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Volunteer Duncan helps make sure things run smoothly at Ruthin Repair Café

Duncan Moulden, Ruthin Repair Café volunteer of the month

IT'S 250 not out for a popular Vale of Clwyd service.

During the August Ruthin Repair Café, the 250th item to be repaired was worked on.

Meeting on the first Saturday of each month, the café at the Naylor Leyland Centre is known for its small army of talented 'fixperts' willing to repair or give advice for free on all kinds of household items, saving them from abandonment.

Clothing with tears and broken zips; electrical goods which mysteriously stopped working; necklaces with broken clasps: all have been rescued.
Yet the repair café does not just depend on the practical skills of its IT experts, bicycle repairers and guitar re-stringers alone.

It also runs on a highly inclusive team of support volunteers in the background. Duncan Moulden is one such valued volunteer.

Duncan is 60 years old and lives with his mum in Denbigh.

He has learning disabilities, a sharp sense of humour and a willingness to lend a hand wherever he is needed.

Hilary Clare and Nia Baker (right), with 250th item at the Ruthin Repair Café

He can usually be seen setting up the hall in the Naylor Leyland Centre before the morning session begins, moving tables and chairs, fastening up banners outside the building, and laying out tools and equipment ready for the fixperts to get to work.

As the day progresses, he is there welcoming visitors, pointing people in the right direction and assisting at the electrical PAT testing station.

Duncan admits he is not a technician.

He joked: "I like fixing things. But it's easier to take things apart than it is to put them back together!"

Nevertheless, he is acutely aware of the need for safety in all aspects of work, especially around machinery and electrical appliances.

Duncan enjoys woodworking, strimming grass and painting.

He began his volunteering at the 50s Museum at the Cae Dai Centre in Denbigh.

It was there that he discovered and began helping out at ReSource CIC, helping set up a wood turning lathe, doing ground work and eventually helping with their move to new premises on the Lon Parcwr Industrial Estate in Ruthin.

READ: No question is too silly at the Ruthin Repair Café

ReSource is a community interest company founded by Janine Cusworth and fellow directors in 2020, with a passion for providing local people opportunities to learn, create and benefit their community, by organising innovative workshops accessible to all.

ReSource proclaim that they are passionate about the environment, working collaboratively to find creative ways of re-using waste materials, through upcycling, repurposing or simply recycling items that may otherwise go to landfill.

As such, they are natural partners of Ruthin Friends of the Earth, the group behind the repair café.

For Duncan, it seemed totally natural to lend his talents and good natured energy to both projects.

He was at the repair cafe early this August to witness the 250th item being worked on, when Hilary Clare of Ruthin brought in a winter jacket, belonging to her husband Philip, in need of a replacement zip.

The landmark repair was carried out by Nia Baker, chair of Ruthin Friends of the Earth.

Earlier in the day, the team had examined a clock brought in by a refugee from Ukraine, snatched as she fled her house in Kyiv with missiles striking around them.

Avis Lundberg and Brian Peters, with a 1940s Kodascope 8mm home projector

Also during the morning, Avis Lundberg had made the journey to Ruthin from Widnes especially to collect a Kodascope reel-to reel projector, which used to belong to her father.

Brian Peters, repair café fixpert, had taken the projector home to work on, and was able to put on an impromptu showing in a back room of some of Avis's old 8mm films, including flickering celebrations of independence celebrations in India in 1947, which her father had shot while stationed there with the RAF.

Anyone is welcome to drop into the monthly Ruthin Repair Café, either to ask for help and advice with a broken household or personal item, or just for a cup of coffee, piece of cake and a chat.

Visitors are likely to find Duncan stationed near the front door.

The next Ruthin Repair Café will be on Saturday, September 3, between 10.45am and 1.30pm.