



Charter



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The Newsletter of the British Charitable Society

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www.britcharity.org

Society Officers

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

Executive Committee

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 Jan Carrigan
 Steven Clark
 Michael Dawson, Editor
 Jacqueline Greenlaw
 Robert A. Groom, OBE (Past President)
 Timothy J. Hunt, MBE (Past President)
 Thomas Keown
 Geoff Mullis (Past President)
 Valerie Nelson
 Jane Ollerhead
 Bruce Lee Rogers
 Gillian Sherrington

Letter from the President



Christmas celebrates the birth of Hope; it is a time when it is correct to be hopeful about our own future welfare, about that of the country and about that of the world. New Year's is about making resolutions which bring such hopes to reality. The British Charitable Society resolves to be evermore faithful to the goals set forth in our mission, and this means:

- Doing everything we can to make sure that Britons in need in New England know how to find us, by letter, email or telephone.
- Making sure that we are on the databases of all the helping agencies in this region of the country, by word of mouth wherever appropriate.
- Being prudent in our Committee meetings about how many dollars we dispense, i.e. erring on the side of generosity, but at the same time being good stewards of our endowment and the gifts of our donors.
- As a corollary to the previous point, we sometimes have to decide whether dispensing dollar aid is in the best interests of our clients. In some cases, it is more useful to refer them to professional organizations who are better-equipped both to help them deal with their current difficulties and to avoid a recurrence of those same problems.
- Being not only visible to and findable by those who need our help, but also being visible and credible to potential supporters, most of whom have many other claims on their generosity.

The above is a tall order, but we are fortunate in having an extraordinary and dedicated team on the Executive Committee. I am grateful for the work of all the members of the Committee: from those who play the role of being the "Voice of the Society", in that it is they who are in direct contact with our clients, to those who bring their different professional skills to bear on the problems of clients who need our assistance.

For those who heard or read the Queen's Christmas message it could almost have been interpreted as having been beamed directly to our membership. She pointed out that the Christmas story is of a family which was literally shut out, thus drawing our attention to the plight of those who live on the edge of society. There were many groups who work with such people, she said, **"However, each one of us can also help by offering a little time, a talent, or a profession."** Yes.

A very Happy New Year to you all.

Some Case Histories

Let me first reiterate Charles Platt's message of gratitude, from the last Charter, to Susan Dugdale for her years of dedication to the Society. For nine years, Susan Dugdale managed the charity cases single handedly, and the fact that the space that Susan left required not one but two people to fill, is testament to the all-inclusive job Susan did. Well done Susan, and thanks!

Since Gill Sherrington and I took over Susan's role we have been involved with a variety of charity cases. Many are referred by the 2-1-1 helpline, some have come from the Consulate and some have managed to reach us from the Red Cross. Each case is different and most are along the lines that our members have become accustomed to reading about. Each case however shares a commonality and that is of a desperate need for help. Often by the time these folks come to us they have exhausted every financial resource and arrive at our doorstep as a last resort.

Take, for example, the lady referred to us by our 2-1-1 in Connecticut. Theresa S., a daughter of an English national, divorced mother of two teenagers, struggling to make a living as an auxiliary nurse, was in a financial crisis. Her new job had fallen through during the probationary period, and as such she did not qualify for unemployment benefit. Living from hand to mouth and having no savings, this brief gap in employment had very quickly reduced her to debt, and by the time she came to us she was already behind in her rent. She was trying to find a job but as you can imagine job seeking had become difficult owing to the fact that she had no telephone and no car insurance. With the help of our Society we were able to pay her rent arrears, we reconnected her telephone and had her car insurance reinstated. I am happy to report that Tracey did find gainful employment and is back on her feet, thanks to the ongoing support of our Society.

Losing a loved one back in England is an experience many of us have unfortunately experienced, myself included. When it happens, all one wants to do is fly home. Imagine how terrible if, because of the lack of funds, one could not be with your loved one or at least be there to comfort the family? This was the case of Maryanne H. who was frantically trying to raise money to get to her mother's funeral. The Society we were able to assist in her emergency travel plans, and she was able to go to her mother's funeral in Britain.

I know I speak for Gill as well when I say that being part of this organization is tremendously rewarding, in that, because of the generosity of our contributors we are in a position to make a small but significant difference in someone's life, but at the same time it also a very humbling experience and this is reinforced each time I deal with one of our cases and learn of their particular plight. And what strikes me each time I speak to the person is how surprised they sound when they find out that we exist and also how grateful they are to actually receive the assistance they so deservedly need. The print cannot express the true gratitude that is shown when we lend a hand to these unfortunate individuals, but I can tell you that in speaking to them, their relief is almost palpable and they are truly thankful for our help. Please let me assure you that every dollar and cent that is given to these people is immensely appreciated, and you should feel secure in the knowledge that your donations are being put to good use.

All that remains for me to say is that Gill and I thank you very much for your support this year and all the very best for the year to come.

Jane Ollerhead and Gill Sherrington

The New Website

Last November the new website became operational. It was the work of many hands, but mostly those of Chris Hall. Website design has evolved rapidly since Roger Tunsley's pioneering efforts in 2000, and we have tried to take advantage of newly available technology. We hope you will find that it is now easier to navigate through, and that some of the new features are useful.

Above all we have striven to make information about the Society and its work more accessible both to those who need our help, and to those who might help us with it. With that mind we have also tried to make it more findable (sorry!) for the search engines such as Google and Yahoo. That meant careful attention to the keyword meta tags, which is what search engines look for when someone is doing a search. Our site has seventeen such keywords, e.g. "British" and "help"; we still have to find ways to put our website at or near the top of the list which the

search engines present when these key words are entered.

Although the number of visitors to our site is still modest, the growth over the last four years has been impressive: an increase of 236% from 2004 to 2007.

The site is really a marketing tool for us, aimed at the applicant "market" and at the donor "market". We are looking for ways to apply this tool more creatively. Any ideas?

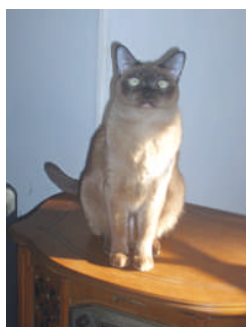
(michael.dawson@verizon.net).

Ex-Pat Tax Alert

We have been alerted to a change in the UK tax code which, effective in April this year, may reduce the time that a UK-born ex-pat may spend in the UK without being subject to taxes. The current time is 91 days a year, not counting the days of arrival and departure. Effective in April those days may be counted in the total. To see the full *Telegraph* article, go to their website:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/global/main.jhtml?view=DETAILS&grid=&xml=/global/2007/11/01/non-resident-in-UK.xml>

Taking Your Pet to Town



Time to Get Cats Back to the West End



Piccadilly Circus

For many decades taking your dog or cat (or ferret) into England from abroad, meant a six-month quarantine to make sure that the unfortunate animal had no nasty foreign diseases. This draconian procedure caused an immense amount of suffering to both man and beast, not to mention death from the trauma of separation, and/or the treatment received while in quarantine. It was a good idea to protect the country from rabies, but it has somehow not been protected from BSE, foot and mouth, blue tongue, and now H5N1 bird flu. Perhaps they have been

fighting the wrong enemy. But even long-established cruel bureaucratic practices can change.

In June, 2001, the Department of the Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, DEFRA, was formed, and though it has a Gilbert & Sullivan name, it has actually done some good things. One of these good things has been the authorization of more flights on which pets may come into the UK and the clarification of the dog and cat (and ferret) quarantine rules. The DEFRA scheme under which this is going on is called PETS (Pet's Travel Scheme or Pet's Passport). By 2002 DEFRA had authorized Virgin Atlantic to fly pets from Los Angeles to Heathrow, and Britannia Airways to fly them from Florida to Gatwick. Air Canada could carry pets from six Canadian cities to Heathrow. However there were still a daunting number of requirements to fulfill before you could zoom through Quarantine at Heathrow. However, the door was slowly beginning to open. Today twelve American cities have pet service by seven different airlines to Gatwick and Heathrow, and also to Bristol and Manchester. But fulfilling all the requirements for bringing your pets to town, is still no walk in the park. You have to start jumping through the many required hoops more than six months before your wheels touch down on runway 27R with your confused little animal on board. Here's a simplified countdown:

- Have an identifying microchip inserted into your pet's ear. (Microchip should meet ISO standard 11784 or annex A to ISO 11785)
- Six months before leaving for the UK have your pet vaccinated against rabies.
- Have blood tested 30 days after vaccination to determine if pet has adequate protection against rabies.
- Six months after the blood test obtain PETS certificate from vet.
- 24-48 hours before you travel have your pet treated for tapeworm and ticks. Obtain official certificate of treatment.

Before throwing up your hands, you should know that help is at hand. BA has a good web page with more details than the above. The page's web address is:

www.baworldcargo.com/products/liveanimals.shtml?site=%2Fproducts%2Fliveanimals.shtml

Or you can call BA's PETS number 9am to 5pm on week days at 1-888-578-4806. Prepare for a longish hold.

DEFRA also have a useful website:
www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/pets/procedures/support-info/trip.htm

BA say that about one third of their passengers to the UK who want to take their pet with them use a pet travel agent or the equivalent. For example Cambridge Veterinary Care at 1724 Mass. Avenue in Cambridge, MA (617-661-6255) will take care of the medical requirements. BA also mentioned that World Care Pets have a useful website:

www.worldcarepets.com, or call Don Uyeno at 631-791-5461. This organisation operates as a sort of call centre for pet travel agents.

Another agent in Massachusetts is Gale Young, Starwood Animal Transport, PO Box 21, Hardwick Village, MA 01037 413-477-0087
www.starwoodanimaltransport.com or gale@starwoodanimalhospital.com. They will do all the paperwork, take your pet to Logan and, if you like, have someone pick it up in London.

That's it. It's still pretty daunting, but not as bad as it used to be. Good Luck, and Bon Voyage.

Michael Dawson

ONE HOME MANY HOPES FOR KENYA

New Group Makes Massachusetts Family To Those With None

Thomas Keown is a member of the Society's Executive Committee, and when he was in Kenya recently he took a train trip from Mombasa on the coast to Nairobi. A journey into the past designed for the tourist trade turned out to be an experience he could not forget. What he did about it when he got home is both interesting and inspiring. We thought you would want to read about it.

It is one of the last truly great railway journeys. From Kenya's concrete capital city, Nairobi, to its coastal paradise of Mombasa is a marathon 16 hours on the country's only line. Despite being only about 500 miles as even the most directionless crow flies.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday the sole train trundles east from Nairobi and every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday it turns around and crawls back. Passengers could be forgiven for feeling

outpaced by trees and shrubbery at times, but no-one minds. It's fun, there's tea and, when it comes down to it, you are not there for convenience but for the experience. Those who wanted convenience purchased plane tickets and are watching American television in their hotel already. Your experience is silver service dinner in the dining car served onto whitish tablecloths by waiters in crispish shirts and a cabin tended by your personal porter. It gives you the feeling of a colonial era long since gone and replicated rarely. It is an exquisite expedition.

It's so enjoyable in fact that you barely notice that the locals you saw on the platform are nowhere to be seen. And that the only Kenyans in the dining car are working there. Then you realize that the passengers you chatted with over tea in the station are munching their packed lunches somewhere in third class and will shortly be trying to sleep in their chairs while you stretch out in your bed with laundered linens. With an average income of \$1.32 per day (less than \$500 per year) the average Kenyan's railroad experience is vastly different to the average tourist's.

About two miles outside Mombasa every passenger near a window slams it shut at the same second. An overpowering odour utterly unlike any other assaults your nasal cavities from every direction and won't be overcome. Foul, fetid and filthy, it is beyond description, but squinting out the window explains everything. A massive mound of rubbish covers a huge area and you can almost see the smell swirling above it. All of the bins of Mombasa emptied in a huge open heap of refuse and left to fester and rot and decompose in the heat and humidity.

If you didn't already feel nauseated then a closer look makes you want to wretch. Swarming over this mound of unspeakable muck are dozens of eight year olds, ten year olds, five year olds. Some live there. Some carry infant siblings on their backs. All are scavenging for food in the midst of misery and foulness simply so they can survive to do it all again tomorrow.

In the early 1990s, Anthony Mulongo was selected by the government as one of the 18 brightest students in Kenya. His story since is one of humbling but inspiring sacrifice. Plucked from high school, he was propelled into an intensive five-year journalism program funded by his government, which wanted to

produce 18 one-stop-shop journalists trained to the highest level.

Mulongo was brilliant with TV and print and, had nature taken its intended course, would today be one of the top reporters in the country. Talk with him for an hour and you know he'd be one of the best on the continent.

Instead he lives beneath a leaky roof on an acre of land north of Mombasa with four cows, a few hens, a vegetable patch, a donkey called George and 33 orphaned girls. Some were abandoned, some thrown away, some saw their parents starve. Some contracted HIV during childbirth but didn't know it. Many lived or ate stinking food on that rank rubbish dump. All needed somebody.

Three years into his journalism career, Mulongo witnessed the tragedy of these street children and was compelled to help; at work he wrote about them, after work he fed them. He spent his spare time — and all his income — building a home for the girls and today makes do with whatever funds he can muster to meet the \$40,000-a-year operating costs. Mulongo, now 34, turned his back on a glittering career because he saw a great need.

I visited Anthony and the girls in August of 2007. My heart was touched by the tangible sense of familial love bestowed upon each life by him and his skeleton staff. My head in turn responded to the long term vision of educating these young ladies up to and through college. Of equipping them to be the agents that will eradicate the extreme poverty they have been lifted from but millions languish in still. Returning from Kenya in September I was determined to help make that happen.

I wrote a speculative column for the Boston and New York 'Metro' and, from the response of a couple of readers and a handful of friends, a new Boston based organization was born in November. 'One Home Many Hopes' (www.onehomemanyhopes.org) aims to raise enough money to provide a second chance at life for 33 young human beings who have suffered more in the first five or six years of their world than most of us combined will in the whole of our lives. We want to build a new home for them, build a school for them, and create a fund to send them to college. It's a big

dream, but no bigger than the dreams they have for themselves.



Witnessing Anthony Mulongo pour all of himself into saving these girls left me asking myself and my friends "how willing are the rest of us to sacrifice even some of ourselves?" We can use our time, our income and our networks for more than our own comfort and advancement.

Mulongo sacrificed everything, but if we all give a little, no one has to give it all. "If we have clothes, we all have clothes," Mulongo told me. "If we have no clothes then we have no clothes together." Imagine it so.

For more information on One Home Many Hopes visit www.onehomemanyhopes.org

Thomas Keown

Armistice Day 2007



Old North

Armistice Day was observed once again at "Old North", with a gathering of British Officers Club and British Charitable Society members in strong attendance. The official host of the event is the Consul-General, the operational host is the British Officers Club, the *in situ* host is the Vicar, The Reverend Stephen T. Ayres, but perhaps the real hosts are the parishioners of Old North who year after year welcome our intrusion so warmly, and who

lay on such sumptuous receptions after the service.

Old North, built in 1723, was, of course, C of E at its beginning. Its formal title is Christ Church in the City of Boston; it belongs to the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. It is perhaps most famous for Longfellow's poem *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*, which describes how in 1775 the two lanterns hung in the bell tower told Paul Revere, waiting on the other side of the Charles River, that the British Army were on their way to Concord by sea, and not by land. In the course of history the

Queen and Prince Philip attended a service at Old North in 1976, the bicentennial year of the country.

In the British mind Armistice Day is mostly about the Great War, in which there were nearly a million military deaths of British and Commonwealth service men. In his sermon the Vicar recalled the work of three of the war poets: John McCrae's poem *In Flanders Field* with the defiant cry of a dying soldier, "Take up our quarrel with the foe"; Wilfrid Owens calling *Dulce et decorum est, pro patria mori* an old lie; and Laurence Binyon, the Vicar's favourite, whose *For The Fallen* alternates between mourning their death, and hoping for a better life. He then quoted Matthew 22:32, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living", meaning that we all live in God as individual souls. The full text of the sermon can be seen by going to the "Events" page of our website – www.britcharity.org – and clicking on the link to the sermon.

Tony Carrigan and Jeremy Wailes, members of the British Officers Club who died this past year, were both remembered at this service.

Christmas Party at the Residence

On Wednesday December the 12th there was a grand party at the residence of Consul-General. It was a Christmas party, but it was more than that. It was a fundraising event, featuring a raffle with some fine prizes; it was a social event, at which to reunite with old friends; it was a musical evening, ending with the singing of carols, and in the setting of old Beacon Hill this last was almost Dickensian. In addition to all this, it was the first chance that most of us had had to meet Dr. Philip Budden, our "new" Consul-General, his wife Deborah, and his two young daughters. It was a perfect party in the sense that all the different parts came together just right and justified the hard work of all those who had made it happen.

Jacqueline Greenlaw, at the Consulate, had been the prime mover in getting us all organised; Valerie Nelson had found the musicians and printed up sheets of carol music, so that we would not be groping for the words; the two Budden daughters acted as doorkeepers and shepherded the guests upstairs; Susan Dugdale provided her famous sausage rolls, and many other guests arrived with various, mostly British, treats; Jane Ollerhead used her magic camera to take some great photographs

(See the last two pages of this newsletter). Whom have we left out? The thing is that almost everyone contributed to the party in one way or another, and that was probably what made it such a success. Altogether there were some 65 people present, and it was particularly good to see Bruce Rogers, who had been away for a while.

We are most grateful to our gracious host and hostess for making their lovely home available to the Society for this gathering. Thank you!

Coming Events

The Ball, Friday November the 7th, 2008

This will be the major event on our calendar for 2008, and planning for it has already started. Having organised two of these affairs in recent years, we are going up the learning curve. The ball of 2007 went more smoothly than the one in 2005, and we believe that 2008 will be better still.

The Harvard Club has been booked again. Guests seem to like it there, and the Club likes us. Believe it or not they do not have many formal dinner dances there now, and they miss them.

We are considering hiring a different orchestra, but those plans are not yet final.

Please mark the date on your new 2008 calendar!

And from the Consulate-General's Website

MUSIC: Band of the Coldstream Guards and the Pipes, Drums, and Dancers of The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards
Music of Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales...pipes, drums and Highland Dancers... an extraordinary and colorful evening of pageantry in the grand Scots tradition featuring the Scots dragoon's outstanding and famous pipes and drums who perform world wide and hold the top of the charts with "Amazing Grace."

Tuesday, 29 January 2008, 8:00pm

**Mechanics Hall
 Worcester, MA**

Tickets: \$39, \$36, 508-752-0888 or 508-754-3231

For more information visit:

www.musicworcester.org or

www.army.mod.uk/coldstreamguardsband

CHRISTMAS AT THE CONSUL-GENERAL'S RESIDENCE



Charles Platt, President of the British Charitable Society (left) and Philip Budden, Consul-General (right)
(Photograph by Jane Ollerhead)



Sarah and Dan Snape
Our talented musicians for the evening



The Consul (left) with Simon and Gillian Sherrington, winners of the Grand Raffle Prize
(Photograph by Jane Ollerhead)



Paul Downey and Susan Dugdale (BCS Vice-President)
(Photograph by Jane Ollerhead)



Melissa Murphy
Consulate-General
(Photograph by Jane Ollerhead)



7 (left to right) Josie Maguire, (Canadian Vice-Consul), Kathy Tunsley (BCS Treasurer), and Fred Rice
(Photograph by Jane Ollerhead)



**Jacqueline Greenlaw, Vice-Consul
and BCS Ex. Com**
(Photograph by Jane Ollerhead)



**Dr. Bruce Rogers
BCS Ex. Com**



**Steve Clark,
BCS Ex. Com.**



**Valerie Nelson (right) with
Sarah and Dan Snape**
(Photograph by Jane Ollerhead)



**(left to right) Mr. & Mrs. Steve Clarke,
Mr. & Mrs. Stinton, Peggy Hunter**
(Photograph by Jane Ollerhead)

Email Addresses

We continue to make more and more use of email to inform members of coming events (but **not** for fundraising). Records show that approximately 60% of member households have email connections, but we suspect that that percentage would be higher if we knew all the addresses. So ...

... if you have not been receiving emails from us from time to time, perhaps you have changed your address, or perhaps you are newly on line and have not thought of sending us the address. In either case could you please send the new information to us? It will be included in our Directory, available to any member on request, but otherwise it will be entirely confidential.

michael.dawson@verizon.net

Thank you