

# ABS:NEWS

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ARCHITECTS  
BENEVOLENT  
SOCIETY



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## Medical rescue

**Two year old Elsie had been pale, feverish and generally unwell for weeks before Mum and Dad, Max and Charlotte, where given the terrible news every parent dreads:**

Elsie had Leukaemia. Long periods of hospitalisation and a journey with a very uncertain outcome were to follow.

Acute Myeloid Leukaemia, comparatively rare in children, meant that Elsie would be an inpatient in medical isolation for at least six months. She did not respond to the initial treatment and

chemotherapy, blood transfusions, bone marrow transplants and a host of other unpleasant medical procedures followed.

The family had to relocate to the other end of the country for specialist treatment in the only unit of its kind and the ABS was able to provide practical support in the form of money for temporary accommodation. Charlotte was pregnant and a second child was born soon after Elsie's diagnosis. All this whilst the couple were trying to build their landscape architecture business.

The family are back home now, Elsie can start getting reacquainted with the world after living in isolation for so long and hopefully she can soon start going to pre-school. Mum and Dad's landscape architecture practice has survived and is growing in spite of the tough economic times which have seen a marked increase in the number of people seeking help from the ABS.

Visit [www.absnet.org.uk](http://www.absnet.org.uk) to read Elsie's full story and to link to the family blog and the British Bone Marrow Registry.



## Now is the time!

This Summer was not the best but we keep positive and are making plans for Summer 2010. If you enjoy a gentle 6km run then remember the ABS Populous Fun Run which will be taking place next June. To be kept informed about this sociable fun event contact [josh@absnet.org.uk](mailto:josh@absnet.org.uk). We would appreciate your support and the exercise will do you good!

## Dealing with redundancy

Earlier this year the ABS produced a Redundancy Help and Information Pack which has been read by over a thousand people. We have been able to help some of these people with money, legal advice, debt counselling and in extreme cases provide funds to keep a roof over their heads.

If you need help please contact the Society at [help@absnet.org.uk](mailto:help@absnet.org.uk) and our trained welfare officers will confidentially assess your situation and advise our case committee on the most appropriate help for you in your particular circumstances. In urgent cases where there is particular need we can make payments very quickly.

## Update on Antonia

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In a previous issue of ABS News we reported on how we had been able to help Antonia who qualified as an architect in 1984. A successful life and an impressive number of career highlights working for leading European and London practices followed until she contracted viral meningitis in 1993. She was a fit healthy 43 year old but her immune system malfunctioned and started attacking her own cells. She eventually left hospital a tetraplegic and a wheelchair user. Complications led to several more spells in hospital, a broken relationship and loss of income.

We first visited Antonia in November 1997 shortly before she moved into a specially adapted flat. The ABS helped by providing equipment for her care and a computer to enable her to keep in touch more easily with friends and colleagues. We've also provided the funds to ensure that she has been able to have a holiday from time to time.

Since moving into her own flat Antonia has regained control of her life. She has attended various courses and familiarised herself with the Disability Discrimination Act and issues around access in the built environment. Together with other volunteers she runs an Access Information Line, attends Access Group meetings on various building projects and is involved in local planning matters.

We still support Antonia and are grateful for the financial help we get from the profession which enables us to continue with this work.



## An electronic throttle kept Gareth mobile

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We were able to help Gareth with a wheelchair hoist and an electronic throttle for his car. This is what he had to say:

"Previously, it was necessary to laboriously take the chair to pieces and lift each component individually into the boot – a difficult and time consuming process. In addition I was finding the effort of using a mechanical throttle, with its heavy spring, increasingly difficult. Having retired early from my lecturing post, because I have MS, my pension is modest. I was therefore grateful for the interest free loan which the ABS made me, enabling us to fit both the hoist and an electronic throttle to the car.

This specialist equipment is expensive, and the help of the ABS has made a dramatic difference to my ability to get around, and to Jill's back-ache. It is now an easy matter to go shopping, or attend the occasional student assessment at the School of Architecture, where I used to work."

## Help for those who help themselves

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The Redundant Architects Recreation Association in Clapton, East London was set up when the recession started to bite in 2008. It offers workstations, a workshop, tools, storage and a collaborative atmosphere where redundant architects can undertake small design jobs, enter competitions using equipment available and generally keep in touch with fellow professionals whilst earning a small income. For more information go to [www.eastlondondesignbureau.com/rara.html](http://www.eastlondondesignbureau.com/rara.html)

## A brief history of tomorrow

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The Society is arranging a series of talks by leading architects who are generously opening their offices and hosting a series of evenings which begin at Make Architects on 22 October. Other hosts include Alison Brooks Architects, Allies and Morrison, dRMM and Wilkinson Eyre. See [www.absnet.org.uk](http://www.absnet.org.uk) for further details. If you would like to come along after work, hear leading architects share their thoughts, have a glass of wine and network with other architectural professionals then email [josh@absnet.org.uk](mailto:josh@absnet.org.uk). The series runs until Spring 2010. Tickets cost £6 (or £24 all 5 events). All proceeds to the ABS thanks to generous sponsorship from Quinn London Ltd, WPG Surveys, AZOgraphics and Thomas & Wilson.



## Can you help?

Please help us care for people of all ages who have suffered illness, accident, bereavement and other personal misfortune such as redundancy. You can make a donation today or arrange a small fundraising event such as a coffee morning. Simply passing on our details to a friend or colleague in architecture who you know could do with a helping hand might make a real difference.

## WCCA recognises those with a heart

The Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects recognised Malcolm and Elisabeth Thirkettle for their good deeds to fellow residents at the Society's sheltered accommodation and for their fundraising efforts to support the ABS. A beautiful platter painted by John Lyall was presented to them at the WCCA Election Court Dinner held at the Vintners Hall at the beginning of July.

If you want to be considered for the 2010 award now is the time to start planning your sponsored abseil down London's tallest building or perhaps something more down to earth like a building visit or a Summer Ball. Contact the Society for more fundraising ideas. Next year's platter will be designed by Russell Brown.

## Postcards from the future

We are holding a drawings exhibition and sale in 2010 to raise funds for the Society and to give you a chance to show off your sketching, drawing and painting skills. If you would like to see your A5 sized work exhibited alongside that of some of the world's leading architects then register your email address with [josh@absnet.org.uk](mailto:josh@absnet.org.uk) to receive further information.



## Yes - I want to help by making a regular donation

Post this form to: **Architects Benevolent Society, 43 Portland Place, London W1B 1QH** or give online at [www.absnet.org.uk](http://www.absnet.org.uk)

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To get in touch with us  
call **020 7580 2823**  
or email [help@absnet.org.uk](mailto:help@absnet.org.uk)

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