

TIME BANKS UK

TIME TO GIVE AND TAKE

www.timebanks.co.uk

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The Magic of Time Banking in the South Wales Valleys

Merlin, 'Wizard of Wales' magically helped both tenants and staff of Rhondda Housing Association launch their exciting new time banking scheme, RHATE (Rhondda Housing Association Time Exchange) at the Rhondda Heritage Park. The innovative project - the first time that this cross-generational scheme will be active for RHA tenants and residents living and working in Rhondda Cynon Taff - has already signed up nearly 40 members and is set to revolutionise tenant participation and community spirit, by sharing skills, resources and time.

Says Terry Mace, time broker appointed to set up the project: "We are delighted that so many of Rhondda Housing Association's tenants, family members and staff could join us for this official launch. By bringing our tenants together to exchange their skills, they will be empowered to improve their own lives, the lives of others, to make connections and help build up the local community to aid social regeneration. The skills, resources and abilities on offer will only be limited by our imagination! We're all looking forward to watching this exciting project get off the ground."

"We often have skills and talents that go unnoticed simply because we think no one will want them. Even if potential participants feel they've 'nothing' to

give back, they are still welcome to join the project. As time broker one of my roles is to work with the members to find ways for everyone to share in the success of this amazing idea."

Terry Mace

Rhondda Housing Association Time Exchange



Merlin, Terry, Avril and Karen at the RHATE launch

Banco del Tiempo

I had the honour and great experience of representing The Rushey Green Time Bank in the most beautiful city in Spain: Barcelona. I was invited to talk about my time bank and the type of activities and exchanges we do. The event was at the National History Museum of Barcelona. Time banks from other parts of Spain were there such as Alicante in the South East, Bilbao in the North (Basque country), El Escorial from the centre of Spain (Madrid) and Chipiona from Cadiz in the South West. There were also representatives from the USA and Time Banks UK.

It was two very intensive days of meetings and listening to national and international members of Time Bank that's "Banco del Tiempo" in Spanish or as they called it there "Health and Family Association".

Barcelona has five different time banks in the city: Del Raval is one of them, where they have very big social problems. They speak in Spanish and in Catalan and four out of ten people are from different ethnicities.

The representative from Alicante gave a totally different presentation from Barcelona: they interpret documents to people who cannot understand the way they have been written; they'll walk the dog for somebody; they help children and elderly people by giving food and room to stay. Bilbao's activities have been learning how to cook regional dishes, caring for children, giving company to others, giving a manicure, doing some small DIY, and dying hair.

I spoke about how the time bank in Rushey Green works. I gave them an idea of how the different groups are organised and the different members' activities, how they earn their credits and debits through the work they do for others. I also showed them a selection of photos taken during our recent 5th birthday party and AGM.

At the end of the second day, to finish the conference, they put on an excellent and very traditional castanet concert.

*Charo Agero
Rushey Green Time Bank*



Don and his partner were introduced to her Worship, The Mayor of Lambeth

Medal Winner

A prestigious Royal Mint medal was awarded to dedicated participant Don Cain from Clapham Park Time Bank at the Guildhall London. The Right Honourable Lord Mayor Alderman David Brewer CMG gave Don the medal in recognition of all his support to his local community through time banking.

Funmi Olowe, one of the Clapham time brokers, nominated Don for the Community Service Volunteers' scheme to give medals to the top 2,005 volunteers as part of celebrating the Year of the Volunteer.

Don used his experience to help young people keep out of trouble. He linked them with an 80-year-old lady who was having difficulty maintaining her garden. The young people took over three-quarters of the garden and turned it into a vegetable plot producing vegetables for everyone to share.

"I have lived in my community for twenty years. I have seen young people with anti-social behaviour problems hanging around with nothing to do. I made it my work to engage the young people in sport to encourage them away from crime."

It was hard work with not much support. I noticed that a time bank had been set up and I signed up as a member. The time bank has encouraged me to continue the work with their support. Without Roz, Funmi and the time bank where would I be now?". said Don.

Time broker Roz McCarthy-Henriques explained: "Don has been a valued member of our time bank since the very beginning. He has clocked up a vast amount of time credits through the work he has done with both older and young people. Don has encouraged new membership and been very supportive to those who need his help. Don brings a happy face and enthusiasm to our time bank."

*Roz McCarthy-Henriques
Clapham Park Time Bank*

Getting going in Bath

Since Time Bank Plus began in October 2005, our location (shop front on the local High Street) has been key to our success. Everyone knows where it is and it is a great place to advertise what is going on. The door is always open for people to pop in and local residents feel relaxed about coming in. So far, our three most successful activities have been drama, learning guitar and gardening.

The drama workshop is as a result of a university student saying it would help with her coursework. She will be running 6 weeks of drama sessions, with a production at the end involving all youngsters from main characters to those who will paint the scenery. We are using the local youth centre for the drama sessions and hoping that we can use a senior school for the actual production. The drama workshop is free. At the end the young people will take part in a production, open to all local residents which will be their way of paying back the time to the community. Hopefully I will encourage the young people and their families to become members.

Our 'guitar for beginner' courses were kindly offered by Jason. He wanted to get involved but did not know quite how. We chatted and it turned out that he can play guitar. Our local youth centre had previously told me they had 12 unused, brand new guitars which were still in their wrappers (and had been for years!). Jason said he would be happy to teach complete beginners everything he knows – any age welcome. So we have people aged between 5 and 60 who are now on the waiting list!!



Hannah and Beth, the first young volunteers

Gardening was top on the list of services required by local residents. We now have a professional lady, Lucy, who is paid from money available for training. She will be passing on her skills to budding gardeners. We have decided that a small team of gardeners, headed by Lucy, is the best way to tackle gardens. Not only are the volunteers learning new skills, they can enjoy the social interaction with others and earn time credits for every hour spent in meetings planning the garden activity or actually doing it.

*Sarah Bird
Time Bank Plus, Bath*

New Directors

The TBUK Board of Directors is delighted to welcome two new Directors. They are both from within the time banking movement: Shelley McKowen the Development Manager at Rushey Green Time Bank in London and Sean Gaskin the Project Co-ordinator of the Torridge(Help the Aged) Time Bank in Devon.

Carers' Day

Last September Ash-worth Time Bank initiated a special Pamper Day for Carers –an afternoon of free holistic therapies exclusively for unpaid carers.

Ash-worth Time Bank (Big Lottery funded), is sponsoring this regular event at Kelsall Methodist Rooms, Kelsall. Pamper Day for Carers is free to all unpaid carers who look after a relative or friend. The afternoon commences at 2pm until 4pm with refreshments, and carers are free to choose relaxation therapies from four qualified holistic therapists, who freely give their time. This is an opportunity for carers to take some time out to relax and share their experiences with other carers.

Therapies include: Reiki, Indian Head Massage, Tibetan Acupressure, Reflexology and other relaxation techniques, all free of charge.

*Susan Ross-Turner
Ash-worth Time Bank*

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Shaping Up

To begin, a great big thank you to everyone who contributed to the 'Getting into Shape' exercise. (A fuller report on the findings is on the News Page of our website).

It was very encouraging for us to learn that time banks really value all the work that we do here at TBUK. We are now also much clearer about what is expected of us and we will do all we can to meet those expectations.

We heard loud and clear that our main role is to mobilise and extend the capacity of our members and to build a welcoming environment for anyone wanting to set up a time bank - not to justify our own existence.

The time banking movement has come a long way in a few short years and 2006 is going to be a 'tipping point' – the point when time banking goes main stream!

To give ourselves the best of all chances TBUK needs to focus on providing *consistency, credibility and visibility*.

Further, we must model the change we want to see by 'co-producing' our services along with local time banks and with the regional

and national networks that are now growing fast all across the UK.

We will use the feedback from 'Getting into Shape' as the starting point for planning next year's activities. This will be done in time for a full consultation with members at this year's National Conference and AGM in Cardiff on May 4th and 5th (see our website for details).

Personally, I take with me from the 'Getting into Shape' exercise a timely reminder not to get carried away with our own hype. Sometimes, when faced with the hypocritical claims made by Health and Social Services that they are 'shifting their emphasis to prevention' or 'actively promoting participation', I feel justified in presenting time banking to them as the answer to all of their ills.

However, we all know that time banking is just one part of the answer. By that I mean just that one small part that has to do with connecting people, re-building trust, creating social networks and sharing our skills with one another. That's all.

Go well
Martin Simon