

A Royal Visit!



Above: The Duchess of Cornwall chatting with Stewart Male and Ron Carver © David Chedgy

Frome Men's Shed were thrilled to have a visit from Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, to recognise the 'Compassionate Frome' programme, which connects people to support networks, groups and services throughout Mendip, and has resulted in a reduction in emergency hospital admissions.

Camilla visited Frome Men's Shed on a very cold 30th January after meeting people at the Frome Medical Centre.

The Duchess took time to meet and chat with all of the 25 Shedders there, and she shook hands with all of them.

Patrick Abrahams, Chair of the Frome Shed, said *"The Shedders commented on how easy she was to talk with, how down to earth she was, and how she was genuinely interested in what they were doing. All the Shedders commented on how welcoming Camilla, and all her staff and security were during the visit. Her staff said that they thought the Shed was full of so many wonderful characters and were pleased to see so few 'suits'. They appreciated the warm welcome and sense of community that they felt in our Shed workshops. Camilla commented on the amount of laughter she heard during her visit to Frome Shed."*

Camilla chatted to Jan, one of the Shedders learning how to re-cane a chair. Jan, one of the women who comes to the Men's Shed, said *"It was fun meeting Camilla. I explained I liked to benefit from older people's experience – she agreed that it was getting increasingly difficult to find older people to learn from!"*

Ron, the Frome Shed President, said *"She asked quite a few questions about the jewellery box I was making" adding "she was more knowledgeable on woodwork than I was expecting."*

Camilla gave encouragement and best wishes to two Shedders - Bern and Peter. Bern was making a scale model of cladding that he is hoping will be used to turn shipping containers into attractive looking low-cost housing. Peter showed the thatched dolls house he is currently making for his granddaughter – and is struggling a little with the plans.

Other Shedders were busy building a vinyl turn-table, a planter for the community, a cigar box guitar, a computer—controlled cutting machine, a seat for a mahogany veneer and fibre glass Coracle, whilst others were just chatting and drinking tea.

Camilla was fascinated by the two Coracles made in the Shed. On asking how the Shedders learnt to make the Coracles, Tony and John explained how they were made and raced against the Welsh in Carmarthen. They shared their hope for more Sheds to take part in the next Festival on July 13, 2019. Tony shared their plans to make up full—sized Coracle kits, for people to make them themselves.

On leaving, Camilla was delighted with the gift of a 1/10th scale model of one of the Coracles as a souvenir of her memorable visit to the Frome Men's Shed.



Above: Camilla presented with a model coracle by Tony Hopkins and Patrick Abrams © David Chedgy