Repair Cafe boasts a Great British Bake-Off flavour

By Shaun Davies
Shaun.davies@newsquest.co.uk



■ Marlene Peters and Jean Leith (right), while Andrew Comber and Mair Davies work on a cow bell and food mixer Image: Ruthin Repair Cafe

VISITORS could have been forgiven for thinking The Great British Bake-Off had arrived in Denbighshire recently.

The Repair Café, hosted by Ruthin Friends of the Earth, is now well-established as a popular community event on the first Saturday of the month on Well Street in Ruthin.

Visitors are used to seeing a wide variety of household items, otherwise doomed to the tip, being taken in for salvage and repair by volunteer 'fixperts', who themselves have become something of local celebrities.

Bicycles, musical instruments, jewellery, clocks, laptops and clothing have all passed through the door.

This month, however, was unusual, as the big front room of the Naylor Leyland Centre began to look like a scene from The Great British Bake-Off, when several broken blenders and faulty food mixers all began arriving at the check-in table.

The Bake-Off heroes of the day were Tim Cook, John Miller and Pete Regan, who carefully applied their fixpert skills to repairing the kitchen counter casualties.

While the owners of the food mixers were waiting, Jean Leith and Marlene Peters fulfilled expectations of this being a repair "café" by ensuring everyone was offered a mug of coffee or tea and a variety of home-made cakes and pastries baked by the team.

Jean and Marlene have been looking after the fixers and visitors at virtually every repair café since 2020.

Marlene is especially famous for her Welsh cakes, always very popular.

Jean paused in her hospitality role to reflect on the Repair Café, noting: "It is a very harmonious event which really brings the community together."

Between them, both women are kept busy with a range of community activities including a U3A Sustainability Group, Incredible Edible, Tidy Towns and Ruthin Quakers - but they wouldn't miss a Repair Café.

Jean explained, "The remarkable thing about the Repair Cafe is that it brings life back to practical and personally precious items, some of which will have been, and now can continue to be, passed down through generations."

This time, the whole team of 22 volunteers made the morning go smoothly.

A total of 36 items came through the door with a fix rate of 81 per cent.

In addition to the food mixers, one of the more unusual items brought in was a large cow bell, repaired by fixpert Andrew Coomber.

Andrew, noting that the next Repair Café falls on the Coronation weekend, joked: "Maybe next time we could do a special offer on orb, sceptre and crown repairs? Ermine restitching? Throne refurbing?"

The Coronation weekend Ruthin Repair Café is again at the Naylor Leyland Centre on Saturday, May 6, at a slightly earlier time of 10am-1pm, with the last item booked in at 12.30pm.