



Truc sel bartering with Andrew Beldowski

- Rob In communities throughout the world people have been looking for alternatives to the global economy and Brittany is no exception. I'm with Andrew Beldowski who is part of an initiative with the title 'truc Sel'. What's this about, what's this project you're involved in Andrew?
- Andrew Well, 'Truc' means exchange of information, services, goods. The 'Sel' is the monetary value that we attribute to the time or the value of the product that we are exchanging. But there is also a social aspect to it. In other words, yes, we have a morning, we get together we bring the things that we want to pass on to other people. They then, um, sign a commitment to spend that much with us and we exchange the goods. Then afterwards we sit down and we have a communal meal where everybody brings a little bit as a contribution to the others and frequently it goes on right into the evening when the host probably provides a buffet and things like that. So the whole thing is a social gathering and at the same time you meet people frequently, of course they are offering some services. We have naturally a very extensive library of who does what and we also have a website so that people can contact us.
- Rob What kind of services are being exchanged.
- Andrew Oh, there's no limit to it - um, I mean gardening is, is a great one here in Brittany but information technology, babysitting,
- Rob French lessons..
- Andrew Yes, of course, language lessons altogether, yes. There's no limit to it. Each one of us makes a little list of what we can offer and that is then published and this way people who are interested in a particular aspect, they just look through the list and contact us directly and say, you know, er, they pay by the hour then. And if you want to know the value of the hour it's a bit horrific haha because it's actually -right- a truc-sel is valued at 6 francs - 6 francs plus because that makes it actually a Euro
- Rob Ok
- Andrew And so the services for instance are 20 truc sels for an hour, you know, and so it's quite inexpensive but we, we exchange er goods. I, for instance, sold a lot of household things and now I can ask people

to come and do my brambles and things like that in the garden so this is how we go about it.

Rob Ah!. Is it something that works only in a small community or can it work in towns or cities?

Andrew Oh yes, Truc sels are all over Europe and even in America. I think it probably started in America. Ah, yes and I looked the other day at some in Belgium and I just happened to have gone on holiday in Belgium and I noticed they do Truc sels there. Yes, its quite a universal thing. As I said, the social and the exchange of goods and services.

Rob Where, er, where do you meet. You have this exchange of services...

Andrew Even at one of members homes. I mean here we are very fortunate, the lady who runs the Pontivy part, she has a neighbour who's got a sort of an open hangar and there we can meet and, uh, and put our goods out and if the weather if inclemental we can go into her house because she's extensive rooms there available.

Rob And how many people are you in the, in the Association- is it an association?

Andrew Ah well in the Pontivy Association I just looked at the last figure -122 members.

Rob All with different skills and things to offer?

Andrew Yes. Yes.

Rob And you're not from Pontivy are you? What's happening in your area?

Andrew Well I am from Perret which is round the corner from Gouarec and we used to have a truc sel there. We discovered that by accident and we are trying to revive it because obviously there are quite a few people who live in Silfiac and,uh, and thereabouts so to them Pontivy is also quite a long way away whereas if we were locally we could do it.

Rob You've mentioned some of the benefits, social um meeting, social exchange and what about the 'sel' part - SEL. What's that, that's the money I think isn't it?

Andrew Yes, the money value of course it comes from the old days of salt, when salt was very valuable and used to be a currency so that why we used the 'sel' part as, uh, as the name for the monetary value.

Rob And is there..... there's a 'Bank' somewhere is there for the 'sel'?

Andrew Er, no, n...no because each one of us keeps our own records of what we buy or sell so when, when a deal is done between 2 people they each one of us has got a sheet and we put down what we sold and the

other one is what they bought and then we reconcile the two figures and that's then held centrally and now we are going to have it on a data base so it.... on the website so we don't have to fill out the paper work so much, we can do it online.

Rob It is a system which is adaptable to the modern age?

Andrew Yes, very much so and obviously because we sign everything we know that each claim is legitimate whether it's for receiving or for paying.

Rob Why haven't we all adopted this system do you think.

Andrew Well, most people are possibly not, not even aware that this system exists because its not so widely publicised. It's only by word of mouth. I became a member because my friend who I help a great deal in the village said -you know- would, do you want to get rid of some of the things? Come and join us and that's what I did and then I became more interested in it of course.

Rob Uhuh, its been a pleasure talking to you. Thanks very much Andrew.

Andrew Thank you. Thank you Rob- it's been a pleasure.

