



CHARTER



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The Newsletter of the British Charitable Society

June 2008

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www.britcharity.org

Society Officers

President – Charles Platt
Vice-President – Susan Dugdale
Executive Secretary – Jane Ollerhead
Treasurer – Kathy Tunsley, MBE
Recording Secretary – Margaret Hunter

Executive Committee

Guy Bennett
Jan Carrigan
Steven Clark
Michael Dawson, Editor
Jacqueline Greenlaw
Robert A. Groom, OBE (Past President)
Chris Hall, Webmaster
Timothy J. Hunt, MBE (Past President)
Thomas Keown
Geoff Mullis (Past President)
Valerie Nelson
Bruce Lee Rogers

On Being Charitable – An Editorial

The word “charitable” is, of course, the adjective derived from the noun “charity, and so means “of, for or concerned with charity”. So what about “charity”? Well it comes from the Latin “caritas”, which first means “dearness” in the sense of expensiveness, but more commonly now it means “affection”, “love” or “esteem”.

The New Oxford English Dictionary finds a difference between the meaning of “charity” in Christian and non-Christian contexts, citing the famous quotation in the King James version of the New Testament “faith, hope and charity”, where “charity” is the translation of the original Greek word *αγάπη*, which translates as “love” in later versions of the bible. Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon translates *αγάπη* as “love, especially brotherly love, charity”.

In non-Christian contexts, the NOED gives, among others, the following meanings of “charity”:

- Love, kindness, affection ... especially notion of generous or spontaneous goodness
- A disposition to judge leniently and hopefully; large-heartedness
- Benevolence, especially to the poor

So much for a brief etymology of the operative word in our name! While not slaves to these definitions, we must at least be guided by them. What do they mean, then, in terms of the behaviour of an official Charity, licensed by the state and tax-free, managed by an Executive Committee composed of a group of a dozen or so diverse human beings, not all of whom would want to profess and call themselves Christians? What are our criteria when we make decisions for or against an applicant’s request for assistance?

Our by-laws require that an applicant must be a British Citizen, or have one British parent. And we do not pay education, legal or medical bills. Those absolute requirements having been met, how do we go about making decisions? In general:

- It is prudent that we establish the truth of the applicant’s claims concerning his or her financial need. Without wanting to be unduly intrusive, we do want to see some bills, and some details of income, to establish his or her financial status.
- We would also like to know how much other assistance may be available, from other family members, or elsewhere
- And we would like to find out what other help should be offered, besides financial.

Once we have a fair picture of the applicant, and his or her needs and situation, then the dozen or so individual minds do their own internal multiple regressions, subjectively weighing all the relevant known variables, and coming to individual decisions. Then there is a vote. Not a perfect system, but who can claim perfection? The best we can do is to try to clothe the bones of the statistics with the flesh of understanding - and then act with charity.

The Annual General Meeting

I - The Business Part (excerpt from the Minutes)

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Ms. K. Tunsley, Treasurer. In the year ending 2007 the BCS distributed \$49,153. This figure includes regular monthly stipends and special relief. Our securities continue to do well—we are up by \$50,000 for the year, averaging a 7 per cent return. The report was accepted.

Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of Officers

The Chairman of the Nominating Committee, Mr. T. Hunt, presented the following nominees for the 2008/09 year: (Other Nominating Committee members were Mr. Simon Sherrington, and Mr. R. Tunsley.)

President	Mr. Charles Platt
Vice President	Ms. Susan Dugdale
Treasurer	Ms. Kathy Tunsley
Executive Secretary	Ms. Jane Ollerhead
Recording Secretary	Ms. Margaret Hunter

The following were nominated as members of the Executive Committee for two-year terms:

Mr. Guy Bennett
Mrs. Jacqueline Greenlaw

The following was nominated for a one-year term:

Mr. Michael Dawson

It was voted to cast one ballot for the election of all nominees.

President's Report

Mr. Platt opened his remarks by thanking Her Majesty's Consul-General, Mr. Budden, for his hospitality in hosting the event at the Consulate. He also thanked Ms. J. Ollherhead and Ms. J. Greenlaw for arranging the refreshments.

See page 8 for pictures

II - Alex Holroyd-Smith's Address



A quarter of the entire British Army, some 46,000 troops, were involved in the invasion of Iraq in March, 2003. We were very fortunate to hear a first-hand report on this operation from a man who was there from the start. Alex Holroyd-Smith was a Captain in the

Scots Guards, who crossed the border with his regiment from Kuwait to Iraq on March the 30th. His account of the three-week war was riveting, moving from inspiration to gritty reality, and through comedy to tragedy and job well done. The following is a brief account of what he had to say.

The Scots Guards, the Black Watch and other regiments had been waiting in Kuwait for what seemed like a very long time, until at 4 am on March the 30th, the Pipe-Major of the Black Watch stood on top of his tank and lifted his pipes to play the troops across the border. Their main job, once there, was to secure the oilfields at Al Zubayr and then occupy Basra.

The first thing they did was to secure some prisoners of war left behind by the Americans on their way to Baghdad. Then it was on to the oilfields, meeting little resistance from the collapsing Iraqi army, but avoiding being drawn into fighting in the cities, where their superior weaponry would be less useful.

They also avoided the temptation of going into Basra right away, but chose to "punch in" at the beginning of the day, destroying important targets and withdrawing at nightfall. After a few days the city was suitably softened up to be ready for occupation. Alex reported that their route into the city was lined with smiling faces.

Soon after the fighting stopped, the looting began, and it was very widespread. Both the British and the Americans were criticized for allowing it to go on, but Alex said that they simply did not have enough people to stop it, because it was on such a massive scale.

The most tragic thing was the kidnapping of two British soldiers, who, despite an intensive search for them, were found to have been executed by the fedayeen.

Despite this tragedy, and the many setbacks and frustrations – e.g. everyone wanted to be the first soldier to discover a weapon of mass destruction – Alex concluded by saying, “It was the hell of an experience ... I was very lucky to have taken part in it.”

When he came home, his friends in the three quarters of the Army who did not go to Iraq were full of envy.

It was always thus.

Case Histories

A lady, single, and in her fifties came to us for help. Already stretched with a tight budget her situation became worse when she contracted a debilitating disease and could no longer work. Her Disability Allowance was all she had to live on, and she realized she had to move to a more affordable housing in order to survive. Finding a house that was somewhat reasonable in price she was dismayed to realize that she could not afford the deposit. Once again, the British Charitable Society stepped in to help and Lyn C. was able to move to her new apartment.

We were also able to give aid to a young widow, whose 32 year-old British husband had died suddenly, leaving her alone with two young children to support, and unfortunately without life insurance. We helped by contributing to the funeral costs so that she could bury her spouse

New Members

Welcome to Mark and Deniz Exley from Chestnut Hill, who have recently joined the Society

Curry Night



Mr. Sham, the restaurant owner, explains the appetisers

Curry Night last month was a great success, with over 40 members showing up at the New Mother India Restaurant in Waltham on a rainy Monday night.

This restaurant has arguably the best Indian food in Greater Boston; we have been there before, and we are sure to go there again.

Although our Society's mission is not to entertain ourselves, but to give help to hard-pressed British people in New England, we do occasionally allow ourselves a night out, and it is gratifying to see that more and more members come to these events. Those who begin by being just a name on the membership list soon become people we know, and before you know it we have new friends.

See page 7 for photographs of the evening.

The Prime Minister in the U. S.



Gordon Brown at the Kennedy Library.
(photograph from the BBC website)

The Prime Minister was in the States for several days in April, visiting at Camp David, being interviewed on CBS, writing an Opinion Piece for *The Wall Street Journal*, and

giving a foreign policy speech at the Kennedy Library in Boston (actually in Dorchester).

The gist of the Kennedy Library speech was to stress the need for cooperation among nations, as opposed to confrontation, in order to solve the world's problems. The full text can be read on our website, www.bitcharity.org. Click on “Latest News” in the left hand column of the home page, and at the bottom of the Latest News page there is a link to the speech.

What caught our eye was a paragraph in the *Wall Street Journal* piece urging cooperation between

charities on each side of the Atlantic and proposing that, "... British and US charities come together to discuss projects where working in common we can make a difference." The Hunter Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation have agreed to hold a convention at which British and American charitable organisations can discuss how they can help each other.

With this in mind we emailed the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square to see if an American charity existed in the UK with a mission similar to ours. The answer, alas, was No.

J. K. Rowling Among the Muggles



J. K. Rowling in Harvard Yard

Depending on which side of the bed you got out of bed that morning, Harvard Commencement is either a pretentious, anachronistic bore, or a many-splendoured circus, with the faculty in high academic drag and the graduates in high academic euphoria. This year we seemed to have got out of the right side of the bed, but the weather was cool and grey and damp, with occasional drizzles, more like Edinburgh weather, perhaps. This may have suited Dr. Rowling – Harvard awarded her a Doctorate of Letters in the morning – for although she was born in Gloucestershire, she now lives in Edinburgh

The Tercentenary Theatre, the largest area in the Yard, was packed; it has an official capacity of 40,000, but that figure must have been easily exceeded, with standing room only on the steps of Widener Library, the small metal chairs being unusually closely packed, and large crowds standing before the huge television screens elsewhere.

The afternoon of Commencement is given over to the Alumni Association, and there are three major speakers: The President of the Alumni Association, the President of the University and, finally, the

invited guest address. The first speaker talked mostly about money, how important it was, how alumni should give more, and which classes had broken records in their giving. Fascinating stuff, of course.

The President of the University also talked about money, how a \$35 billion endowment was really not very much considering all that had to be done with it, and the government should not take it away by taxing it. It was also realised that this address was only a warm-up for J. K.

Finally these riveting speeches came to an end, and the band reluctantly became silent

The afternoon addresses are given from a podium on the steps of the Memorial Church, surrounded by as many people as can be squashed into that limited space. Even today the crowd is mostly composed of men in suits and academic regalia, looking well-lunched and very pleased with themselves to be in such prestigious company. Rowling wore a light summer frock with no Harvard gown or hood, nor those of her own university, Exeter. She spoke clear Standard English with, to our ears, no hint of a regional accent. What did she have to say?

The complete text of her address was too long to be included in this newsletter, but it can be found from a link to it on the Events page of our website, www.britcharity.org.



**Rowling at Podium;
Faust Pays Attention**

In summary she had two main messages to the graduating seniors and the rest of us: It is all right to fail, because you learn that you can survive failure and be stronger as a result; and it is important to acknowledge your imagination and to broaden it so that you can know how it feels to be in another person's shoes. She mentioned having known real poverty, but made no other mention of money.

This summary does not do justice to the actual delivery. One thing was her total contrast to the others around her. She was young (42), attractive, and convincing. The writer has heard Winston

Churchill, Prince Charles, and, more recently Bill Gates speak to this crowd, and they were inspiring. But Rowling was incandescent, lightening our darkness, speaking from a better world which she had reached by climbing out of her own suffering.

While she was speaking the huge crowd was totally quiet. An elderly man in the next seat was weeping unashamedly. When she had finished there were a few seconds of silence, and then with a great roar the applause began, seeming never to end. Wave after wave. What a day for Harvard. What a motivation to review our own lives.

Coming Events

ART: Joseph Wright of Derby in Liverpool

Joseph Wright of Derby (1734-1797) is one of the most significant and admired British artists of the eighteenth century. Prized by his contemporaries for the originality of his "candlelight" paintings, Wright was also a distinguished portraitist. From 1768 to 1771, he lived and worked in Liverpool, then Britain's fastest-growing port and a burgeoning cultural and economic center. Wright's success in Liverpool made him the first great British artist to establish a career outside of London.

May 22 - August 30, 2008

Yale Center for British Art
1080 Chapel Street, PO Box 208280
New Haven, Connecticut 06520
203 432 2800
<http://ycba.yale.edu/>

ART: Great British Watercolors from the Paul Mellon Collection

Great British Watercolors brings together more than eighty outstanding works spanning a century of British artistic production, the emergence of watercolor painting in the mid-eighteenth century to its flowering in the early nineteenth century. The exhibition highlights the diversity of British watercolor painting, showing both landscapes and figurative works by some of the principal artists who worked in the medium, including Thomas Gainsborough, Paul Sandby, John Robert Cozens, William Blake, Thomas Girtin, J. M. W. Turner, and John Constable.

June 10 - August 17, 2008

Yale Center for British Art
1080 Chapel Street, PO Box 208280
New Haven, Connecticut 06520
203 432 2800
<http://ycba.yale.edu/>

The Churchill Conference

25th International Churchill Conference - Boston
Thursday, September 11, 2008 - Saturday, September 13, 2008
Fairmont Copley Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts

Thursday, 11 September.

Registration; a presentation on Churchill's Boston: 1900 – 1949 and a Welcoming Reception

Friday, 12 September.

The day will be devoted an in-depth study of the Conference theme Churchill and Ireland, guided by panels of recognized experts on Churchill and modern Irish history and politics. We will consider Churchill's involvement with and writings about Ireland during several distinct phases of the eventful period from before the First World War through the Second World War.

September 12 marks the 100th Wedding Anniversary of Winston Churchill and Clementine Hozier, which happy event will be the theme of our Gala Reception and Dinner Friday evening.

Saturday, 13 September.

Sessions on Churchill and Ireland will continue, and a tour of the incomparable Museum of World War II, which is not open to the public, will be offered. The conference will conclude with a closing night Reception and Dinner.

Registration materials will be forthcoming soon.

Contact: Joseph L. Hern
jhern@fhmboston.com (617) 248-1919

Highland Games

August 16 – Thomas Point Beach, Brunswick, ME
September 13 – Heritage Museum and Gardens, Sandwich, Cape Cod (The Highland Light Scottish Festival)

September 19-21 New Hampshire Highland Games, The Mountain Club on Loon, Lincoln, NH

Obituary – Royston C. Preece



Royston C. Preece

When Royston Preece died last April we lost a distinguished member of the British Charitable Society, a distinguished and loyal member – we have evidence that he actually read the

newsletter! His mourners were asked not to send flowers for his funeral, but, instead, to send cheques to our Society, and we are most grateful for their doing so. His official obituary follows:

“Royston C. Preece of Reading passed away on Monday, April 14, 2008 at Salem Hospital.

“Born in Bristol, England, Royston was the loving son of the late Charles E. and Mabel Preece. Royston was a warm and caring son, brother, husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, uncle and friend. He will be sadly missed.

“Royston attended Bristol University and later Cambridge University. During World War II, Royston was involved in maintaining the continuity of telecommunications in Bristol. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Royston came to America to work at John F. Kennedy’s Hideaway.

“Royston worked at LFE. He retired as a design engineer at Digital Equipment Corporation. He was a Co-Founder of the present day DCU. Royston was the secretary of the Victorian Club in Boston and a member of the British Charitable Society. He was a well known and accomplished organist, pianist and artist.

“Royston was the beloved husband of Margaret (McKenzie) Preece. He was the devoted father of Jennifer Lyons of Newton, New Hampshire, Anthony Preece of Plymouth, and Allison Preece and her husband Sanjiv Bhatia of Reading. Royston was the cherished grandfather of 5 and the great grandfather of 3. He was the dear brother of Lorna

Preece of England. Royston was also survived by many loving nieces and nephews.

“A Funeral Mass celebrating Royston’s life was held in St. Agnes Church, 186 Woburn St., Reading.”

Miscellany

The FCO’s New LOCATE System

If you are about to travel to a dicey country you can now register with the Foreign Office’s LOCATE system before you go, so that you can be found in case of an emergency. You can do this by going to the FCO website: www.fco.gov.uk and clicking on the “LOCATE” icon on the home page.

The registration procedure is not exactly a doddle, because you have to first pre-register at one location, and then register again at another. You can download a blank form on which to register, but we had difficulty in finding where we should send this form once it had been filled in. Does this surprise you? Still, the FCO’s heart is clearly in the right place.

You can also continue to drop into the Embassy in any foreign country you are visiting, and register in person, as we have all been doing for years. Sometimes, but not always, this can result in your being invited to the next party.

Virgin Atlantic’s New Upper class Departure Lounge at Logan

All of our readers are, by definition, upper class, but to claim that distinction when flying on Virgin Atlantic you have to pay Upper Class fares (\$11,439 including taxes, round trip Boston-London, mid-week, June 2008). If you are willing to do that, you will find a spiffy new Clubhouse (departure lounge) at Boston’s Logan International Airport, Terminal E.

Designed by the Boston-based architectural firm Bergmeyer Associates, it includes a lounge, brasserie, deli, library and business area - all free if you are the right sort. It gives new meaning to the expression “Port Out Starboard Home” doesn’t it?

Curry Night – 28 April, 2008



Mary Hancock & Friend (l), & Tim Hunt (r)
(photograph by Jane Ollerhead)



(l-r) Jane Bryant, Robert Bryant, Charles Platt
(photograph by Jane Ollerhead)



**(l-r) Bruce Rogers, Jinyu Rogers,
Sally Smith, Andrew Smith**



Chris Hall and Wife, & Guy Bennett (r)
(photograph by Jane Ollerhead)

SOME AGM PICTURES



Charles Platt Opens the Meeting



(l-r) Jane Hunt and Renia Platt



**(l-r) Bruce Rogers, Jinyu Rogers,
Peggy Hunter**



**Frank Porter, President
Scots Charitable Society**



**Alex Holroyd-Smith Explains
The Invasion of Iraq**