memorial bench.**

Debenham Shed

Member's Projects and Social Events.





Member's Projects and Social Events.



It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of projects undertaken by members for their own items or others in the community and our social events.

We have created a neurodiverse space where members can rekindle, hone or learn skills, giving them a way to express their individuality.

Members report an increased sense of self-worth, well-being and belonging while undertaking a project which is so important in supporting good mental health.

In some cases, these projects are also used to raise much needed funds for the Shed, such as the MG Midget project.

Member Projects.



Restoration of a Barrel Organ.



Jig to make cogs for the Barrel Organ.



Restoration of a Long-case Clock.



Upcycling furniture.



Member's Projects and Social Events.



The MG Midget fundraiser project.



Model boat making.



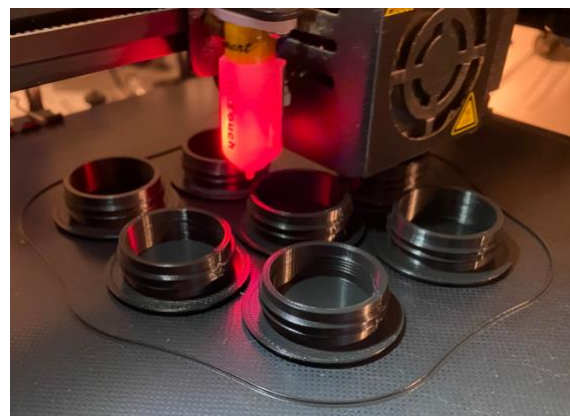
Making personalised name badges.



Tying fishing flies.



A 3D printed yacht stanchion.



3D printing door plugs.



Member's Projects and Social Events.



Making a door.



Sewing machine repair.



Mountain bike repair.



A happy crafter at work.



Restoration of a Rocking Horse.



Repairing a small chest of drawers.



Member's Projects and Social Events.



Social Events

It is important to open the Shed up to social events, especially to thank our many benefactors and attract new ones.



Mrs Bridget McIntyre MBE cutting the ribbon at our opening ceremony.



Our Guest of Honour, Mrs Andrea Pittock opening our 1st Anniversary Party.



Christmas Fair 2021.



Debfest community fair.



Christmas Fair 2023.



Tea and cakes.



Member's Projects and Social Events.



A typical afternoon in the shed.



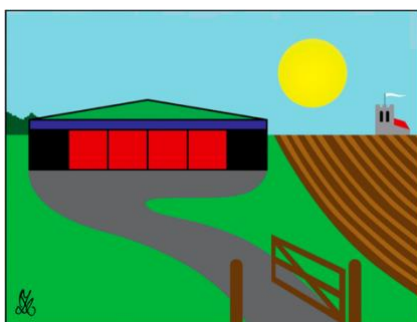
Tea time in the summer.



Christmas Party.

Debenham Shed

Craft Days.





Craft Days.



By only opening during normal working hours, inevitably, the Shed attracted a limited demographic group, mostly retired gentlemen, yet clearly the social and other benefits of the Shed should not have been limited to this group.

In order to welcome and encourage new members and promote a wider spectrum of activities, including crafts and 'technology', we now open the Shed on one Saturday per month for 'Craft Days'. This has resulted in a much more diverse & dynamic membership and attendance of our weekday meetings.



How to build a Ukulele.



3D Printing.



Making Terrariums.



Macrame place mat made by Joan from Coopersfield³.

³ Coopersfield is the local retirement home.



Craft Days.



Spinning lamb's wool from the Community Farm.



Making picture frames for the Galley from the spun wool.



Painting Oyster Shells.



Furniture restoration and upcycling.



Upcycling a sewing box.



Christmas wreaths.



Craft Days.



Ladder craft.



Tool sharpening training.



Candle making.



Bird box craft day.

The following Craft Days are planned for 2024:

Fairy Houses (jam jars, clay and lights).

Glass fusion workshop.

Sewing machine workshop and making planters.

Pompom garlands and weaving in the barn.

Mexican tin lanterns and T-shirt design.

Dance workshop and pottery.

Food smoking and eating, willow weaving.

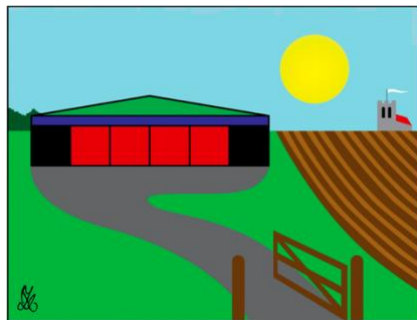
Shed Coffee Morning.

Pumpkin Craft and Autumn Chandeliers.

Christmas Crafts.

Debenham Shed

The future of the Shed.





The future of the Shed.



Demand for the services of the Shed continues to increase and we need to plan for the future.

Planning is following a number of paths;

1. Plan for increased and more diverse membership and the workspaces they will need.
2. Plan for increased storage to replace that lost to the West Wing.
3. Plan to improve access to the site, the gate and driveways.
4. Many of our tools are old, we need to acquire more modern equipment that, with electronic controls, is safer and easier to use.
5. There is clearly demand for us to include more 'high tech' services, such as the acquisition of a good 3D printer and laser etcher.
6. We need to plan for longer opening hours.
7. We are investigating the Governance of the shed, and what sort of legal entity is appropriate for us going forward.