



# CHARTER



Volume 14 Number 2

The Newsletter of the British Charitable Society

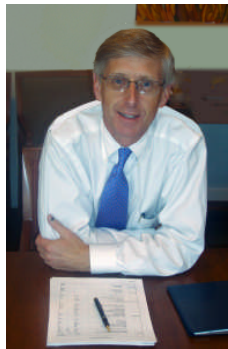
June 2009

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## The President's Letter The MPs and Their Expense Accounts

If you have been following the British news at all recently, you know that many Members of Parliament are in trouble over padded or false expense claims. I was at Heathrow Airport on Wednesday May 27<sup>th</sup>, waiting for a flight back to the USA, and took a few minutes to browse through W H Smith's. Almost every newspaper had a two inch headline on the subject. As of this writing, 13 MPs have resigned and one paper suggested that as many as half of MPs may lose their seats at the next election before this is all over. The claimed expenses range from the bizarre (£4,690 claimed by Pensions Minister Rosie Winterton for soundproofing her bedroom) to the embarrassing (£2,200 claimed by Douglas Hogg for clearing the moat at his country house) to the truly penny-pinching (59p claimed by John Greenway for a box of matches). For more details, you can Google "MPs expense claims". It would be funny if it were not so sad.



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

### Society Officers

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

### Executive Committee

**Guy Bennett**  
**Stephen Clark**  
**Michael Dawson, Editor**  
**Jacqueline Greenlaw**  
**Robert Groom, OBE (Past**  
**President)**  
**Chris Hall, Webmaster**  
**Timothy J. Hunt, MBE (Past**  
**President)**  
**Tomas Keown**  
**Geoff Mullis (Past President)**  
**Bruce Lee Rogers**  
**Emma Wicks**

What makes it all the sadder is that if any of these individuals were to spend just an hour listening to the cases that the Executive Committee hears about every month, they might think twice before filing such claims. None of our clients has a second home in the country, let alone a moat around it. And I am sure that more than a few have had to give up smoking because they can't afford the price of a pack of cigarettes or the 59p for a box of matches. Hearing about the hardships being suffered by people who come to the Society for assistance certainly gives us some perspective on any minor troubles we may be facing ourselves and makes us appreciate the many blessings we enjoy.

I hope that you will all enjoy a wonderful summer. After the long New England winter, it is very welcome but often seems all too brief. The Executive Committee will be in recess from formal meetings over the summer but need is no respecter of vacation schedules and I know that we will have cases that call for our attention. We will deal with them to the best of our abilities and with the resources we have available.

*Charles Platt*

**We continue to be grateful to Loomis-Sayles, Inc, and especially to Mr. John Wencek, for printing this newsletter for us, issue after issue. We could not continue publishing it without their help.**

## Annual General Meeting (AGM)



Looking cross the Charles River to Boston  
on a Claude Monet Evening

Our by-laws require us to meet on the last Thursday of May, and every member must be sent a notice of the meeting at least seven days before the date. It has been held at various places in the past, from the USS Constitution to the Union Club. More recently the Consul-General has graciously invited us to use the Consulate's offices, which are ideal for the purpose, with a large area for socializing before the meeting, a separate space for the meeting itself, and a magnificent view across the Charles River to Boston. This combination, together with a vigorous invitation campaign and two fascinating speakers, resulted in a record attendance this year of over 80 people.

After the business part of the meeting, President Charles Platt thanked Dr. Budden, the Consul-General, and his staff, for their hospitality, particularly for the efforts of Jacqueline Greenlaw, a BCS member and Vice-Consul. He then identified and thanked the various BCS Committees and officers for their work over the past year, and noted the return of Susan Dugdale as Executive Secretary.



The Scots Contingent  
(l-r) Mr. John Kilgore, Ms. Deepto Chakrabarty, Mrs. Kilgore, and Ms. Peggy Hunter

Other organisations, who had been invited to join us, were welcomed, including British Airways, the Irish Immigration Centre, the American Red Cross, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, and Massport.

The chief activity of the Society, of course, is caring for those who come to us for help, but there is a social side which includes garden parties in the summer, a Christmas party at the Consul-General's residence, a curry night, and, as we write, a gathering at a pub in Walpole to watch the Cup Final. These events offer an opportunity to get to know our co-members better, and to network in general. Surf to our website occasionally to find out what is happening on this side of our activities.



Our Guest Speaker, Marcus Wright, has a quiet word with Member Alastair Drummond before the programme

Charles then talked about our cases and the need for continual fundraising to pay for the cost of providing assistance to our clients. He drew attention to the descriptions of some typical cases which had been posted just inside the premises.

Finally Mr. Platt introduced Mr. Joseph Pickerill, the Consulate's Political, Press and Public Affairs Officer who has been with the FCO for three years. Prior to this assignment he was in the Cabinet Office, working on security issues post 9/11.

Mr. Pickerill also welcomed everyone to the meeting. He delighted the audience with most interesting details of his tenure and assignments since coming to Boston. He spoke extemporaneously; this is his own summary:

“Briefly, I discussed my official role as the head of the Consulate's Political, Press & Public Affairs Team, which normally involves trying to find ways to engage with the political players involved in setting the policy direction this country takes on key issues of mutual concern, particularly on the economy, climate or areas of global conflict, including Afghanistan and the Middle East. I do this in a myriad of ways, some basic, some not, in support of the Consul General, Phil Budden, and often with the help of Ministerial and other senior visitors, including the Ambassador. After I set out these broad objectives in greater detail, I went on to discuss that while I hoped to be judged on my successes in moving opinion in these three policy areas, it (my success) will probably be judged on far simpler sets of criteria. For example, my ability to manage the detail of visits by knowing readily available locations for chowder (a key for any visitor) or deftly finding random bits of information on the iPhone requested of my Minister at a moment's notice - usually on Boston history or the previous successor to the

last but one occupant of the assistant secretary position at such and such a Department - are more accurately the benchmarks on which I will be assessed! Either way, the job is either fascinating, good fun, or both!

Mr. Pickerill introduced our guest speaker, Mr. Marcus Wraight, formerly a journalist with the British Broadcasting Corporation. The meeting was fortunate to have him as our guest speaker because Mr. Wraight's thirteen years of BBC experiences included interviews with countless famous persons, many of whose names were readily familiar. His talk was entertaining and totally fascinating, and was enjoyed by all. He closed by offering any assistance to the BCS that he can provide.

The complete Minutes of this meeting are contained in an Appendix to this newsletter.

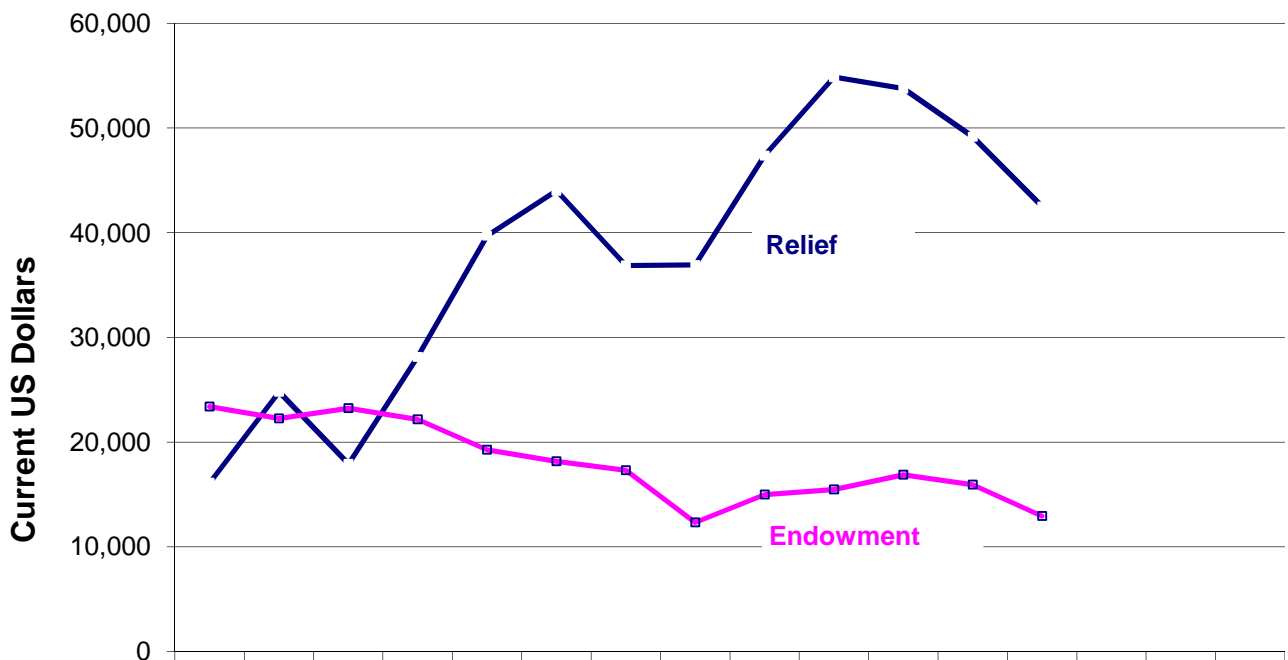
### Minding the Gap - Redux

The Chart below dramatizes the gap between our expenditures on assistance and the income derived from our endowment (interest and dividends). In 2008 this gap was almost \$30,000. In 2008 this amount was reduced by donations and dues (\$5,770) and by modest revenues from social occasions (\$5,975).

The gap was further closed by realizing some of the capital gains from our endowment. This source of income has been a life-saver in years past; recently the capital gains have been close to zero, but the endowment is slowly beginning to recover.

We include this information not just for the fun of whinging, nor to justify further passing of the plate, but simply to explain why we are so grateful for the generous help we continue to receive from the membership. Thank you!

**BCS Relief Outlays vs. Endowment Income  
1996-2008 (current US dollars)**



	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total BCS Relief Outlays	16,124	24,804	17,912	28,142	39,706	44,003	36,863	36,913	47,359	54,845	53,733	49,153	42,510			
Endowment Income	23,397	22,273	23,238	22,171	19,279	18,177	17,324	12,327	14,979	15,476	16,880	15,925	12,941			

## Case Histories

**Al & Betsy R.** are a retired Scottish couple living in CT. They get by on their Social Security checks in rented accommodation. A couple of years ago, Betsy developed Alzheimer's disease and their lives changed dramatically. Al was now the housekeeper and took care of day to day living which for 40 odd years had been Betsy's role. With the disease progressing and Betsy's health deteriorating, Al was spending more of their fixed income on prescription costs and comfort drugs and this began to take a toll on their finances. Pretty soon Al realized they had to move down into more affordable housing and he applied for low income housing. The wait was not short and by the time they had risen to the top of the list they were pretty desperate for money. Al contacted the BCS and we were able to bridge the couple with a rent payment until they could move to affordable housing.

**Tania**, a young mother of a toddler was at the court house on Christmas Eve securing a restraining order from her abusive husband. When she returned home she found the family house almost burnt to the ground. Her estranged husband had set light to it, not caring whether Tania or their 3 year old was inside. He was subsequently incarcerated which removed him as a threat but also left Tania with no child support. With the home burned and all their belongings and paperwork with it, Tania moved in with a friend to in effect re-establish her identity. Tania started working two jobs to pay for herself and her daughter and they moved into rented accommodation. The transition costs associated with moving into a new home and the winter fast approaching caused a cash flow crisis for Tania and she contacted 2-1-1 for help and learned of our existence at that time. The British Charitable Society were able to pay for a rental payment and a utility bill to help her get back on her feet.

*Jane Ollerhead*

## A 2012 Overture

The year 2012 is going to be an extraordinary year in two, and maybe three, ways. First of all it is the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, probably in early June, though the date had not been fixed at the time of writing. Second, it is the London Olympics from July the 27<sup>th</sup> to August the 12<sup>th</sup>. And lastly a growing group of New Age types are predicting the end of the world in December of that year. Yes we have heard this

forecasting of doom before, but, well, enter "2012" into Google and see what you get.

So how does this confluence of events affect the British Charitable Society? One thing it means is that the eyes of the world will be on Great Britain more than at any time since the blitz. Therefore we should perhaps plan to ride this mother wave of attention, both to increase our visibility and at the same time to attract more donors to help fund the increasing demands on our resources.

Our plans are extremely fluid at this time, but one idea would be to schedule another ball, a special ball, with a well-known celebrity guest, and coordinate that with the British-American Business Bureau of New England, who might put on some variety of a trade-cum-cultural event.

All of this is three years away, but there is a long lead time in arranging the mega event which some of us are dreaming of. The purpose of writing this short article now is to ask our membership for ideas. We intend it to be a brilliant occasion, and we are not afraid of being primly outrageous. May we hear from you?

The easiest way to be in touch with us is via an email to the Editor: [michael.dawson@verizon.net](mailto:michael.dawson@verizon.net). Or you could write to him: Michael Dawson, One Brattle Circle, Cambridge, MA 02138-4625. Lastly you could ring him at 617-492-9588.

## The Australian Bushfire Benefit

On a Saturday afternoon in February, members of the Boston Australian and British expatriate communities, as well as many sympathetic Americans, joined together in a kind-spirited, inspirational event to benefit the Red Cross Bushfire 2009 Appeal Fund and the RSPCA Victoria Appeal Fund. Hosted at the British Consulate Office in Cambridge on February 21, 2009, over 300 supporters attended this one day wine - tasting and silent auction event, resulting in **over \$50,000** benefit for individuals and animals affected by the Australian bushfires.

According to the "[Timesonline.co.uk](http://Timesonline.co.uk)" (Feb 24, 2009):

*'Terrified residents fled their homes in southern Australia yesterday after strong winds fanned back to life wildfires that killed more than 200 people this month.'*





*The day after Australia observed a day of mourning for the victims of “Black Saturday” — when the worst bushfires in the country's history destroyed about 1,800 homes — at least two new fires sprang up in Victoria State.*

*Residents were urged either to leave their homes early or to stay and fight the flames — but after the devastation of February 7 that choice was an easy one. “I’m no hero — take the house,” one woman said as she prepared to leave her home in the town of Warburton.*

*Some of the blazes have been burning for weeks and had mostly been contained by firefighters hosing down the edges and building firebreaks.”*

The recent Boston charitable event was put together in little over a week, and benefited from the power of the intranet’s “Meet up” site. Thirty two gift donations, provided by individuals and corporations, were the basis for the silent auction. They included a Tiffany diamond and sapphire band, Nintendo Wii, a Magic Show for adults or children, an Australian Fire fighter helmet, pants and jacket, an F2 Snowboard, multiple bottles of Australian wine, and many other desirable contributions.

Corporate donors included the Boston Demons Football Club, the British Consulate, the Danish Pastry House, the Innocent Bystander Winery, the Maple Mill Construction Company, the Phoenix Landing, Redtribe, Sel De La Terre, Starbucks, Tommy Doyle’s, Tufts University Alumni Association, TY KU, Whole foods, and Woburn Foreign Motors.

The 2009 Victorian Bushfire Fund was launched by the Premier John Brumby of Victoria, Australia, in partnership with the Red Cross and the Federal

Government. Millions of dollars have been generously donated through Australian Red Cross to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund to assist individuals and communities affected by the bushfires. An independent panel of community leaders is overseeing the fund's distribution. Donations are continuing to flow in via the website and phone, and the fund’s website indicates there has also been an overwhelming response from corporate Australia and overseas, including a generous donation from Her Majesty the Queen.

## Curry Night



March the 2nd was a dark and stormy night, so our Curry Night was postponed until March the 16<sup>th</sup>. This change resulted in a thinnish attendance, compared with previous years, but the curry was no less hot, our host was no less genial, and the conversation crackled and sparked with the pungency and verve of the curry itself.

We shall return!

## The Cup Final

On Saturday, May the 30<sup>th</sup>, over 89,000 fans were crammed into the new Wembley Stadium at 3 pm British Summer Time when the referee blew the starting whistle for this year’s Cup Final between Chelsea and Everton.

By 10 am Eastern Summer Time, some 3,500 miles from Wembley, 28 BCS members and their friends were into their first Bloody Marys as they watched the match on a large television screen in the British Beer Company’s pub in Walpole, Massachusetts.



### The British Beer Company

President Charles Platt was there and had this to say about it:

“Many thanks to Chris Hall for organizing this event and to Peggy Hunter for taking the money at the door. 28 of us showed up to watch Everton score the fastest goal in Cup history (26 seconds into the match). Both sides played fine, attacking football with Chelsea eventually emerging as deserved winners, 2-1. It could (should?) have been 3-1 but a ricochet off the crossbar that appeared to cross the goal line was not allowed as a goal. It was “déjà vu all over again” for those of us who had watched the England victory in the 1966 World Cup final.

“The BBC did us proud with a terrific English breakfast and the Society made about \$280 on the day. We look forward to the next event.”



(l-r) Emma and Paul Wicks, Gillian and Paul Wright, Nicola O'Shea at the Pub  
(Photograph by Becky Liley)

## British Radio & TV

### The BBC World Service

At least 150 million people per year listen to the **BBC World Service**, which provides international news, analysis and information in English and 42 other languages around the world. The BBC remains the best known and most listened to international radio broadcaster in the world. The BBC World Service can be listened in English across the US on AM or FM.

### BBC/PRI/WGBH Radio News Magazine: The World

“**The World**” co-produced by the BBC, PRI (Public Radio International) and WGBH-Radio gives you access to the latest world news, expert analysis, commentary, features, and interviews on issues of the day. The show is broadcast by a number of PRI stations across the region.

### British Inspired Radio Show: "British Accents"

British Accents is on Boston's **WMFO 91.5 FM** every Sunday from 4pm to 6pm. The show radio hosted by David Virr plays old and new Brit pop.

### WGBH Radio Show: "A Celtic Sojourn"

Irishman Brian O'Donovan hosts "**A Celtic Sojourn**" - a weekly exploration of traditional and contemporary music from the Celtic countries and **Lord Barnes at the Residence** England.

### World Soccer Weekly, Boston's WWZN AM 1510

Soccer Weekly, Inc., the producers of the America's #1 Soccer talk show “World Soccer Weekly” announced the addition of Boston's 1510 The Zone to its affiliate line-up. For more information on the show and its distribution in Boston visit:

[www.worldsoccerweekly.com](http://www.worldsoccerweekly.com)

### Televised British Sport in New England

There are a number of sports bars in the New England region that cater to fans of British sports. Both English & Scottish Premier League matches are shown throughout the season as well as international rugby, football, motor sports and cricket. Matches are televised by both **Fox Sports World** and **Setanta**.

*(from the Consulate-General's website)*

## Gordon Brown in the US

The Prime Minister has been creating sizeable carbon footprints as he has shuttled back and forth to America this year. He has been here for talks about the global recession, to address Congress, and to give a foreign policy speech at the Kennedy Library in South Boston. Full texts of both events may be found by going to our website ([www.britcharity.org](http://www.britcharity.org)), clicking on "Latest News", and then scrolling down to the paragraphs describing them. The links to the texts will be found at the end of these paragraphs.



Commenting on the role of Chancellor, he said it was mostly ceremonial, and the Vice-Chancellor did all the work. A former Chancellor, when asked what, then, was the point of having a Chancellor at all, answered that 1) you could not have a Vice-Chancellor if you did not also have a Chancellor, and 2) impotence was assuaged by magnificence. There will always be an Oxford.



**Patten the Magnificent**

## Senator Kennedy

The official announcement 4 March 2009)

Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts is to be made an honorary Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced today in a speech to a joint meeting of Congress.

The award is in recognition of a career during which Senator Kennedy has consistently promoted a closer relationship between the UK and the US.

### Prime Minister Gordon Brown said:

"I hope that you will allow me to single out for special mention today one of your most distinguished Senators, known in every continent and a great friend. Northern Ireland is today at peace, more Americans have health care, more children around the world are going to school, and for all those things we owe a great debt to the life and courage of, Senator Edward Kennedy.

"And so today, having talked to him last night, I want to announce that Her Majesty the Queen has awarded an honorary Knighthood for Sir Edward Kennedy."

## Impotence Assuaged by Magnificence



On the 29<sup>th</sup> of April Lord Patten of Barnes, the Chancellor of Oxford University, came to a tea party in his honour at the Consulate-General's Residence on Beacon Hill. He had come down from Canada and was on his way to New York, in part to talk

about his new book *What Next? Surviving the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, and in part to meet with Marshall Scholars who had chosen Oxford as their UK university.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Barnes is probably best known for having been the 28th and last Governor of Hong Kong, before it was handed back to the Chinese on June 30, 1997, but his career has included other important posts in and out of government. He was elected to parliament in 1979, became Minister for Overseas Development in 1989, and Chairman of the Conservative Party in 1992. In 1999 he was appointed Commissioner for External Affairs in Brussels. In 2005 Chris Patten was both raised to the Peerage and elected Distinguished Honorary Fellow of Massey College in the University.

At the party he was asked if, at age 65, he would seek further office, and he replied that was hard to be effective in government when you were seated in the House of Lords. The important work was almost always done in the Commons.

<sup>1</sup> Founded by an Act of Parliament in 1953, Marshall Scholarships are basically funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. They provide for forty American graduates of American universities.



**Senator Kennedy said:**

"I'm deeply grateful to Her Majesty the Queen and to Prime Minister Brown for this extraordinary honor. I have always prized the opportunity to work with the British government and strengthen and deepen the role of our two countries as leading beacons of democracy in the world. I am proud that I was able to play a part in the decades-long effort to bring peace to Northern Ireland.

"I also think of my ties to Britain that stretch back across the years—from my childhood to the Kennedy Scholars today who come from Britain to study in America. It was from Britain that my oldest brother left for his last mission during World War II. It is in Britain that a portion of land at Runnymede, where the Magna Carta was signed, is now designated as American soil and dedicated to President Kennedy as a gift of the British people.

"So for me, this honor is moving and personal— a reflection not only of my public life, but of things that profoundly matter to me as an individual. I accept this honor in the spirit in which it is given, with a continuing commitment to be a voice for the voiceless and for the shared ideals of freedom and fairness which are so fundamental to the character of our two countries."

**A Media Miracle**

Blackburn, West Lothian, is not the first place that comes to mind when you think of a media miracle. It is an old cotton and coal town, 20 miles west of Edinburgh on the old M8 road, while West Lothian is best known for the absurd West Lothian Question, about which the less said the better. Nor would we expect that a 47-year-old spinster from Blackburn, named Susan Boyle, a woman built, as McCall Smith

would say, along traditional lines, with an equally traditional double chin, and a coiffure in which swifts would kill to nest ... we would not expect, we repeat, that such a person would perform a miracle on Holy Saturday, on a rather tacky amateur hour called *Britain's Got Talent*. But that is what she did.



When she appeared on stage, the judges rolled their eyes and anticipated a bit of fun with their pathetic competitor – competitor 4321, for the record. A bit of a lark on a Saturday night, you might say, and there was a certain amount of sniggering in the cheaper seats. But then this joke contestant opened her mouth and began to sing. The sniggering stopped, immediately, and the applause began. It did not stop until long after she had left the stage.

She sang "I Dreamed a Dream", from *Les Miserables*, a song of yearning, a yearning for a lost love, for an impossible love, of innocence betrayed. A writer for the American magazine *Celebrity Weekly* had this to say:

In our popminded culture so slavishly obsessed with packaging – the right face, the right clothes, the right attitudes, the right Facebook posts – the unpackaged artistic power of the unstyled, un-hip, un-kissed Ms Boyle let me feel for the duration of one blazing showstopping ballad, the meaning of human grace.

A YouTube post read: "I cry because she reminds us to hope, to never lose track of our dreams, to keep putting one foot in front of the other no matter what others say or think. She gives us hope." Hope.

Susan reached the finals of the *Britain's Got Talent* show, which were held on May the 30<sup>th</sup>, but she was to be disappointed. The street dance group, Diversity, made up of three sets of brothers, were, to their huge surprise, voted by the judges to be the winners. It will be they who perform for the Queen, not Susan. That's show biz – a cruel biz sometimes.

Source: The BBC Website



## Miscellaneous

### It Was Like This ...

On Monday and Tuesday, February the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, this year, up to 12" of snow fell on London and all of Southeast England. Boris Johnson admitted that London was not equipped to deal with such a heavy snow fall, and anyway it would be silly to invest in a fleet of snow ploughs that would only be used once in every two decades. So the streets were not ploughed, the busses did not run, the Tube was spasmodic, and the airports were closed. Chaos? – well, not for everyone.



For some Londoners it was a rare opportunity to see their always beautiful city in a new and exhilarating dimension. For one thing, it was silent. No traffic! Even the sound of the occasional emergency vehicle was muffled. It was even too cold for dogs to get out and bark. London may not be the cleanest of all capital cities, but now it was sparkling and immaculate in its coat of new snow.

Walkers, who were bold enough to go out and have a look, found themselves standing in awe at the dazzling miracle before them. And what was that person doing, just down the street? Had he not seen the dome of Saint Paul's before? Why do people weep in the presence of overwhelming beauty? For many this morning after the storm was an epiphany. So this is what the poets and mystics had meant when they wrote about transcendence.

### LONDON SNOW

When men were all asleep the snow came flying,  
 In large white flakes falling on the city brown,  
 Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,  
 Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;  
 Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing;  
 Lazily and incessantly floating down and down;  
 Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;  
 Hiding difference, making unevenness even,  
 Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.  
 All night it fell, and when full inches seven  
 It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,  
 The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;  
 And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness  
 Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:  
 The eye marveled - marveled at the dazzling  
 whiteness;  
 The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air;  
 No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,  
 And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.  
 Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling;  
 They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze  
 Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snow-  
 balling;  
 Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees;  
 Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,  
 "O look at the trees!" they cried. "O look at the trees!"  
 With lessened load, a few carts creak and blunder,  
 Following along the white deserted way,  
 A country company long dispersed asunder:  
 When now already the sun, in pale display  
 Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below  
 His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.  
 For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow;  
 And trains of somber men, past tale and number,  
 Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go:  
 But even for them awhile no cares encumber  
 Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken,  
 The daily thoughts of labor and sorrow slumber  
 At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the  
 charm they have broken.

*Robert Bridges, OM  
 1844-1930  
 Poet Laureate 1913-1930*

**THE BRITISH CHARITABLE SOCIETY**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**  
**The British Consulate**  
**May 28, 2009**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Charles Platt, President, who welcomed not only BCS members, but the special guests from British Airways, The Irish Immigration Centre, The Charitable Irish Society, The Scots Charitable Society, The American Red Cross, The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and The Massachusetts Port Authority.

1. Minutes of Annual Meeting of May 22, 2008

It was voted to waive the reading of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of May 22, 2008.

2. Treasurer's Report

Ms. K. Tunsley, Treasurer, presented the report to the meeting. Ms. Tunsley distributed copies of the Financial Statements as audited by Lloyd B. McManus, CPA. She mentioned that, as with many associations last year, we have suffered some losses; however, things are looking more favorable at this time. The portfolio of the Society is presently being reviewed. Ms. Tunsley also explained the distribution of our monies, a breakdown of which is in the report. The current economic situation has increased the requests for our assistance, with the result that the gap has widened between what we pay out and what we earn, which we are striving to end with our various fundraising efforts throughout the year. There were no questions from the attendees, and the report was accepted. A copy is attached.

3. Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of Officers

The report of the nominating committee was given by Mrs. T. Hunt, who presented the following nominees for the 2009/2010 year:

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

3. Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of Officers, continued

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

Mr. Steven Clark  
Mr. Christopher Hall  
Ms. Jane Ollerhead  
Dr. Bruce Rogers  
Ms. Emma Wicks

The following were nominated for a one-year term:

Mr. Michael Dawson  
Mr. Thomas Keown

Executive Committee members continuing their terms are:

Mr. Guy Bennett  
Ms. Jacqueline Greenlaw

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

#### 4. President's Report

Mr. Platt acknowledged the graciousness of Her Majesty's Consul General, Dr. Philip Budden, and his staff, particularly Ms. Jacqueline Greenlaw, for the hospitality shown to us this evening.

Mr. Platt introduced the members of the Executive Committee and asked each one to stand.

He thanked two Committee members who will not be continuing their terms, Ms. Jan Carrigan and Ms. Valerie Nelson.

Ms. Jane Ollerhead, who will continue as a member of the Executive Committee, has relinquished the duties of Executive Secretary, and Ms. Susan Dugdale, in addition to her duties as Vice President, will serve as Executive Secretary. Mr. Platt thanked Ms. Ollerhead for her service and outlined briefly the sensitive nature of the Executive Secretary's position; receiving the requests and dealing with the emotions involved.

Mr. Platt also thanked Peggy Hunter for her work as Recording Secretary.

There were several social events during the past year—a summertime Garden Party in Manchester, which raised substantial funds. A Christmas Party at the Residence with Christmas fare and carols led by some singers from the British School, and a curry night in Waltham, the date of which had to be rescheduled due to snow, which affected the attendance.

Upcoming social events include the Football Association Cup Final at the British Beer Company in Walpole on Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup>. The admission will include full breakfast and live TV of the game.

There will be a summer garden party on August 1<sup>st</sup> at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Steven Clark, and there will be a party at The Residence to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the house. (Date to be announced.)

In closing, and asking for support, Mr. Platt gave a brief synopsis of our cases—we are slowly reducing our monthly stipend recipients but special cases are still coming. These requests range from simple, such as mortgage payment or utility bills, to the very complex. In some instances the assistance is not always financial. Thanks to Mr. Clark we were able to help a nineteen-year-old with Immigration paperwork. Mr. Platt again asked for continued support through the Annual Appeal and the fundraising activities. He mentioned that membership forms were available in the lobby.

#### 5. Mr. Joseph Pickerill

After closing his report, Mr. Platt introduced Mr. Joseph Pickerill, the Political Press and Public Affairs Officer of the Consulate, and who has been with the FCO for three years.



Prior to this assignment he was in the Cabinet Office, working on security issues post 9/11.

Mr. Pickerill also welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained what he does at the Consulate; mainly in three categories, Economy, Conflict and what he termed “Climate.” He delighted the audience with most interesting details of his tenure and assignments since coming to Boston.

#### 6. Address by Mr. Marcus Wraight

The meeting was fortunate to have as guest speaker, Mr. Marcus Wraight, formerly of the BBC, who was introduced by Mr. Pickerill. Mr. Wraight’s thirteen years of BBC experiences included interviews with countless famous persons, many of whose names were readily familiar. His talk was entertaining and totally fascinating, and was enjoyed by all. He closed by offering any assistance to the BCS that he can provide.

Mr. Pickerill closed the meeting at 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Hunter, Recording Secretary

Readers may have noticed that this newsletter has been evolving over the last few years, and we welcome comments. It is pleasanter to receive orchids than to receive onions, but sometimes the onions can be more useful.

We are to some extent guided by the valuable piece of advice to designers of websites, who want to attract visitors to their sites, namely “Make it interesting!”

So you will see some non-BCS items included in these pages – typically British things, whatever that means, that may elicit a smile of recognition, or a twinge of nostalgia. Or pride, e.g. the Beijing Olympics.

Whatever your thoughts and feelings, please do share them with us. We would genuinely like to hear from you. And if the Muse moved you to submit an article for the next issue, that would be especially welcome.

The Editor is Michael Dawson, and he can be reached by email ([michael.dawson@verizon.net](mailto:michael.dawson@verizon.net)), or by ringing 617-492-9588.