

At the sharp end

tales from the field

Part-time blues

A part-time youth worker did some revealing sums recently when he had cause to record the hours he worked. The calculation he already knew about were his paid hours - for 190 hours' work a year, running 76 youth club sessions, he receives £2,200, which works out at £11.57 an hour.

But then he added up his unpaid hours - and found his hourly rate no longer looked quite so healthy. He listed his additional hours worked as follows:

TRIPS

Alton Towers twice yearly	
20 hours x 2	40 hours
Cardiff Ice Rink	7
Other visits on club nights (min 5 visits)	12.5

COMPETITIONS Disco dance (4 Saturdays per year)	44
Youth clubs competition	15

ACTIVITIES

Summer activities on 6 club nights	18
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YOUTH CLUB BUSINESS

Cash & Carry 5 times a year	10
Bank 6 times a year	6
Yearly return and accounts	6
Weekly club finances	38

Hours worked in private time 196.5

Why did I say that?

Here are a few deeds and phrases (from workers and young people alike) that have been collected during the course of youth work.

Looking out at the two islands of Steep Holm and Flat Holm in the Bristol Channel while on a coastal walk - "Which one's which? Oh, stupid question." On arrival at a campsite in France after having a first look round, and in a disgusted tone of voice - "There's topless down that end of the beach - and nude-less up that end."

Pointing to the sea - "Look, it's coming in in waves."

While driving through Europe - "It's dark in this tunnel" - "You've got your sunglasses on."

While camping, - "This tea's a bit weak. Oh I forgot to put the teabags in." Again at camp - "Where are you two going to sleep tonight?" "It's alright sir, I've got a 2-seater tent" In Austria - "How do these cable-cars turn around?"

In a sunny Moroccan garden - "This sundial only goes up to six o'clock. How do you tell the time in the night?" While driving through the plains of Kenya during a community aid programme - "Who feeds all these animals?"

Dear diary

by Neil Desperancmm

✓ "What I meant to say was...."

For the last few months I've lost every argument with my teenage daughter. I've had to resort to "You'll do it ("it" being "Do your homework"; "Tidy your bedroom" and other instructions in the same vein) because I'm bigger/older/stronger than you." This is a technique well known to parents and bullies the world over. Don't tell me it's unfair. I know it's unfair, but I've always been prepared to resort to foul means when fair means have failed miserably.

I've been puzzling over my singular lack of success. I mean you win some, you lose some - but if arguing with my daughter was a hundred metre race she'd be breaking the winning tape while I'd still be working out my position on the starting blocks. Fortunately for my pride and sanity I have discovered the secret of her success.

Yesterday evening she left - unwisely, as it turned out - a book behind her when she went to bed. It was on the arm of the settee and I picked it up and glanced at it. Let me tell you, it was dynamite: a complete manual on how to handle parents and other assorted adults. I couldn't put it down.

One chapter deals with translating adult speak so that the real meaning becomes apparent to the young person. Here are a few examples to show you what I mean.

"I want to have a serious talk with you." (Meaning: *I'm really going to tell you off*). "Your new boyfriend is quite nice really." (Meaning: *I hope his arms and legs drop off*)

See what I mean? Dynamite in the wrong hands.

I've thought of a few examples of my own. They're all taken from things I've heard or read in the last few weeks.

"Our examination results continue to improve." (Meaning: *We no longer enter the ones we think might fail.*)

"We have a strong sense of discipline in this school. I don't believe in pampering pupils." (Meaning: *There's no toilet paper in the toilets.*)

"Youth work practices will need to be more efficient in future." (Meaning: *We're going to give you less money.*)

"Youth work should be targeted at those most in need." (Meaning: *We're going to give you less money.*)

"It could be you!" (television advertisement. Meaning: *It isn't you.*)

"The collapse of one bank doesn't mean that people should lose faith in the whole banking system." (Meaning: *But if I were you I'd keep my money in an old sock under the bed.*)

And, finally:

"The young people of today are our hope for the future." (Meaning: *But we couldn't care less about them now*)

This represents a rate of £5.69 an hour! ... Any more gems?

Do you have a humorous youth work story to tell?

If so, Ymlaen would like to hear from you. Contact Liz Sharp at the address on page two.

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available for school exchanges although grants may sometimes be given if certain criteria is met - exchanges must be "extra-curricular" and take place in vacation time. Among the projects not eligible for grants are school sports teams taking part in tournaments and competitions; school orchestras or music groups; and language-based groups.

Application forms for youth exchange grants are available from the Wales Youth Agency and should be submitted to the Youth Exchange Committee for Wales at least 12

weeks before the exchange is due to take place.

The Youth Exchange Committee for Wales meets on the following dates. The dates in brackets are the final dates for submission of grant application if it is to be processed at the relevant committee meeting.

Thursday, June 29

(Wednesday, June 14)

Thursday, September 28

(Wednesday, September 13)

Thursday, December 7

(Wednesday, November 22)

WHO TO CONTACT

Youth Exchange Committee for Wales:

Jean Reader, Youth Exchange Consultant, Wales Youth Agency, Leslie Court, Lon y Llyn, Caerphilly, Mid Glamorgan CF8 7BJ. Tel: 01222 880088; Fax 01222 880824.

Youth Exchange Centre, The British Council, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN. Tel 0171 389 4030; Fax 0171 389 4033.

Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council, Commonwealth House, 7 Lion Yard, London SW4 7NF. Tel 0171 498 6151; Fax 0171 720 5403.