

# LOCKDOWN

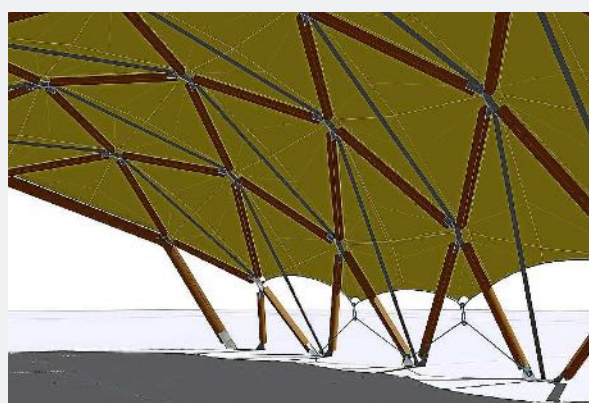
## SECTION: 6 PAGE EXTRA



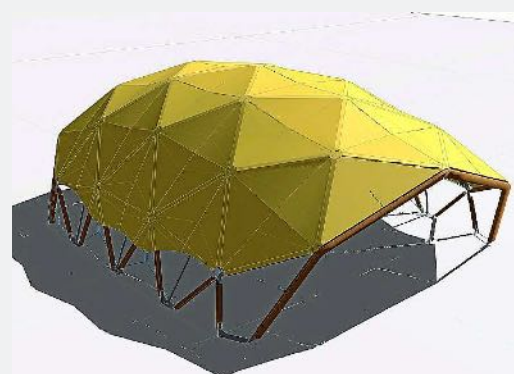
by Margaret  
Morris

## ‘Life in Lockdown’ Series 9

### *The story of the Tor Shell*



● The Tor Shell is an interesting and complex form inspired by the ‘torus’ shape found in nature.



**L**AST week I said that developing opportunities for learning outdoors could form part of the solution to the challenges all schools will be facing in the light of the continuing issues with Coronavirus. There is no doubt at all that new regulations and requirements will be demanding. The ‘new normal’ for those of us involved with schools is still difficult to comprehend. We honestly don’t know what these changes will be. However, if we don’t start looking at options now and planning for different scenarios, we might have to sacrifice the educational values we hold so dear in order to comply with regulations. We need to be one step ahead and use all our resources in imaginative and innovative ways.

Pol Taylor came to Majorca with his family a while ago looking for an interesting and innovative school with an integrated and holistic education. After visiting Escola Global they were convinced that it was the right place for them and they joined our community. Two years ago Pol made the point that although the school had a great outdoor space, there was no shelter or real shade to make the most of it. There was a need to build a functional shelter that had a clear relationship with the land it would be anchored in and would also integrate seamlessly with the services of the school.

At this point the idea of the Escola Global ‘Tor Shell’ was born.

The Tor Shell is an interesting and complex form inspired by the ‘torus’ shape found in nature. Though the Tor Shell has a complex surface, it has a lot of repetition and is therefore easy to pre-fabricate and build.

Pol began work in this area, as a researcher in Antarctica. His first brief was to design a prefabricated ‘shelter’ that would function in extreme conditions, could be easily transported and built quickly. The Tor Shell did exactly that and since then he has applied this de-



sign in various settings in complex environments and extreme conditions.

Pol’s most recent project was with Amereida Group. His brief was to work with remaining members of the Kaweska ethnic group in the most remote area of Patagonia. They were a group of canoe nomads who had lived for over six thousand years in the stormy fjords of South-West Patagonia. They rowed from island to island, spending short periods of time on each one, taking only as much shellfish as they needed before moving on.

They took everything they owned in their family canoe. Their prized possession was a sealskin cover which, when stretched over a simple wooden frame called an At, provided their shelter. As they rowed to the next island they would sit on the sealskin and upon arrival they collected new wood to make the frame that they then covered in their sealskin. As they moved on, all they left behind was the wooden frame and,

even after six thousand years of existence, there is little evidence on any of the islands that they have ever been occupied. Like birds, they had zero impact and never accumulated anything.

The remaining members of the tribe have left the nomadic life behind. Pol’s brief was to develop a Tor Shell for them and he decided to produce a contemporary version of the At. The tribe had established a precedent for sustainable and ‘zero’ impact living so this Tor Shell was designed to explore and preserve the history of this ethnic group.

The Tor Shell reflected well their environment and history. They had never inhabited land so their shelter was designed to look like an upside down canoe. The community was then invited to cover the internal surface of the shell to tell and preserve their story and traditions.

The Escola Global Tor Shell project is the first of its kind. Our Tor Shell will provide outdoor shelter whilst having no detrimental impact on its surroundings. It will be woven into the environment.

It will be a flexible learning pod, a meeting space and a place of reflection. In fact it will become anything our school family wants it to be!

It will respect the environment and be part of the environment.

It will stimulate all the senses.

After two years of planning, the ‘earth anchors’ are now in place and the structure will be assembled next week. In two weeks time I will write an update ‘The Tor Shell has landed’ so we can learn more about how this unique shelter has settled into our land.

If you are interested in finding out more about the story of the Tor Shell go to:

[www.poltaylor.com](http://www.poltaylor.com)

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