



## CASE STUDY

### ROB

"It's good to mix with others for a few hours if you are a bit isolated, and get talking about anything. I soon came out of my shell. I like planning ahead and doing a drawing of what I'm going to build, it gets me thinking and it's something to look forward to each week."

Rob joined the Groundwork Men's Shed in April 2017. Rob is 62 and a former builder, he is currently unemployed and actively looking for a new job. Rob attends every session rain or shine, biking down to Berwick Hills from his home in the centre of Middlesbrough. Rob talked to us about how he has previously spent time in prison, but "has moved away from all of that" and is trying to build a better life for himself and surrounding himself with better people. Rob was referred to the Men's Shed project through Ageing Better Middlesbrough as a way of gaining new skills and meeting new people.

To begin with Rob kept to himself working quietly on small projects he found for himself around the site, this included building a step up to the tool container, sourcing the bricks and slab he used from around the site. Rob also drew designs for the step in his own time and brought them into show staff and other shedders. During this first project we really started to see Rob becoming involved in the group often chatting over a cup of coffee before everyone started on the mornings activities.

Rob isn't one to sit still for long; as soon as he had completed work on the step and was happy with how it looked he was began designing his next project. For this he started to think about things on a bigger scale and what he could contribute to the site. A large pile of bricks was found at the back of the site in among the weeds and brambles and Rob soon put these to good use. This isn't something Rob would have done when he first started coming to the sessions.

Rob's skilled have further evolved as he has been attending Men's Shed. During a session he was digging and discovered what looked like a Roman coin. Rob then took it upon himself to go down to the Dorman Museum and speak to someone to get the coin authenticated. Whilst waiting for this Rob did some research on the Romans and Greeks and felt the urge to paint the places he was reading about. Rob now has a whole sketchbook full of paintings some of his landscapes, old warships, people and some of his own imaginings. The coin turned out to be a fake but this reignited a passion and skill in Rob that he hadn't really thought about since he was young. His artwork is truly breath-taking in their vibrancy and skill. Rob has now been painting for over a year and has recently been approached by a gallery in Middlesbrough that want to display his paintings and hold an exhibition for the artwork which he is thrilled about.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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