



# The **WORLD** in our street

Interview with

## Stuart at Chester Comic Company

Stuart started the company on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1989 and originally he worked in Grey and Pink records. He sold comics there and an extension was built to accommodate the comics but basically he outgrew the space and was concerned about the weight of the stock on the old floors so about 12- 15 years ago he moved to the current property which he actually bought 7 or 8 years ago. He has called it the Chester Comic Company because it is important to tell the public what you sell and where you are and so to say what you do in your name.

Stuart was always interested in Greek and Norse mythology and he went to art collage so that aspect was important. He also has a shop in Rhyl. Most comic shops just sell new stuff. Stuart specialises in stuff from 1960s onwards and they have a delivery from America every week with all the latest stuff. They have 3 filing cabinets of standing orders as so many people collect for example Batman, Spiderman, Xmen, Avengers and clients will come to collect their orders.

Stuart has two members of staff, Alistair is the technical manager and works two days per week and there is another employee called Gaz. They have just won “best shop in Rhyl”! There is going to be a Comic Convention on 25<sup>th</sup> September at Chester Roodee which will be for dealers from across the UK and there will also be artists and writers. Stuart is not sure how many will attend as it is the first Convention to be held in Chester, previously there have been Fairs. Stuart goes to Conventions across the country for research and sales. Basically sales go up and down when films come out and particular TV shows – see spikes in sales.

Stuart likes being in Brook Street, it is very eclectic but he does get frustrated that some of the businesses do not mix, he believes it is third generation before people





## **BROOK STREET** The **WORLD** in our street

integrate properly. It is very hard for example to get some groups to be involved in the Brook Street carnival but EVERYONE does benefit.

It is challenging when businesses are set up because people think Ah that is a good place to have a 2<sup>nd</sup> hand shop because there are already 2 there so then there were 4 in the street and so this was a problem and in fact some have had to close. It is perhaps a bit short sighted, similar is likely to happen as there are now so many hairdressers. Occupancy of the units in the street is generally very good, it is affordable; unfortunately they are too close to Tesco's for the street to have any "fresh" stuff.

People come to the shop from all over the country and even mainland Europe. If they are travelling in the UK and have seen the company on the Web, then they will track it down. Stuart recalls an article in The Guardian about comics being the 4<sup>th</sup> most investable product – comics are increasingly an investment item.

Six comics are put together in a collection. Stuart takes delivery of over £1k of new stuff each week from the US – Stuart mainly deals in American comics. They go out on the shelves, there are various categories. They never put a sticker on the comics as this would cause damage. There is a US \$ and £ sterling conversion chart so that customers can work out the costs of the comics. They are all alphabetically listed and grouped with similar titles – Xmen would have dead pool comics, wolverine comics and cable comics so these all cross over into the same group. After about 6 months they move them and bag them and put stickers on the bags and go into "back catalogue" in alphabetical and numerical order.

Stuart also buys collections from people for example a mother contacted him as her son is going to America and there are loads of comics to get rid of.

