



VIV ASKELAND
Tour Guide

Norwegian-born Viv, 58, was sleeping rough under London Bridge before she came to The Big Issue. She sold the magazine from the start of the 2000s until 2010, when she found a new role as a London tour guide. Part of the award-winning Sock Mob's Unseen Tours team, Viv takes tourists on a journey through hidden parts of the city. "When I started selling the magazine it gave me a lot of confidence," says Viv. "I realised how much I actually liked speaking to new people, and that's what I've moved on to doing with the tours."



MARK DEMPSTER
Harley Street Therapist

Former addict, drug dealer and prisoner, Mark Dempster turned his life around with The Big Issue's help. After selling the magazine in London in the mid-'90s he went on to become a qualified therapist, and the 51-year-old now treats patients at his practice in Harley Street in London. He hails his time selling the magazine as the catalyst to his recovery.

"It felt empowering – it gave me the platform to put drugs and crime behind me," Mark recalls. "I remember one day in The Big Issue office, a pal of mine called Paul, another vendor, came in and said he was going through a detox programme. I remember thinking, yes – I can do it, too. It was an important turning point, and The Big Issue was a very big part of that process."



JON BROWN
Children's Book Illustrator

Jon, 37, sold the magazine in Bath up until the end of 2015, when he finished work on a series of drawings for a children's book called *Katy and the Rainbow Mermaid*. Jon had painted a colourful dragon on the window of Waterstones where he sold The Big Issue, which caught the eye of author John West who offered him work on his book. "The biggest thing is confidence," says Jon. "It got me talking to people, gave me the push to talk to them about my work."



TERRY GORE
Housing Charity Manager

Terry, 51, used to sell The Big Issue in Wimbledon, and now manages Canterbury-based housing charity Catching Lives. "I started selling The Big Issue after I'd been sleeping rough for two years," he says. "It started to give me back my self-esteem. I'd become very isolated but selling the magazine meant I had to talk to people. That was the start of developing interpersonal skills that are key to the work I do now. It was the start of my route off the streets." **TBI**

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