

Hafal Taking The Wheel in Tenby

By Sharron Hardwick

Hafal's Taking the Wheel, a campaign aiming to empower people with serious mental illness to take control of their lives and the services they receive, took place in Tenby on the 31st September.

Dressed as pirates, event organisers Bethan Lynam, practice leader, with Hafal staff and members, hit the streets of Tenby raising awareness about Hafal's services.

Hafal are Wales' principal charity working for people with serious mental illness and their carers. The Tenby event included Hafal's driving simulator and vintage campervan in Tudor Square, where lots of visitors were literally taking the wheel, whilst learning more about the campaign.

Craft activities took place in the Salvation Army Hall. Hosts, Major's Martin and Denise Clements, welcomed visitors with refreshments. The hall was filled with talented musical acts, featuring Hafal service user Kim Emens.

Kim, who performed a number of her own songs, along with a mixture of popular soft rock ballads, is no stranger to the effects of mental health issues, suffering with complex post traumatic stress disorder. Kim shared how music, along with being involved with Hafal for the last year, has helped her saying:

“Teaching myself to play the guitar started out as personal therapy. My love of this has grown; it gives me a reason and purpose to go out. I have started to play at open mic nights, which is often quite challenging. I have especially enjoyed playing for Hafal today because it's been much more relaxed.”

Other service users had opportunity to tune their skills in preparation for Hafal's art and craft display in the Tenby Resource Initiative (TRI) Centre. Mark and Adam made an impressive display of photographs taken by numerous members, whilst the ladies group displayed their talent in making jewellery and knitwear.

Hafal's newest staff member, Helen Morris, joined the service user led silk painting group which started in the spring. Recently eight members worked hard to produce an excellent piece for the Taking The Wheel display.

Other organisations linked with Hafal supported the event, with a stall by Alex Walker from MDF the Bipolar Organisation Cymru. MDF offer a one to one mentoring service for people with Bipolar and hold monthly Tenby self help drop in groups. People can access the MDF mentoring service by calling 01633 244244, or at www.mdfwales.org.uk where a full list of self help groups is also available, or call 020 79316480.

Pembrokeshire COAST (Creating Opportunities and Skills Team Alliance) exhibitor shared how “Hafal prepare participants to build confidence and skills. Once they are ready to progress, they come along to COAST, where we help them gain further skills, preparing them for volunteering, training and work.”

Hafal hold lots of social events including ladies, photography and fishing groups with *Messy Craft Fridays*. They run activities for improving basic skills, helping people overcome barriers including AGORED credited courses in: recovery, healthy eating, horticulture, work and computer skills.

Hafal staff support people with their holistic approach, enabling them to take the wheel, making steps towards recovery.

To find out more about Hafal please call 01834 844177, Email: tri@hafal.org or drop into the TRI on Trafalgar Road, Tenby.



