



"We believe that the whole community benefits when everybody and everything is cared for and has a purpose"

Story by John Marshall MBE Edited by Hanna Moore Illustrated by Natalia Jaszkowska "I thought of that while riding my bicycle."

ALBERT EINSTEIN ON THE THEORY OF RELATIVITY

"Bicycle is the nearest approximation I know to the flight of birds. The airplane simply carries a man on its back like an obedient Pegasus; it gives him no wings of his own."

LOUIS J. HELLE JNR

"[The bicycle] is no longer a beast of steel... no, it is a friend... It is a faithful and powerful ally against one's worst enemies. It is stronger than anxiety, stronger than sadness. It has all the power of hope."

MAURICE LEBLANC, LATE FRENCH NOVELIST



I remember the day like it was yesterday - Monday 27th June, 2011. A nice couple had taken me from the store I was built in, put a bow around my neck and left me in a room filled with balloons. I sat there for a while and watched curiously as some strange people came over and hid behind the sofas and curtains.

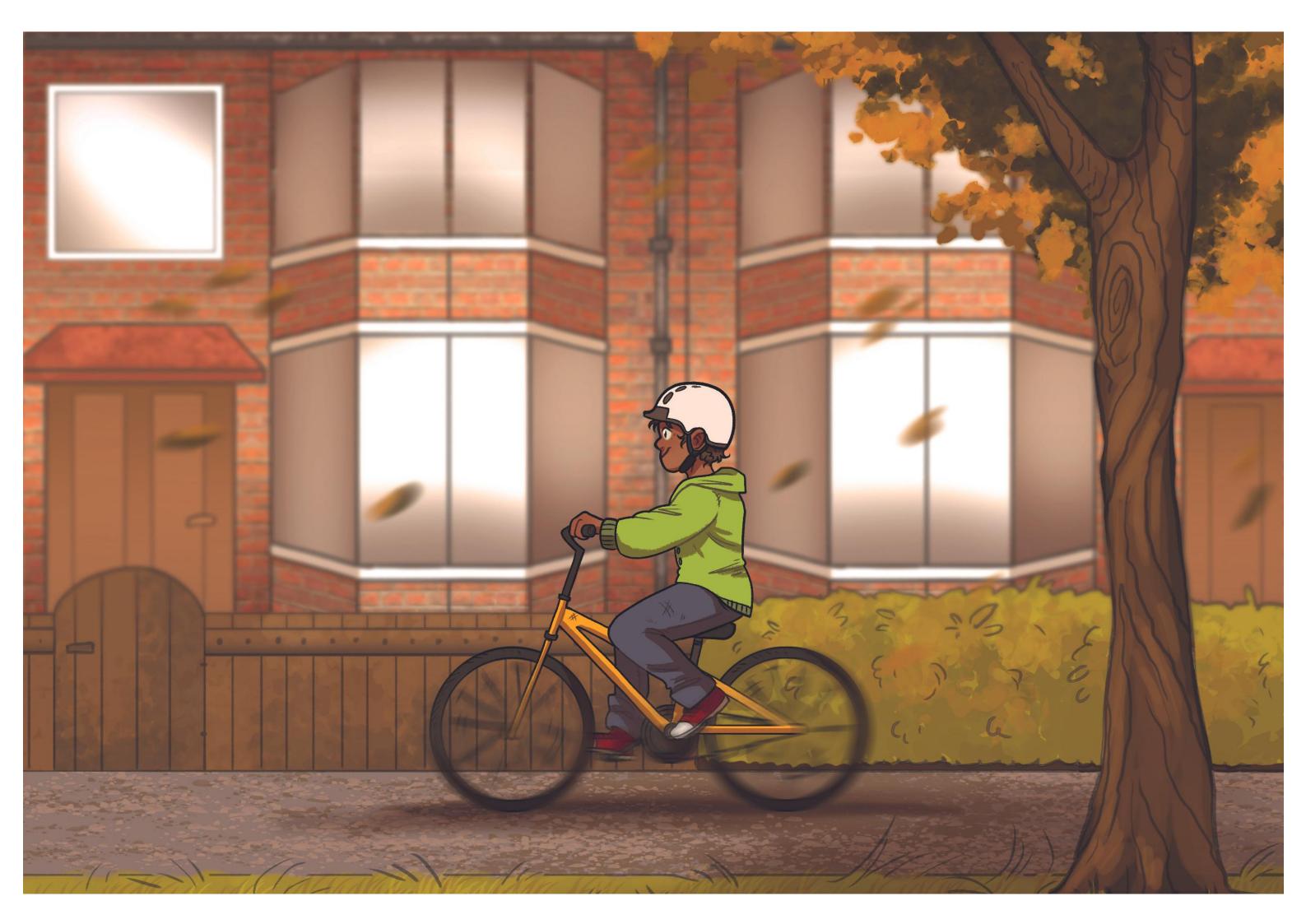
They turned off the lights and everything went silent - well, silent with the occasional giggle followed by a swift 'shh!'.

"I've entered a mad house!" I remember thinking.

I must admit I got a bit nervous at this point, that was until a young boy came through the door and the room was filled with light, confetti and cheers. They were hugging him and patting him on the back; that's when he saw me.

I will never forget Jack's face as he ran past the crowd and jumped and leaped and danced all around me. I felt like a celebrity!





I loved watching Jack grow; we did everything together!

We went to school with his friends, we played in the park until it got dark and even did the milk run for Mum.

As he got a bit bigger, he started to take the school bus more with his friends.

I remember one time when it started to rain really hard. Jack was walking to the bus stop, but he was too slow and the bus zoomed past him. He ran back home, grabbed me from the shed and we were like Batman and Robin -going so fast my tyres felt like they were on fire! We made it to school just in time and I was so happy I was able to help him.

I would always be there for Jack.





Over the years Jack kept growing and growing but I seemed to stay the same size no matter how much I tried to stretch.

His mum always told him he needed to eat his greens, but they were working too well and my little tyres buckled trying to hold him up. I think I needed some of those green things!

As the days and weeks passed, I knew I had been officially outgrown and I was put in the shed. I was okay with it, I knew I had done my duty: I helped teach Jack how to ride a bike. I had been there for his falls and bumps but I wasn't a young, new bike anymore.

I had accepted my future in this musty, old shed.





After months of making friends with the local insects and spiders building their homes around my frame, the shed opened and I saw a young man come through the door. He was looking left and right and left again until he looked directly at me and smiled.

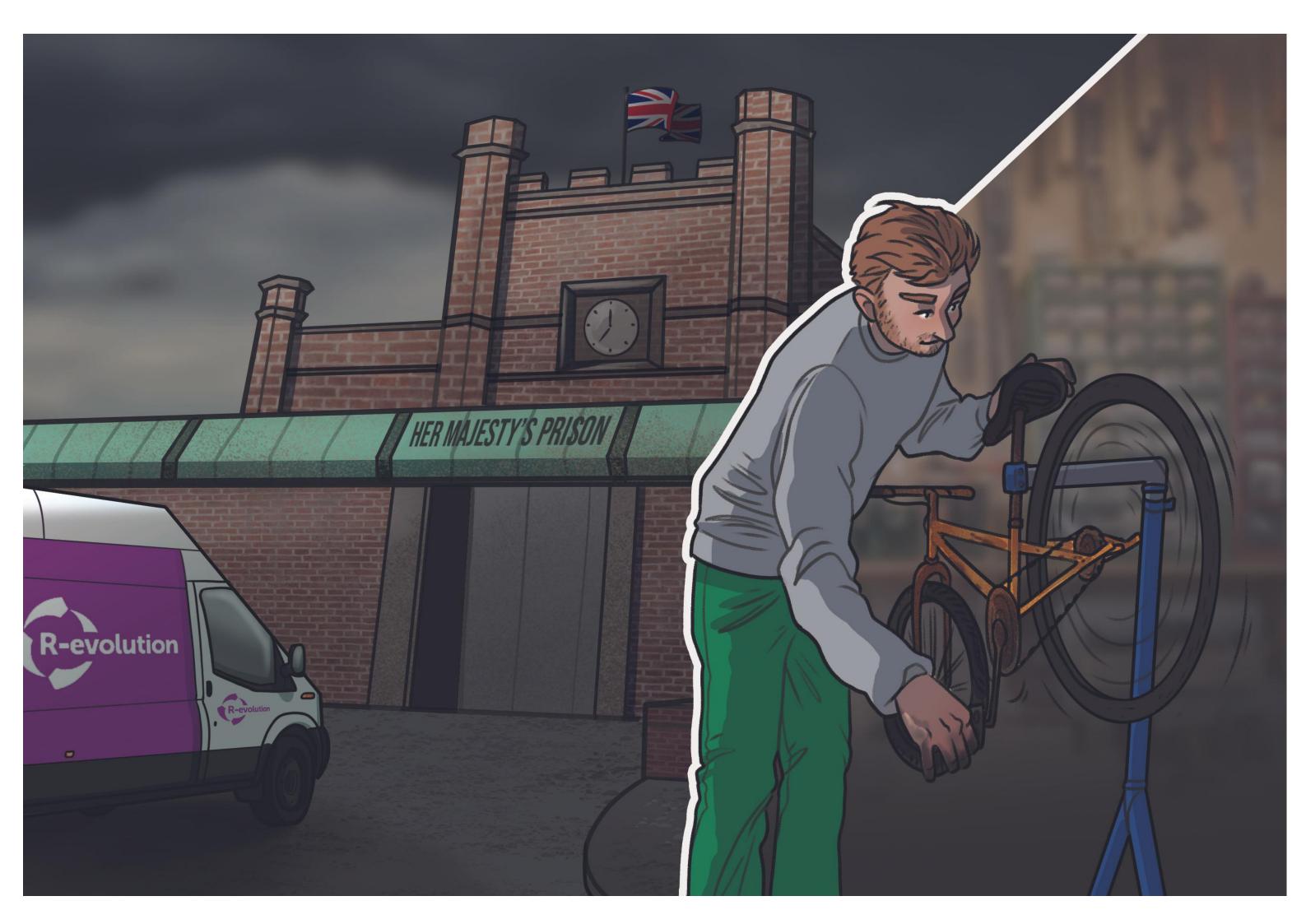
"It's Jack!"

He scrambled his way through the clutter and carefully pulled me out... I had forgotten what fresh air smelt like.

He dusted the cobwebs off of me, patted my saddle and handed me to a kind looking man.

His name was Neil, he was a volunteer for some charity. I didn't know what was going to happen to me, but I trusted Jack and got into the purple and white van.





'I trust Jack. I trust Jack.' I remember saying to myself as we drove up to a big, scary building.

'It's a prison! Why am I going to prison?' I cried, 'I was always so good to Jack, what am I doing here!'

They wheeled me into a workshop where some men in grey jumpers gave me a good clean, took all my worn, broken parts off and replaced them with newer, shinier versions. They oiled me and even got my chain working freely.

I was so happy - I felt like a new bike again!

I overheard that they were in training, working with a charity called R-evolution. Once the prison workers helped with my worst parts I would be heading over to R-evolution HQ to be made even better.





When I arrived at the R-evolution workshop, there were so many people. Mechanics were showing trainees how to fix bikes and volunteers were busy loading the van full of restored bikes - just like me!

I wondered where they were heading.

A trainee hoisted me up and walked around me. He commented on my new parts and tightened up my bolts and gears. You know when you wake up in the morning and have that big morning stretch? That's what this felt like. Absolute bliss!

The Tutor ticked off my personal check sheet to make sure I was safe to ride and told the trainee he had passed the course.

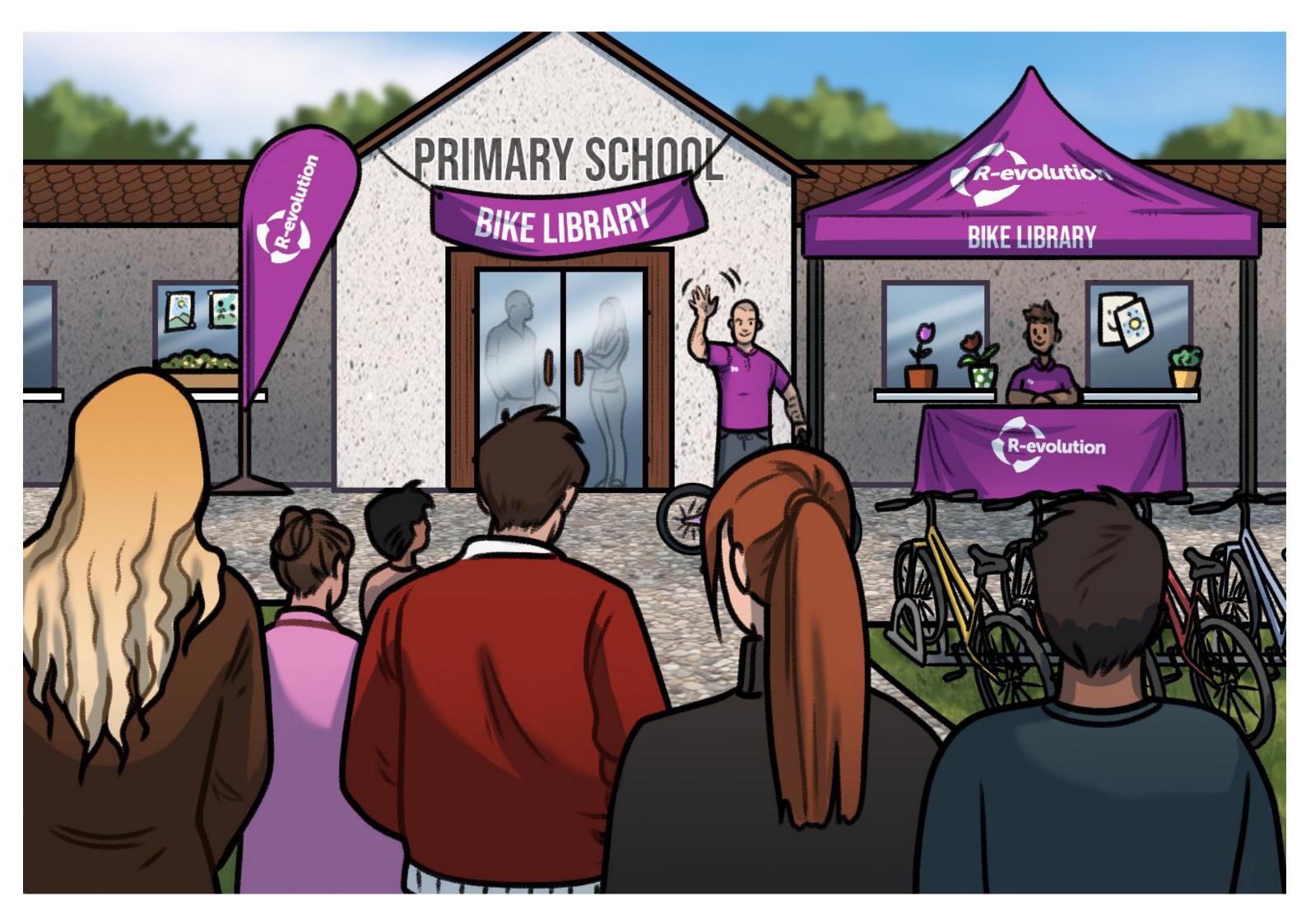




Once they were happy with me, I was given the badge of honour. I wasn't sure what the next step was but I was excited - ready to fire up my new wheels and get on the road again.

The trainee was really excited too when he was given his sheet of paper. It didn't look that exciting to me to be honest... I can't read, but I heard them say he was now a qualified City and Guilds Cycle Mechanic, whatever that is!





I waited in the workshop until one of the mechanics wheeled me into the van with many other bikes. The doors shut. The engine turned on.

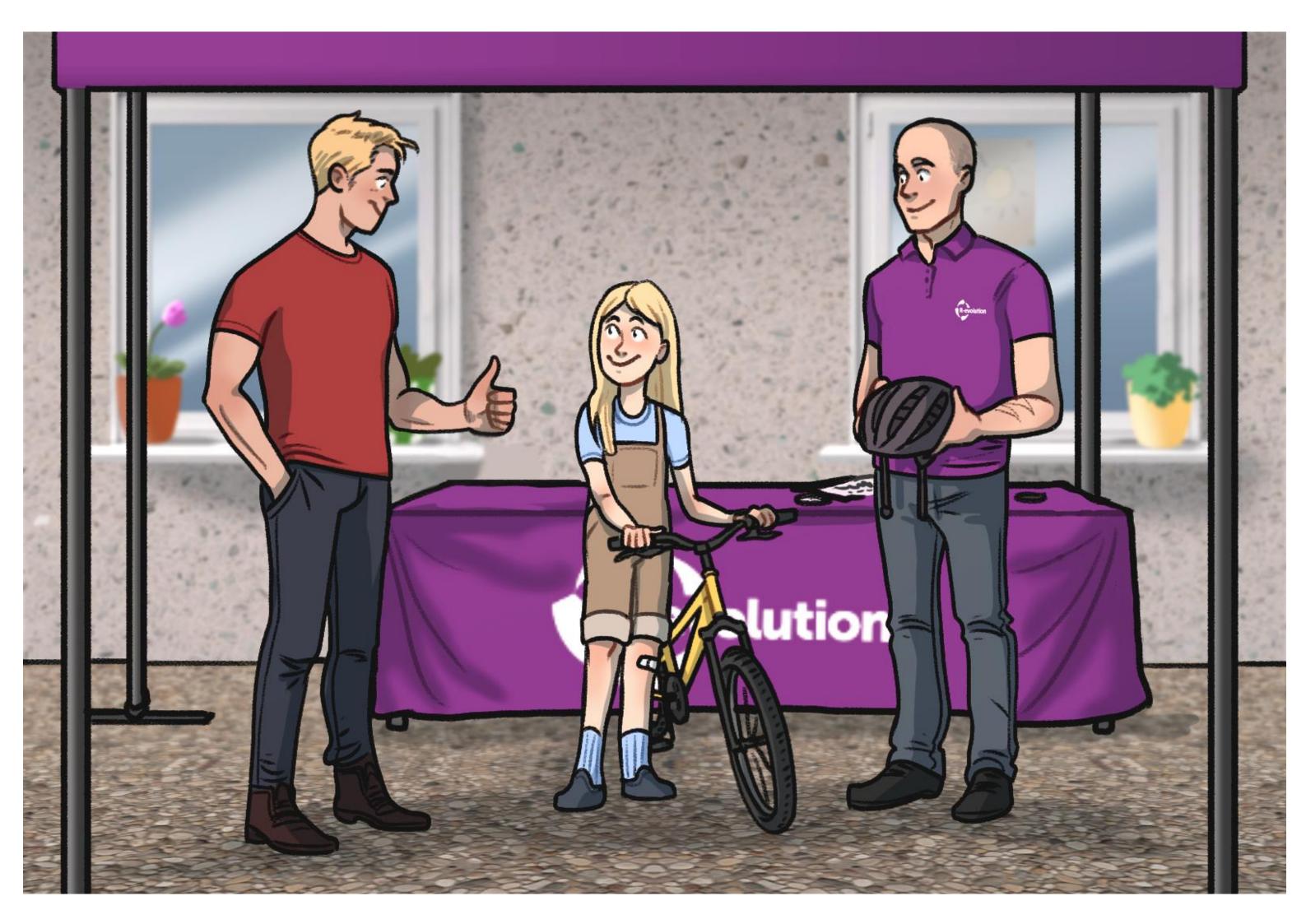
We were on the move!

A lifetime seemed to pass until the doors opened again and one by one we were rolled out to be placed side by side in front of a crowd. It was like Jack's birthday all over again, but with more children this time.

Children of all different sizes excitedly rushed over and chose a bike. They were given a helmet and that was it, off they rode into the distance.

"Ooh, I hope I get picked! I hope it is someone nice!"





I looked around and watched the other bikes being chosen when I suddenly felt a little hand on my handlebar. A blonde girl smiled at me and pulled me out from the rack.

She put on her helmet and sat on my saddle ... she was much lighter than Jack was!

She tried to pedal and giggled so much that we almost fell over.

"It's okay, I'll teach you!" I laughed to myself and off I went to my brand-new home, ready to start my journey once again.





A big thank you to all of those who have invested time, money and bicycles into R-evolution over the years.

We would not be where we are now without you all.

Our project aims to upskill people in order to move them into work or community participation. We do this by refurbishing bikes and making them available at events and in schools and commercial centres helping to:

- Reduce waste
- Lower carbon emissions
- Increase healthy lifestyles, wellbeing and exercise levels
- Get people cycling for necessity, to gain a new skill or improve their mental health



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Special thanks go to our friend Ian Burnett for all the enthusiasm, encouragement, and support.

You helped set us off on this road.

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