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Artist Steve Dillon 'will be sorely missed'

Tributes to comic book legend



BY STEWART CARR
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Tributes have poured in for Luton comic book genius Steve Dillon – best known for his artwork on Judge Dredd, Preacher and The Punisher – who has died at the age of 54.

His brother Glyn, who wrote the graphic novel *The Nao Of Brown*, confirmed on Twitter that his “big brother” and “hero” had died.

He wrote: “Sad to confirm the death of Steve, my big brother and my hero. He passed away in the city he loved (NYC). He will be sorely missed. Cheers x.”

Dillon was born in Luton

and lived here through his life. He started his career by drawing Nick Fury for *Hulk* magazine when he was 16.

He went on to become a much-loved artist to generations of comic book fans all over the world.

But despite that, he never forgot his roots and continued to live in Luton. He was a regular at High Town’s Brick-

layers’ Arms pub for over 20 years and scores of friends have paid tribute to “New Bloke” – his nickname.

Landlady Alison Taylor said: “To many he was a great friend, confidant and didn’t

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Steve Dillon, far left and, below, Comic book character Judge Dredd

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LUTON NEWS

Feature

Bar's new owner backs gender cause that's so close to her heart

By Jo Gravett

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An ambitious Luton businesswoman is ensuring her new LGBT bar supports young people experiencing gender dysphoria.

After relaunching the business in July, Tina Haynes, 58, is hoping punters at the California-Inn, Chapel Street, will help donate to Mermaids, a charity close to her heart.

Tina is celebrating 25 years post-op and wants to support children and teenagers who are struggling with gender dysphoria, something she went through herself when she was younger.

The condition sees a person feel discomfort or distress because there's a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity, for example, sometimes in young-

er children, this may surface with boys playing with traditionally female toys, or girls refusing to wear dresses.

Tina said: "Mermaids is a little know charity supporting the parents of children and teenagers who are scared to say how they feel about their gender.

"The charity have been around for 21 years and if we can support them and help save the life of just one kid it will have been worth it.

"I was born in 1958 when the term 'transgender' wasn't even used – but since then there's been a tectonic shift in attitudes."

Tina is a transgender woman, becoming Tina 29 years ago and four years later having an operation to create a vagina.

The adjective transgender describes a person whose gender identity differs from the sex the doctor marked on their birth certifi-

cate.

At school, Tina was badly bullied; her biological sex was male, so her parents took her to doctors and psychiatrists because she would question her gender identity, asking 'why am I a boy?'

Tina said: "I probably outed myself aged six. At school,

they were very much into promoting debates. The teacher asked whether it was better to be a boy or a girl, so I raised my hand and said I would rather be a girl – my teacher looked terrified!

"Psychiatrists back then were looking for a 'cure' – there is no 'cure'. At the age of 14, if I opened my mouth all I ended up with was pain."

Thankfully, after going through a transitional period, Tina is confident in her own skin and the California-Inn pays homage to her journey.

There is a chess board painted on the ceiling with heels and champagne bottles as the game pieces.

Tina said: "The chess board is on the ceiling because going through a transitional period turns your life upside down.

"The pink divisional lines represent the transitions and squares are grey and white – not black – nothing in life is black and white!"

JUXTAPOSE PHOTOGRAPHY: SCOTT WIGGLESWORTH



Tina at the California-Inn

Mermaids

The California-Inn has a collection box at the bar for Mermaids and staff and punters have so far raised in excess of £200 for the charity.

On December 17 the bar is holding a comedy sketch night to raise further funds.

Visit Mermaids at: <http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/>

To find out more about the California-Inn, visit: <http://calibars.co.uk>

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