

THE BANGKOK ST. GEORGE'S SOCIETY



The Banner



October • November • December - 2002

The President's Message



Dear Members,

Once again I must thank the members present at the AGM who elected me President for a second term. I am sure it will be as interesting and eventful as my first year as President.

Of course all the Society's members have a part in its success, and this year everyone of us has contributed to a good year. But grateful thanks must go to those on the Council who have guided my efforts and have given me much appreciated support and encouragement.

A Society stalwart, thrice President and erstwhile Honorary Treasurer, Terry Adams is now developing the Society's website, taking the Bangkok St George's Society to the rest of the world.

Andy Pickup, again an ex-President who this year ably took on the duties and responsibilities of Honorary Secretary, excelled in this role - his ability, discipline and organisational skills shone through.

Mike Tallis, another Council veteran who for many years was Membership Secretary and Golf Convenor for the Inter-Society Golf Tournaments, returned to England earlier this year with his family.

Jane Peake, another returnee, was the Society's Social Secretary. Her imagination gave us the first ever Bangkok Pancake Party, the Hungarian Quiz Night and a splendid Oak Apple Day. Jane also masterminded a number of difficult quizzes.

Dave Baker also left Bangkok this year, after solving a long standing problem of collecting subscriptions. It is in great part due to Dave that we now have over 120 members.

Two more bastions of the Society, Gail Bailey and Ann Paton have been formidable in the recruitment drive and in fund raising - what would we have done without both of them?

John and Dave Allen have lent their support when it has been needed, and over many years the late Nicholas Lynx-Lomonde also gave tremendous support to the Council.

I would like to welcome new Council members Colin Broadhurst, who has taken on the role of Honorary Treasurer, Sara Haboubi, who will act as Honorary Secretary at Council Meetings, Angela Baker will be Membership Secretary, Lynn Nelson and Caroline Reynolds have taken on the duties of organising social events, and John Howe has taken on the role of editing 'The Banner'.

Looking back over the year, the President's Lunch was a great success, with 70 members attending. Eckie the Clown and Manida the 'flying ice cream' man provided great entertainment. The Bangkok Pancake Day and Oak Apple Day celebrations were also very successful.

The Annual Ball was again a resounding success, with the Bandit Beatles playing until early into the morning. The Ball would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors. I want to give heartfelt thanks to: Siam Inter-Continental Hotel, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Transpo, Berli Jucker, Castrol (Thailand), Carlsberg Brewery (Thai), Rajawongse Clothiers, Thai Glass Industries, Market Edge Asia, and BNH Hospital. This year's successes would not have been possible without the co-operation and support of all the Society's members. So to all of you I must reserve my biggest thank you.

*Angela Stafford
President*

Forthcoming Events 2002/2003

Forthcoming Events

20th November, 2002

President's 'Ruby Murray' Dinner at Rasoi Indian Kitchen
Sathorn Soi 1

11th December, 2002

Yuletide Supper at the British Club

January, 2003 (date tbc)

New Year Event - "Don't Mention The War" Dinner at Goethe Institute,
Sathorn Soi 1

March 2003 (date tbc)

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party at the British Club



Your Council Members

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Colin Broadhurst	Hon. Treasurer	0-2653 0636	0-1564 7242	bcoll@ksc.th.com
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Gale Bailey	Council Member	0-2379 4152	0-2722 3161 0-1828 5213	galebailey@hotmail.com

New Society E-mail Address! bkkstgeorges@hotmail.com

BANGKOK ST. GEORGE'S SOCIETY C/O THE BRITISH CLUB 189 SURAWONG ROAD, BANGKOK 10500 TEL: 0-2234 0247 FAX: 0-2235 1560

Society Membership

Dear Members,

It was a pleasure to meet many new members and their partners at the President's Lunch, and the AGM. I hope that you enjoyed these functions and I look forward to meeting you at all of the events the Society has arranged for the coming year.

I must say thank you to all who have renewed their membership, and confirmed their personal details. Unfortunately there are still a few who have not yet done so, and this is a pity as the Society has a lively events calendar for the coming year.

A mere 500 baht will ensure that you and your partners do not miss out on the forthcoming programme.

Payment can be made by cash or cheque (payable to the Bangkok St George's Society) and mailed or delivered to the following address:

The Membership Secretary
Bangkok St George's Society
C/o The British Club
189 Surawongse Road
Bangkok, 10500

Welcome to the Bangkok St George's Society to:

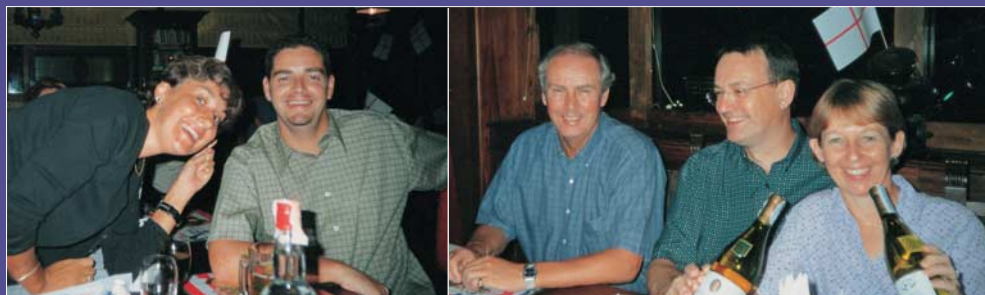
David Nevin	Claire Medd
Steven Robinson	Sean Cabourne
Zita Clarke	Caroline Reynolds
Eddie Haworth	Pippa Harker
Richard Geier	Janice Walters
Heather Jones	Graham Stanford
Stuart Corbishly	Jane Wise
Paul Bishop	Krystyna Kaminski-Cook
	John Howe

So that you will not miss out on any correspondence and your copy of The Banner, it is vital that I receive any changes of personal details such as address, telephone number, email.

You can contact me via email on lynnnelson47@yahoo.co.uk or bkkstgeorges@hotmail.com, or by mail at the above address.

*Best Wishes
Lynn Nelson*

Recent Society Memories



Quiz Night at O'Reilly's

As I have been nagged to death to write this piece for the St George's Society, and after a glass or two of Tesco's finest red wine – cheap at 198 baht a bottle, I have succumbed to 'she who must be obeyed', or as I call her Swmbo – Stella - gawd bless her cotton socks.

Bangkok is full of British and Irish pubs, and although I am a Shenanigans man, the pub that is - should I be asked to contribute further to this august journal perhaps my other shenanigans will feature. But the venue for our St. George's quiz was the 'Thairish' pub on Silom, O'Reilly's.

So 'orf I jolly well went' to my meeting with my dear Swmbo and the crowd at the Thairish pub. I arrived to find that the Carlsberg was on the house, generously donated by Bruno the manager. I, of course, ordered a 'Kilkenny' bitter and a pint of Carlsberg for Stella - she must have been very thirsty cos she drank it quite quickly. Well, Bangkok at this time of year is very hot!

After much 'air kissing', hello dharling's and the odd 'senior moment' trying to remember the names of people I met only two weeks before, dinner was eaten and the quiz was underway.

O'Reilly's food is legendary in this neck of Silom and it did not disappoint. Good British faire served with Thai hospitality and promptness. My request for the apple pie and ice cream and custard was accepted without a blink from the waitress, but Stella cast her usual admiring glance at my nicely developing 'love handles'.



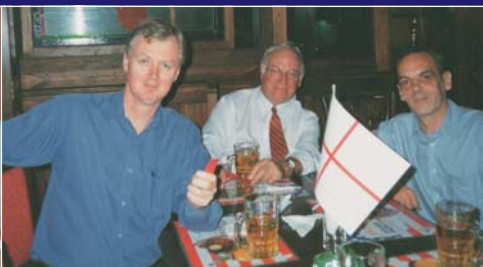
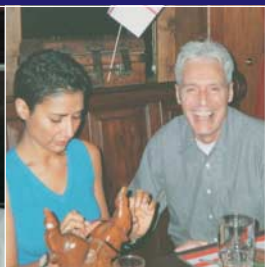
Our esteemed past President and now past Secretary, Andy Pickup, did his best to impersonate Magnus Magnusson. Unfortunately we did not have the famous 'da da de dum, boom boom' music, nor did we stretch to the unforgiving glare of a spotlight.

The quiz was topical and with a warning from our quiz inquisitors, Andrew and Angela, not to confer we answered all the questions, not all of them correctly though. There was no quibbling over the prizes as everyone was satisfied with the finest white wine that Emporium could muster, many cans of Carlsberg and a few girly things that I did not notice.

The double As inquisitors were more than patient and joined in the seriousness of the business at hand, as did everyone else. No, O'Reilly's is not just known for its hospitality and its occasional quizzes. Wednesday nights are Beatles nights, with the Thai version of the 'fab four' called 'The Better.' The music was impressive and calls for another visit to the pub.

At the end of the evening most of us toddled off home in good cheer, clutching bottles of wine or cans of Carlsberg. So the only question left to answer is – When is the next one?

Howard Bryant



Did she really say that?

Tell us what you think was said, and we will give a St George's polo shirt to the funniest, most original caption. Three runners-up will be awarded St George's ties for their efforts. Get your imagination going and send entries to John Howe at Jhowe@bnh.co.th or use the snail mail c/o The British Club, Suriwongse Road, Bangkok 10500

The President's Lunch



It might have been a perfect English summer day. The blue sky was almost cloudless and the sun shone throughout. The only things that were missing were the thwack of leather upon willow, the gentlemanly cries of 'Howzzat', polite applause from the Panama beccapped spectators, and the parson declining for the umpteenth time "More tea vicar?"

It was as if the good saint himself was looking down on us, we assorted and varied ex-pats of the Bangkok St George's Society President's Lunch. The back lawn of the British Club proved a suitable venue for this year's bash.

By noon the tents had filled with more than 70 guests and 20 mini-guests. It was good to see a number of new members of the Society, along with some newly arrived ex-pats. The Lunch was a great opportunity to make new friends.

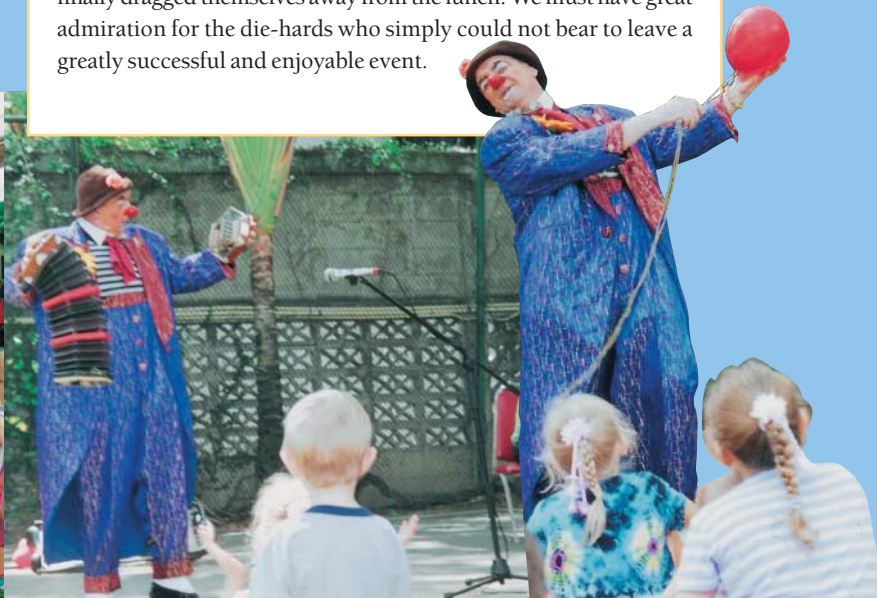
Soon the aroma of familiar food filled the air and assailed the nostrils; the smell surely would have evoked memories of lunches past. It was obvious by the murmurs of appreciation that the buffet was welcomed and enjoyed. Soon everyone was tucking into a delicious spread of traditional English fare: thick sizzling sausages, steak chops, chips and for the health conscious baked potatoes. Pasta salad and lasagna may be a little exotic for English palates but non-the-less were appreciated by our cosmopolitan digestive systems.

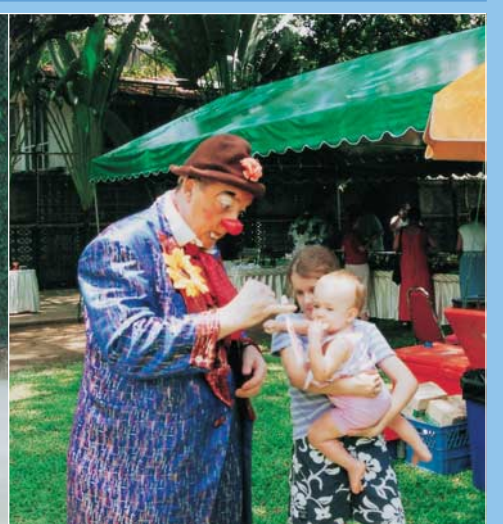
Eckie the clown kept the youngest to the oldest of us entertained. He certainly had the children engrossed with his antics. And by Jove did he gain everyone's attention when the concertina he was attempting to play exploded with a report as loud as an Enfield service revolver. Eckie continued to provide entertainment and education for the younger audience by conducting a juggling workshop.

A real surprise was the 'flying ice cream' show by Manida. It was a short display but a sweet one. From his scoop flew dollops of ice cream, each throw ending with a flourish of his scoop. In Manida's hands the scoop spun and twirled into a blur of cold steel; he brandished it just as a Samurai would his katana.

The more co-ordinated of us actually managed to catch a flying vanilla, lime, or chocolate delight in a glass. This was obviously as great an achievement as the flying ice cream itself.

Late in the afternoon stalwarts of the Society and those with stamina finally dragged themselves away from the lunch. We must have great admiration for the die-hard who simply could not bear to leave a greatly successful and enjoyable event.





Khao Lak Days

As a new comer to Thailand, John Howe decided to go exploring around the beautiful, untouched beaches of Khao Lak. This is his account of how a seemingly idyllic place can rapidly turn into a nightmare!

I wanted to make sure that I had the flavour of the place and its people. I read the usual guidebooks, Lonely Planet, Rough Guide, even the AA Short Guide to Bangkok. They gave the detail, facts and figures and pretty pictures. How to go here or get there, which are the best beaches, the better islands, the climate in Chang Mai and Phuket. They gave helpful hints, like don't make an enemy of the police, don't disparage the Monarchy, or the religion, but they did not tell me not to hum the King's Song in public!

What about the nitty gritty: the heat, the humidity, the dusty air? I thought of re-reading Kipling, but would his tales paint an accurate picture? I didn't think so. Or Conrad: too dark and too far removed from our own time. Then I remembered that George Orwell's first novel was set in British Burma of the 1930's.

Okay, Thailand isn't Burma and the start of the 21st century is another country where they do things differently. But Orwell is a very descriptive writer, who gets under the skin of his subject and creates real characters one can believe in.

His first novel 'Burmese Days' was written while he worked as a policeman in Burma. In the book his love of the country, its peoples and culture is evident. Orwell lived 'up country' in a small town on the edge of rubber plantations. Early in the book he describes the climatic conditions. Flory, the main character lies on his bed, the



humidity makes this an uncomfortable experience. Not only is the bed and its occupant damp and sweaty, everything succumbs to the humid atmosphere of the jungle. In his bedroom there is an unpleasant odour of mildew. Now this is something that I could relate to.

I spent most of May in the little Andaman coast village of Khao Lak, just five miles north of Phuket Island. During the high season nothing much happens there, out of season less happens. The beach is deserted except for a few German tourists, making the most of their Euros.

As they shatter on the shore the breakers have few ears to marvel at their booming. For most of May the sun shone bright and hot, but I soon discovered what the rainy season meant.

I stayed in a cheap beachfront bungalow, made of bamboo with a banana leaf roof. There was no TV or radio or even English language magazines.

Eventually the sun retreated to be replaced by dark glowering



mornings that gave way to dark glowering afternoons. Day in day out, the weather worsened as the rainy season settled in good and proper. The only difference I thought between this rain and the rain of dear old blighty is that Thai

rain is at least warm. Outside, the earth path that led to the beach was regularly transformed into a rivulet of muddy water.

Soon my bed was constantly damp, and mildew and mold were creeping into my books, clothes, they even seemed to penetrate my inner being. Boredom was beginning to set in. Just as Orwell described. Worse was to come.

The bungalow was nicely situated between beach and a small rubber plantation. One particular morning having nothing to do, I slept in. I have always enjoyed listening to the sound of rain beating on a roof. In this bungalow it was particularly atmospheric, as the Andaman breakers, the thunder and lighting added to the auditory emotion.

One particular dazzling flash of lighting and an immediate mighty cacophony of thunder were followed by a low and slow creaking. Then the heavens opened above me as a smoking rubber tree fell through the roof!

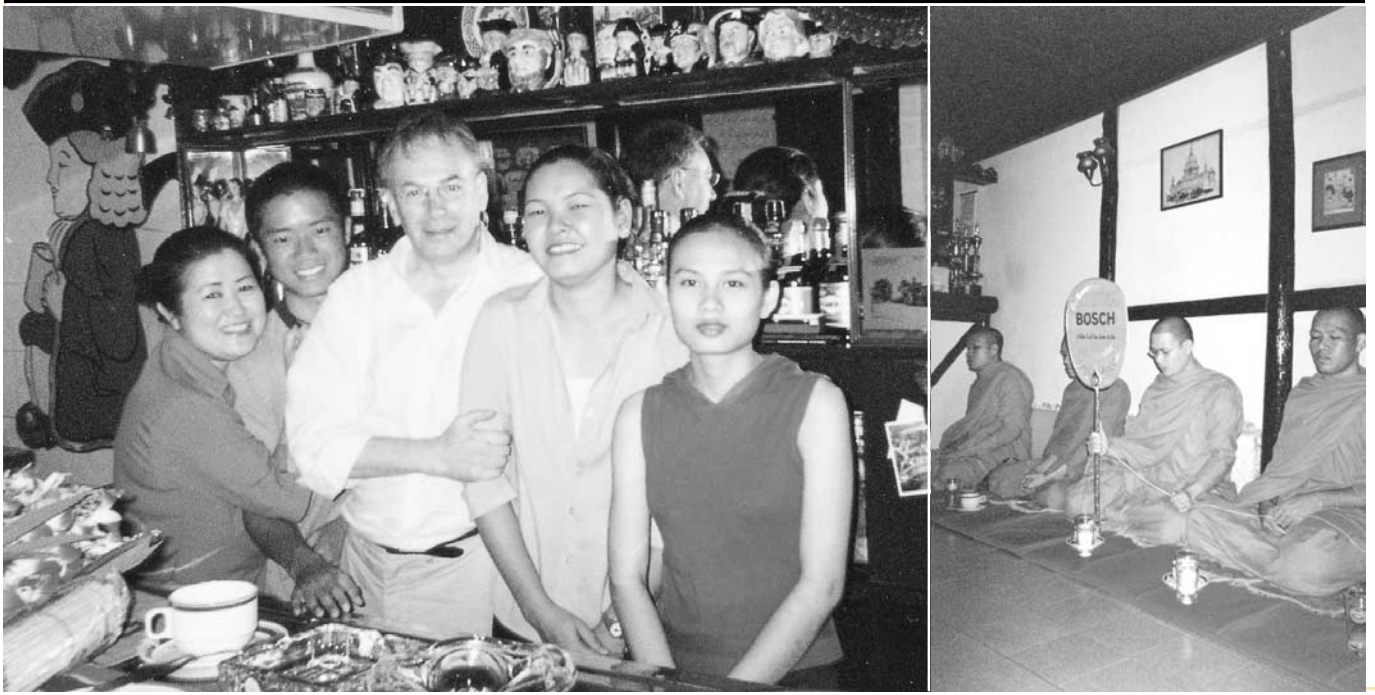
The floor, the bed and I were covered in strips of dried banana leaves, slowly being soaked by the tropical pour-down. The bamboo walls had failed to halt the downward progress of the tree, and I found myself staring at a large, dripping trunk, just inches above my nether regions. Oblivious of my state of dress, or undress, I made a hasty retreat, while brave handymen climbed the trunk and attempted to remove the tree from what remained of the bungalow.

I was soaked, my clothes were soaked, the men were getting wetter by the minute but they carried on regardless of the rain and the lightening.

Then I understood what you can not get from guidebooks or fiction. Figures and pictures are important no doubt, but they don't provide you a real insider's view of the sometimes uncomfortable conditions that can exist even in a modern tropical 'paradise'.



The Blessing of the Toby Jug



Silom Road's British-style pub, The Toby Jug recently held its annual blessing. It was a strangely moving event.

The saffron robed monks, sat on the hard tiled floor and laid out the required impedimenta; a prayer shield, a silver lidded bowl, consecrated water, a candle and a roll of pure white twine. A small shrine lit by candles and decorated with flowers was constructed near by.

Water and coffee were offered and accepted. Only the men were allowed to present these to the monks before a few moments of meditation followed. The senior monk took the twine in his hand and in doing so he said a prayer over the roll, and placed the strand in the crook of his thumb and first finger. Each subsequent monk repeated the action before passing it to the next in line. Twine symbolises the spiritual link between the past and present, between Buddha and the monks.

The water was poured into the bowl and the candle fixed to the rim. Another prayer was recited and responses returned. Placing a fan in front of his face the senior monk recited a blessing, the fan radiating the blessing to the room. The senior monk then passed the fan to a second monk and the process was repeated.

The most moving, spiritual and peaceful part of the ceremony happened when the monks began a chant using strange tones that were a hybrid between Gregorian chant and Mongolian throat singing. Its droning quality proved to be both rhythmic and hypnotic, sounds like a

bagpipe's drones and the mid-tones of a harmonium filled the room. A strange kind of peace, almost of tranquility, came over me. I forgot my discomfort from sitting for so long on the cool tiles and was taken over by the enticing tones of the voice music. At a signal the Toby Jug's owner, Annan, lit the candle perched on the bowl's rim, the senior monk positioning it immediately over the water so that its melting wax dropped into the water. Finally the candle was doused in the water and the lid replaced.

The ceremony over, the monks were presented with a 'devotional offering', a gift of life's essentials; toothpaste and brushes, soap, candles, washing powder and the like. The final part of the devotional offering: a meal. As the Toby Jug is a British-style pub and serves only British faire the monks were offered what must have been a novel meal of roast chicken, roast and boiled potatoes, carrots, peas and gravy made with real Bisto. Certainly a change from their usual diet of rice or noodles. However, they did tuck into the meal with relish and cleared their plates.

Annan blesses the pub every year, it must have some effect as the place is usually full of appreciative expats, tourists and Thais eager to sample Khunya's excellent blightly-style home cooking.



THE BANGKOK ST. GEORGE'S SOCIETY

The Banner

Mrs. Ruth Lines,
50 Brunet St., Holland Park,
Brisbane, Aust. 4121.

7/10/02

M/s Angela Stafford,
President,
Royal Society of St. George,
c/o The British Club,
189 Surawong Rd.,
Bangkok. 10500

Dear Angela,

Firstly let me tell you who I am - I am the Sec/Treas of the Royal Society of St. George, Brisbane Branch, Aust. and I thank you very much for "The Banner" which I receive regularly. I find it a very interesting and informative publication and you are to be praised for it - please pass on my regards to your publication officer or whoever publishes it.

I am sorry to hear that you will not have the Royal Marines with you this year, but I am sure the "Bandit Beatles" were a wonderful replacement. I heard a short excerpt on T.V. here some time ago.

Then I am an avid crossword/quiz fanatic so I give you my answers to this issue's quiz - hopefully a lot answers correct, and it would always be of interest to get other members throughout the world interested.

We, in an English speaking country don't find it easy to get new members - they don't club together as they do overseas - anyway that is how we find it in Aust. Our Branch is quite small and we only have about 36 members, but at meetings we always get 20 plus to attend. We meet regularly every month.

We recently held our Celebration luncheon on 27th April with 80 folk present and with a balladeer whom we have to entertain us now for 3 years - he sings with suitable backing, songs from all over the U.K. and other popular songs too. I personally have organised all our lunches now for 6 years and I love doing it, but maybe I will let someone else carry on after 2003. I've been Treasurer here for 17 years and Secretary for 11 yrs. and I have now reached the ripe old age of 86 years.

For the Queen's Jubilee, Warwick, Toowoomba Branches and ourselves held a big family picnic at a favourite site where there is a dam (but no water this year owing to prolonged drought here) I think about 56 folk turned up.

- My answers to your quiz.....
1. 1805 Oct.
 2. D. Day
 3. Gunpowder plot.
 4. Prince Charles born.
 5. Sept. 1945. (2nd.)

6. Mary Q. of Scots executed.
7. English Civil War.
8. Battle of Agincourt. 1415
9. Q. Vic dies.
10. Fire of London.

How did I do?

Yours sincerely,
Ruth
Ruth Lines Mrs.

THE BANGKOK ST. GEORGE'S SOCIETY

The Banner



Chairman: Eric G. Taylor, Lord of Balneath

Incorporated by Royal Charter Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

The Royal Society of St. George (South Downs Branch)

President - Colonel Peter Howard-Harwood, MBE, DL
Secretary - Michael R. Smith F.F.A.

M/S ANGELA STAFFORD
PRESIDENT,
BANGKOK ST. GEORGE'S SOCIETY
c/o THE BRITISH CLUB
189 SURAWONG RD.

Eric G. Taylor
118 Broad Road
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East Sussex BN20 9RD
Telephone 01323-483004

7/10/02

Dear Angela,

On behalf of our membership I thank you, most sincerely, for forwarding, at regular intervals, your quarterly 'Banner'. At a recent Branch Council meeting it was decided that we should reciprocate by sending you our quarterly newsletters, 'The Pennon'. Whilst not as elaborate as yours it may give an insight into activities in the area of Eastbourne, Seaford, Newhaven, Hailsham, Lewes, in East Sussex. We do operate further afield as the South Downs is a large catchment area but most of our events are in, and around, the Downs mentioned.

With every good wish for your continuing success,
Eric Taylor, Chairman
South Downs Branch.

THE BANGKOK ST. GEORGE'S SOCIETY

The Banner

Donations to charity



An important part of the St. George's Society year is the April Ball, the Society's main fundraiser, with part of the proceeds being donated to Thai charities.

This year three admirable causes have been supported. The Thailand Hill Tribes Education Project will receive 96,000 baht, and a 100,000 baht will go to the People Eye Care Foundation.

The Karen Hill Tribes Trust received a donation of 60,000 baht. The Trust's main activity is to provide a supply of clean and safe water to the Karen Hill Tribes. However, our donation will purchase much-needed blankets. The Hill Tribes Education Project will enable the construction of a general purpose building-come-classroom, at the primary school in Ban Huay Plakang, Mae Sariang. And as there is no electricity supply in this village a generator has also been purchased and will be shared with the general community.

The Ban Huay School has a new headmaster, Khun Apichart. He has transferred from a primary school in Ban Khun Wong Nua, where he made great improvements to the quality of education in that village.

The People Eye Care Foundation carries out cataract removal surgery throughout Thailand. The surgery has many effects; it obviously restores sight and freedom to the sufferer and it relieves the strain placed on families who support the semi-sighted family member.

The elderly person can return to a fulfilling family life by taking on small household chores or looking after grandchildren allowing the parents to take up employment.

The Society feels that these three charities are worthwhile and valuable causes to support.



Over to you

You know the old saying, that every one has at least a book in them. Well to mix metaphors, if you don't yet feel like writing your life's tome, start with a little something in The Banner – your magazine.

You don't need to have the talent of Shakespeare, or Dickens, and you don't need to be a wit or raconteur like Wilde or Ustinof. And leave the philosophising to others.

What is required are some anecdotes of your time in Thailand, whether you are an old hand or a newcomer you must have a story to tell, something to get off your chest. What are the cultural differences? Are you still suffering from culture shock? Have you discovered a nice pub, restaurant, bar or any other place of refreshment and entertainment that you want to share with the Society members?

You can send your material by mail to John Howe, c/o BNH Hospital International Centre, 9/1 Convent Road, Bangkok, 10500. Or by email to Jhowe@bnh.co.th or rhondda_uk@yahoo.com OK, I own up, I am a Taffy, but my grand pappy was a Bristolian.

We also like to get news from other St George's Societies as it is always heartening to know what the rest of us are doing throughout the world.

This is your magazine, please use it.

The AGM



Angela Stafford and the new Council members elected at the 2002 AGM



This year the British Club hosted the Society's Annual General Meeting. There was a good attendance for the formal part of the evening, which thanks to the Council members only lasted half an hour. They kept their speeches short and to the point. Angela Stafford was re-elected President by a unanimous vote, as were the rest of the Council members.

I suspect that most people were there not for the formalities but for the North Sea cod and chips with mushy peas. This was a real delight, and while not being served in the traditional way – in last night's copy of the Evening Standard, the Bristol Evening Post, or the Crewe Chronicle, it was authentic in every other way. The large fillets of cod were packaged in the most succulent and crispy, golden brown batter I have experienced since – oh – I was a kid. The real thick chips yielded to the teeth with a satisfying 'krunk', the potato beneath was fluffy and succulent. Ignoring the baked beans most of the gourmet's made a beeline for the mushy peas. There really is nothing better than a plate of England's national dish with lashings of malt vinegar and frosted with Cerabos salt.

Humm... roll on the next AGM

Editor

