



CHARTER

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In this issue

President's Letter
Page 1

Fund-Raising - The Results
Page 2

A Look at Some of our
Casework
Page 3

Curry Dinner
Page 4

Society Vice-President
Honoured by HM The
Queen
Page 5

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Society Officers

President - Tim Hunt MBE
Vice-president - Kathy Tunsley MBE
Executive Secretary - Susan Dugdale
Treasurer - Charles Platt
Recording Secretary - Jackie
McGrail
Clerk to the Committee - Peggy Hunter

Executive Committee

George S. Ames
Diane Bailey-Boulet
Jan Carrigan
Micheal Dawson
Robert A. Groom OBE (Past president)
Geoffrey Hall
Peter Howard-Johnson
Eileen Morley
Geoff Mullis (Past president)
Paul Stanislas OBE
Roger Tunsley

President's Letter

First of all, let me congratulate our vice-president, Kathy Tunsley, on the award of the MBE in the New Year's Honours list. See inside the *Charter* for more information.

For the British Charitable Society, the year 2003 was one of great success, marked by the ability to help an increased number of worthy cases of people down on their luck for one reason or another. Our search for new cases has borne fruit and the dedicated work of our Executive Secretary, Susan Dugdale, has provided the committee with well documented "stories" to allow us to make as compassionate a judgment as possible. She has gone into some of the details of a few of the cases in her article. In most instances she has interacted directly with potential recipients and each case often takes several quite lengthy phone calls and sometimes a personal visit. We would, of course, like to have potential cases evaluated by a social service agency, but this is not always possible.

This increases the desirability of having one or more members on our committee who have social service credentials and, if such a member of the society wishes to help in this way, we would like to hear about it.

Other successes during the year included two fine social occasions. For the second time in both cases, we had a fish n' chip supper in Gloucester and a curry night, this time in Waltham. Both were well attended and it was great to see so many members and prospective members at each event. Kate Hall put on another auction at the fish n' chip night which was a great deal of fun as well as offering the chance to buy such things as Marmite, which no British fridge should be without. (P.S. It goes wonderfully on toast under poached eggs!)

These two events were successful in getting some new members for the Society and this is a course we need to pursue. Not only is our cause a good one for any resident of the area with British background or leanings, but we must constantly rejuvenate ourselves. In particular, there have been increasing numbers of Brits entering the high-tech industries around Boston, especially biotechnology, and we should have a sizable penetration into this population. In fact, I would like to challenge every member to get one new member into the Society during 2004.

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Our successes this past year are not without their costs. We have been making grants in excess of our income and, unlike some charities headlined in the recent news, we pay no salaries and our expenses are very low. So, for the second year, we ran an annual appeal, the results of which are detailed below by Treasurer Charles Platt. While we don't think it is asking too much of our membership for their charity (after all the cost of life membership is a paltry sum), we also want

to search for greater support in the coming year from British companies or subsidiaries, or those doing business in or with the UK. This will be a priority effort during 2004. The investment markets have been kinder during 2003 than in previous years but, given the increased call for our help, we should be increasing our endowment and certainly not letting it be spent down.

There is also the opportunity for members to benefit the society by

gift annuity or by a bequest in your will. Indeed, that's how most of our existing endowment was received. If any member would like some help to arrange such a gift, please contact Charles Platt or myself.

Finally, let me say how pleased I am to be involved in such a vibrant and successful organization and I hope you are too. Good wishes to every one for a prosperous and safe new year.

Fundraising - The Results

In response to President Tim Hunt's annual appeal letter, the membership sent in a total of almost \$8,000 in 2003.

Gifts were received from 36 members and were broken down as follows:

9 gifts of \$25 to \$99

22 gifts of \$100 to \$499

5 gifts of over \$500

Many thanks to all who so generously responded.

Don't forget that if your company has a matching gifts program, you can double the value of your gift in a stroke.

A Look at Some of our Casework

by Susan Dugdale

It's been an interesting and very busy year on the caseload front. Interesting I shall get to in a moment, but busy is what concerns me right now.

I've been aware as 2003 has progressed that my activity levels have increased enormously. As the first point of contact for anyone needing assistance it became necessary halfway through the year to devise some sort of application form to send to enquirers to try to cut down on the length of the initial phone call, which could sometimes last an hour. That maybe should have given me a clue as to how many more people were coming to us largely as a result of our outreach efforts. However, it's only now, at the beginning of 2004 that I have referred to the database and indeed it has confirmed what we on the board have all suspected. We are indeed very busy!

In 2003 we had enquiries from 51 people. This may not sound too much, but if I tell you that's just about the combined total of the previous 3 years and about one third of the combined total of the past 7 years, you may get a clearer idea. Having started the ball rolling and got our name out there to all the care communities in the New England area, we expect similar levels in the years to come.

Now to the interesting cases.....

Case # 1: We were contacted in the summer by an Englishwoman living in Maine. At the first call she was pretty hysterical because she'd just learned that her father was seriously ill in Manchester, England and she naturally wanted to go to see him. Normal ticket purchase was complicated however by a number of circumstances that seemed to emerge one by one as the weeks went by. Firstly she had no passport and couldn't remember when she'd last had one. She'd been in the US for 20 years and arrived here as a bride of a military man. As she came here from Germany on a military aircraft the passport had not been necessary and she hadn't travelled since. She had a green card, but she'd lost it. She had a daughter but no documents to prove sole custody, and of course the daughter had no passport. We spoke regularly, but nothing seemed to happen with her getting the documents she needed. It was only when she called me to let me know that her father had now died that I realised that she had reading difficulties which had prevented her from getting the paperwork together.

With the help of the British Consulate and advice from all quarters we eventually got her on a bus from Bangor, met her and took her to the British Consulate where she was issued a temporary passport, and from there to the airport where she boarded a flight for England. She was able to attend the funeral and be a support to her

mother. Two weeks later we did the same in reverse, met her from the plane, looked after her for the evening and put her back on the bus the next morning. We still speak every week, and I expect to hear very soon that she's going to make a permanent move back to England to be near her family.

Case # 2: It has become increasingly apparent to us from our associations with some of our cases that bad luck only seems to strike people who are already struggling. Case in point is a couple in Connecticut who called to see if we could help them with their rent. It seemed that they had been in the US for over 10 years although illegally, inasmuch as they had just never gone back after a holiday. They had existed pretty well, even running a cleaning business and had created a comfortable life for themselves. Tragedy struck them in 2002 when the wife was diagnosed with a tumour on her brain and of course had to be hospitalized and then start the process of chemo treatment. By now she had obtained a green card for herself through a relative, but the husband, also now in the application process for his own was unable to work to support them. In the space of six months their finances were used up, the wife was so sick it was feared she wouldn't live and their landlord of 10 years was threatening to evict them. The British Charitable Society stepped in and negotiated with the landlord to accept half rent for six

months and then paid it for them. To date the green card for the husband has still not come through, but he is managing to find the odd job here and there which is bringing in some cash and the wife is all but recovered from her illness.

Case # 3: We had a call in September from an Englishwoman in her 60's who has lived here most of her adult life with an abusive husband and a mentally disabled child. She was anxious to leave her situation, but had no assets and nowhere to go. Her son had recently been accepted into a care facility which gave her freedom to

leave the home, but constrained where she could live. She luckily found an apartment close to where he was situated and with the aid of friends and family was able to move in with at least the basics. Having kept in touch with her since the initial call, we were able to establish that although she professed to being comfortable she in fact was sleeping on the floor and had no refrigerator. The British Charitable Society were able to purchase the fridge for her and one of our generous members came up with a box spring and mattress.

It's hard to describe in these cases and many of the others just how grateful these people are for what seems to us in many instances to be such a small contribution. Many are so desperate, have so little money that they can't see how they will feed themselves next week, let alone pay the fuel bills. The lady from Maine paid for her bus fare with borrowed quarters for instance!

We believe there are so many people who are struggling out there, but you can rest assured that we are doing our best to find them and bring help.

Curry Dinner

by Charles Platt

On November 12, about sixty of us gathered at New Mother India restaurant in Waltham for an evening of Indian food and good company. The manager of the restaurant, Tarun, agreed to close for the evening so we could have a private party. The first guests arrived about six o'clock and enjoyed a drink before the buffet became available. Tarun laid on a splendid menu for us with a choice of a dozen dishes including Tandoori Chicken, Samosas, Shrimp Korma, Saag Paneer, Chicken Tikka Masala, Vegetable Biryani, and accompanied by naan bread, poppadums and dhaal. For dessert, there was a choice of English rice pudding or ginger ice cream.

Our president, Tim Hunt, said a few words of welcome to all. Then Susan Dugdale, our effervescent executive secretary also welcomed everyone, in particular the non-members present. She innocently asked any non-members to identify themselves, then she pounced on the people holding their hands in the air, thrusting society membership forms in their hands. Mission accomplished amid smiles; we gained at least four new members from the evening.

No one left hungry, all agreed that the location was convenient, the food was excellent and that we should do it again.

So let's do it again!

Your committee is planning for a fish and chip supper to be held on May 6th.

Hold that date. Put it in your calendar right now. It's the most fun you'll have all year. Perhaps!

Society Vice-President Honoured by HM The Queen



Kathy Tunsley, the society vice-president and Vice-Consul, Management, at the British Consulate-General, Boston, has been made a Member of the Order of the British Empire in the New Year's Honours list. The award cites Kathy's "service to the Consulate and charitable service to the British community in New England".

Kathy has been the Vice-Consul for Management and Consular Affairs at the British Consulate-General in Boston for the past thirteen years. She has worked closely with members of the British community throughout New England, including those in personal and financial distress, and those awaiting trial and serving prison sentences in New England. She has dealt with the consular aspects of difficult and highly publicised court cases such as those of Louise Woodward and Richard Reid.

For over twelve years, as a committee member and then as vice-president, Kathy has been a driving force in the British Charitable Society. Her position in the consulate has made her a natural conduit for cases in which distressed British citizens seek help which cannot be provided by the British Government but are worthy of consideration by the society.

The honour comes just a year after the British Charitable Society president Tim Hunt was made an MBE.

Three other British citizens who are local residents are also on the honours list:

Dr. Tim Berners-Lee of M.I.T. Cambridge is made a KBE for his services toward the global development of the internet.

Dr. Malcolm Rogers of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is made a CBE for his services to the arts in both the UK and the USA.

Mr. Gordon Cameron, president of Acambis, Inc of Cambridge, is made an OBE for his services to the British biotechnology industry in the USA.