## Repair, Reuse, Recycle - Reflect

The NABG session on October is a bit unusual. The idea is o immerse ourselves in the topic by doing some repairing, reusing and recycling in the preceding month, preferably outside one’s normal activities, and reflect on our experiences in the session. (Does this sound too much like a Uni workshop?) Here’s a few random thoughts to kick it off.

**Purpose**

We need to make stuff last longer, by buying better, longer-lasting stuff less often, keeping the things we have going as long as possible , finding other users and usages when we’ve tired of them and extracting and reusing their components when they’re dead.

**Repair**

There’s a tension between repairing things oneself and using local commercial services. I just had some sandals repaired by Paul Rutter at Express Shoe Repairs at 218 GR – very good and reasonable price. I could have done this repair myself, and this too would have supported local businesses – buying the glue, finding I need some clamps – probably finding it didn’t work and going to Paul in the end anyway! Repair services in the high street have been in decline but we have a good range in Gloucester Road: computers, phones, hifi, shoes, clothes, cars …?

I’ve also noticed the emergence of Repair Cafes – weekly/monthly events where enthusiasts will help repair stuff e.g <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bristolrepaircafe/>

One of the most heart-warming shows is the BBC’s ‘The Repair Shop” - gets a bit formulaic but worth a watch. Most items are pretty old and hence repairable in a way that modern products are not (I’m struggling with an ailing dishwasher myself) and the movement towards legislating for repairability is very active. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/may/08/sidestepping-apple-the-third-party-tinkerers-fighting-for-your-right-to-repair>

**Reuse**

I take reuse to mean using something second-hand, or handed on or shared, or repurposed more or less as is, whilst recycling means breaking it down into its components. Reuse retains more of the intrinsic value of the item so is preferable.

I guess we all have stuff accumulating which could be of more use to someone else if only you could find them. We are blessed with a dozen or more charity shops in GR so local reuse must be quite high. And then there is Freecycle which I had forgotten about and ebay if you think it has value.

**Recycle**

I guess we are pretty good recyclers in Bishopston, at least of packaging. However I’m very bad about recycling electronic equipment because I always hope it can be reused and Im never sure wher best to take it, so for example, I’ve got about ten mobile phones lying about. Crazy!

However there are huge problems with recycling: “Recycling is like a Band-aid on Gangrene” says Max Liboiron <https://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/591640/recycling-plastics/> but we need the scarce elements tied up in electronics.