

THE BANGKOK ST. GEORGE'S SOCIETY



# The Banner



January • February • March • April - 2003

# President's Message

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*Dear Members,*

Once again the year seems to be racing by and Society members have enjoyed a number of fun activities featured in this issue of the Banner magazine. It is always pleasing to see new faces at such activities - so don't forget, when you make your reservations for future events please invite your friends along – you never know they might like to become St George's Society members too. The social calendar for the remainder of the year has been mapped out by the Council - details can be found inside this issue of the Banner and also there is a page called 'What's new' on our exciting Website – **[www.bangkokstgeorgesoc.org](http://www.bangkokstgeorgesoc.org)** If you have not yet visited the site please do – Terry Adams has done an excellent job since the beginning of the year and it really is something to be proud of.

As you will realise we are almost at the highlight of the Society's social calendar – the prestigious and ever-popular St George's Annual Ball, which celebrates England's patron saint - St George. This year the Ball will take place slightly later than usual on May 10th. (St George's Day is actually on 23rd April and already we are receiving messages of celebration from societies all over the world).

Following the success of last year's Ball, the Council had no hesitation in repeating the format and quickly booked the same entertainers to make the evening (and morning for some) go with a swing! The only significant change is the venue – the 2003 St George's Annual Ball will be held in the Ballroom of the new luxurious Conrad Hotel. Numbers will be restricted this year to make the occasion a quality rather than quantity occasion, so if you have not yet booked your table (tickets) please hurry to do so – details of the event and instructions for making reservations can be found on the back cover.

*Angela Stafford  
President*

## Forthcoming Events 2003

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### *Forthcoming Events*

May Sat 10th  
*St. George's Ball at The Conrad Hotel*

June Tues 10th  
*Oak Apple Day featuring  
"Yorkie's" fayres at the British Club*

July Wed 23rd  
*Quiz Night TBA*

August Tues 19th  
*"Vintage Comedy" Night at the British Club*



# Your Council Members

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New Society e-mail address! [www.bangkokstgeorgesoc.org](http://www.bangkokstgeorgesoc.org)

Bangkok St. George's Society c/o The British Club 189 Surawong Road, Bangkok 10500 Tel: 0-2234 0247 Fax: 0-2235 1560

## Membership News

### *Dear Members,*

Firstly, a very warm welcome to our new members who have joined since the last issue of The Banner: We are sure that you will enjoy the many events that are organised and look forward to seeing you at the next social function. If you have not yet renewed your membership please do so as this will enable us to keep you informed of all up-coming events. The events team arrange some really great social functions so to keep up to date – renew today!

New members: 1000 baht (Entrance fee & first year's subscription)

Renewal: 500 baht (annual subscription)

Payment may be made by cash or cheque (payable to Bangkok St Georges Society) and mailed or delivered to:  
The Membership Secretary  
Bangkok St George's Society  
c/o The British Club  
189 Surawong Road, Bangkok, 10500

Angela & Matthew Baker  
Zita Clark  
Andrew & Angela Coyne  
Elsie & Derek Green  
Sara Haboubi  
Clare and Adrian Johnson  
Frederick & Alma Lee  
Raymonde Lemieux Marshall  
David and Julie Shaw

Events are announced through the membership email list – if you are not currently receiving information please let me have an update of your contact details. If you do not have access to e-mail and prefer to receive notification by post please advise me. Contact Angela Baker on 02 663 1971 or [angela@cranbrookint.com](mailto:angela@cranbrookint.com).

So – enjoy the coming months of social gatherings and we look forward to seeing you all soon.

*Very best wishes,  
Angela Baker,  
Membership Secretary*

St George may be a myth, and others may have a stronger claim to be England's Patron Saint, but against all comers this dragon slayer has a resonance with we English.

## Saint Who?

You don't need to be told that M.P.s of all parties have some pretty silly ideas that they sometimes try to enact in legislation. Recently in the Mother of Parliaments, a cross-party group of M.P.s laid down an early day motion seeking to replace St George as the Patron Saint of England and to replace him with a lesser known one called Alban. St who? Well Alban is an interesting character, so perhaps our 'guardians of democracy' should be thanked for bringing him to our attention.

Who then was St Alban? What is his claim to usurp George as England's premier saint? As Lloyd Crossman would say 'Let's examine the evidence.'

Alban was born to wealthy parents in one of the farthest flung outposts of the Roman Empire. Alban and his family lived in luxury in a typical Romano-British villa, in the small town of Verulanium. Alban's parents longed to return to the civilised heart of the empire: Rome. They intended that their son's education was to be conducted in Rome and not in uncivilised and barbarian England.

To the young Alban, Rome must have been a world away from his beloved Verulanium, with its few Roman villas, its many rude huts, surrounding marshes and forests, the cold climate with grey overcast skies. In Rome there were massive villas, temples to the Gods the like of which he had never seen, luxurious baths and white marble palaces. Above all, the blue skies and gold sun of the Eternal City.

However, Alban never forgot his little town on the banks of the River Ver, he was later to return and to settle into a life of riches and luxury.

Alban was a kind and generous man, well-liked and respected within his community. No needy person ever left his door without alms of some kind. But one particular act of kindness sealed his fate.

Hearing an urgent yet muffled knocking at the outer gate Alban's servants went to investigate. Standing

before them was a weary looking man dressed in the long cape of a teacher. He asked to be taken in and hid secretly until his pursuers had passed by. The fugitive was a Christian priest, being hunted by Roman soldiers.

The priest's courage and conviction so impressed Alban that he soon converted to Christianity. This was an act that the Roman Empire considered treacherous and for which severe punishment and torture were prerequisite.

In time the soldiers were to discover the priest and his protector, both were put on trial. A confession was forced from both Alban and the priest and they were convicted of treason and for being Christians.

All of the townspeople came to see Alban's final indignity of torture and execution. Some of them with pity and compassion in their hearts, for they remembered the kindness and generosity of this wealthy young man. But as in all ages, some came to mock and revel in his misery.

His execution was to take place on the opposite bank of the River Ver, the throng of people made crossing the river by the only bridge impossible. The Governor gave the order to ford the river. Legend recalls that before Alban could step into the water its flow dried and he crossed to the opposite bank without getting his feet wet.

Witnessing this the executioner was struck with fear and remorse. How could he put to death a man who was so heavily guarded by this new God? The executioner threw down his sword and refused his duty.

But Alban had no such fears, for on this June day, he walked the way he played as a boy. Other men were prepared to carry out the orders of the Governor and execute Alban. As the fatal blow fell, severing head from body, tradition tells that a clear, fresh spring seeped from the killing place.

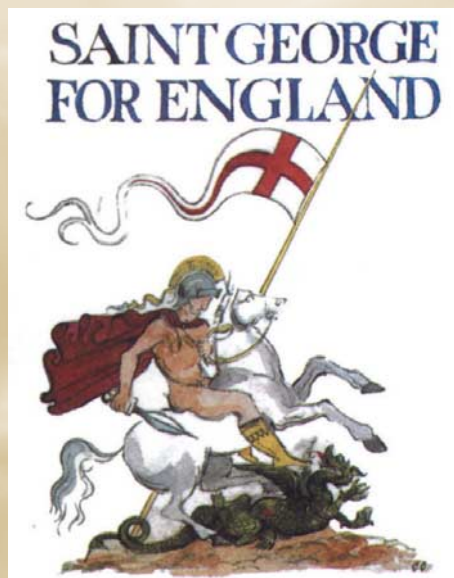
Alban was the first of many English martyrs; in his honour Verulanium was later renamed St Albans.



St George has a very different fable behind his claim to England's patron saint. Much has been written of this foreigner and his deeds. And much of it fits with the English psyche: legends claim him to be strong, courageous, defiant, fond of rescuing maidens in distress and slaying dragons.

However would Shakespeare's words placed into the mouth of King Henry V have the same resonance were St Alban to be declared patron saint of England?

In the famous scene before the Battle of Harfleur, in a cold, wet and windy French field Henry sits on his horse. He rallies his troops before battle. Knowing they are outnumbered by ten to one, he relies on the grit of his warriors and the famed skill of his Welsh



longbow men. He sits high and proud, armor and breastplate glinting in the weak morning sun; the king raises his sword in an action of encouragement and speaks these famed and stirring words:

“The game's afoot  
Follow your spirit, and upon this charge  
Cry 'God' for Harry, England and  
Saint George.”

Would the name of gentle Alban portray the essentialness of being English? Would it have the power to stir and inspire the English breast, to recall the greatness of a great little nation, to instill pride in our history and achievements?

Far be it for this writer to say, you must be the judge – Alban or George?

## Bavarian Night 29th January 2003

The Rasstube Restaurant at the Goethe Institut was the venue for this rather intimate evening of Bavarian food and beverages. Although only a handful of members (literally) attended, the event was deemed a great success thanks to the delicious consumables and the very friendly staff. Definitely a restaurant to return to!!

For Gale Bailey's full write-up on the evening, check out our website: [www.bangkokstgeorgesoc.org](http://www.bangkokstgeorgesoc.org)



# A Great Bunch of Tossers!

Shrove Tuesday celebrations were a huge success in March. The pictures show how much everyone enjoyed the evening in traditional style with egg-and-spoon races, pancake-tossing and a few drinks on the back lawn of the British Club. Many thanks to everyone who turned up to make the night another fun St George's event.



**"Do you think he knows that his zip is undone?"**



Many thanks to Liz Keeling for coming up with the winning caption to last edition's competition. Lucky Liz wins herself a St George's polo shirt for her effort. Keep the rib-tickling captions coming in and you too may win a prize next issue! Send your entries to John Howe at [rhondda\\_uk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rhondda_uk@yahoo.co.uk) or by snail mail c/o The British Club, Suriwongse Road, Bangkok 10500

# Yuletide Supper

## 14th December 2002

Christmas spirit abounded throughout the lawns of the British Club as almost 100 members and guests met to celebrate Christmas. The British Club was lit up like a Christmas tree and so were the revellers! Once again the British Club did us proud with the tremendous food and the immaculate staff. Entertainment was provided by the Royal Thai Navy Band Quartet, the Sister Louis's Choir, the Silom Street Entertainers and some very merry members. For more details check out our website:

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





Every true blue English man (and woman) loves curry. Gail Bailey reports on the Society's penultimate event of 2002: a celebration of England's adopted dish.

## Ruby Murray Night

The Society's November event was the celebration of that 'classic English' dish curry. We convened at the Rasoi Indian Kitchen on Sathorn Soi 1 ready to appreciate the delights of the Indian cuisine. The night was also a celebration of the re-election of Angela Stafford's second term as President.

The restaurant shares its premises with the Indian Chamber of Commerce, so we know we were in for a treat, and we were not disappointed. There was a wide range of both vegetarian and meat dishes, including the usual favourites; Tadoori chicken, rogan josh, aloo gobi, and the various types of nan, poppadoms, pilau rice, and the like. It was a splendid spread.

If you enjoy 'going for an Indian' I would strongly recommend the Rasoi Indian Kitchen. Although the décor is rather unprepossessing the curry is the best I have tasted in Bangkok. Remember I am a Leicester lass and my taste buds were very impressed.

Our post-dinner speaker was Penelope Worsley who was visiting Thailand from the UK. She is the founder of the charity 'Karen Hilltribes Trust'. This charity not only supports the education programme for the hill tribes in northwestern Thailand, one of its major projects is to provide clean, safe drinking water to the villages. One permanent Thai manager and groups of volunteers do this; the volunteers live with the villagers for a few weeks at a time and help to install the pipes and other systems along which the water will flow. Training is also provided in the maintenance of the systems.

This project is of such major importance for the health of these communities that the British Women's Group has chosen the Karen Hilltribes Trust as its major beneficiary this year.

Penelope gave a very emotive talk explaining how she had been inspired to start the charity. Her son Richard, had worked for some months as a volunteer at a Karen village. He had really

enjoyed the experience and had learned a great deal from it. On his return to the UK he joined the army and was posted to Germany. Soon after his posting and at a tragically young age, Richard died in a road accident.

When the people of the village in which he had worked heard of his death, they sent Penelope a letter paying homage to her son and to his hard work. Penelope was so touched by the sincerity of the letter that she became determined to support the tribes by establishing the charity. She did this in tribute to Richard.

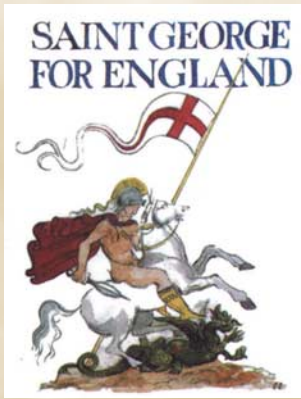
Penelope explained the aims and successes of the charity and finished by showing some of the lovely bags and cushion covers made by the Karen women. The bags and covers are made from materials woven by the women and dyed with natural vegetable dyes, made by the women of the villages. We have all become so adjusted to Bangkok prices that we were taken aback by the cost of these items back in the UK. However, we know that the profits from the sales is going to a worthwhile cause.

Young volunteers from the UK do most of the work with the hill tribes. This seems to me to be a very useful and fulfilling way of spending part of their 'gap' year. If you know of any interested and willing youngsters, I know that Penelope will be glad to hear from them.

She also explained that there is sometimes a need for people to provide a bed for one or two nights while the volunteers are in Bangkok in transit between the UK and the tribal villages. Penelope is keen to hear from any kind sole who can see their way to helping with this.

Our President, Angela, closed the evening by thanking Penelope for her enjoyable and thought-provoking contribution.

This event was not just delicious and nutritious but provided food for thought as well.



## Bangkok St George's Society Annual Ball at the Conrad Hotel on Saturday, 10th May 2003.

“God For Elizabeth, England & St. George”

It is a pleasure to announce the Bangkok St George's Society Annual Ball, celebrating all that England is famous for. **The Orchestra of the Royal Thai Army** will stir emotions with a selection of glorious tunes from 'Old Blighty' during dinner, building up to a grand finale of old favourites such as '**Jerusalem**', '**Land of Hope and Glory**' and '**Rule Britannia**', guaranteed to make everyone sing along and wave St. George's red cross flags! **The Bandit Beatles** will return for a second year to perform the ever popular **Fab Four's** hits from the 60's and 70's, such as '**Twist and Shout**', '**Love, Love me do**' and '**Its been a Hard Day's Night**'.

The sumptuous 5-course dinner includes tasty starters, succulent Roast Beef and irresistible desserts. A fine selection of white and red wines will be on each table with free flowing beer all night.

Many thanks to our sponsors  
for their generous support:

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Cranbrook International

The Grand Raffle will be drawn at midnight, and then its back to the dance floor once more to the swinging rhythms of **The Big Boy Band** who will entertain us into the early hours with English classics from **Queen, Bowie, Robbie Williams**, and **many, many more.....**

Breakfast, featuring Yorkies Pork Platter goodies, will be served in the early hours of Sunday morning for those needing added sustenance. Extra wine can be purchased or you may bring your own wine and spirits (no corkage charge) and the hotel will even provide free mixers.



To avoid disappointment, please rush to your phone or computer without delay to reserve a table (or seats) at what will most certainly be, yet again, the **BEST EVER St George's Day Ball!!!**

**Angela Stafford**  
President - The Bangkok St. George's Society

**Booking details can be found on [www.bangkokstgeorgesoc.org](http://www.bangkokstgeorgesoc.org)**