# Meet the Welsh skateboarder using running and skateboarding to tackle mental health issues

**Tuesday 12 April, 2022**

**Matthew Ryan of Dinas Powys has produced a short film and book documenting his attempts at using running and skateboarding to improve his mental health.**

Long-time skateboarder and running enthusiast, Matthew Ryan, 46, is set to release a short film and book about how he has used skateboarding and running to overcome mental health issues.

The project, titled 'Open That Door', explores his recent running challenges - including a 1,000 mile journey around the perimeter of Wales - as well as his return to filming skateboarding, and how these have helped improve his mental health.

Open That Door is set to be released on Saturday 16th April with a launch event at Spit and Sawdust skatepark, located just off Newport Road, from 6PM until late. Spit and Sawdust will also be free to skate from 12PM onwards.

In the book, Matthew - or Dykie, as he's known to mates - discusses how he has used skateboarding and running to help him deal with mental health issues. This includes a list of actions he's taken to actively improve his mental health, in the hopes that his own struggles may help other people overcome their own.

The 120-page book includes a memoir of his time running around Wales, his motivations for starting the project, and the other steps he's taken to improve his mental health. It even includes some of his "crazy, embarrassing stories" from over the years.

The book will also feature an archive of artwork from the former skateboard company founded by Matthew, Crayon Skateboards. The archive will include old skate photographs and pictures from Dykie's previous runs, alongside artwork from Welsh artists Phil Morgan, Lee 'Beef' Bennett, Nathaniel Jones, and Pete Fowler.

The Open That Door book will be available for just £10 at the launch event, but you'll also be able to get your hands on a copy online from the 15th April or from Cardiff Skateboard Club. All the proceeds are to be donated to mental health charities, Mind and The Ben Raemers Foundation, as well as helping to plant trees through the organisation Trees Not Tees.

The launch event will also see the premiere of his accompanying short film of the same name, which marks his return to filming skateboarding after a break of almost ten years. The film documents the eight steps that Matthew has undertaken to improve his mental health, including his run around Wales and his return to skateboard filming.

Matthew recently completed an unsupported run around the perimeter of Wales to raise money for charity.

In just five weeks he completed the 1,000 mile journey round the Wales Coastal Path and down the Offa's Dyke Path. Doing so, Matthew managed to raise over £7,400 for the mental health charity, The Ben Raemers Foundation, all the while carrying his tent and personal belongings on his back.

The Ben Raemers foundation is a mental health charity founded following the death of one of the UK's most beloved professional skateboarders, Ben Raemers, who sadly took his own life in 2019.

The organisation aims to 'maintain Ben's legacy and help prevent any more loss to suicide' by providing the skateboarding community with the tools and knowledge to understand and address mental health issues.

Matthew had previously attempted the challenge of running round Wales five years earlier but, unfortunately, he was unsuccessful.

When asked what his motivation for starting the project was, Mr Ryan answered: 'If I could help a couple of people, as well as myself, then that would be my biggest accomplishment'.

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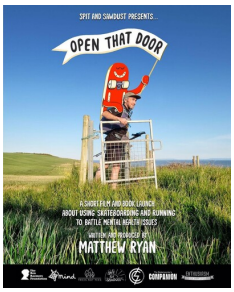


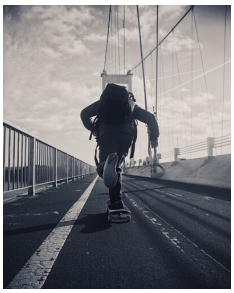

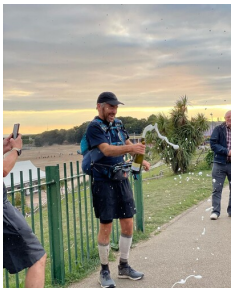

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Dykie is best known in the skateboarding community for his work documenting the Welsh skateboard scene in the late 1990's and early 2000's. He helped film much of the early careers of Matthew Pritchard and Lee Dainton, including the classic 'Pritchard vs. Dainton' video which later formed the basis for the MTV series, 'Dirty Sanchez'.

The launch event will also see the release of a limited edition collaborative skateboard from Crayon Skateboards and Spit and Sawdust skatepark to celebrate the eighth anniversary of the skatepark opening.

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