

**Jon interviewing Alex Maldwyn-Davies from the charity shop/brocante Les Puces in Poullaouen**

Alex: Hello

Jon: The manager are you of this brocante?

Alex: Er, there isn't really a manager because we're all volunteers. Nobody's paid here, but it was I'm the president of the association.

Jon: But it's no ordinary brocante is it. What kind of things do you have going here?

Alex: It isn't. So as well as the brocante we have um a tea room and a boutique de créateur, which is um a place where local artists come and display their work and then generously give us 10 per cent er of er what they make from it.

Jon: And they display their wares in the tearoom.

Alex: In the tearoom, yes. That's er

Jon: A couple of minutes

Alex: Yeah, so it's a it's a very cute little room where it's a nice place to sit, er enjoy a piece of home-made, er homemade cake um at the weekends, on Saturdays and Sundays. And we also have started setting up some workshops. So we have French classes on Wednesday mornings. We have a wellbeing group on Thursday afternoons, a craft club on Friday afternoons, tarot lessons on um Saturdays, and then pottery classes and a kid's group starting soon.

Jon: Sounds pretty busy.

Alex: Yep, very, very busy everyday. So we're open um Wednesday to Sunday in the afternoons, two until six.

Jon: So if someone is interested in the wellbeing club, how do they go about joining?

Alex: Um, so they can contact us um via our Facebook group where every Monday we put a programme of all the weekly events.

Jon: Right

Alex: Any you can join anytime. There's not a beginning session. It's every Thursday two o'clock. Come along. It's women only though, that group.

Jon: And you just pay per session.

Alex: Yeah, it's er five Euros. All our clubs are five Euros per session, and it all goes to the charity.



Jon: Yeah. Sorry, which charity?

Alex: So it's er Les Puces. So we're um an animal charity. So all the money that we raise so there are no um no members, no paid members of staff. So all the money goes on cat sterilisation programmes. We have a foster network. Er, last year we rehomed a hundred, over a hundred animals. And we worked with local refuges as well. So if there's any money spare that gets donated to other groups.

Jon: A hundred animals, that's very impressive.

Alex: Yes

Jon: Most of your customers, there's one or two milling about at the minute, in the shop, hence all the creaky floorboards.

Alex: Yeah,

Jon: Most of them from France do you reckon? Or from Brittany?(?)

Alex: I would say that the whole concept of a charity shop wasn't particularly known um over here when I started it er eight years ago. So I'd say the customer's base is 50:50 at the moment. Um I like to make sure that there's always a a French speaker er on duty everyday because um we were known as the er English shop for quite a while, but that's changing now.

Jon: You're a translator aren't you?

Alex: I am a translator.

Jon: How did you get into that?

Alex: Well I started, let's think. I was a French teacher in the UK after my degree. Didn't, I didn't like that.

Jon: Secondary school?

Alex: Secondary school French teacher

Jon: How long did you stick that for?

Alex: Two. Um. Then I moved to Poland to become an English teacher. I did that for a year. Then I moved to Paris.

Jon: Whereabouts in Poland?

Alex: Warsaw. Then I moved to Paris. And I taught er air traffic controllers er English. So aeronautical English, and I did that for 10 years. And then one of my students um had a friend who was a



video games designer, and he was looking for a translator. So that's how it started through a friend. So I translated a video game. And I thought I liked this a lot a lot more than aeroplanes. Air traffic controllers have to do certain number of hours a year. So I was at Boissy, Charles de Gaulle and Orly. I'm not, I did love it. Um, sometimes, but I lived in a tiny studio in Paris. And I thought I can't, I can't carry on like this, you know, and it was like three hours a day on the metro and the bus.

Jon: Forget it. Plus teaching.

Alex: Yeah, yeah. So, so 10 years was good enough.

Jon: Yeah.

Alex: Then I came down here, translating and then it's just luck, I think it was just luck. I applied to translate a book. I got chosen. Then that book got picked up by Amazon Crossing, er which is the the publishing house for foreign literature in America, but an app within Amazon. And then that's it. So I did about 10 books with them. And now I work for UB Soft, which is a big video games company.

Jon: How did you get into coming here?

Alex: I was um a crazy vegan, militant vegan, and I saw that the um there was an old crêperie that had just closed and I didn't know anybody here really. I didn't know that there's such a big English population here at all. I had no idea. So I lived in that house with my ex. I didn't really know anybody.

Jon: The orange house.

Alex: The orange house. And um, with my crazy vegan ways. I decided that I wanted to do that just as a way of doing you know a hobby really, get a little charity shop going. And that's that.

Jon: Alex, thank you very much.

Alex: Thank you.