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OPEN THE MAGIC DOOR

Shedman is writer, poet and film maker John Davies who's inspired by all kinds of sheds. He's writing a book about his shed experience and on his travels researching the subject, he creates residencies and workshops at different events and locations, using sheds as the focus for a unique interaction with people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds.

ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY

Stimulus and guidance through creative writing, poetry and video workshops for people of any age, ability or background

ENERGISE COMMUNITY

Rekindle sense of belonging, neighbourhood discovery and involvement through Shedman's special Shedquests and networking across the local community

STIMULATE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Connecting to the tradition that spans Thoreau, Grey Owl and Gilbert White, Shedman refreshes appreciation of our natural and built environment.

EXCITING INTERACTIONS

A unique visitor experience and star attraction at festivals, exhibitions & shows including performances and Shedman's unique Shedshow

ENGAGING RESEARCH

Shedman provides an ideal way of engaging the public to harvest research

SHARED SHED EXPERIENCE

Everyone has a shed story! People enjoy remembering and celebrating sheds and Shedman invites them to contribute stories, drawings, memories, photos and anything else sheds inspire to create an evolving multimedia installation in his shed during projects.

EASY TO INSTALL

Shedman erects his shed - often provided by a local sponsor - on a suitable internal or external space. This little wooden house has a fairy-tale quality with magnetic power. Over the project the shed is raffled or auctioned to raise funds for a local charity and the whole project can be themed to suit particular needs.

'Shedman was the outstanding hit of the Festival; he was both the focal point of the street entertainment and a tangible manifestation of the festival's aims of connecting with all ages and all sections of the community in interesting and dynamic ways. He is also a PR dream - there isn't a Press Release in the world that can't be improved by adding "and a poet in a shed" at the end!' **Lucy Flannery, Havant Literary Festival**

Shedman offers a unique residency experience for schools and colleges, nature reserves, parks and woodlands, museums and gardens, shops and businesses, hospitals and homes, country shows and festivals. With a highly proactive approach, Shedman creates a fascinating visitor attraction, enthralling workshops and lively events that explore the place of the shed, literature and creativity in everyone's lives. To discuss your project and for further information on fees and availability, please contact John Davies on 01273 242850, email shedman@shedman.net or follow Shedman on Twitter at www.twitter.com/shedman

SHEDMAN – the literary sideshow

SHEDMAN: THE STORY SO FAR



John Davies began his career as Shedman when he won one of the Archi-TEXTS awards for Architecture Week in June 2002, to be writer in residence at a place of architectural interest. John proposed to celebrate that great institution of British architecture, the shed, inside the Booth Museum of Natural History in Dyke Road, Brighton. The Booth is itself a shed structure and a listed building, originally built by Victorian ornithologist Edward Booth in 1874 to house his collection of stuffed British birds. During his residency John built a garden shed inside the museum shed and invited people to come and see him.

Amazing response

The response was phenomenal and John realised he had tapped into one of those arteries of meaning that run like secret rivers through British culture. Everyone had a shed story - some funny, some tragic, some poignant, some plain daft. But everyone, of any age, gender, religious affiliation or ethnic background, agreed on the centrality of the shed as a place of separation, memory and escape – at least in the British Isles. John has been poet in residence at *The Shed* online magazine, interviewed by Mark Lawson on Radio 4's *Front Row*, on BBC TV *Gardeners' World* and in the book *Shedmen*.

What is a shed?

A temporary structure, changeable, impermanent. Peripheral. Liminal. On the boundary. Threshold and container. The maximum space at the lowest possible cost. Usually single storey, made of wood or tin. A space of creative inspiration and endeavour, as it has been for dozens of writers and artists from Mozart to Jilly Cooper, and for generations of model makers, woodworkers and engineers. A zone of erotic adventure, where many couples first tasted sexual pleasure, especially in the first half of the twentieth century. A workplace where people create new careers for themselves after redundancy. A treasure trove of memories, a store of secrets, a dumping ground. An observatory on nature. A place halfway between home and the wilderness, between order and chaos, between the artificial and the natural. A place in everyone's hearts.



Architecture, poetry and nature

Shed construction is the dominant form of modern architecture in the shedlands on the periphery of cities - from superstores to factories, warehouses to garden centres. The shedding of blood or light, tears or care, joy or water is the stuff of poetry. And there are tie-ins with natural history – the sheds of insects and animals - skins, antlers and shells, as well as the little temporary houses insects and animals make or borrow for themselves. Sheds provide a treasure trove of meaning and inspiration.

'What Wordsworth did for daffodils, John Davies does for sheds.' **Mark Lawson, Front Row, BBC Radio 4**



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Shedman on location

As he writes his book, John researches the cultural history of the shed and its place in literature. He explores famous and unusual sheds and he's inspired by all kinds of sheds – from potting sheds to aircraft hangars, but also shed antlers or skins, shedding tears or shedding light. He creates residencies and workshops, using sheds as the focus for a unique interaction with all kinds of people, young and old.

Shedman has been a writer in residence at *Ledbury Poetry Festival* (2008-09); *Havant Literary Festival* (2008 and 2009); the *Bird Fair* at the Wetlands and Wildfowl Trust Centre, Arundel, West Sussex; the *Appledore Visual Arts Festival* in Devon; the *Redbridge Show*, Ilford; the *Weald WoodFair* at Bentley in East Sussex; at the conference of the *Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment* at University College, Chichester; at the *Small Wonder Short Story Festival* at Charleston; and at *The Big Weekend* in Cambridge. He has collaborated with artist Sue Ridge on a number of major commissions: *Our Storeys* creating artwork for the lift lobbies in the new North Middlesex University Hospital, Enfield; and at hospitals in Eastbourne and Hastings as part of the Arts in Healthcare project *Outside In - Navigating the Hospital*. He's run workshops for *Arundel Writers' Group* (2004-2005); *Runnymede International Literary Festival* (2006-08); *Cuisle Limerick City International Poetry Festival* and *Poetry Ireland* (2005-2009); and for many primary and secondary schools including *Pigshedman*, a special project for the *Kent High Weald Unit*, *Ghost School* (again with artist Sue Ridge) for *Creative Partnerships* in Hackney and *Rural Shedman* - a week at Worle Community College in Somerset. Shedman was poet in residence at the *Cuisle International Poetry Festival* in Limerick, Ireland in October 2005, returning to show the documentary *Shedman in Limerick* in 2006. In 2010, he will be *Second World War Shedman* with former evacuees and young people in Eastbourne, at *Pigbaby*, the Literary Weekdn Party and returning to *Ledbury Poetry Festival* for the third year running.



Shedman in the community

Whatever the reason for our fascination with sheds, they exert a magnetic attraction on anyone who passes by. When the shed door is open we are all deeply curious to look inside. So Shedman creates a fascinating community focus. 'Although sheds are very much about an individual in a private space, they have an amazing ability to bring people together,' says Shedman. 'Sheds are down to earth and unpretentious. They're very close to our hearts and we enjoy remembering and celebrating them. They're so like us – transient and fragile. They can represent a private space we all desire for work or play. They can be places of quiet contemplation, observatories on nature or shrines to our obsessions. They can be the threshold to risk and adventure, or a doorway to a different world of hobbies or the stored past.



'My shed is very accessible. Anyone can come in to tell me their shed stories, to bring anecdotes and poems, pictures and photos, recollections and fantasies. So, individually, members of a local community create a living installation. I interview everyone who comes to see me to create a multimedia record of shed life that we can all share as a finale event. So sheds offer a great way of networking across a community, and of introducing people to poetry and literature indirectly in an enjoyable and intriguing way.'





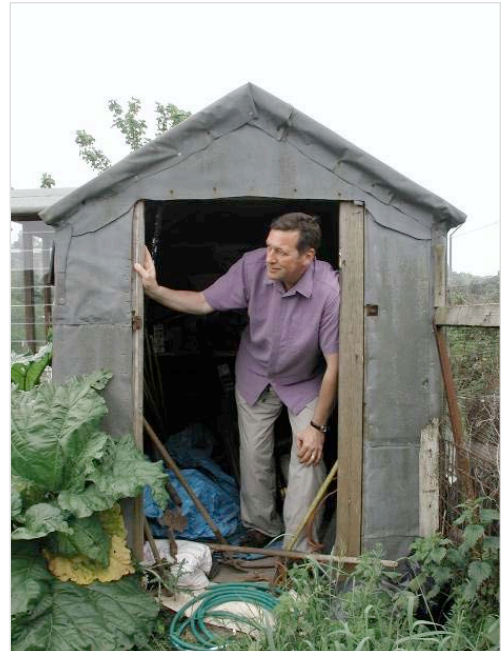
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Shedman in his shed

Shedman's shed represents different things for different people: a garden retreat or a symbolic threshold; a stage or a sideshow booth; a place to seek advice about their own shed; a creative space where they can draw, make or write; a contemplative space where memories flood back and the past comes to life.

He provides art materials in the shed for children and grown-ups to draw shed pictures. He writes poems and stories focussed on the residency location and can offer readings and performances at a knock on the shed door. During a residency Shedman also organises his special *Shed Quests*, exploring the local area and discovering sheds of note. Enjoyed by young and old alike, *Shed Quests* are especially suited to the adventurous 12-15 age group, who often use Shedman's shed as a base and gathering place during a residency.

Alongside a residency Shedman will run workshops in local schools, homes and businesses, linking all the different strands to create an intriguing and memorable mixed media community arts project. Shedman usually arranges a shed to be donated by a local shed supplier that can then be raffled to raise money for a local charity. Over the last seven years Shedman has raised over £3000 for charity.



Get in touch

If you have a project that needs lifting out of the ordinary, talk to Shedman on 01273 242850 or email him at shedman@shedman.net. Thanks for your interest!

'A memorable mixed media installation with a very human face. He brought new visitors to the museum and struck a chord with people from many different backgrounds...His residency was a motivating and energising process for all involved... I can recommend him unhesitatingly to other organisations seeking a different approach to the integration of community, arts and cultural activities.' **John Cooper Booth Museum of Natural History, Brighton**



Shedman (ISBN 978-1-906309-01-5) – the new collection of poetry by John Davies – is available from all good bookshops for £11.99 or direct from Pighog Press www.pighog.co.uk

'Exceptionally well-crafted poems' Anne Rouse

'Filled with a spirit of compassion' Sasha Dugdale

'...justly and widely acclaimed poems... the language and metre are constantly dynamic' Adam Hansen

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