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Ruthin Repair Cafe enjoys a fine start to the year

Ruthin Repair Café fixpert Basil Ward PAT testing appliances *(Image: Ruthin Repair Cafe)*

WHAT a start to the year it's been for Vale of Clwyd fixperts!

The first Ruthin Repair Café of 2023, organised by Friends of the Earth, was, true to tradition, staged on the first Saturday of the month.

It was held at the Naylor Leyland Centre on Well Street and, despite the inclement weather, proved to be as popular as the previous 15 events.

No fewer than 39 items were taken through the door and, as usual, they were a fascinating assortment.

The repair café has now processed 458 items, of which two-thirds have been successfully fixed by the team of 'fixperts', who have also provided expert advice on how to fix a further 15 per cent.

In other words, the unfixable items have been a distinct minority.

Among the items that graced Sylvia Cole's sewing machine, for example, were cycling 'longies' and a pair of colourful knickerbockers whose lining had seen better days.

An attractive antique glass lamp required a victorious team effort that lasted most of the morning.

Meanwhile, a ceramic hare, suffering from the Van Gogh syndrome, required such delicate surgery that Brian Peters needed to take it back to his workshop to replace the missing ear – and hand it back at the next Repair Café.

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In the same vein, Andrew Coomber had executed delicate repair work on a 19th-century German ceramic figurine in his workshop, much to the delight of the 'customer' who had taken it in at the previous café.

At the January event, electrical goods were in the majority: kettles, lamps, irons, coffee machines, a soup maker, a radiator, an air fryer and a foot-warmer, among other items.

And these all passed through the hands of Basil Ward, tenant of a table marked PAT (aka Portable Appliance Testing).

"We can't risk giving a colleague something that's potentially dangerous," he explained. "It's interesting work and something I really enjoy."

Basil is an electrical engineer who retired 23 years ago.

He was encouraged to join the team of repair café fixperts by his wife Judith, one of the bell-ringers at St Peter's Church in Ruthin and active in local craft networks.

“I’m glad she encouraged me to become involved, because the repair cafés are really enjoyable," he added.

"It’s satisfying to see so many objects not ending up in landfill.

"And I think people are increasingly getting pleasure from not throwing things away.

"Apart from that, the cafés are a great social outlet and one of the reasons I enjoy them so much is that the fixers are a team of very nice people.”

People can pop into the next Ruthin Repair Café on Saturday, February 4, when fixperts will once again be ready to share their expertise between 10.45am and 1.30pm at the Naylor Leyland Centre.