

# Squaddie's slipped discs sees him open Swansea All or Nothing Barbershop

By [Chad Welch](#) | Posted: February 04, 2015



Opening of new barbers 'All or Nothing' in Killay, with former British soldier Sam Ryan and Tony Davies

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FOR Sam Ryan, as long as he can remember he strove for a career in the Army.

Following in the footsteps of his squaddie uncle, the [St Thomas](#) boy signed up aged 17, becoming part of the Royal Signals.

After years of training, he was set to fly out to Afghanistan, only to suffer three slipped discs, ending his forces dream.

Forced to give it all or nothing, now, with the support he has received, the 25-year-old has returned home to Swansea specially trained in a different discipline — barbering.

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And looking back at what could have been, he said no money would now get him on to a plane to Afghanistan.

"I had always wanted to get away," he said.

"You don't appreciate Swansea until you get away, but I really wanted to travel and in the Army every day is different."

But the early days in the forces were tough for Mr Ryan.

"I was one of the youngest guys there," he said.

"When you're 16, you start with the juniors, but at 17 you join with the seniors — that could be any age up to about 35.

"It was tough at first, but I loved it."

In 2009, Mr Ryan was posted out to Paderborn, in Germany, and served with the 200 Signals Squadron for three and a half years.

"I was meant to go out to Afghanistan, but just before I suffered three slipped discs in my back," he said.

"At the time I was heartbroken — I had done all the training and we were all ready to go.

"I was gutted, but now I'm over the moon.

"I sort of found that when you are injured, you can't do a lot — they are really protective and you are not allowed to do anything.

"It was horrible, all the training and all the exercises that you do, you do them so can do your job in anger."

In 2013, the injury worsened and he was "downgraded", which he compared to being off sick.

Looking towards the future, Mr Ryan decided it was time for a change, and was sent to a personnel recovery unit.

"You can't recover in a unit that's sole job is to be soldiers," he said.

"I couldn't sit down for a long time, I couldn't lift, I couldn't carry, I couldn't run for long.

"I had to bite the bullet that I wasn't going to be able to serve in the Army.

"But the recovery unit was 100 per cent supportive.

"I had my heart set on working in the service industry — working with people, rather than kit and equipment.

"As the Armed Forces only provides you with £534 to pay for retraining, I was immensely supported by the Army Benevolent Fund, The Soldiers Charity."

Thanks to the support of Andrew McGuffie at the recovery unit, Mr Ryan had clearance to go for a career as a barber, and charity backing helped him to pay for a course in [The London School of Barbering](#).

Moving back to Swansea with his wife in September 2014, he set up shop with his best friend and fellow London School-trained barber, Tony Davies.

All or Nothing Barbershop, on Gower Road, [Killay](#), was opened on Sunday by Paul Lloyd, of one of the oldest barbershops in Swansea, [Murphy's Barber Shoppe](#), on Walters Road.

"We think it is very cool that the oldest barbershop in Swansea has cut the ribbon for the newest," added Mr Ryan.

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