

Skittles, School Puddings, and some Sunshine...

These were some of the things that made up the two-day national planning meeting of the time banking 'family' last September. Making up the 'family' were time banking development staff from London Time Banks Network, Wales Institute for Community Currencies, the Islington Network, the Lewisham Network, the New Economics Foundation, and of course Time Banks UK, including Tam from Scotland and Nicola from the North East.

Our home for the two days was a country retreat in Worcestershire, a place for contemplation and meditative activities such as yoga. There was quite a bit of contemplation and scratching of heads but sadly no yoga for us. Fortunately we had a firm leading hand in the form of Lynn, our facilitator, who led us through some initial, potentially difficult issues.

Following a first fairly intense afternoon, we were fed some homely, comforting food, given a brief

history of the venue and pointed in the right direction for the pub! This was when some team building really began, in the form of skittles. It was great to have an opportunity to chat, relax and have some fun together, and very valuable to the process of bringing us together in our work.

Friday began, and it looked as if it could be another difficult session, but that soon turned around with the constructive focusing of ideas, and creation of Task & Finish Groups to address some of the work to be done. So, through a sea of flip-chart paper and post-it notes I'm glad to say the two-days ended on a very positive note (including sunshine), with most people feeling we had definitely moved on.

Continuing the good work, we will all be meeting again in December and upgrading to ten-pin bowling!

Gwen Thirsk
Wales Institute for Community Currencies



A sunshine tea-break after an intense afternoon.



An opportunity to relax in the pub.

Our New Software

Time Online is six months old now and already there have been a number of improvements to the software since its launch at the TBUK conference earlier this year.

The reports section has seen the biggest changes which has really helped time brokers to print off up-to-date statistics for funders in easy to read and understandable formats. The improvements don't end there though. There are many more in the pipeline, helping all time banks using Time Online to do the most with their data but keeping report generation quick and simple.

Switching over has never been so easy – you don't need to type out all the members' names and addresses again onto the new system, Time Online will do that for you. All you need to do is supply me with the file from the TimeKeeper database, and they'll appear next time you log in. Making time to make the switch has also proved valuable for some time banks who have taken the opportunity to review their whole application process for new participants and have designed new streamlined forms to match the Time Online system.

Support for the new software from TBUK is only ever a phone call or email away. There has already been a number of informal training sessions around the country.

The Time Online software is a major benefit of being a member of TBUK. For details on how you

Comments from Time Online users Sarah Bird and Dan Grainger :

- *The best thing is being able to access our data from any computer, with several users inputting information at the same time. This has enabled us to involve more volunteers in the office.*
- *It offers time banks a lot more flexibility of admin. and access, but access can still be controlled by use of the password. In the past I have had several TimeKeeper (TK) host computers nicked or infected, causing major problems. Now the hosting agency makes regular backups of all data which saves time brokers a great deal of aggro.*
- *There's a mail merge function so no need to keep separate files of all addresses.*
- *The reports section is a big improvement over that in TK and the graphic section of reports is great (anyone can understand pictures).*
- *It uses proper date notification format! (TK used American date notification)*

time bank can become a full member and receive a unique and secure login code to access Time Online, contact yvonne@timebanks.co.uk.

Sarah Komnatskaya
sarah@timebanks.co.uk

What's it all About ?

A post and email survey was sent to all active time banks in October to ask time brokers what they think are the four most important aspects of time banking to get across to potential participants. In the 'Getting into Shape' consultation you asked for clear, specified Key Messages to define time banking. So from the national planning meeting described earlier, a Task and Finish Group of UK time banking development staff is collating existing material and the results of this survey to produce the Key Messages of time banking. These can then be used by everyone throughout the network and in promotional material, freely available on the website.

There was no surprise that the time brokers' suggestions closely followed the values of time

banking. The most frequently mentioned topics were: giving and receiving time; neighbours helping neighbours; it's for everyone; being valued equally and building a friendly community.

Many other points were mentioned and the main task now is to try and reach a consensus of the most important messages that help to give an immediate explanation of the benefits of time banking and what makes it so different from other forms of volunteering. Thank you to all the time brokers who took part in the survey and everyone who has contributed to these discussions.

Yvonne Lambert
TBUK

Networking on the Canal

Time banking is all about sharing. So when I received some money for a summer event I thought, what can I do to involve as many time bankers as possible? Looking back, I'm still a bit amazed that nine brokers and 41 participants from 12 London time banks ended up coming along.

As the broker of the Mildmay Time Bank in Islington, I organised a canal trip for all the time banks in London in August. It was meant to be fun and an opportunity for people to meet participants from other time banks around the capital. The day was paid for by the Mildmay Community Partnership, with donations from the 'My Time - Your Time' Time Bank and London Time Bank Network (LTBN).

'Time for Everyone!', a film about the Islington Time Bank Network, was shown and Karen Lyon from LTBN gave a presentation on training opportunities. Then it was all about getting to know one another. Everyone was asked to bring food to share. You should be very careful when you do this in time banking circles - there was enough for 300! People did things they've never done before and made new friends they'd never have met anywhere else. Exchanges were organised and visits arranged. The sun even came out.

The venue was The Electric Barge. This operates from Paddington Basin and is the largest boat on the canal system, run by a charity, the Beauchamp Lodge Settlement (www.beauchampplodge.co.uk). The skipper and crew couldn't have been nicer and wouldn't even let us do the washing up!

Lidya, an Eritrean attendee from Caxton House Time Bank said, "I am very pleased about the boat trip because it helps me to know people from different time banks with different cultures and language. I saw many different kinds of food and people with different skills and knowledge. I meet



Everyone was asked to bring food to share.

people from my same time bank but I don't know them before the boat trip. I didn't expect it would be very lovely like this. I didn't prepare myself but for the next year I hope to bring video camera and to do more preparation and it will be even more better than this year".

The big problem now is that everyone is asking when the next one is going to be. This is clearly going to have to become an annual event!

*Peter Roberts
Mildmay Time Bank*

Welcome John

John Towers started work for Time Banks UK at the beginning of October.

As Operations Director, he will be responsible for setting up and developing new ways of measuring all aspects of our performance. In other words, he will make sure we do what we say we are going to do in the time scale and to the level we agreed to do it.

He comes to us after a successful business career and is a much needed and very welcome addition to our team. He is settling in well and it already feels like he has been with us for years. He would be very happy to hear from you, either to listen to what you think our priorities should be or to talk through our plans for the next few years. Contact 01452 541338 or john@timebanks.co.uk.



TIME TO GIVE AND TAKE

Time Banks UK
City Works
Alfred Street
Gloucester GL1 4DF
Egroup: TimeBanksUKsubscribe@yahoo.com
Printed on 80% recycled paper

T: 01452 541439
E: info@timebanks.co.uk
W: www.timebanks.co.uk



TIME TO GIVE AND TAKE

Time Banking in Georgia

In January of this year I spent two weeks in Georgia working with World Vision. Despite being greeted by deep snow, below freezing temperatures and very little power – their main gas supply from Russia had been sabotaged the day before I arrived – it was an experience I would not have missed.

My role was to train four groups of people from different parts of Georgia to set up time banks. The groups were a delight to work with and I have never experienced such an enthusiastic and resolute band of people who were determined to succeed against all odds. Succeed they certainly did.

During my visit I sent daily diaries back to the UK which many of you may have read on the website. Now 10 months down the line I am thrilled to tell you that the time banks have been set up, have enthusiastic members and are continuing to thrive and grow.

All the group leaders were experienced community workers and from the start had a highly professional attitude and splendid ideas on how to enthuse their local communities with time banking. Each group developed logos, publicity material, and held recruitment drives to raise awareness and build a strong identity for their time banks. The first time bank became active in June and now three of the four are operational. To date there are a total of 95 members who have exchanged a total of 1726 hours – an outstanding achievement.

Many of the services offered reflect those of UK time banks such as childcare, housework, computer lessons and gardening. However,

in Georgia they have tapped an area that has rarely been reached in the UK – the professional market. In Georgia there are high levels of unemployment and this includes many professional people who have joined time banks. Through the time bank they offer their expertise which includes dentistry, medicine and legal work. Georgia leads the time banking world in this area.

World Vision Georgia representatives are delighted with the success of their time banks, so much so that they are looking to expand time banking internationally and research into this is underway by Micael Olsson, the World Vision International Director. We will keep you posted on their progress.

Joy Robinson
Development Manager
TBUK



Training at World Vision Headquarters in Tbilisi, Georgia.