October 22

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Those talented Ruthin 'fixperts' really enjoy a mystery!

Carole Crosby's brooch. Picture: Ruthin Repair Cafe *(Image: Picture: Ruthin Repair Cafe)*

THERE'S been a mystery to solve at a monthly Vale of Clwyd gathering.

The volunteers at Ruthin Repair Café always enjoy a puzzle - and they certainly got one earlier this month!

Carole Crosby took in an old, sterling-silver, professional brooch.

She could no longer make out the engraving on it, so she wondered if the Ruthin 'fixperts' might be able to help.

Carole Crosby, owner of the brooch. Picture: Ruthin Repair Cafe *(Image: Picture: Ruthin Repair Cafe)*

Andrew Coomber gladly polished the brooch and repaired its fastening for her.

As the brooch started to gleam, it became evident that it bore a coat of arms and some wording:

HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE
SANCTE ET SAPIENTER

Several volunteers got involved at this stage, all trying to recall some French and Latin from long ago!

Then, with a bit of assistance from Google, the first line of text started to make sense: "Shamed be whoever thinks ill of it." (Anglo-Norman).

The Anglo-Norman language, a dialect of Old Norman French, was spoken by the medieval ruling class in England, and it turns out that these words – usually translated as "shame on anyone who thinks evil of it" – are the motto of the British chivalric Order of the Garter.

The second line of text – SANCTE ET SAPIENTER (Latin) – translates as "with holiness and wisdom".

On inspecting the coat of arms more closely, it became apparent that this was, in fact, the coat of arms of King's College, London, whose motto is "sancte et sapienter".

READ MORE: 'Fixpert' John is on time to repair German cuckoo clock

When the words and images had been clarified, Carole thought she might have been given the brooch after attending a short physiotherapy course at King's College, though she doesn't actually remember it.

So, if anyone can provide any further information about the brooch, they are urged to get in touch.

However, everyone at the Repair Café was delighted to have solved the mystery of the engraving.

October's Repair Café in Ruthin was one of the most successful yet, with 46 items being brought in for repair; 40 of these items were either fixed or advice was given on how to proceed.

Andrew Coomber, 'fixpert' at Ruthin Repair Cafe. Picture: Ruthin Repair Cafe *(Image: Picture: Ruthin Repair Cafe)*

The PAT Testing volunteers were particularly busy; they tested three electric blankets (a sign that people are preparing themselves for the winter ahead), two vacuum cleaners, a printer, sewing machines, lamps, a food mixer and a wallpaper steamer.

All electrical items are PAT Tested before being passed on to a fixpert for repair.

Plenty of people attending the Repair Café also means plenty of baking!

And the volunteers were on hand to provide tea, coffee and cake for anyone who dropped in.

The next Ruthin Repair Café is sure to go off with a bang... as it's being held on Saturday, November 5.

It will be held in the Naylor-Leyland Centre in Ruthin between 10.45am and 1.30pm.

There's no charge for refreshments, or for fixing items, but donations are gratefully received to keep the Repair Café running.

Talented 'fixperts' help solve the mystery

By Shaun Davies
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Carole Crosby, owner of the brooch. Picture: Ruthin Repair Cafe

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