

Northern

BRINGING YOU THE LATEST NEWS
FROM OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS
AROUND THE WORLD

NEWS

JULY 2010



Editorial Ramblings

The good news this month is that Grace has received her Resident's Permit for Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK. Isn't that great. I won't have to send her back to the Philippines after all!

Sad to say, but we have had some bad news too. Our friend, Josie, is seriously ill in hospital in Manila. Although she isn't expected to recover, please pray for a miracle and also that she doesn't suffer too much pain. Also pray for her family, Lourdes (sister) and Al (partner).

As you will see, we've been very happy to spend time with Chris and Mam, on leave from Qatar. We first met Chris and Mam when we went to live in Qatar in September 2003.

We also attended the Royal Marines Training Centre, and were very proud of my son, Paul, who was in charge of the passing-out parade of his Troop. It was a great privilege to attend this parade. I was also able to spend time *behind the scenes* at the training centre and meet many of his colleagues, all of whom made me welcome, and very much at home. What an incredibly interesting visit I had. Well worth crawling out of bed at 5:00 a.m. Thanks, Paul.

Alan



Photographs above: Daryl and Jake - Two of Grace's nephews. Photograph recently received.

Cover photograph: Paul Alan John Cook in charge of the Royal Marines Passing Out Parade on 23 July 2010.

Photograph overleaf: Mum and Dad in the Philippines. Photograph recently received.



Wightwick Manor



Wightwick Manor is considered to be the most important Victorian building in the care of the National Trust. It is one of the few surviving examples of a house built, decorated and furnished under the influence of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement. Wightwick Manor was commissioned by the enlightened industrialist, Samuel Theodore Mander, a paint and varnish manufacturer, and his wife Flora, daughter of Henry Nicholas Paint, member of Parliament in Canada who were influenced by the ideas of William Morris. It was designed by Edward Ould of Liverpool in two phases; the first was completed in 1887 and the house was extended with the Great Parlour wing in 1893.

The later, eastern half of the house is more ornate and inspired by the Tudor buildings of the Welsh Marches. The building is set on a plinth of local red sandstone and the patterns of the black and white timbering are reminiscent of Little Moreton Hall in Cheshire. The gabled roofline is crowned by banks of great, spiral Tudor chimneys. The elaborate bargeboards with a flowing Gothic design demonstrate the medievalizing spirit of the Pre-Raphaelites and the fine standard of craftsmanship shown by the architect, who was a disciple of Morris.

This family house portrays life during the Victorian era and is a notable example of the influence of William Morris, with original Morris wallpapers and fabrics, De Morgan tiles, Kempe glass, and Pre-Raphaelite works of art. The house has splendid Victorian gardens and the outbuildings house stables, a handmade pottery shop, studio workshop and an antiquarian bookshop.

The house was presented to the National Trust by Sir Geoffrey Mander under the Country Houses Scheme in 1937. Descendants of the family retain rooms in the manor.



Wightwick Manor



The first of the Sunflowers to
come into bloom in our garden





King's Squad 101 Troop Royal Marines Passing Out Parade

On 23 July 2010, we were all delighted to be able to attend the Passing Out Parade of the troop that Paul (*right and above - holding his Pace Stick*) has been training in his role of Drill Instructor. Paul choreographed the parade, that included a stunning display of marching by his troop. Brigadier Paul Denning, the main VIP at the parade delivered a short speech in which he publicly complimented Paul, something that has never been known before. A number of Paul's colleagues were also very complimentary as they had never seen a marching display like this at a passing out parade before. They told me that when they first saw it during practice the day before the parade, it was a case of WOW! Just look at this!

The band is that of the Royal Marines, Plymouth.





Photograph above: Paul (left) with Troop Officer, Captain Matthew Hammond. To the right is Lieut. Colonel Chattin, Officer Commanding The RM Training Wing

Photograph below right - left to right: Director of Training, Colonel Jim Hutton; Brigadier Paul Denning, Deputy Commandant General of the Royal Marines; Major Gray, Adjutant of The RM Training Centre, Lymestone.

Photograph below left: Troop Sergeant Kal Peterson.





Photographs at the Parade - by JP



Julie and Emily



Oscar





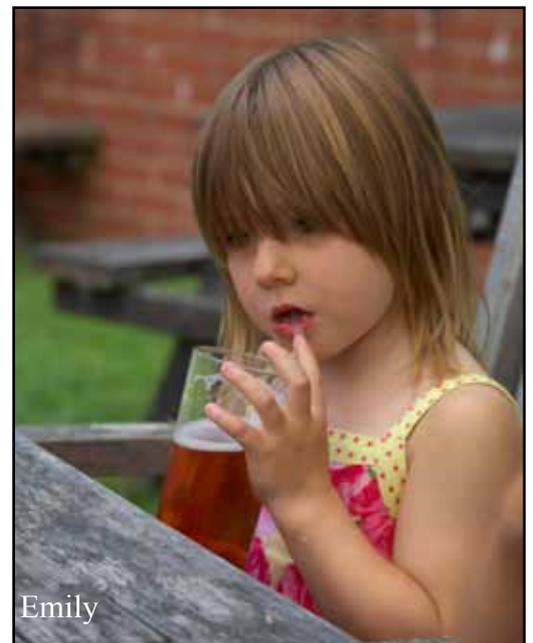
Alan with his two sons, Paul and John and his grandchildren, Emily and Oscar



Family weekend in Somerset



We enjoyed a super family weekend with Paul, Julie, Emily and Oscar in Taunton. We travelled after JP had finished school on Thursday 22 July. During our visit we attended the Passing Out Parade (*see previous pages*) and Alan spent quite a lot of time at the RM Training Centre, sharing a little of Paul's life in the Royal Marines. It was great to see all the family once again. On Sunday morning, we walked along the bank of the River Tone that flows through Taunton, where some of these photographs were taken, before heading for a good lunch at a local pub. It was sad to leave them all and head back to Wolverhampton on Sunday afternoon.



JP and Emily

Emily



All Aboard with Chris and Mam





We were delighted to be able to spend a day on board **Bella** with Chris and Mam who were visiting the UK from Qatar. Despite the weather, a good time was had by us all and it was really great to get together with our dear friends once again.



*Photograph (left)
Bella alongside the
Towing Path, by JP.*



*Photograph (right)
Mam, by JP.
(below) Chris and
Mam's children
operating a lock on
the canal.*





Book Choice



This is a collection of poems created by a group of students in Hong Kong.

Their task was to create a 5-line poem on any subject of their choice but stay within the format and metre prescribed. The subjects and issues they chose were wide-ranging: trees, love, water, animals, food, anger, fire, stars ...

They experienced tremendous satisfaction in using their right brains, being truly creative and making something unique; completely of their own. And they revealed such awareness and sensitivity to the subjects that I decided an anthology of their

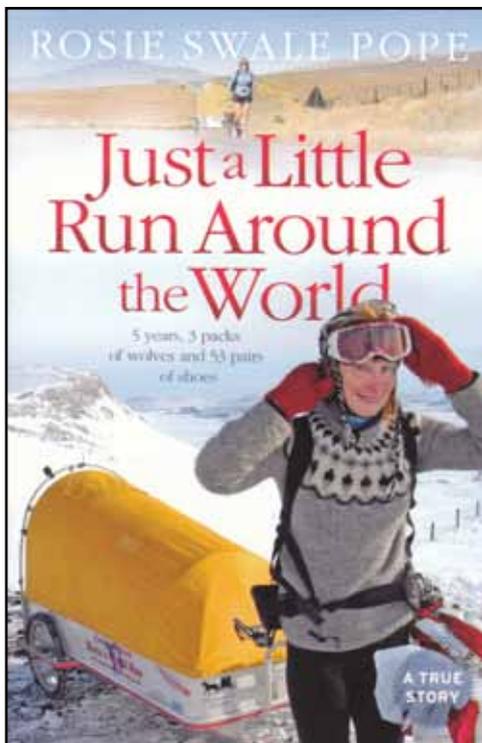
work should be produced. **Vonnie Boston**, who wrote

this description and compiled and designed this book, is one of

our very dear friends who lives and works in Hong Kong. It may be viewed

(and ordered) from URL: <http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/1409582>

Vonnie also has a website at URL: <http://www.zeropointfieldenergy.com/>



Another good book I've read this month is about the inspiring 5-year journey around the world by Rosie Swale Pope to raise awareness of prostate cancer and raise money for the Prostate Cancer Charity. Travelling alone through Siberia and Alaska in the winter and camping out in temperatures below -50°C is not for the faint hearted. Rosie made this epic journey after losing her husband to prostate cancer. Funding her trip from the rent of her cottage, she set out from Tenby with a pack on her back (later she purchased a cart she could pull along instead of carrying her load), she encountered wolves (one wolf put his head inside the door of her tent), bears and crazy people. She was knocked down by a bus and endured frostbite. One of the many experiences she had was being confronted by a pack of very hungry wild dogs. She threw a frozen loaf of bread to them and off they went without harming her. After camping for the night, she awoke to the sound of snoring outside her little tent. Gingerly poking her head outside, she saw the leader of the pack of dogs, who also opened his eyes and, on seeing her looking at him, wagged his tail in greeting. The rest of the pack of dogs were also laying against the sides of the tent as though protecting her after she'd shown kindness to them by giving them the bread. She shared her meagre breakfast with the dogs and off they went - best of friends. Rosie also encountered many people who showed her great kindness and hospitality. This book is a great read and may be obtained, on line from Amazon, or any other good book shop. I know you'll enjoy it.

Britain's Lady Pooh-Bah and the EU hall of mirrors

by **Melanie Phillips**
Daily Mail, 19 July 2010

By now, we are all so used to stories of EU profligacy and intrusive ineptitude that surely we should be inoculated against amazement or outrage.

Nevertheless, the revelations over the weekend about the activities of Lady Ashton, the EU High Representative, still take the breath away.

It appears that the noble Baroness and British Labour Party loyalist — who is effectively the EU foreign minister — is interviewing prospective ambassadors and senior officials to create the European External Action Service (EEAS) of EU diplomats.

Governments were originally promised that this new bureaucratic empire, which has been brought into being by the Lisbon Treaty (the one that created the EU constitution on which the British public were denied a vote), would entail no extra cost to taxpayers.

But a former chief accountant of the European Commission has estimated that it is likely to cost at least an extra £45 million to set up. And just look at what is being established here.

The EEAS will control a budget of £5.8 billion, including the EU's enormous aid and development packages and the costs of peacekeeping operations in global trouble spots. To administer this, a vast infrastructure is being created of 7,000 civil servants, with embassies around the world.

And this when the countries of Europe are under the financial cosh as never before, and with the British Foreign office planning to cut its costs by up to 40 per cent in order to help cut this country's budget deficit.

But then the EU never did observe the same rules that govern mere nations, such as prudence, accountability or proportionality.

To a bureaucracy whose profligacy would have made even the Sun King Louis XIV blush, what's a little thing like the global economic crisis — particularly when there is a whole new political order to be created?

For let us not forget that the very purpose of Lady Ashton's burgeoning empire is to undermine and even negate the ability of individual countries to have their own foreign policy.

That's why, as Britain's embassies and consulates in smaller countries are forced to shut down, their duties will be passed to the new network of 136 EU embassies.

That's why High Representative Lady Ashton says she will be speaking on behalf of the EU countries' 27 foreign ministers on global conflicts such as the Middle East or Iran.

But the idea that anyone should be able to speak 'for' William Hague or the foreign ministers of other EU member states is preposterous. These countries employ Foreign Ministers to be the voice of their nation abroad. They don't need anyone to speak for them.

The real purpose of the EU High Representative is to override what they are saying, and to substitute for the foreign policies of democratic nations an approach that has no popular mandate.

For this EU superstate, which so grandiosely lays claim to a collective voice on foreign affairs, has no coherence, identity or legitimacy — except what was brought into being by craven politicians whose electorates have remained overwhelmingly hostile to this coup d'état against national self-government.

Indeed, the EEAS will be taking foreign policy decisions that may well run entirely counter to the policies and interests of member states — but which, frighteningly, Britain and other EU countries will be forbidden to oppose.

In order for all 27 member states to agree on a united foreign policy, they will inevitably be forced to coalesce around the lowest common denominator. Though such a position will be weak — maybe dangerously so in the case, say, of Iran — neither Britain nor any other country will be able to pursue its own foreign policy.

This is because the Maastricht Treaty (remember the fight that was lost over that?) lays down that every country inside the EU must 'actively and unreservedly' support the EU's foreign and security policy, and must do nothing that is 'likely to impair its effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations'.

This common foreign and security policy has already made Europe weaker, leading to inaction or to positions dominated by France and Germany.

And now, at astronomical cost, an infrastructure is being bolted into place under Lady Ashton that will turn the foreign ministries of Europe into a ghostly hall of mirrors.

It is not just the foreign ministers who will find themselves second-guessed and undermined by the High Representative. Every country's ambassadors and foreign embassies will be replicated by EU duplicates.

In other words, the whole thing is nothing other than extravagantly subsidised megalomania. In truth, Jonathan

Swift or Franz Kafka would have had difficulty conjuring from their imaginations something quite as preposterous as this.

And on top of this whole baroque edifice of extra-territorial excess sits Baroness Ashton, the living embodiment of Gilbert and Sullivan's Pooh-Bah or Lady High Everything Else, whose epic expenditure appears to be matched in scale only by her incompetence.

Indeed, both the way in which she was appointed to her £270,000-a-year post and her subsequent performance in office have provided a veritable parable of the cavorting caravan of the contemptuous and the contemptible that is the EU.

It was suggested that Gordon Brown had wanted the post of High Representative filled by David Miliband or Peter Mandelson, but that he was outmanoeuvred by France and Germany, who believed they could control someone as inexperienced as Lady Ashton.

And yet these countries have been queuing up to moan about her incompetence. The German magazine *Der Spiegel* called her 'a walking disaster', with a German MEP saying she was 'simply out of her depth'.

The French went for her throat after she failed to visit Haiti in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake there — she argued in her own defence that 'disaster tourism' would detract from vital humanitarian efforts.

The French Europe minister even insultingly told her to brush up on her French — an offer she humiliatingly accepted by enrolling for a week at a French residential language school. Oh dear.

There were also reports that she was neglecting her duties by returning to Britain most weekends to be with her family and refusing to take calls after 8pm. Complaints about her amateurism and even incompetence erupted across the EU. officials sniped that she had become the 'mediocrity everybody loves to hate'.

But the criticism also laid bare the competition for primacy between the High Representative and the other two main EU figureheads, the presidents of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, and the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso.

All three lay claim to being the voice of the EU in the foreign councils of the world. In the EU's hall of mirrors, even Pooh-Bah, it appears, comes in multiples of three.

It is the other side of Henry Kissinger's famous aside that when he wanted to speak to Europe he needed to know which number to call.

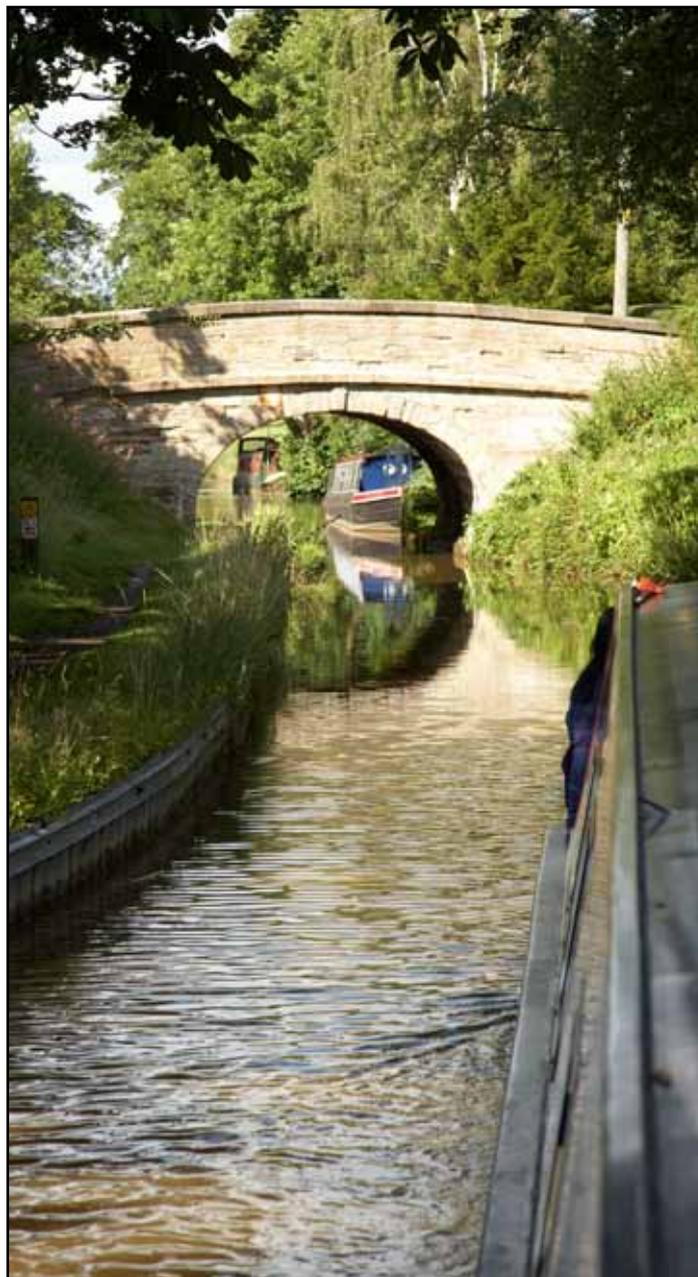
Well, now there are multiple numbers — an exponentially

increasing empire to service them, paid for by the long-suffering British and European public even as their own foreign services and powers of self-government are decimated.

Lady Ashton's performance has been a humiliation for Britain. But it has also shown up the EU's endemic incoherence and arrogant excess.

'No taxation without representation,' goes the defining slogan of democracy. But in the EU, it seems, there's not so much representation as replication — with the progressively disenfranchised being fleeced to provide it.

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.melaniephillips.com/articles-new/?p=754>



Philippines Triumphs at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod 2010 in Wales



The University of Santo Tomas (UST) Singers and the De La Salle University (DLSU) Chorale bested other choirs from around the world in the recently concluded Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod 2010 in Llangollen, Wales. Both choirs delivered world-class performances and won titles in their respective categories. Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod started in 1947 and has since attracted thousands of visitors and competitors from around the world.

The UST Singers won in the Mixed Choir and Youth Choirs categories. Best of all, the group was awarded the prestigious title “Choir of the World,” received the Pavarotti Trophy and became the first choir to win the title for the second time in the history of said international musical competition. The Choir of the World Competition is the final “play-off” between the winners of the five prestige choral competitions, namely Mixed Choir, Barbershop/Close Harmony Choruses, Male Choirs, Female Choirs and Chamber Choirs.

The DLSU Chorale won second place in the Chamber Choirs competition while the UST Singers placed third.

Prior to the competition, the UST Singers performed at St. Giles in the Fields Church in an event organized by the Philippine Centre charity. Likewise, the DLSU Chorale, held a concert at the Royal Over-Seas League principally sponsored by the Inter-Cultural Society of London and OneLASALLE UK.

Both the UST Singers’ and the DLSU Chorale’s performances for the Filcom were staged in cooperation with the Philippine Embassy in London. The choirs are scheduled to continue with their respective ongoing world tours and bring further joy and pride to the Philippines and Filipinos everywhere.

The University of Santo Tomas Singers, founded in 1992, is the University’s premiere mixed choral ensemble composed of a select group of students and alumni representing the different colleges and faculties of the Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas – the oldest university in Asia, under the baton of Prof. Fidel G. Calalang Jr.

The UST Singers has put together a repertoire of exceptional interpretations that cover significant parts of the choral literature of the last five centuries, paving way to the group’s triumphs in various international choral competitions, particularly in Europe. Since 1993, the group has earned more than 45 top prizes.

In the course of 15 years in the international choral music scene with thirteen (13) concert tours that brought them to GERMANY, POLAND, SLOVENIA, CZECH REPUBLIC, HUNGARY, MONACO, AUSTRIA, the NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM, SWITZERLAND, DENMARK, ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND, SPAIN, FRANCE, ANDORRA, BULGARIA, ITALY, MEXICO, CANADA, the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, TAIWAN, SINGAPORE, and SOUTH KOREA, the choir has achieved both national and international recognition as one of the top choirs in the world.

To see their performance, go to URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDdowTNhGN8&feature=related>

Also view their website at URL: http://www.ust-singers.com/index_e.html



The River Tone in Taunton, Somerset

