



TWAM Local Impact

TWAM
Tools with a Mission

Welcome to the second edition of **TWAM's Local Impact Newsletter**

We hope you enjoyed the first Local Impact Newsletter if you were able to read it back in April. We have lots of inspiring stories coming in of people who have gone above and beyond to help our work. It certainly wasn't difficult to find stories for this edition!

For those who don't know, this is a quarterly newsletter showing the amazing work that our volunteers are doing in the UK.

If you volunteer with TWAM, or if you have hosted any events to support us, please get in touch and tell us your story. We'd love to use it in this newsletter and potentially on social media too. Just send me an email at jamesn@twam.uk. We'd love to hear from you.

James Noble,
Fundraising Apprentice

2nd Edition
July 2022

In this edition:

- **Behind the scenes** - an introduction to the sewing machine department of our Ipswich centre
- **Meet the volunteer** - meet Ian, who has been our Volunteer Coventry Refurbishment Centre Manager for over a decade.
- **Volunteer milestones** - Derek Ranson has refurbished over 6,500 saws for us
- **What's going on at TWAM** - we'll finally be moving into our new Rugby centre soon

Volunteer Milestones: Derek Ranson

We'd like to tell you about one of our fantastic volunteers, Derek Ranson.

In 2012, Derek, a retired carpenter, saw a flyer in his church from a charity asking for volunteers. That charity was TWAM! Derek went and had a chat with the then manager, Graham Hart. Graham saw an opportunity to work through the large quantity of blunt saws that TWAM had stored, so he suggested that Derek take on this role. Derek got to work immediately, and has sharpened saws from TWAM ever since.

Tending Tool Refurbishment (TTR), an independent centre that assists TWAM, took over the delivery and collections of Derek's saws in 2016. Derek has been a strong supporter of both TWAM and TTR, attending multiple local volunteer events.

Derek has managed to restore over 6,500 saws in his time volunteering for TWAM - what an impressive achievement! Derek says that it's a brilliant cause to be involved in and has helped him with his health. He loves transforming vintage saws back into useful tools that will be transformative to the people who receive them.

Derek also enjoys carving wooden animal figurines, displaying them in local gardens, keeping his woodworking skills going.

We're very grateful to have Derek helping us out. It is so inspiring to think that thousands of vulnerable people across Africa are using saws that Derek has restored.



We've nearly got our new centre!

We are now only weeks away from getting the keys to our new Rugby Refurbishment Centre. This is an incredibly exciting time for us, and the whole team is looking forward to finally equipping the centre and getting it ready to start sending out containers full of refurbished tools.

We'll be documenting the equipping of the centre on social media, so make sure to [follow us on Facebook](#) to see how it's all progressing!

If you'd like to join us in creating livelihoods in African countries, you can head to twam.uk/rugby to donate or help us fundraise. We'd appreciate anything you can give to support us!

Behind The Scenes: Sewing Machines

We get all sorts of sewing machines donated to us. Some of them are quite basic manual machines, and others are more complicated electric machines or very heavy treadle machines! Our skilled sewing machine volunteers can always handle them and ensure they're working properly before we send them out.

Those of you who have seen our annual Tools Sent report will know that sewing machines are our most popular kit. We sent over 2,500 of them last year, despite it being a very difficult year. It is such an incredibly useful tool for those who receive one, as it allows people (usually vulnerable women) to make clothes and do repairs for their local communities, and often secure contracts with local schools to make the children's uniforms.

Stephen, who has been helping out in the sewing machine department for a few months, says that he really enjoys using his mechanical skills to make a difference. He's used to restoring broken-down old cars, so he got the hang of the manual and treadle sewing



machines very quickly, but the electric machines are quite a lot trickier. He says that he's able to restore 6 sewing machines a day!

It can get quite busy in this department, with 5 people all working together on some days. Luckily there is plenty of bench space allowing them to all work at the same time. We're very grateful for the skilled volunteers that we have!



Tony (left) and Stephen (right) refurbishing some manual sewing machines

Meet the volunteer: Ian Schoolar

Someone who has been a crucial part of TWAM's work for more than a decade is Ian Schoolar, who was one of our Volunteer Coventry Refurbishment Centre Managers. Ian has written an article about his time at TWAM, so we hope that you enjoy reading it.

"I took an early retirement/voluntary redundancy package from Peugeot here at Ryton, near Coventry, after over 37 years service. Plans that I made didn't materialise, and after a couple of years, I was ready to start again.

I saw a half page spread in our local paper asking for volunteers at a charity called TWAM in late 2008. Terry Heath was the manager, and my initial thoughts on doing one day a week escalated into three days a week. I really enjoyed the atmosphere and the thought that we were helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

Late in 2011, Terry handed the management of the Coventry Refurbishment Centre over to me, and I did so for 10 years. I continued managing the workshop until earlier this year, when TWAM appointed a full-time Refurbishment Centre Manager for the first time.

For many years, until COVID arrived, we spent a few weekends a year at local charity shows promoting TWAM, as there are still many people who have never heard of us.

Shows that we attended include *The Donkey Derby* (Coventry Memorial Park), *Kenilworth Lions* (Abbey Fields Kenilworth), *Fernhill Heath Worcestershire* (the Fernhill Heath Baptist Church encouraged people in the village to bring unwanted tools), *Bramcote Barracks Nuneaton* (home of the Gurkhas), *Growing Southam* (Southam village where we displayed one of our tool kits and a sewing machine, and local residents brought tools to donate), and *Old Milverton* (near Leamington Spa) where we were invited to promote the work of TWAM.

For these shows, we loaded everything in the van on a Friday, then spent all day at the show, then had to unload the van again so it was ready for the Monday morning. I decided to call a halt to them as they ended up taking a huge amount of time to prepare for.

In my 14 years with TWAM, I can honestly say I have enjoyed it. You never know what you will find when you're emptying donated toolboxes."

-Ian Schoolar



Tom Heath from Countryfile talking to Peter Shirley and Ian (right) at Growing Southam who opened the show as he is a local resident.