

MOVING ON

Some Big Issue vendors stay with us for a long time – as long as they need us. Others use the magazine as a stepping stone to move on to new starts. Here are some of our great success stories.

STAN BURRIDGE

Healthcare Champion for Homeless People



Stan is an expert on homelessness through his own experience: he slept on the streets of London and sold The Big Issue outside the old BBC headquarters in west London during the late 1990s. "Selling The Big Issue, I learnt I had an ability to get people talking, not only talking but listening as well," he says. "I got to hear about

other people's lives, marriages, divorces – it led me to where I am today."

Now in his early 50s, Stan is a project leader at Pathway, a charity that works within the NHS to get homeless people and other marginalised groups better healthcare. "I get a real sense of pride when one of the people we help gets a job or when they make a massive step forward in other areas of their lives," Stan says. "It's the same feeling that The Big Issue has when one of their flock smashes through the glass ceiling and begins to fly. The Big Issue opened the door to me and countless others."

MARVINA NEWTON

Youth Charity Boss

Marvina Newton, 30, began sleeping rough on the streets of east London when she was still a teenager. She decided to sell The Big Issue to earn an income, before finding a job as a waitress and beginning to build her career. Marvina now lives in Leeds and is a part-time biomedical technician. She has taken a career break to focus on her charity Angel of Youths, helping disadvantaged children.

Marvina's aim was to stop other teenagers ending up in the predicament she found herself in over a decade ago. "Whether they're white, black or whatever, I can see a little bit of me in them," she says. "No one's going to save you but you. You're the superhero in the story – that's what I got from The Big Issue. The only person I had was myself. I could have chosen to be a victim but I chose to sell as many Big Issue magazines as I could."

JOEL HODGSON

Legal Eagle

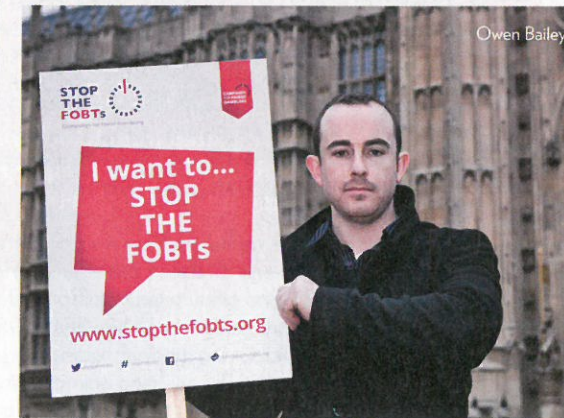
Seven years ago Joel was sleeping rough in London. Today the 27-year-old works for top City law firm Freshfields. He says the turning point was when he walked through the doors of The Big Issue in 2009: "It felt like someone was on my side for the first time in a while." After a corporate placement at Freshfields, he got a job in the firm's billing department. "The Big Issue turned my life around massively. The good thing is they give vendors the tools to help themselves."



OWEN BAILY

Gambling Campaigner

Owen, 34, began selling The Big Issue in Canterbury in 2006, when he was still struggling with a gambling addiction, hooked on the high-street bookmakers' digital roulette games called Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs). After The Big Issue helped turn



CARON BOULGHASSOUL

Refugee Charity Manager

Caron, 42, sold The Big Issue in central London back in the early days of the magazine, from 1992 to 1995. Using it to gain some structure at a chaotic time, she applied to go to university in Lancaster, got a degree in social policy there and then went on to work with refugees struggling with homelessness. Today she is the project manager for Nottingham Arimathea Trust, finding housing for destitute asylum seekers and refugees in the city.

"Selling The Big Issue helped me get my self-esteem, a bit of structure in my life, and I met some very good people doing it," Caron recalls. "The people I work with now find themselves in desperate trouble, and I can relate and empathise with them, because as a young woman I went through some of the same things."

JO ADAMSON

Painter

Jo was known in Glasgow for many years as "the singing vendor," cheering everyone up with songs about the magazine. Registered blind, Jo stopped selling The Big Issue because of her deteriorating sight. But she is



now thriving at her first love: painting. She has exhibited at CASS Art in Glasgow and also set up her own online Etsy store to sell her work. "I don't do depressing pictures – I do cheerful ones," she says. "Since I left The Big Issue I didn't think I could draw any more because I'm almost blind. So I'm very proud of what I've done."

his life around, Owen began campaigning for regulation of FOBTs and now works with many organisations to combat gambling addiction. "Selling The Big Issue gave me some stability back," he recalls. "I realised I was getting the chance to run my own little business – it was the moment things began to change for me."

FLORIAN CIOBANU

Organic Supermarket Chef

Florian, 47, used to sell The Big Issue outside organic supermarket Whole Foods in Glasgow. Then at the end of 2014 he landed a job as a chef in the shop's cafe. In 2012 he moved to the UK from Romania for a fresh start but when his newsagent business collapsed he lost everything. Selling the magazine outside Whole Foods led to a full-time job as a prep cook and kitchen porter. "I showed I'm not afraid of hard work and I think they recognized that," he explains. "I'm very grateful to The Big Issue for all the support over the two years I was selling it."

