

This is fast becoming a hobbyhorse of mine, a Men's Shed. Perhaps it is because in a few weeks, I will officially be old enough to attend – no it is not for those thirty-five and over. In reality I have been fascinated for years, being someone who lives in a tower with no outside space to speak of I have longed for the shed my Dad has, you know where you can knock up a boat, fix a car, listen to the cricket, generally hide away and potter.

North Kensington needs this writ large. Men over fifty-five are frequently socially isolated, feel redundant in many ways. The research is clear - mental as well as physical ill health is rife, and companionship and lack of purpose frequently an underlying factor. This [article outlines the case](#).

A week ago, I paid a visit to "Camden Men's Shed", based on a council estate near Camden Town – which looked to me like a lost sequence from a rainy day on the El Dorado TV set – another story perhaps? The Shed shares a large block with the local residents association and pays a reasonable rent to Camden, which they fund through a daily participation (according to ability), donations and through selling some of the quality produce, they create. However, the cost is too high to allow daily opening. I have to say I was impressed. Drills, benches, lathes, hammers, chisels, planes even a kiln. The place was a goldmine of bits of artisanship and some not so artisanship on the go.

"Bill" who goes twice a week said the place had literally saved his life; it had given fresh impetus and purpose. He was very clear; the Shed saved lives and gives enormous comfort and comradery to many men from the area.

The cost of setting up a Shed varies enormously from place to place as acquiring such facilities, equipment etc. is probably down to factors such as council support as well as NHS and other statutory bodies seeing the savings and investing to save.

The model for sheds varies with membership. They focus on whatever pursuits motivate folks. The Camden focuses on woodwork and pottery. I have heard of boat building, fixing radios, toasters, cars and well... just about anything you can get a shock from.

I would like to see a "Shed" in North Kensington and believe it would be a powerful addition in the area as it could assist in PTSD, isolation, loss and perhaps refocus people who feel prematurely out of the job market.

I know some local politicians, some community activists and some statutory commissioners and others have had their interests piqued by talk of a shed, some suggesting where it could be sited. Perhaps we can build a momentum for a shed for North Ken... Perhaps we could hold a Grenfell Network Group meeting if there is enough interest. If you are interested let me know on <mailto:joe@kcsc.org.uk>

Regard

Joe