



CHARTER



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The Middle Class and the American Dream

As the effects of the economic recession begin to seep through America, the profile of our typical applicant is beginning to change. Whereas in the past those who have come to us for help have been living on a very modest income to begin with, but who have met with some misfortune along the way – illness, loss of job, emergency back in England, et cetera - now we are beginning to see people who could have been said to have been living the American dream.

One recent applicant had been living in one of the wealthiest counties in the country, with a wife and two sons in a good school, and a household income of over \$75,000. Then his business disappeared, his mortgage payments could not be met and he lost his house. One disaster followed another, and now he is happy to accept odd jobs – and charity.

Many Britons who emigrate to the States have left home with the good wishes and some envy from their friends and neighbours. They are the pioneers going to a new land with high hopes. Some bravado is displayed as a relative drives them off to the airport and waves goodbye. Not all are very well-prepared for their new situation, but this is the land of opportunity, is it not?

With such an optimistic departure, how does pride handle the option, when in trouble, of calling home for help? After all that boasting, how can they say, “I failed.”? Or, worse still, how can they return home meekly after all that hype?

If there is any consolation for the industrious newcomer, who has found only vanishing gold on the pavement, it is the native high flyers, the gamblers with our savings, the manipulators of the credulous, who have fallen the furthest. The important thing is not to let the humbling of pride destroy the tender shoot of hope.

Case Histories

Living the American Dream. And when the dream becomes a living nightmare.

The term first used by James Truslow Adams in his book, *The Epic of America*, describes, among other things, the dream as a land in which life should be better, richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity based on individual ability and achievements. Although written in 1931, the American Dream continues to be a striving force of motivation for those leaving their homelands to make a better life for themselves in America. The reality of course is that most folk who emigrate to the States have to work incredibly hard to earn a decent living and find themselves making huge sacrifices for the sake of their young families.

Such is the case of the man we helped recently. George, originally from London, came to the States with his wife and young sons ten years ago. They were young and energetic and brimming with enthusiasm, ripe ingredients for success in America. The children were in a good school district, his business was steady, his wife was teaching yoga and life, although hectic, was good. They were starting to live the American Dream. This dream turned into a nightmare in 2007 when the economy faltered and George's construction business began to suffer. Things did not get any better, and in late 2007 George lost his company and then lost his house. The family moved into rented accommodation and he was out of work. Without a Bachelors degree he found it virtually impossible to gain employment. He eventually found a very low paying job, but the gap in wages put them in danger of eviction. I am pleased to say that the British Charitable Society have helped by paying one month's rent, and he and his family have thus avoided eviction.

Another case whereby the American dream shattered is that of Sarah, a 36 year old mother of three adorable girls, who came here as an au pair when she was just 24 years old. She married an American man, who over the course of their marriage became physically and mentally abusive toward her, attributed in no small part to the fact that he was an alcoholic. With no money to her name, no family to run to here in the States, and no means of survival outside of the home, Sarah turned to our

society for help. I can tell you that at this point in time, Sarah is planning to return to the United Kingdom to the safety and love of her mother and the British Charitable Society are paying for one way fares to the United Kingdom for Sarah and her three young girls.

Jane Ollerfield

New Members

We give a warm welcome to the following new members:

Anne Duncan of Mashpee
Christopher Lavery of Quincy
Becky Liley of Wellesley Hills
Alice Sloan of Charlestown
Emma Wicks of Boston
Susan Adams of Cambridge

Annual General Meeting Thursday 28 May

Once again this year the AGM will be held at the British Consulate-General on the 15th floor of One Memorial Drive in Cambridge. Members will receive invitations in due course, with details of parking, etc. Members are welcome to bring guests. Our guest speaker is to be announced.

This event is an opportunity for members to take part in the running of the Society and to vote for members of the Executive Committee. It is also a time to meet other members and to socialize in general.

The consular offices have a magnificent view over the Charles River to Beacon Hill and we keep hoping that the rumours of their moving are untrue.

Our host will be the Consul-General himself, Dr. Philip Budden, but the proceedings themselves will be run by our President, Mr. Charles Platt. The evening opens with a social hour from 6:30 to 7:30, followed by the meeting.

There were 11,790 visitors to our website in 2008, a 36.6% increase over 2007

Armistice Day Sunday the 9th of November, 2008



Old North Church



**The Queen Places a Wreath
at the Cenotaph
(photograph from BBC website)**



**The Rev'd
Christine Whittaker**

A day to remember....

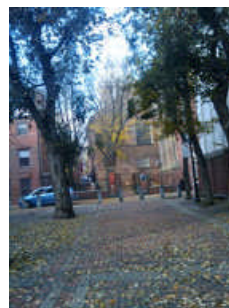
On Sunday, November 9, members of the Old North Church in the North End and the British Officers Club, gathered for a service celebrating Armistice Day. The patriotic service included a sermon from the Rev'd Christine Whittaker, who preached from her personal accounts of military service. (The full text of her sermon can be found beginning on page 7) She spoke fondly of her father, who had been on active service, and reminded those in attendance that "... that remembrance matters, because we are formed and shaped by those before us, and it is important to hold onto those who gave generously." Recalling that the life expectancy of a British soldier in 1916 was 2 weeks, she commented, "Remember the words of Jesus, 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends'. Remember what they fought to achieve: political, intellectual and religious freedom. Our remembrance should be an active, living remembrance of those who gave up their lives in pursuit of these freedoms. "

The church service was followed by a brief memorial service outside the church, near a newly created garden with over 4,000 dog tags that represent those killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Becky Liley



**George Washington Views
the British Visitors with
Disdain**



**The Old North's Iraq
& Afghanistan
Memorial Garden**

Christmas Parties

Christmas parties, particularly office or organisation parties, sometimes get a bit too merry, and there are some sheepish faces in the office next morning. One person we know has a stack of form letters of apology all ready to be mail-merged and sent to those whom he ... well you know the kind of thing he may have done, and this is a family newsletter, after all.

The BABCNE Christmas Lunch

We are happy to report that there were two parties last month where there was a lot of innocent merriment, and the first one was held by BABCNE at the Harvard Club on December the 5th. “BABCNE?” we hear you ask, “what’s that?” Well it is the British-American Business Council of New England, that’s what, and a very powerful organisation it is; we were honoured to have been invited to their annual Christmas lunch.



The Wellstock Band
 Urszula Wojciechowska is 2nd from right

BABACNE consists of some 97 companies, organisations (profit and non-profit) and a few individuals. They were founded in 1986 by Urszula Wojciechowska, who is still their Executive Director. Their basic mission is networking among those who have both British and American interests, in order to advance those interests. Are you a British or Irish person looking for a job? Are you the CEO of an American company looking for the right place to locate in the UK, or *vice versa*? Are you looking for a bio-chemist who can advise you about importing live viruses into England? That sort of thing.

The Harvard Club was packed to its 300 capacity for the lunch, and we were entertained during the reception by a string quintet of the British School of Boston. The speeches were brief and to the point, the food was delicious, and then came the Christmas Revels and the Longwood Symphony Orchestra. There had been rumours that the farmers in Concord were getting restive again, but we were ably protected by redcoats – well, by one redcoat, actually, namely Lt. Col. Winston Stone of the First Foot Guards. We went home safe, fat and happy. Thank you very much.



The BCS Contingent at the Party:
 (l-r) Jane Ollerhead, Peggy Hunter, Jacqueline Greenlaw, Stephen Clark



Lt- Col. Winston Stone of The First Foot Guards



The Christmas Revelers

The Consul-General's Christmas Party

Once again this last Christmas the Consul-General opened his residence for a musical reception for Society members and others. The music was supplied by a septet of choristers from the British School of Boston under their Head of Secondary Music, Miss Kirtsy McDonald who accompanied them on the piano. Their well-trained voices ravished the guests with their purity of tone and sweetness of voice. The words of T. S. Eliot came to mind, quoting Verlaine, "Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!"

There was a raffle, organized by Jane Ollerhead, and wonderful British hors d'œuvres. Could some of them have arrived in the diplomatic bag?



**Charles Platt, President of BCS,
and Raymond Davies (ex-RAF)**



**(l-r) Charles Dumbaugh,
President of Irish Charitable
Society and Dr. Philip Budden,
Consul-General.**



**Joan and Stephen Clark,
Second Prize Raffle Winners**



The Choristers of the British School of Boston



(l-r) Guy Bennett, Tim Hunt and Gill Sherrington

Coming Events

Curry Night – Monday March 2 at New Mother India, 336 Moody Street in Waltham.

We will be returning to New Mother India in March for a spicy evening of good Indian food and drink. Pre-dinner drinks at 6 pm, dinner at 7 pm

\$30 – all you can eat!

For further information call 617-241-2278 or email to: secretary@britcharity.org

Look for invitations shortly.

ESTA Has Arrived

On January the 12th of this year, 2009, the “Electronic System for Travel Authorization” (ESTA) came into effect for travellers to the US from 27 approved countries, including the U.K., who, until now, have been able to come swanning into the US for up to 90 days under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). Up until that date your friends and relatives in the UK could visit you for 90 days without any documentation but a British passport. Well they will still not need a visa, but they will need an ESTA number which can only be obtained through this website: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. Further details may be obtained through a “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)” site: http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/travel/id_visa/esta/about_esta/esta_faq.ctt/esta_faq.pdf

This programme is administered by the US Department of Homeland Security in cooperation with U. S. Customs and Border Protection and is said to be “an additional layer of advance scrutiny” of visitors. If Society members are expecting visitors to the US from the UK, it would probably be worthwhile for them and you to have a look at both of the above websites. It is only through the website that an application may be made, or information obtained. Those who are internet-challenged can get help from a friend or travel agent. Here are some basics:

- The purpose of ESTA is to “assist(s) in determining eligibility to travel to the United States under the VWP”

- It applies to visitors who are only transiting the US
- You cannot apply for an ESTA when you have already arrived in the US
- ESTA approval only allows board a carrier for travel to the US. You may still not be admitted when you arrive
- An ESTA is good for two years and allows for multiple visits
- So far this is no charge for this authorization
- If an application is denied, you can apply again after ten days. Emergency visas cannot be guaranteed
- There is a programme called TRIP (Traveller Redress Inquiry Program) for those who experience difficulties with ESTA:

http://www.dhs.gov/xtrvlsec/programs/gc_1169676919316.shtm

Good luck, everybody!

(Thank you to Jacqueline Greenlaw for alerting us to this development)

New Year Honours

In our October 2008 issue we commented that the outstanding performance of British athletes at the Beijing Olympics would almost certainly be recognised by being awarded Honours by the Cabinet. Actually honours for achievements overseas are awarded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Embassy has just sent out a release of the New Year Honours for 2008. (*Our thanks to member Roy Manns for forwarding it to us.*)

This list does include one Knighthood, four CBEs, six OBEs, and 23 MBEs for our Olympians; the Paralympians received two CBEs, seven OBEs and 12 MBEs. On to London in 2012!

The full text of the Embassy’s release can be found beginning on page 9.

Armistice Day Sermon

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

A Sermon preached at Christ Church Episcopal (Old North Church), Boston
by the Reverend Christine Whittaker
Remembrance Sunday, November 9, 2008.

It is a privilege to be the preacher here this morning and I am grateful to the British Officers Club and the British Charitable Society for the invitation, and also to my colleague in the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, the Reverend Stephen Ayres.

A few years ago my husband and I visited Orkney for the first time. Looking out over Scapa Flow, the waters between some of the islands that form a natural harbor, we saw a buoy floating in the water. It showed, a local resident told us, the position of the sunken *Royal Oak*, one of the first ships in the British Navy lost in the Second World War. A daring German submarine had ridden the incoming tide into Scapa Flow undetected and torpedoed the *Royal Oak*. It went down with the loss of 800 men. Each year a Royal Navy diver goes down with a new flag to replace the White Ensign flying on the ship as it rests on the bottom of the sea. It is a moving act of remembrance.

That is what we are about today, for this is a day set aside to remember. It is a time to remember the men and women who died in both World Wars as well as other conflicts since then around the world from the Falklands to Iraq and Afghanistan; to remember also the men and women and children who were wounded, whether in military service or in civilian life, and those whose lives were never the same because of the loss of those they had loved, or because they never recovered from what they saw or heard or did during those wars. It is a time also to ponder the meaning and the purpose of our remembrance.

Each of us here today no doubt brings different memories and understanding to this remembrance. Some served in our armed forces or merchant marine during the Second World War or kept the home fires burning and recall those times with an intensity that belies the more than sixty years that have passed since the end of that war. Others, in my generation, were born after the war, yet grew up in its shadow. So many of my childhood memories are associated with the effects of the war – air raid shelters at the end of the road, bomb sites waiting reconstruction in city centers, rationing and food shortages, and most of all the stories.

Both of my parents served in the army. My father became a major in the Royal Army Medical Corps and my mother rose to be a captain in the Women's Royal Army Corps. Incidentally, my husband did his national service as a lieutenant in the artillery of the United States Army. When we were married, he remarked that he had never expected to be outranked by his mother-in-law.

When my parents got together with friends in the years after the war, there were always stories exchanged – the night my father landed in Bombay in the dark and found when dawn came that he had spent the night huddled up next to a general, the day my mother in the midst of a pay parade for 300 women received news that my father had arrived home after more than five years overseas and she bicycled furiously to the telephone to hear his voice. There was often laughter, for usually the stories they told were the ones they could bear to tell.

Yet for some here, stories like that is history. The war, as we always called the Second World War, began two generations ago. A dozen years ago, when I visited Churchill's War Rooms in London, I realized that my teenage daughter knew very little about the war except as an event in history. I bought her a book that described everyday life for someone her age during the war and she talked about it with her grandparents.

Remembering matters. It is particularly important as we grow further away in time from the World Wars and there are fewer people alive who can tell us the stories of those years that changed the face of our world. It matters because we are formed and shaped by the stories of those who have gone before us.

In today's first reading, Joshua, who had succeeded Moses in leading the people of Israel, reminded them of their history – from God's call of Abraham to leave the land beyond the Euphrates and settle in Canaan, through slavery in Egypt, deliverance at the Red Sea, wandering in the wilderness until the eventual entry into the Promised Land. In response to that story, the people answered that it was God who had led them. So too, we tell the stories of our past recognizing that our God is a God who takes human history seriously. We do not need to fear that the stories of our lives are insignificant in God's eyes. For we believe that God entered into our history willing and wanting to give generously in love no matter the cost. And so today, we remember the generosity of those who gave themselves for their fellows and for those who would come after them.

We remember first the cost of their gift. It is almost impossible to put into words the carnage of war. It is said that the life expectancy of a British soldier sent to the Somme in France in 1916 was two weeks. Almost an entire generation of young men was lost and life was never the same for the women and men who survived. It is the poets of that war who have perhaps come closest to finding words to describe what happened, like Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen who wrote while convalescing from war wounds at the Craiglockhart War Hospital in Edinburgh.

Shortly before returning to France, where he earned the Military Cross for bravery and was killed by machine gun fire seven days before the Armistice, Wilfred Owen wrote of his work: "This book is not . . . about deeds, or lands, nor anything about glory, honour, might, majesty, dominion, or power, except War. Above all I am not concerned with Poetry. My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity."

We remember today the pity of war and we recall the love of those who gave of themselves. "No one has greater love than this," Jesus said, "to lay down one's life for one's friends." That was what so many did or were willing to do. The testimony of so many whom we regard as heroes is that they did not feel themselves brave or want to be; they simply did what they did for those alongside them, who had become their friends.

Yet today is for more than remembering only the sacrifices made by so many. It is a time also to give thanks for what they made possible, for freedom, political, intellectual and religious, for democratic government, for individual rights and liberties. Several years ago, I read a thriller set in Britain as the author imagined it might have been had Hitler successfully invaded in 1941.

The book's plot centered on the work of an underground British resistance movement and there were some lighthearted incidents. Nazi spies who spoke excellent English were detected when the conversation turned to football and they could not quickly talk about Wolverhampton Wanderers. The underlying premise of the book, however, was far more chilling than anything written by Orwell. It brought home with vivid clarity what life in Britain could have been like under Nazi rule.

At the same time, our remembrance cannot lead to an uncritical patriotism. As Andy Rooney, who served in World War II wrote, "Patriotism is rampant in war and there are some good things about it. . . . War brings out the kind of pride in country that encourages its citizens in the direction of excellence and it encourages them to be ready to die for it. At no time do people work so well together to achieve the same goal as they do in wartime. Maybe that's enough to make patriotism eligible to be considered a virtue. If only I could get out of my mind the most patriotic people who ever lived, the Nazi Germans."

Patriotism cannot be blind or unquestioning. A decade ago, a new study of the Holocaust, entitled *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, raised troubling questions about previously accepted explanations of the genocide of millions of Jews, Slavs, gypsies, and others. In an extensive analysis of primary evidence, the author showed that the killers were not exclusively SS men or Nazi leaders but perfectly ordinary people from all walks of life

who acted as they did because of a deep and virulent prejudice that led them to regard those they killed with extreme cruelty as a demonic enemy whose extermination was not only necessary but just.

There were few who were not swept up in acting upon their prejudices. Sadly, that included most of the church. Only the Confessing Church, led by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and others, gave witness at the cost of their lives to the embracing love of God for all people, particularly those who are persecuted or despised, different in background or abilities. So today we remember love of country while recognizing that it must always be an intelligent, questioning love, seeking to embody the love that was poured out for all humankind.

Finally, if our remembrance is to be a living act, it will bear fruit in the way we live and enjoy life today. A true appreciation for the sacrifice made by countless thousands in so many different ways makes everyday life more precious. We must feel the joy of ordinary life in a way that comes to those who have experienced actual or threatened deprivation. We must understand the extraordinary in the ordinary, the holiness of our own lives.

The pity and the joy are strangely interwoven, as another poet of the First World War, Wilfrid Gibson, recognized in his *Lament*:

We who are left, how shall we look again
Happily on the sun or feel the rain
Without remembering how they who went
Ungrudgingly, and spent
Their all for us, loved too the sun and rain?
A bird among the rain-wet lilac sings –
But we, how shall we turn to little things,
And listen to the birds and winds and streams
Made holy by their dreams,
Nor feel the heart-break in the heart of things?

Christine Whittaker is Rector of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Holliston, Massachusetts.

Text of the Embassy's New Year Honours Release

The 2009 New Year Honours List was published today (December 31st), recognising outstanding achievement and service to the UK, in areas including community voluntary and local services, education, health, industry and the economy, science and technology, arts, media, and sport.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is responsible for awarding honours to those in the Diplomatic Service and Overseas List. This list recognises service given overseas, or service in the UK with a substantial international component. It includes freelance photo-journalist **Harry Benson** and **Professor Linda Colley** of Princeton University who are honoured with CBEs, while **Professor David Warburton** at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and **Dr Alexander William Lowndes de Waal** are honoured with OBEs.

Mr. Benson is recognised for services to photography and the community in the UK, while **Professor Colley** is recognised for services to historical studies. **Professor David Warburton** is recognised for services to UK/USA collaboration on healthcare research, and **Dr de Waal** is honoured for services to development and conflict resolution in Africa.

For Britain's Olympians there are one Knighthood, four CBEs, six OBEs, and 23 MBEs, including a knighthood for triple gold medallist **Chris Hoy** and an MBE for 14-year-old swimmer **Eleanor Simmonds**, the youngest person ever to receive an honour.

There are CBEs for **Ben Ainslie**, Britain's most successful sailor ever, **Bradley Wiggins**, the first cyclist to successfully defend his pursuit title at the Olympics, **David Brailsford**, performance director of the phenomenally successful British cycling team and **David Tanner**, the performance director of GB Rowing.

Among the OBEs there are awards for **Rebecca Adlington**, who won two swimming golds at Beijing, and for sailors **Sarah Ayton** and **Sarah Webb**, who won gold at Beijing to add to their golds from Athens in 2004.

For Britain's Paralympians there are two CBEs, seven OBEs and 12 MBEs.

David Roberts, who has now won 16 Paralympic medals at three Games (including four gold medals at Beijing), has a CBE, as does horseman **Lee Pearson**, who won three golds at Beijing.

Among the OBEs are cyclist **Darren Kenny**, who won four gold medals at Beijing and swimmer **Sascha Kindred**, who won two golds and holds several world records.

In motor racing, **Lewis Hamilton**, who won the Formula One title in only his second season, is honoured with an MBE.

But the sports stars of Beijing make up only a tiny minority of the people on the list. The majority are local heroes from a range of fields, undertaking outstanding work that is having a real impact in the community. They include an MBE for senior nurse **Carol Hoy** the mother of cyclist Chris who is honoured for her exceptional service to healthcare.

Six individuals are honoured for showing real service to others in the midst of the London terrorist bombings in 2005. They include an MBE for **Timothy Coulson**, who jumped across the tracks and into a damaged Tube train to render first aid.

In the arts and media, there is a Knighthood for **Terry Pratchett**, one of the most popular authors writing today, in recognition of the huge impact his work has had across all ages and strata of society and across the world. There are CBEs for **Robert Plant**, one of the most significant rock singers of all time, **Lady Marina Vaizey**, a prominent figure in the arts world who has given distinguished service to almost every major UK arts organisation, and **Courtney Pine**, one of the UKs most influential and prolific jazz musicians.

Among the OBEs are actor **Michael Sheen**, who played Tony Blair in *The Queen* and David Frost in *Frost / Nixon*, and **Lakhbir Kaur** (AKA Lucky Dhillon) multiple-award winning producer and broadcaster, who is honoured for services to Asian broadcasting.

Other notable awards include a KCB for **Jonathan Phillips**, Permanent Secretary at the Northern Ireland Office, whose diplomatic skills have enabled once intractable parties to come together and form a government working for the good of all of Northern Ireland's citizens. There is also a KCB for **Nick Macpherson**, Permanent Secretary at the Treasury, to recognise his extraordinary work in response to the crisis in the financial services industry.