

THE *WASTESAVERS* **VOLUNTEER**

Your news and stories

Spring 2023

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FAN FINDS
HIS DEN**

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WELCOME BACK!



I can't believe we are already in April – Spring has sprung, hopefully warmer days are ahead; and we have finally managed to produce a new look Volunteer Magazine!

It's been a really busy and interesting time over the past months.

We now have ten shops across south Wales - who would have thought it when we first opened the "Tip Shop" in Newport just a

few years ago!

There are now more than 100 of you volunteers across all of our shops.

We continue to be exceptionally proud of you all for giving us your precious time helping us deliver our 'Don't dump it; reuse it' work.

In June last year (yes it's been that long since the last edition) we achieved our 'Investing in Volunteers' official accreditation.

This is a fantastic achievement. I know many of you were involved in the assessment and thank you for your valuable contributions. The plaques are now proudly displayed in our shops.

On a sadder note, anybody who visited the Tip Shop would have come across Mike, a constant source of positive energy.

Mike sadly passed away very suddenly last month. All of us who knew him miss him dearly.

On a more positive note (and Mike loved this idea), we are now running two repair cafés; one in Newport and one in Pontypool. So if you have anything that needs mending, or some practical skills you would like to share, just ask a staff member.

I would also like to mention our digital inclusion programme at the Reuse Centre.

It is aimed at absolute beginners and could change your life!

And finally, we are getting some volunteer tee shirts made so look out for them.

Space in the magazine is always tight, so please accept our apologies if your project has not been covered in this edition - it will be next time.

They tried to take it down for re-use ... But I said ... no, no, no ...

OK, don't be that blunt, but we can't take everything and sometimes we have to say no thank you.

- * Electricals: must have a CE mark. If no mark then it goes in recycling.
- * Soft furnishings: Chairs (even if only the seat), sofas etc. must have fire labels.
- * Safety equipment: From child car seats to cycle helmets, sorry no.
- * Furniture with glass: Must have a glass safety kite mark (even if good quality retro).



AMELIA GETS KEYS TO TILL



New Inn volunteer welcomes more responsibility

Amelia finds the flexibility of volunteering at the Steelhouse just what she needed.

"My son Alfie is six years old now and has quite specialized needs, so he goes to a local specialist school. But he's non-verbal and I might need to be called away at any time," she explains.

"But it's not just about flexibility. I know it sounds corny, but as his primary carer, I also need interaction with adults, and this is a great place to find that"

As a main carer, Amelia rarely has time off but seeing live music remains one of her passions, when

she can find the time.

"I'm glad that my younger sister still thinks I'm cool enough to go to gigs with," she confesses, with some relief.

Amelia's last gig was Lizzo in Birmingham, but

To be trusted means a lot

she also has plans to see Coldplay, Beyonce and, Harry Styles in Cardiff.

"Frustratingly, my sister, turned me on to Harry – I really had little choice. He's not really my style, but I'm now a convert and I'm really looking forward to that. "Fingers crossed all will be well with Alfie that

evening while I'm out."

When it comes to working at The Steelhouse, Amelia is really proud to have been given responsibility for the till.

"It means a lot to me. Especially when I know that managers above Rob (The Shop Manager) have also put trust in me.

"That's made me really happy, to be trusted means a lot."

So, if you were lucky enough to get Harry Styles tickets don't be surprised if you find Amelia has wound her way to the front row – probably behind her younger sister.

Lockdown was hard for everyone ...

but for some those restrictions opened a door to something new.

Connor Abbot, who has volunteered at the Llantrisant Shed for almost six years, was one of those people who found a new passion during the pandemic – making short videos about one of his hobbies; Pokemon.

“I started making short videos on my phone in lockdown because I was trying to do some dealing in Pokemon cards and games” he explains.

“I noticed people were doing clear outs, getting rid of their old computer games, so I decided to start trading them. To show people the games worked I took videos of the screen (because you couldn’t go round

Connor at the Shed has another life as Tik Tok hit “The Welsh Pokepicker”

to someone’s house) so people could see what I was selling. It just went on from there.”

Connor decided to call himself the “The Welsh PokePicker” and created his own youtube and Tik Tok channels.

He now goes round all the second hand shops in RCT (not just ours) making short videos showing what

game and collectable bargains can be had, to his more than 1,500 followers.

“I was at a Pokemon fair in Cardiff a few months ago and this girl came up to me and wanted a selfie!” he told us with a big grin; “I couldn’t believe it!”

And his next project? “I think it would be fun to

have some rivalry between the Shed’s as I go round them all the time. I think I’ll call my next video “The Battle of the Sheds!”

Connors tips for making videos are quite simple; watch how other people do it; be yourself; and get used to the sound of your own voice (that can be hard).

The Welsh Pokepicker can be found on Tik Tok and Youtube.

BATTLE OF THE SHEDS



MAGS GETS CHANCE TO SAY THANKS

Mags started volunteering at the Llantrisant Shed just after covid.

“I was heading towards retirement and was a bit scared of being inside on my own all day.”

“Word got round that this new shop was opening up the road so I thought I’d pop in.”

“It’s a great place to make friends and we have a laugh while getting the work done.”

Mags has lived in the

valley all her life. “I followed my mother who was a seamstress at the old Policoffs factory which later became Burberry” she recalls.

“We started off by learning how to thread a needle and for the first six weeks you just practiced seams – nothing else.”

Mags was spotted and taken under the wing by the owners wife and taught every machine on the shop floor. “That woman had a big influence

on my life, but being young I didn’t say thank you to her properly at the time.

Fast forward 40 years; “there was a customer in the shop and someone told me “That’s the daughter of your old boss”.

“I was so asked her you to her

happy, I went up and to say a big thank mum, who was still alive.

“It’s not often you get that chance, but I’m glad I did.”



Stress free in Aberdare

Gerwyn had an especially hard time with isolation during covid, but when the Aberdare Shed opened he jumped at the chance to get involved. “I can get stressed quite easily but I like the fact there’s no pressure on me here.”

One thing Gerwyn clearly

does not get stressed about, however, is tattoo needles. His current count is 34 tattoos, with quite a few more planned - when he can afford it.

It’s the Disney and DC comic characters he goes for. Poison Ivy on

his left arm we would kind of expect, but his favourite is actually the Disney mermaid Ariel.

“This arm took 32 hours”, he says with pride.

Gerwyn’s body art is clearly an important part of who he is, and if you want to find a decent tattoo artist you could do worse than ask him.





I ALMOST BACKED OUT BEFORE I STARTED!

Nicholas Malolepszy and Deanna Broughton (above) have been volunteering in the IT department at the Reuse Centre since late 2021.

"I came here via the job centre and started on the shop floor," explains Deanna, "but with my interest in gaming I decided I wanted to work in the IT department."

"Before coming here I had such anxiety that I almost backed out of volunteering before I even started."

"But on my first day everybody was so helpful it made me feel

comfortable straight away.

"Starting to volunteer here took me out of my comfort zone but I now feel a lot more confident in myself."

Nicholas has known Wastesavers for longer, having been a volunteer in the old Reuse Centre.

"I've always had an interest in computers and had started my HND in computer studies, but I found it harder and harder to leave the house," he explains.

"I had to push myself to even come here; but from the first time I met

Alin, (the Reuse Centre IT Manager), this place became like a breath of fresh air to me.

"It's so busy here, it's definitely fun and the atmosphere is always warm and welcoming."

"The people are a real pleasure to work with."

"I also like the diversity of jobs on offer here. If I wanted to help on the shop floor, or work on the delivery van, or try an admin role, that's all open to me. It's nice to have those options."



HORROR FAN FINDS HIS DEN

Like many horror film fans, Sean is actually a breath of fresh air when you meet him.

Sean has been volunteering at the Den for the last four months.

Old black and white horror films are his passion.

As he puts it; "I'd rather go back to the past than back to the future".

To back that up he has more than 1,200 DVDs in his collection.

"When my college

teacher asked me why I collected so many old films I told him I wanted my house to look like a blockbuster store!"

He's also a big fan of stop frame animation films- The Nightmare Before Christmas is one of his favourites.

"Computer generated animation lacks imagination for me."

"When I do stop frame it really gets into my head," he explains.

We met Sean during Autism Awareness week

(which he was keen to talk about having the condition himself).

The process of moving figures frame by frame clearly appeals to him.

"When I start my media studies course later this year I want to make a stop frame animation tribute to those old Hammer House Horror films," he tells us.

And who knows - Christopher Lee might make a surprise guest appearance!

Meet the new manager on the block

Kerrie is our new Retail Manager for all shops.

What make you happy?

My family, hearing my teenage kids laugh.

What is the most challenging part of your new job here?

Getting my head around the main focus being tonnage and people, not just profit.

What have you learned since starting?

How Wastesavers is a front runner in the reuse world.

What would your super power be?

Either super speed or unlimited energy. There's always so much that needs to be done.

Continued on back page...



Sporty Bill Langsford!

Bill Langsford is the Treasurer of our Charity. As ever, we asked him some really tough questions like ...

What makes you happy in life?

Lots of things, but the latest person who makes me very happy is my two year old grandson.

What have you learned recently?

Two weeks ago I learned that you should cut the bottoms off flower stems before putting them into water to keep them fresh.

What would your super power be?

Spiderman. That way I can clean the upstairs windows without using a ladder. I'm always being told I'm too old to be up ladders!

...continued

What's your most guilty pleasure?

A Large bag of onion rings and watching old movies like Star Ship Troopers.

What would your last supper be?

Chinese – chicken and mushroom noodles, rice, prawn crackers and a bottle of Prosecco.

How do you relax?

Watching TV with a glass of bubbles or line dancing with friends.

What is your most guilty pleasure?

Buying a real cream doughnut from the local independent baker and eating it before my wife comes home.

What would your last supper be?

Lasagne and salad followed by Raspberry Roulade.

Have you ever had a near death experience?

I was pushing my wife, who was in a wheelchair, over a level crossing and she fell out when I bumped it

What is the closest you've come to death?

Jumping out of a plane at 20,000 feet (with a parachute), but still very scary.

What is your favourite item of clothing?

My cowboy boots - I have several pairs and I live in them. My favourites are my red ones.



on the track. A train was due in two minutes!

Luckily a passer by helped and we managed to get her back into her chair as the bells started!

How do you relax?

I am a season ticket holder of Newport County and regularly go to both Dragons and Newport Rugby games. I am also a season ticket holder of Glamorgan and Somerset County Cricket Clubs. The most

relaxing sport is four day cricket; you close your eyes, listen to the leather hitting the willow and drift off.

What is your favourite item of clothing?

Shirts. My wife says I put out more shirts for washing than any other item.



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