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## Letter from the President



The British Charitable Society is 194 years old. many changes in that time. When I first Executive Committee about 20 years ago, the required annual distributions to other charities. mid-90s under Tim Hunt's leadership. Over the able to re-direct the focus of our relief efforts to the year 2000 we have distributed over families in the six New England states.

Change can be good. Organizations that don't evolve to meet the changing needs of their clients or their members are likely to wither and die. But change can also bring challenges. The challenge the Society faces today is that we have become almost too successful. We are now well-known in the New England states as a place to turn to when times get tough, where needed relief can be swiftly delivered. Like me, many members of the Society are immigrants, some of long-standing, some more recent. Along with the tremendous opportunities for success that this country offers, comes the opportunity for failure. We are not Western Europe. We do not provide the same kinds of social support systems that are available to people who live there. When failure happens, the British Charitable Society has often been there to help.

[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**  
**Jacqueline Greenlaw**  
**Robert Groom, OBE (Past President)**  
**Chris Hall, Webmaster**  
**Timothy J. Hunt, MBE (Past President)**  
**Tomas Keown**  
**Becky Liley**  
**Geoff Mullis (Past President)**  
**Bruce Lee Rogers**  
**Emma Wicks**

### Other

**Michael Dawson – Charter Editor**  
**Simon Sherrington - Webmaster**

A consequence of our success has been the problem of limited resources, both financial and human. We simply do not have the endowment to sustain the level of relief that we have been called upon to provide the last few years. We also, despite the extraordinary efforts of many, do not have the human resources to fill the gap. We need to evolve. If we are to continue our mission, we need a different business model.

The Memorandum that went out with the Notice of the Annual General Meeting spoke of "financial sustainability". Back in the 1990s, when financial markets were routinely delivering annual returns in the mid teens, a charitable society could afford to spend 7 or 8% of its endowment and still grow. Over the last ten years, the stock market has returned zero but we are still required to pay out 5% of our assets to maintain our charitable status. That fact alone presents challenges.

Fortunately, we have some energetic Executive Committee members who have taken on this task of guiding the Society's evolution. We need to develop relationships with a range of people, from corporate members who will bring expertise and knowledge to our board that we currently don't have,

*(continued overleaf)*

to new members who will bring a different energy and perspective. At the same time, we will continue to rely on our current members for their support and wisdom. And membership should be a two-way street. If members feel that they are getting something from the Society as well as giving to it, the relationship is strengthened. One way in which that benefit can be felt is by strengthening the connections, not just between the members and the Society but between our members themselves. The Guest Speaker at the Reception, John Shannon, Executive Director of the St. George's Society of New York, spoke about how the St George's Society has evolved along just these lines. *The text of his address may be found in Appendix A at the end of this newsletter.*

I am happy to announce that we have already lined up our first Corporate Members, and that some individual Life Members have indicated their intentions to convert to annual membership. We have an exciting program of events for all ranges of members' tastes and pockets planned for each month from September to December, and details will be sent out over the summer. In addition, we want to hear from you about what you like and don't like, so we will be sending out a questionnaire to all members. In other words, the key to our success will be our members, new and old. We are looking for ways to enhance our relationship with you.

The specific change to the By-Laws for which approval of the membership was required is found in Article 4 (see below). At present, the By-Laws provide that members are elected for life for a one-time payment of \$45. The new language gives the Executive Committee the ability to establish membership levels and the annual dues associated with each level. A couple of points to bear in mind: the Executive Committee is elected by (and therefore answerable to) the members at the AGM. The new By-Law does not affect the status of existing members in any way unless they choose to place themselves under the new annual membership system.

#### **New Item 4 of the By-Laws Approved by Vote of Members at The Annual General Meeting, 3 June 2010**

##### **Levels of Membership and Dues**

1. The Executive Committee shall establish levels of membership and an annual fee for each level from time to time.
2. Each person elected to membership shall be entitled to annually select a particular level of membership and shall pay the annual dues established for such level. The first payment shall accompany the application.
3. Honorary members shall be exempt from dues.

*Charles Platt*

##### **Annual General Meeting – Summary**

- In 2009, 51 applications help were received; 29 were accepted.
- 50% came from Connecticut; 21% from Massachusetts.
- \$67,000 was paid out in relief to individuals.
- The by-laws were changed to allow different levels of membership (Item 4 above)
- There was one change in members on the Executive Committee as Becky Liley was elected to it.

## Case History



**Susan Dugdale**

March 2005, as it took that long to get K3 and K4 visas. They came back to the US and settled with good jobs in Southbridge MA.

The marriage began to break down in 2006, with her husband becoming violent and controlling and occasionally putting herself and the children in dangerous situations. She started divorce proceedings which were eventually finalized in 2008. After that the husband disappeared. He is not the father of either of the 2 children.

Ms. W. was advised by her divorce lawyer that she would be able to remain in the US and so applied for a visa Form I – 360 (?) which is supported by the Violence Against Women Act. This application however triggered a revocation of her then current visa whilst her case was pending. She has been unable to work since.

She married again in January 2010. Her new husband however lost his job in late January and hasn't been able to find work since. They are in some trouble financially and she legally as she has no status. She has no one here to help her and they are beginning to be swamped by mounting debts.

They were 2 months behind with their rent. And she had carried a debt on from her previous marriage with the electricity company that amounted to \$450.38, although she has negotiated a payment plan of \$42 per month to keep it alive. They have a broken car which they cannot use, which has an estimate of \$750. This would give her husband mobility to look further afield for work.

Her 17 year old daughter is due to graduate from High School this summer. Without legal status she can't apply for college. The 9 year old is in school and has no problems.

She receives \$618.00 per month from MDTA and \$ 520 per month for food stamps. Her husband who is only recently unemployed receives nothing officially and is making his contribution to the household from savings, which of course are rapidly depleting.

In the short term the BCS paid off 2 months' rent and the outstanding electricity bill.

When estimates for the car repairs were verified, the BCS also paid to have them carried out and this resulted in the husband being able to chase jobs further afield.

Meanwhile a member of the Executive Committee, who happens to be a very talented Immigration Lawyer, looked through her paperwork and made some enquiries about how she should proceed. This resulted in an introduction to an immigration expert who offered to take her case pro bono. With correct status and the ability to work, this family will be able to move forward and resettle themselves.

*Susan Dugdale*

## Obituaries

### Dr. Edward Willett



WILLETT, Dr. Edward 86, of Industry, Maine, formerly of Stoneham, died on the one year anniversary of his wife Frances, Jan. 27, 2010 at his home. He was born in Brockton, July 5, 1923, the only son of Melvin and Ruby (Tarbell) Willett, attended Arlington schools and graduated from Northeastern University with his B.S. and from Harvard University with his M.A. and Ph.D. On June 26, 1948, married Frances Phillips at the Calvary Methodist Church in Arlington. He was a professor (emeritus) of Finance at Northeastern from 1947-1985 and was President of Willett Institute.

A long-time resident of Stoneham, he and his wife had a summer home in Madison, NH and wintered on Sanibel Island, FL. He will be remembered for his quick wit, compassion and a generous soul. Survived by his loving daughters, Sara Wilk and her husband Dennis of Industry, ME and Jane Gunn and her husband Thomas of North Andover.

Published in The Boston Globe

### Len Elborn

We regret report that notice has been received of the death of Len Elborn (R.A.F. Air Crew Reserve and Royal Artillery), a long time member of the British Officers Club of New England. Len last lived in Kingston, Rhode Island.

As we go to press, no further details are available.

### New Executive Committee Member

Becky Liley

### New Society Members

Welcome to:

Lewis Allen of Prides Crossing, MA  
Gurdeep Bhogal of Marblehead, MA  
Janet and Laurence Macdonald of Belmont, MA  
William Evans of Boston, MA

## From Our Consular Correspondent

### There was a volcano here too

Phew.....!

As a result of the Icelandic volcano ash and disruptions to flights, I have many British nationals stranded in Boston. No major emergencies yet and I've been able to manage those families needing our assistance - so far. However, I just wonder whether any of you would be willing to help out - if needed. It might be along the lines of visiting hotels, assisting with provisions or transporting those in need of medical assistance to clinics/hospitals etc.

We have been approached by many kind British ex-pats, offering accommodation. Our suggestion is that they post such offers on Craig's List, or similar sites.

Thanks all.

## It's a New Day



**David Cameron “kisses hands” with the Queen**

The first the thing a new Prime Minister does after being elected is to drive over to Buckingham Palace to kiss hands with the Queen, and to get her approval. This year Cameron's silver Jaguar just followed the black limousine of Gordon Brown, who had gone to say Good-bye. The Queen does not choose her Prime Minister, but her influence becomes more and more important the more uncertainty there is about the outcome of the election. (Think what her role might have been in the Bush-Gore close call in the 2008 election!).

Part of the Conservatives' arrangement with the Liberal-Democrats was that their leader, Nick Clegg, should be Deputy Prime Minister, but the other three senior cabinet members are all Conservatives (two men; one woman). Of the 18 sub-senior cabinet ministers, four are liberal-democrats, all men. among the fourteen conservatives, three are women.

Of the senior cabinet ministers, William Hague, the Foreign Secretary, is probably of greatest interest to our readers. He was in Washington three days after the coalition team was finalized, and there was no question in our mind that, when he was being interviewed, he regularly had the better of the exchanges.

Hague's name will be familiar to many because he was Tory leader himself from 1997 to 2001, and shadow Foreign Secretary until the election. As Foreign Secretary he has said he is determined “to put in place a distinctive British foreign policy”, and “Afghanistan is a priority”.



**William Hague**

## And a New Charter

Yes it is. A new Editor, new guidance from a new Executive Committee, and - Bless my soul !—what happened to all the hard copy which had choked our offices before flying off to tell our membership all about everything, and, we hope entertain them. Gone, all gone.

The thing was that, aside from the cost of printing the newsletter, stuffing them in envelopes, putting stamps and labels on the envelopes, and taking them to the Post Office all cost us some \$250 an issue, or \$750 a year. So-o-o we downsized, and now everything goes on our website. Besides, that is what the Saint George's Society does down in New York with their *ne plus ultra* Industry Leader, the E-Newsletter. So that's that. There will still be a few hard copy Charters about, as there will always be a few red double-decker busses chugging along the old routes. Ten hard copy Charters will still go to adorn the Consulate's waiting-room. And one each will go to new members, but the day of the hard copy is basically over. However there is still a story to tell about how one of Boston biggest financial behemoths – much too big to fail – printed our little newsletter for us year after year. Thank you very much indeed!

## Thai One On! Tuesday April 27th 2010

### [Patou Thai Restaurant](#)

69 Leonard Street  
Belmont 6:30 pm

Charles Platt on our Thai evening: Many thanks to Kathy for organizing such a delicious and fun dinner last night. Despite the weather, almost 40 people showed up to enjoy great appetizers and an excellent Thai dinner, not to mention good company. There were about half a dozen non-members in attendance as well as many first-timers, so I think we spread the word to some new friends and hope to see some of them at either the AGM in June or other future events.

Thanks very much, Kathy.

Charles Platt

## Our Members Write

### **Cooking in the Good Old Days ... and Now** **From Guy Bennett (Member of the Executive Committee)**

Children always moan and groan when their fathers start stories with "when I was a boy....." However, bear with me.

For those of us who spent our childhood in the 1960s and 1970s, we encountered the hangover from our parents' post-war experience. Those values entailed thrift, eschewed waste ("finish what is on your plate"), courteous manners and respect for elders. The most advanced electronic item was the black & white television. I can see my children with tears in their eyes - as if! - at the hardships we endured: no laptops, iPods, cell phones, calculators, etc.

Sunday was a day of rest, when few shops were open and little sport happened, apart from the Sunday morning football (soccer) for the philistines. For the majority, a regular Sunday involved church in the morning, a roast for lunch, tea in late afternoon and then the BBC had a reputation for quality drama in the evening.

A roast lunch normally included guests (home or away), either family or friends. They rarely mixed! This was often the main social event of the week for the family as a whole. The old motto, "The family that eats together, stays together" applied.

Not that it mattered that I had a working mother but Monday's evening meal was using up leftovers from the weekend. Hence, older readers well recall "bubble & squeak," for example. Given my family had colonial experience in India, a "Ruby Murray" (curry) was regular Monday evening fare.

Times are no longer as tough but we have just the recipe for you. Or, rather, Jane Kelly does. Jane has been a member of the BCS for several years. More recently, she has established a global cookery website, on which you can search an index of recipes in your own cookbooks.

Everyone has a bookshelf of cookbooks, many of which are rarely touched. Jane has alighted on a way of optimising your collection. For a small fee or by signing up for a 30-day free trial, you can gain access to her website, [www.eatyourbooks.com](http://www.eatyourbooks.com), which covers over 100,000 cook books and 260,000 recipes. Do you ever look in the fridge at disparate ingredients, when it is snowing outside and cold, and think, "what the hell am I going to do with this lot?" And how to use leftovers from Thanksgiving and Christmas? Equally, Jane's website will have many ideas for how to solve the thorny issue of what to serve at your next dinner party.

### **My Friend, Mr Wells, From Bristol, U K. (from Michael Wynne-Willson, member from Dedham)**

I may have told you, previously, that my dad was nuts about cars...just about all English ones and those built abroad. His favorite, however, was a Chrysler and he and three other Chrysler enthusiasts unknown to each other in the U K, were the first to import 4-seater convertible ones from the U S. These were complete with 'running boards' on both sides with a small, auxiliary, petrol tank thereon, wooden-spoked wheels, a spare tire on the back and smart, raised, silver wings on the 'bonnet'. (Engine cover as it was known then.) All very dashing, I thought, in 1936!

I remember, as if it was yesterday, dad driving the family, my mum, my sister Betty and me, in this car to the dealership, 18 miles away from home in Bristol, to have its annual check-up. When we arrived, he asked to speak to Mr. Wells, the Service Manager, as he was always so helpful and attentive, not to mention efficient. Additionally, he was a charming, hyper and incredibly loquacious Jewish gentleman with a pronounced accent to match. In fact, I had never heard anything like it in my sheltered life and, nasty little brat that I was, used to try to mimic him on leaving his garage.

On one such occasion, he really outdid himself and I can remember his words verbatim. Having checked the car, he came rushing out of his office...he always rushed...to us in the waiting room and proclaimed at the very top of his voice:

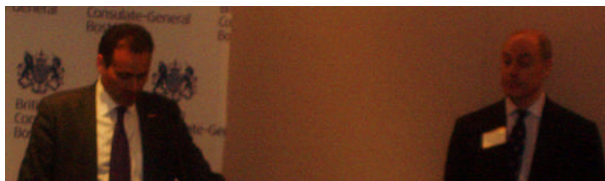
“Major Vynne-Villson, Major Vynne-Villson! I am Mr. Vells and vithout a doubt your vindshield viper von't vork!”

I am ashamed to say that my crack-up was both immediate and total! Dad was anything but pleased with me on the way home, but Mr. Wells had been a true gentleman and had laughed with me when he gathered what had set me off. I didn't say anything at the time, but dad managed, quite well, to cover his amusement, too!

This episode, actually, helped me considerably because, not too long afterwards, my own English accent...quite acute then...was a continual butt of jokes made by the majority of my classmates when I got to St. George's School in Newport, R I, for my year there!

Michael W-W. Ex 'Before I Forget'.

## Appendix A



**The C-G (left) introduces John Shannon (right)**

### Text of John Shannon's Address

Consul-General, President Platt, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for inviting me to speak here today. It's an honour to meet you as well as a privilege to be offered the opportunity to tell you about the Society.

I hope this is the beginning of a new friendship and that we shall be in closer touch from now on and perhaps exchange ideas and share as both our organisations contend with their operating environments.

I was delighted to get a phone call from Susan Dugdale last year and to learn from her about the British Charitable Society. Until then I had known only of its existence. When Susan told me about the organisation and where it is at, I had the idea to recommend that she contact my friend Lewis Allen. She did and I am glad that he has become involved in the BCS as a result.

Lewis suggested that I give you a brief description of St. George's Society of New York, particularly how it operates and what things have been going on there lately.

To begin with the beginning, the Society was founded in 1770. We know this from newspaper accounts of the time, which relate that the Sons of St. George held a banquet to celebrate St. George's Day at local taverns of the day for several years. This was an informal association, I suspect; although it may have been a sort of club, with officers and members. The news reports list in details all the people who were there – described as “the English gentlemen, and the descendants of English parents” – and how many roasts were drunk. After the Revolution, in 1786, a new Society was constituted called the Society of St. George. This was changed in 1824 to the name we have today.



**Lewis Allen**

The 1786 structure was that of an association of members with a charitable purpose, which has been maintained. When it was founded, charity was private and people looked after their own. There was no government welfare and New York's English, Irish, Jews, Scottish, Dutch, German, Huguenots, Catholics, Jews and other groups took care of themselves. If you were in trouble, you naturally looked to your family or your people for help.

This is why we have in New York a St. George's, a St. Andrew's Society, a St. Patrick's Society, and a St. David's Society. All were formed to aid fellow countrymen – meaning from the same country – in need. The interesting thing is to compare their trajectories. Today, St. George's is the only one of the four spending a significant sum on stipends and emergency grants, around three quarters of a million when overhead is factored in. Our New York Scottish, Irish and Welsh sister societies have developed different forms of charities or focuses.

St. George's has a long and varied history. It thrived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the British Association. Its members included social figures and business men, which led it to take on the role of an informal Chamber of Commerce. Distinguished visitors from Great Britain, including Edward VII when Prince of Wales, were



guests of the Society when they visited New York City. The Society was instrumental in the development of St. Luke's Hospital (too long and obscure a story for here but a big deal at the time), the Anglo-American Free Church of St. George the Martyr (a Free Church for poor people who could not afford pew rents), and even the founding of a St. George's cricket Club in the 1830s.

However by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the organisation had become marginalised. This was partly because so much had changed. People looked to the state for help, not their people. St. George's continued to do its work but its relevance was diminished while its membership was decreasing and aging.

From inception to 1988 the Society had been all male. It was due to then President Colton Wagner's vision and persuasiveness, and after many discussions, that the Society's members voted in 1988 to amend its Constitution and admit women into membership. I see that as a major turning point in the Society's revival. One immediate result was a jump in the membership by one third, many of the new members being wives of existing members.

From here on I can speak from personal knowledge. Between 1988 and 1994 the Society's managers examined how the Society operated. It was found that we were overdrawing our capital to fund operations.

A Finance Committee was set up to examine ways to reform the traditional way of operating. A policy was adopted not to draw more than 5% of a rolling three-year value of the endowment. At the suggestion of our auditor, an application was made to the IRS to recognise the Society as a private operating foundation, a relatively rare status, and difficult to obtain, the main benefit of which is that it exempts the Society from all taxes, including the excise tax. At that time our Investment Committee, then constituted by Society members acting in a volunteer capacity, started to liquidate equity positions from decades before, thereby realising significant capital gains, and redeploy the assets. In that same period we received a \$600,000 bequest.

Next was the retirement of my predecessor and my arrival at the Society in 1994. I was not part of a grand plan, it just happened that the previous almoner turned 70 and decided to retire. I was already working there in a part-time capacity, trying to figure out what I wanted to be in life, and was encouraged to apply for the position of almoner, which I did. After interviewing a number of other candidates, the Board named me almoner with starting on 1 January 1995.

At that time the Society had around 550 members, life and annual. The average age was probably well over 60. There were no young members. The organisation was catering to its crowd, but the crowd had no future.

At the time I became almoner in 2005, Bill Shepherd began his term of office as President. Bill was great. He had just retired himself as Chairman of Horizon Bancorp, part of Morgan Chase. His parents were English, he has a passion for England, but he is American and a good businessman. He saw that the organisation needed to continue to transform itself, particularly the membership.

We started producing more social functions. Before that time we did maybe five or six a year, including the annual St. George's Day dinner dance. That event was viewed as an obligation: it had to be done, and it was enough if it broke even. Attendance was around 150.

When I saw the 1994 results of the dinner – a \$1,700 profit – I told Bill that as long as we were killing ourselves to put on a black tie dinner, we might as well make some real money. He agreed and that set the dinner dance, later grandly named the English Ball, onto a remarkable course.



**BRITISH AIRWAYS**  
Be there face-to-face

An award was created in 1996 – the Medal of Honour – to be given to a transatlantic notable. A Committee was established, made up of some of our more prominent members, to identify and procure honorees who would hopefully attract corporate sponsors. Today we are disappointed if the ball fails to make six figures; and our record is \$350,000, thanks to that year's medalist, Sir Howard Stringer of SONY. Last month we honoured Mark Pigott, the Chairman and CEO of Paccar Inc., maker of Kenworth, Peterbilt and DAF trucks. (Sponsorship is easier than charitable donations).

We increased the frequency of social events, from 5 or 6 to 20 a year, taking care, however, to ensure that they scored on three counts: they had to have British content, be held in an attractive venue, and be good value. And of course they had to make money.

Another change is that we hardly ever produce mailed invitations. They're all emailed, which is faster and cheaper. We also set up a website in 1995-6, thanks to a member who donates his time and service. We installed a credit card terminal in 2000.

As Lewis well knows, there is a method to organising social events. New York is a busy place, with many groups hosting events every night of the year. We determined that our crowd – members and potential members – like England and want to be part of something English in New York. So we made ourselves as attractive as possible by featuring British speakers: authors, public figures, diplomats. Or British events, like Trafalgar or the Queen's birthday. All these events serve two purposes: to cater to existing members; and to be a gateway for new members. Today membership is now over 850 and it seems obvious that we should aim for 1,000. If we pass that number, however, we still will not be where we were in the 1940s when membership was over 1500.

I should add that another thing Bill Shepherd and I decided was to raise the dues to be in line with those of other societies. Currently basic annual individual dues are \$100. (Juniors, clergy, diplomats and non-residents pay \$60). By comparison Colonial Wars charges \$125; and The Pilgrims charges \$150. Maybe it's time for another raise.

More recently we introduced different and higher prices for couples, patron memberships, and joint patron memberships. Life dues were raised dramatically, but in fact are not actively offered anymore since they tend not to benefit the Society over time.

Under Natalie Pray's presidency (2005 & 2006) an Advisory Council was established, made up of a number of our medalists, including Sir Dennis Weatherstone, late Chairman of JP Morgan, and Martin Sullivan, former CEO of AIG. This group meets twice a year, in New York and in London, and has evolved into a good source of medalists from the corporate world.

At the same time, Natalie launched a campaign to raise \$5 million for the endowment, with which to fund a full-time social worker (until then it had been a three day position), create a scholarship programme; and increase support to our traditional beneficiaries: elderly or disabled British or Commonwealth people living in the New York area. The campaign raised pledges and gifts totaling \$2.8 million before the recent economic meltdown. Mark Pigott, who is a big education supporter, personally funded the first year of scholarships (\$50,000), we hired a full-time social worker, and we increased the number of beneficiaries from 70 to 75.



In the late 1990s, I recommend that the Society apply to the College of Arms in London for a devizal of armorial bearings. This would confirm the organisation's English roots, gain us a kind of indirect royal approbation (since arms are granted under Royal Authority) and put us in a very small group in New York, if not America, who have an authentic English coats of arms. In the end, the devizal, with shield, crest, supporters, banner and badge, cost \$17,000, but I am proud to add that members of the Board funded the entire project. The arms were conferred in 2000.

Parenthetically, it was interesting to observe that a few years later the St Andrew's Society in New York State applied for arms from the Court of the Lord Lyon in Scotland.

In 2002, we scored another royal coup when HRH the Duke of Gloucester agreed to become the Society's Patron. The Duke has visited us in New York on four occasions, and it appears that he and his advisors are pleased with the association. We are now planning another visit in December.

The British Consulate in New York is a great friend of the Society. For many decades, if not a century or more, the serving Consul-General has also been the Society's Honorary President, currently Sir Alan Collins. (There have been CGs who served as the real President, but that was a long time ago.)

### **Future ...**

A younger membership is a top goal. In the last couple of years, during Victor Stewart's presidency, we started a couple of new initiatives. One is our sporting legends dinners – produced in partnership with a British charity called Sparks. Sparks enlists British sports stars to raise funds to fund research into cures for children's diseases.

One of our Board members, Richard Sexton, who is British, had the idea to team up with Sparks in New York to produce fundraising events. They would provide the stars; we would provide the logistics on the ground. These athletes draw an amazing crowd of crowd of 30-something Brits working in New York. They have jobs and money to spend on tickets and auctions. These dinners are popular and realise surprising sums for both charities. The challenge, however, is to get the attendees to join the Society. Simply stated, young people are not that interested in joining organisations. That is not their way of socialising.

We hope that another source of members will come from the Commonwealth. While half our beneficiaries are from the UK, the other half is from the Commonwealth countries – mainly Caribbean. We spend a lot of money on beneficiaries from the Islands – we think there are people there, or from there living in the US, who would like to support us.

At its April Board meeting the Directors approved the creation of another award, the Commonwealth medal, to be *Awarded for exemplary service by a member of the British Commonwealth in promoting cultural understanding and achievement among Commonwealth nations*. Nominations have been solicited from Caricom consuls-general in New York and we hope now to make presentations at a ceremony in early December, with the Duke of Gloucester doing the honours.

I hope some of this narrative has been useful and that I have not exhausted you with too much random information. My goal was to describe where we found ourselves 15 to 20 years ago, what we did to set a different course, and where we are today. We did what we needed to do if the organisation was going to not just survive, but grow and expand.

We had certain advantages: a long existence, a British “brand” and cash in the bank which allowed us to try new things without threatening our very existence. We also had the right balance of personalities on the Board who saw the need to transform the Society.

That said, change was necessarily incremental rather than instantaneous: we couldn't just alienate the bulk of the members, who are loyal supporters and presumably liked the Society as it was.

Bill Shepherd told me once, if you make a change after a while people start thinking it was always that way.

## Appendix B

### Minutes of Annual General Meeting, 3 June 2010

THE BRITISH CHARITABLE SOCIETY  
Annual General Meeting  
The British Consulate  
June 3, 2010



**Peggy Hunter**  
**Recording Secretary**

Pursuant to the notice sent to all members, the Annual Meeting of the British Charitable Society was held on Thursday, June 3, 2010, at 4:30 p.m. at the British Consulate, One Broadway, Cambridge. Forty members were in attendance. Mr. Charles Platt, President, presided, and Margaret Hunter kept these minutes.

#### 1. Introductions

Mr. Platt welcomed attendees and expressed appreciation to Dr. Phil Budden, HM Consul-General, for hosting the meeting at the Consulate.

#### 2. The Minutes of Annual Meeting of May 28, 2009, were accepted.

#### 3. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Mr. Platt, in the absence of the Treasurer, Ms. K. Tunsley. A copy of the report is attached, but to summarize, total expenses were \$74,920, and of that \$67,000

represented relief to individuals. Mr. Platt advised that financial reports are available for anyone requesting them. The report was accepted.

#### 4. Executive Secretary's Report

Ms. Dugdale give a brief outline of the 2009 relief activities. Applications were received from fifty-one individuals, and twenty-nine were accepted. She noted that an interesting breakdown is that 50 per cent came from the state of Connecticut, through the 2-1-1 system. 21 per cent came from Massachusetts and the balance from the remaining New England states. Ms. Dugdale felt we have to create a little more awareness in those states with so few inquiries, and one of our aims for 2010 will be to work more closely with call centers in northern New England and Rhode Island.

#### Executive Secretary's Report

The \$67,000 in relief varies enormously, and Ms. Dugdale offered examples - \$22,000 was spent between June and August of last year. A somewhat unusual occurrence—there were three crisis transportation situations. BCS paid for car repairs for an applicant so this individual could travel to work, on the second request for car repairs we worked with the Charitable Irish to split the

cost, and the third very sad case was that of a Scot who was about to die. It was his wish to die in Scotland, and with cooperation from the Scots Charitable Society he was flown to Glasgow.

#### 5. Recording Secretary's Report

Ms. Hunter advised that in the past year we have welcomed eighteen new members into the Society.

She also reported that in compliance with our tax-free status, all BCS records through 2008 have been archived with the New England Genealogical Society.

#### 6. Nominating Committee Report

Ms. Jane Hunt, on behalf of the nominating committee of Mr. P. Dugdale, Ms. Tracy Wilmot, and herself, presented the following nominees for the 2010/2011 year:

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

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

Mr. Steven Clark  
 Mr. C. Hall  
 Mr. Tim Hunt  
 Ms. Becky Liley  
 Dr. Bruce Rogers

After a motion was made and seconded, the candidates were elected.

#### 7. President's Report

Mr. Platt again expressed his thanks to the Consul-General for his hospitality and expressed his gratitude to the members of the Executive Committee. Three Committee members will not be continuing their terms, and they are Ms. J. Ollerhead, Mr. T. Keown, and Mr. M. Dawson. Mr. Platt thanked them for their services, particularly Mr. Dawson, who writes the BCS publication "Charter." He also thanked the Officers of the Society: Ms. Dugdale, Ms. Tunsley, and Ms. Hunter for their efforts and contributions.

He mentioned the fundraising activities of the past year, which included the Garden Party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Steven Clark, the dinner at the Thai Restaurant, and the highlight of the past year - the Evening at The Residence.

Mr. Platt acknowledged the special efforts of Mr. Clark, who was instrumental in obtaining a Green Card for a young English lady on Cape Cod who is now able to apply for a job.

Mr. Platt reviewed the stipendiary relief payments, mentioning we have been able to reduce these to two individuals, one of whom is the widow of an RAF fighter pilot.

## 8. Bylaw Changes

In opening the discussion on the proposed bylaw changes, Mr. Platt advised the Society is now 194 years old. Since the year 2000 we have distributed 70,000, which has brought challenges. We have become almost too successful; we are now known in the New England states as an organization of caring people, but a casualty of our success has been our limited resources. We do not have the endowment to fill all the requests. In view of these problems we have made a new business plan. Mr. Platt reviewed the financial status of the past five years – stressing the need for new energy and ideas. He felt we should strengthen the ties between our members. He was happy to announce we have already lined up one corporate member.

BCS plans for the upcoming season will be sent out throughout the summer months. The key to success will be our members, new and old.

Mr. Platt reviewed the articles submitted with the notice to the members, copies of which are attached. He asked for questions. Mr. Hunt remarked he felt this is a good start. Mr. Bennett suggested rather than a yearly dues fee, perhaps we could go on the basis of monthly dues, such as the plan used by WGBH. In accordance with 501C we are eligible for matching funds. Discussion followed.

The publication of the names of the donors was discussed, including those who might wish to be anonymous.

All three proposals were accepted and voted on accordingly.

## 9. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Hunter

## Appendix C Epilogue - An Anniversary of Sorts

# What Say the Reeds at Runnymede?

*A poem commemorating the signing of Magna Carta, Runnymede, Surrey, June 15, 1215*



**Water Meadows Looking  
Towards Runnymede**

At Runnymede, at Runnymede,  
What say the reeds at Runnymede?  
The lissom reeds that give and take,  
That bend so far, but never break,  
They keep the sleepy Thames awake  
With tales of John at Runnymede.

At Runnymede, at Runnymede,  
Oh, hear the reeds at Runnymede:  
You musn't sell, delay, deny,  
A freeman's right or liberty.  
It wakes the stubborn Englishry,  
We saw 'em roused at Runnymede!

When through our ranks the Barons came,  
With little thought of praise or blame,  
But resolute to play the game,  
They lumbered up to Runnymede;  
And there they launched in solid line  
The first attack on Right Divine,  
The curt uncompromising "Sign!"  
They settled John at Runnymede.

At Runnymede, at Runnymede,  
Your rights were won at Runnymede!  
No freeman shall be fined or bound,  
Or dispossessed of freehold ground,  
Except by lawful judgment found  
And passed upon him by his peers.  
Forget not, after all these years,  
The Charter signed at Runnymede.

And still when mob or Monarch lays  
Too rude a hand on English ways,  
The whisper wakes, the shudder plays,  
Across the reeds at Runnymede.  
And Thames, that knows the moods of kings,  
And crowds and priests and suchlike things,  
Rolls deep and dreadful as he brings  
Their warning down from Runnymede!

*Rudyard Kipling*

