

Hear about Freddie's life story at Love Your Business networking event this week

Freddie Main was a Design and Technology teacher for 20 years, but has made a career switch during the last year and has launched his own company, Oak & Black. He now specialises in making bespoke mini bars from old whisky barrels and has made one for Outlander's Sam Heughan and the former Scotland rugby captain Greig Laidlaw.

The bar has a smart lighting system, a magnetic bottle opener and a hand-stamped personalised metal tag along with a unique barrel number tracing its origins. He also makes bottle racks, engraved barrel and wall hangers, whisky boards and planters from reclaimed whisky barrels which have been bought by Ondine Restaurant.

The career change from Assistant Headteacher at Merchiston Castle School resulted from a bout of ill health which led to Post Viral Fatigue. Freddie contracted an illness while playing for the Scotland Touch Senior Mixed World Cup team in Malaysia in 2019 and continues to manage his health. During lockdown his energy improved after being off work since the beginning of 2020, and he created a mini bar for one of his

friends. It was such a hit that he left teaching behind for a new career, and the business now employs a member of staff under the government's Kickstart Scheme which helps young people get into work.

Freddie said: "Creating barrel bars for clients is a dream come true for me – it is something I've wanted to do for years but didn't have the time or energy.

"Lockdown gave me that time to make my first one and really assess whether it was a viable business model or not and I'm delighted that it's definitely going in the right direction, especially securing orders for people like Sam Heughan, Jim Hamilton and Cask88, and taking on my first member of staff, which have given me a real boost."

Freddie, who is also a life coach, @thesilverfoxcoach, will be talking about his entrepreneurial and inspiring story at an online business networking event, entitled Love Your Business, on 24 June, tickets – <https://bit.ly/3i0Zl0u>

Love Your Business Networking Club, which was set up in 2018 by Michelle Brown from the eponymous PR agency, is designed to help bring businesses together to share contacts, referrals and support each other, which has been a major focus over the last 15 months and a life-line for many attendees.

Michelle said: "I'm delighted to welcome Freddie Main from Oak and Black as a speaker at this month's Love Your Business online networking club. His story about leaving the teaching profession after 20yrs and launching his own company during lockdown and doing something he loves, is hugely inspiring."

