

# **Edinburgh man Barnabas Cox awarded British Empire Medal**

**A 24-year-old Edinburgh engineer/designer has been awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year's Honours List for 'voluntary services to Health Workers in Scotland during the Covid-19 pandemic'.**

Barnabas Cox graduated from Edinburgh Napier University in 2019 with a Bachelor's degree in Electronic Engineering and founded his own company, Open Factory Ltd, a 3D Printing and Design Consultation Company based in the Polwarth area of the city.











At the time the pandemic arose, the business was creating household artefacts of various kinds, but when the full impact of the virus became known, he and a friend responded to the pandemic and shortage of PPE by adapting his business to produce vital safety equipment for frontline health workers and the vulnerable including planning the manufacture of face masks for NHSScotland.

Using what little savings they had between them and by begging and borrowing equipment, they soon managed to get the project off the ground.

Within weeks, using 3D printing technology he manufactured and delivered hundreds of face masks which went directly to NHS Scotland's Regional Infections Unit.

Once the initial lockdown phase came to a close, non-essential business began to reopen, albeit with a need to operate safe physical distancing.

He then created and distributed in excess of 1,000 face masks which he made to local businesses, including vets, care homes and local food distribution outlets – and all free of charge.

Overcoming the setback of his workshop having been broken into with equipment damaged and stolen, he continued with the work.

Along with his friend, he worked all day and all night seven

days a week in order to monitor production and following the break in, stayed overnight in the premises to make sure the equipment was safe.

At one point, as raw material for the masks came under increasing demand and was impossible to source, he showed his flair for innovation by turning to using A4 binder covers.

In addition, he helped other businesses to develop functioning 3D printing technology, showing them how to optimise their systems and be most effective when time is of the essence.

Mr Cox told The Edinburgh Reporter: "I received an e-mail informing me about the award earlier this month which came as a shock as it's been so long since the start of the pandemic when we made the masks, but I'm delighted to have been nominated.

"We were just a small cog in a big wheel and other companies have been doing similar things all over the world. It's been a crazy year since I started the business after leaving university but I am now looking forward to demonstrating how to make 3D printing more accessible to everyone and encourage people to come into the premises for a look."

Open Factory Ltd is based at 43 Polwarth Crescent, Edinburgh.