



# CHARTER



Volume 15 Number 1

The Newsletter of the British Charitable Society

February 2010

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[www.britcharity.org](http://www.britcharity.org)

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Emma Wicks

## Letter from the President

At Miss Hall's School, an all-girls boarding school in Pittsfield, the girls leave campus every Thursday morning to volunteer in schools, nursing homes, doctors' offices, radio stations and environmental protection agencies. They contribute over 10,000 hours of community service to their Berkshire County community every year. Returning to campus one recent Thursday, a sophomore, Sarah (not her real name), remarked in frustration "I go to the same nursing home every week and see the same patients every week, but they still don't remember my name". The program supervisor, an experienced faculty member, recognizing a teachable moment if ever she saw one, tapped her on the shoulder. "Sarah," she said gently, "That's the whole point. It's not about you".

It may seem counter-intuitive but research indicates that helping others can actually be one of the most selfish things we do. "Brain scans by neuroscientists confirm that altruism carries its own rewards. A team including Dr. Jorge Moll of the National Institutes of Health found that when a research subject was encouraged to think of giving money to charity, parts of the brain lit up that are normally associated with selfish pleasures like eating or sex" (Nicholas D. Kristof, New York Times, January 18, 2010).

Our own Queen Elizabeth recognized this same idea when she said in her recent Christmas Speech to the Commonwealth: "We know that Christmas is a time for celebration and family reunions; but it is also a time to reflect on what confronts those less fortunate than ourselves, at home and throughout the world. Christians are taught to love their neighbours, having compassion and concern, and being ready to undertake charity and voluntary work to ease the burden of deprivation and disadvantage. We may ourselves be confronted by a bewildering array of difficulties and challenges, but we must never cease to work for a better future for ourselves and for others."

Those words were spoken before the recent earthquake in Haiti and they ring even more true now. Donations have flooded in to the various relief agencies trying to alleviate the truly desperate situation in that country. Here in New England, in 2009 the British Charitable Society gave out 25% more in relief than in any previous year in our history. It still wasn't enough but it certainly made us feel better to know that we had made a difference in the lives of those who received it. I hope it makes all members of the Society feel good to be part of such an organization. I want to say a special thank you to all those who contributed to our year-end Appeal or who made other contributions to our fundraising efforts throughout the year. A separate article later in *The Charter* gives more detail about this.

*Charles Platt*

## Case History



**Susan Dugdale – Vice-president**

Judith is a 42 yr old single British woman who came to the US as a Nanny 18 years ago and stayed. She has a Green card and until a year ago had been employed as a Personal Assistant. She had been laid off and out of work since. She was applying constantly for any new jobs but with no luck. Consequently she was becoming more and more dispirited, which she had begun to suspect was affecting her attitude when she did go for an interview. She suspected she was depressed – her voice seemed to echo that.

She had been receiving unemployment benefits to the tune of \$1904.00 per month. However, she had a hefty bunch of outgoings, which she had struggled to keep up with by using her savings, which were by the time she contacted us, practically exhausted. She was a home owner and anxious not to go anywhere near foreclosure. Although not at that point in any serious arrears, she was at a critical junction. She didn't have enough income to meet her upcoming expenses and with little likelihood of a spike in her income (through employment) until the New Year at the earliest, she was now juggling the bills she could pay and those she couldn't.

Her request to us came through 211 CT. She was emotional but very practical and articulate. Her application was both comprehensive and fully completed.

She had cut back on all usual expenses to try and reduce overheads. For example she had no TV, or house phone. She maintained her cable connection so that she could job hunt on the internet. She had negotiated her mortgage payments down during the previous 10 months and also her car repayments from over \$500 to just under \$400. There was little else she could do to minimize her expenses. She had worked continuously for the last 18 years, and her expenses reflected the lifestyle that bought her.

Unusually for us, we were able to talk about prioritizing her expenses rather than actually dealing with a crisis like eviction or shut off. She believed if she could be relieved of the mortgage payments for just one month, she could manage all other expenses from the \$1904 unemployment benefit check.

The Executive Committee agreed to a one off payment of just over \$1400 to cover her mortgage and another loan she had taken out. It's always a positive experience to make a phone call informing an applicant that the BCS will pay a bill for them. In this case the effect was even more dramatic. Judith was overwhelmed by our generosity. We discussed the fact that often one bit of good luck preceded another and that I would be interested to learn if this happened to her in the New Year.

It didn't take that long.

Within 5 days of our conversation a chance job application turned into an offer which meant she'd have a job in the New Year. The same day that good news came in, she was waiting at a car wash and someone randomly offered to pay her fee. For no reason! She was by now convinced her whole life was changing for the better and the catalyst was the British Charitable Society.

Who could disagree with that?

*Susan Dugdale  
Vice-president*

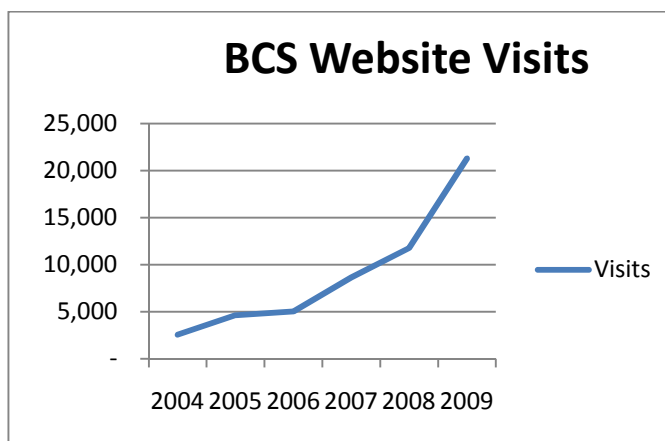
## The President’s Christmas Fundraising Letter

The President’s Christmas letter raised \$4,120. Our thanks to all members who responded so generously in lean times. Individual cheques of \$100 were sent to nine families with children, as a little extra for Christmas presents.

## The Website

The growth in the use of our website has been dramatic this past year. We attribute this growth to the general acceptance of using the internet as a source of information, and to our own efforts at making the website more useful and attractive.

Year	Visits
2004	2,568
2005	4,620
2006	5,054
2007	8,628
2008	11,780
2009	21,274



## Welcome to New Members

Barry & Julie Dyer, of Charlestown, MA  
 Sally Dinsmore of Burlington, MA  
 The Rev’d. Robert Tobin, of Cambridge, MA  
 Rebecca Webb, of Kittery, ME

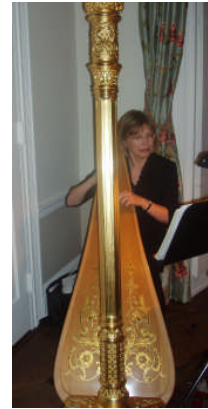
## Recent Events

### Bonfire Night Fundraiser – Remember, Remember the 5<sup>th</sup> of November ...

The British Charitable Society Bonfire Fundraiser certainly lived up to its theme and was indeed a night to remember. Co-hosted by the British Consul General, Dr Phil Budden, and British Airways, the evening was hugely successful and the celebrations burned brightly for the 75 guests who attended the Consul General’s Residence at 15 Chestnut Street. The format of the evening was a silent auction and cocktail reception. Guests were greeted by our very own Guy, kindly donated by Christiana Moore, along with bonfire night themed Hors D’Oeuvres and drinks supplied by A Moveable Feast Caterers.

Guests were also treated to the beautiful music of harpist Juli Miller whilst having the opportunity of viewing the new Government art work which is currently on display in the public rooms of the Residence. This new art work is part of the celebrations for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ‘Swan House’

The silent auction turned out to be a huge success and exceeded our expectations in the amount it raised. The most sought after auction item was certainly the 2 BA Club round trip tickets to London, especially after Senior Manager Greg Onoroto very kindly offered to change the tickets to First Class tickets if the bids exceeded \$5000. As you can imagine, the bidding became a lot more competitive after this announcement, and the winning bid of the evening came from Ms Janet James. The support and generosity of BA was exceptional and hugely contributed to the success of the evening.



**That's Juli Miller Behind the Harp**



**The Table Is Laid for the Silent Auction**

The auction items included a weekend package at the Equinox Resort and Spa, a Bose Sound Dock Portable Digital Music System, Gift Certificates for A Moveable Feast Caterers, Handel and Haydn Society concert tickets, a catered celebratory party by Robert Bryant, Afternoon Tea at the Taj Hotel, a package for the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, a Sailing Trip, and Hotel Chocolat Goodies.

In addition to the BA tickets, the other most popular items were the Sailing Trip, won by Mr. Peter Hirst, the Bose Sound Dock System, won by Mr. Des Maguire, the Handel and Haydn concert tickets, won by Arthur Mabbett, the Hotel Chocolat Goodies, won by Jane Kelly, and the catered celebratory party by Robert Bryant, won by Becky Liley. The fact that Becky was able to secure Robert for New Years Eve was an extra bonus and very well deserved by her considering that she was the donor of two excellent auction items.

Speeches were made by the President of the BCS, Charles Platt, the British Consul General, Dr Phil Budden, and by Greg Onoroto from BA. Charles Platt highlighted the necessity of the BCS, especially in this economic climate, whilst both Greg Onoroto and Phil Budden emphasized the advantages of a close relationship between BA and the BCS.

The total net profit raised from this hugely successful event was \$12,513 and our thanks go to all those who attended and contributed to the event.

*Emma Wicks*



**From British Airways: l-r Kristine Morley, Gurdeep Bhogal, Emily Keoghan, and Liz Ahlgren (Mr. Greg Onoroto, Director, North Sales Region of BA, was also at the Residence on this occasion)**

## Saint Andrew's Night

On Saturday, the 21st of November, Scots from near and far gathered in Quincy, Massachusetts, for the annual St. Andrew's Day Dinner and Dance, sponsored by The Scots Charitable Society of Boston (the oldest charitable organization in the USA).

The head table guests were Mr. John Kilgore, President of the Society, and Mrs. Kilgore; Ms. Jacqueline Greenlaw, H.M. Vice-Consul in Boston; Mr. Curt DiCamillo, FRSA, Executive Director of the National Trust for Scotland, USA; Ms. Kelley Kassa, President of the Charitable Irish; Mr. Frank Porter, former President of that Society; and the Chaplain of the Society, Reverend Dr. Gerald Wyrwas, who led the invocation, and Mrs. Wyrwas.

A delicious roast beef dinner was followed by entertainment by the renowned "Brigadoons" from Canada and an exhibition of Highland Dancing by the champion Highland dancers of the Sylvia Calder School of Highland Dancing in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Festivities abounded, including the Gay Gordons, The Dashing White Sergeant, and of course the traditional Auld Lang Syne.



**(l-r) The evening's Piper, and Jacqueline Greenlaw**

**(l-r) Jacqueline Greenlaw, BCS & BCG, Kelley Kassa, Pres. of the Charitable Irish, Peggy Hunter, BCS, Frank Porter, Former President of the Scots Charitable, and Emma Wicks, BCS**



## The Queen's Speech at Christmas



**The Queen Broadcasts at Christmas (BBC photograph)**

Each year that passes seems to have its own character. Some leave us with a feeling of satisfaction, others are best forgotten. 2009 was a difficult year for many, in particular those facing the continuing effects of the economic downturn.

I am sure that we have all been affected by events in Afghanistan and saddened by the casualties suffered by our forces serving there. Our thoughts go out to their relations and friends who have shown immense dignity in the face of great personal loss.

But, we can be proud of the positive contribution that our servicemen and women are making, in conjunction with our allies.

Well over 13,000 soldiers from the United Kingdom, and across the Commonwealth - Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore - are currently serving in Afghanistan. The debt of gratitude owed to these young men and women, and to their predecessors, is indeed profound.

It is 60 years since the Commonwealth was created and today, with more than a billion of its members under the age of 25, the organisation remains a strong and practical force for good.

Recently I attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago and heard how important the Commonwealth is to young people.

New communication technologies allow them to reach out to the wider world and share their experiences and viewpoints. For many, the practical assistance and networks of the Commonwealth can give skills, lend advice and encourage enterprise.

It is inspiring to learn of some of the work being done by these young people, who bring creativity and innovation to the challenges they face.

It is important to keep discussing issues that concern us all - there can be no more valuable role for our family of nations.

I have been closely associated with the Commonwealth through most of its existence. The personal and living bond I have enjoyed with leaders, and with people the world over, has always been more important in promoting our unity than symbolism alone.

The Commonwealth is not an organisation with a mission. It is rather an opportunity for its people to work together to achieve practical solutions to problems.

In many aspects of our lives, whether in sport, the environment, business or culture, the Commonwealth connection remains vivid and enriching. It is, in lots of ways, the face of the future. And with continuing support and dedication, I am confident that this diverse Commonwealth of Nations can strengthen the common bond that transcends politics, religion, race and economic circumstances.

We know that Christmas is a time for celebration and family reunions; but it is also a time to reflect on what confronts those less fortunate than ourselves, at home and throughout the world.

Christians are taught to love their neighbours, having compassion and concern, and being ready to undertake charity and voluntary work to ease the burden of deprivation and disadvantage.

We may ourselves be confronted by a bewildering array of difficulties and challenges, but we must never cease to work for a better future for ourselves and for others.

I wish you all, wherever you may be, a very happy Christmas.

## A Bermuda Interlude

*Where the remote Bermudas ride  
In the ocean's bosom unespied.*

Andrew Marvell



**The Queen in Bermuda  
(BCS photograph)**

During Thanksgiving Week, a very senior member of the Executive Committee was in Bermuda. As he emerged from the azure Gulf Stream, dripping wet in his swimming trunks, he encountered the Monarch as she reviewed the Bermuda Army. Neither of them seemed to know exactly what protocol should be followed at such an interface, but we understand that they both nodded to each other, in a civil kind of way, and then went about their lawful occasions.

Meanwhile, when the Duke of Edinburgh was presented with a pair of Bermuda shorts, he was asked if he was going to put them on. "Well not right here", he was reported to have replied, modestly.



**(BBC photograph)**

## From Our Consular Correspondent

Ever alert to new British goings-on in New England, our Consulate Correspondent has drawn our attention to reports in the Boston Globe of an up-market invasion of posh Newbury Street in Boston by a number of British shops. Apparently the combination of a weak dollar, plus the recession, has resulted in a number of properties becoming available at attractively low prices.

In this recent invasion the first to arrive was Agent Provocateur, in 2008, at No. 123, selling an 'opulent range of inspirational creations', namely lingerie. No comment.

Then last year three more newcomers arrived on the street: Hotel Chocolat (exotic chocolate confections) at No. 141A, Ben Sherman ('Brit Chic' boutique) at No. 154, and Ted Baker (high fashion) at No.201

The outstanding designs of these shops is reason enough to visit them; if you think you might be tempted to buy, make sure there is an opulent balance on the credit card you bring with you.



Agent Provocateur



Hotel Chocolat



Ben Sherman



Ted Baker

## Current Events

### Harry Potter: The Exhibition

One of the cultural events of the year is, of course, *Harry Potter: the Exhibition*, which opened at the Museum of Science in Boston in January, and will run through February the 21<sup>st</sup>. Here is how the Exhibition's website describes it:

"In this amazing exhibition, guests will get an up close and personal look at the artistry and craftsmanship that went into creating the iconic props and costumes that appeared throughout the *Harry Potter* films. These authentic artifacts will be displayed in elaborate settings inspired by locations from *Hogwarts* School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, including the *Gryffindor* common room, Hagrid's hut and the Great Hall."

Tickets for non-members of the Museum run from \$23 for a child to \$26 for an adult. For members of the Museum, all tickets are \$5.00.

If you think you might be interested in visiting this exhibition, the best thing to do is to go to their website: [www.harrypotterexhibition.com/](http://www.harrypotterexhibition.com/) and get a preview. For ourselves, we plan to skip school at least once to get a *shufti*.