

Most people have thrown something away with the thought in the back of their mind that someone, somewhere might like to have it, but it would be impossible to find that person.

In 1985 a computer programmer in California offered a broken laser pointer for sale as part of an auction website he wanted to try out on his own site. He called it Auction Web.

To his surprise someone wanted to buy it. He contacted the buyer to be sure that he knew it was broken and the buyer said yes and that he wanted it anyway. The internet has made it possible to find the person who wants what you do not want.

Kevin S continued with the story to say that it resulted in the launch of eBay in 1997 as transactions were running at 200,000 a month having grown from 250,000 for the whole of 1996. It went international in 1999 and grew and grew.

In 2010 it sold \$62 Billion (more than \$2,000 a second). This includes a passenger vehicle every 2 minutes; a motorcycle every 6 minutes and (once) a Gulfstream Jet for \$4.9 Million in 2001.

In 2011 it had more than 97 Million members worldwide. There are other auction sites, but Bay is the biggest and best known.

Kevin then introduced the site proper and explained how to buy and sell effectively.

He displayed the opening page of the eBay site and showed how to register as a member, but explained that if you don't want to become a member immediately it is quite OK to look around as a guest to get the feel of how it all works.

If you want to bid on an item or to put an item on watch to keep track of it, then you would have to sign up. This requires your name, address and email address after which you choose a username and your password. So far there is nothing to pay.

Once registered, you are invited to start selling or browsing the auction categories. Selling involves a charge for the eBay service, depending on the values involve and how much information you want to include, such as additional photographs. You will know the cost before you commit to the auction. If you browse and wish to bid for something, you may do so.

Kevin offered hints and tips on how to use the site to best advantage and fielded a range of questions. This included advice on how to describe what you are selling and to find out the correct postage costs to show the buyer.

You are expected to sign up for Paypal in due course. This is a system to ensure that the money involved changes hands securely.

All this was accompanied by a live visit to the site together with a demonstration of how it all works. Feedback from users is used to identify the most reliable people.

The next meeting is on Tuesday 10th April 2012 at All Saints Lesser Hall, Victoria Square, Penarth. 7.30 pm for 8.00. Rhona and Mike F will be looking at words, books and pictures. For more information ring Mike on 029 20309579.

