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Photos by IAIN GARRETT+ SCOPE



The Working Way

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Andrew Banham is a man not shy of a hard day's work. For more than 21 years now he has built up a working routine that consists of five days of labour in his role at Tesco's supermarket in Old Amersham.

Whether Andrew's sweeping the floors, stocking the shelves, helping offload the stock or talking to customers, he has become a permanent figure at the store and is a familiar local face to go to while floundering down an aisle in search of that elusive item.

Dressed very sharply in stripy shirt and tie for our interview, Andrew is in buoyant mood showing off his photos and words he has written about his time so far at Tesco's and his active lifestyle in Amersham.

His home is spotless, well organised and full of interesting paintings and some notable wildlife photos adorn the living room walls. We later find out these are some of his father's holiday shots taken in South Africa, featuring fabulous shots of lions and elephants, which are given great prominence in the house.

When talking about his job, he becomes enthused and animated, revealing a great sense of pride in his work. He first started out at Tesco's in 1990 after getting a taste for employment during a two week work placement at a local food retailer.



"I got my work experience through a college for special needs in Amersham and really liked the work. I am an active person who wants to keep busy throughout the week, said Andrew.

"I applied for a job at the Tesco's and had my first interview which all went well despite it being a new and strange experience. I never told my parents I was going for the job, so when I informed them of the news they were pleased for me. The support my family has given me, both my brother and sister, and my parents who live close by in Chalfont, St Peters has been superb."

Andrew was supported by the Trust's South Buckinghamshire Community Learning Disability Team

for more than 15 years until the end of last year, in which time he believes he achieved a lot of independence and learnt a lot of skills.

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In between discussions about his passion for coach trips around the country and the thrill of seeing new places, as well as visiting his uncle George in Northamptonshire, his favourite soaps (an excruciating decision between Emmerdale and Coronation Street) and his very close family ties, he would often refer back fondly to the people he meets on a day to day basis at work.

"Since I started at the supermarket, I've met many people and enjoy talking to customers on the shop floor. All the staff are very supportive and always ask me how I'm doing and whether I am okay with my role for the day. I've seen lots of changes and people come and go, but it's great fun."

As we leave Andrew to rest on one of his rare days off, he has a look of contentment and as the front door closes, he leaves us with one final reflection: "I always like a challenge, dress smartly and take great pride in wearing my uniform."



Andrew hard at work