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Andrew will be trying to fix things in Ruthin once more in early April

Andrew Coomber

WHO do you turn to when you want something fixing?

Andrew Coomber will be near the top of the list - and he'll be doing his magic again in the Vale of Clwyd early next month.

The Ruthin repair café, run by a team of enthusiastic volunteers, meets on the first Saturday of every month at the Naylor Leyland Centre in Well Street, Ruthin (10.45am – 1.30pm).

Various items can be repaired, from small electrical items, toys and ornaments to clothes, bikes, guitars and jewellery.

They even offer IT support.

Anne Lewis, the coordinator, explained that it is part of a larger organisation called 'Repair Café Wales'.

Repairs are carried out free of charge, but donations are welcomed as the repair café has to fundraise in order to continue.

People can also enjoy a cup of tea and a cake while they wait.

One of Ruthin's 'fixperts', Andrew Coomber, is an artist, designer, silversmith and craftsman who can undertake a variety of repairs.

At the last repair café, he made a new billhook handle out of oak for a customer.

The repaired billhook

It has always been Andrew's philosophy that we should repair our belongings whenever possible.

Today's "throw-away, consumerist society" does not appeal to him, so he was keen to get involved in Ruthin's repair café as it reflects how he likes to lead his life.

A former lecturer, Andrew played an integral role in setting up the Department of Applied Arts in Glyndwr University, Wrexham and this brought him to settle in North Wales.

The billhook before being repaired

Andrew has had a fascinating career.

In 1982, he crafted a chalice for the Pope as part of the papal visit to Heaton Park.

He has produced many 'Krypton Factor' silver trophies for Granada TV.

In Flint in 2016, he created a crown for the Urdd Eisteddfod.

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He has also made a ceremonial mace and presentation paperknife for HRH Princess Anne, as part of her installation ceremony at Harper Adams University when she became University Chancellor.

The two projects that Andrew enjoyed the most, as they were collaborations with his students, were creating a university mace for Glyndwr University's graduation ceremonies and making the Denbigh 2013 National Eisteddfod crown.

These days, Andrew is semi-retired but he still enjoys taking on commissions and running silver-smithing workshops.

He said: "Landscape has always been the primary inspiration for my work.

"Man's interaction with the land, the marks he makes on it, combined with a fascination for geology and the 'anatomy' of the land, have been of prime importance to me."

One of his favourite pieces was commissioned by a young couple to celebrate the birth of their first daughter.

The small ring, crafted from different-coloured metals and displaying different symbols, represented the seasons of the year in miniature.

Andrew and his fellow 'fixperts' will be at the next repair café in Ruthin on April 2.