by Pat Sumner

Ruthin Repair Café, 7th October 2023

A round of applause is in order for the Ruthin Repair Café team, as the 750th item was brought in for repair on Saturday 7th October. What an achievement! On a busy Saturday, when 36 items were brought to the Naylor-Leyland Centre to be fixed, the fixperts achieved a brilliant fix rate of 85%. If you include the fact that some visitors were given advice on the care of their items, then it's a 97% success rate. What a fantastic result!

The first two hours were particularly busy, and the homemade Welsh cakes, flapjacks, Victoria sponge and cookies were enjoyed by visitors and volunteers alike, along with plenty of cups of tea and coffee.

An endearing and popular repair this month was a large teddy bear called Ted. The soft toy, at 80 years of age, had received a lot of affection during his lifetime – and it was starting to show. His paws were frayed, he had a small hole in his fabric head, his fur wasn't as plush as it once was, and he was looking a little saggy around the middle. But no one made him feel embarrassed. Sylvia, one of the sewing experts, set to work straight away to give Ted a new lease of life. Having removed his straw, bandage and cotton-waste stuffing, she soon filled his limbs and torso with some brand-new material. Ted has now gone home with Sylvia to have some new felt attached to his paws... and possibly to enjoy a teddy bear's picnic or two. We can't wait to see what a fine figure of a bear he is when he returns to the Repair Café next month.

Andrew, our jewellery expert, was staggered to behold a beautiful and unique pair of earrings that were brought in for repair. Though an experienced jeweller, Andrew said he'd never seen craftsmanship of this quality before. The earrings depicted the Star of David and were inlaid with semi-precious stones like blue lace agate and bloodstone. The craftsmanship was truly astounding. Marlene, who brought the dropper earrings to the Repair Café, had been given them by a friend who had received them from an aunt who probably wore the earrings in the 1920s. They will require some thought and planning before fixing, but they made Andrew's day and caused quite a stir!

Among the many items repaired by the fixperts were another five pieces of jewellery, a pair of trousers needing a new zip, four clocks, including an old mantlepiece chime clock, and a record-breaking eight sewing machines. One sewing machine was a lovely old Viceroy machine brought in by Julie Hughes. Julie had brought the vintage sewing machine to the Repair Café previously and fixpert John had spent many hours at home stripping it down, rewiring it and renewing the capacitors. The sewing machine had worked perfectly for a while until, unfortunately, another capacitor must have broken. This time, Tim took on the challenge and fixed the fault. Hopefully, this lovely green sewing machine, dating from the 1940s or 50s, will now be used and enjoyed for many years to come.

The repairs this month all demonstrate the care and commitment of the fixperts. Some of the items are taken home as the repairs can be lengthy and painstaking. So many members of the team give up their valuable time to help in this way as they believe wholeheartedly in mending and reusing. Their environmental principles, which we all should adopt, spur them on.

Why not call in and see them in the Naylor-Leyland Centre in Ruthin on Saturday 4th November between 10am and 1pm?