This month, Geoff Steel gives advice on how to get the best deal for your savings...

Banks and Building Societies make the most out of the apathy of savers. They make billions of pounds in profit because customers do not try and get the best out of their savings. It is well recorded that accounts are initially publicised offering high interest rates, but then the interest rate is reduced over the years, as they offer higher rates only being offered to new savers.

Too many people think there is not a lot of difference between accounts and it is not worth shopping around. Just consider that £1,000 at 2% interest, which is not uncommon, will be worth £1,268 after 12 years. The extra interest alone has made up the £1,000 initial savings.

Looking for the best interest rates does not only apply to individuals, it applies to clubs and businesses. When I took over being treasurer of a local club, I found that we had a current account that paid no interest and a deposit account paying 0.9% interest.

We now have a current account paying interest of 3% and a deposit account paying 7.2%.

There is still a prevailing attitude that the bank knows best; we have been customers for a long time so we trust them and I'm sure my bank will do the best for me as a customer. By taking this attitude, customers only have themselves to blame when they find out the bank is acting in its own interest to make the maximum profit, which means making the most they can out of each customer. As their customers, we can only obtain the best by shopping around.

Geoff Steel is an Independent Financial Adviser with Walsh Lucas & Co and he welcomes comments from readers. His freephone telephone number is 0800 7835132.