



Brits Abroad Shanghai
Annual Report 2023-24
to be presented at the
Annual General Meeting
on
Wednesday 20th March 2024 at 10am
at
Copper, Conrad Shanghai

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1. Review of the year

The beginning of the year 2023 brought hope to Shanghai after 3 difficult years as the borders were declared open. There was excitement in the air for travels to begin and the fear of the past 3 years started to be laid to rest.

Brits Abroad was facing its own set of challenges. Lots of expats left Shanghai to escape the restrictions and our membership was severely reduced.

Our interim President, Anna Forster moved to Hong Kong and no-one wanted to take on this role so the new committee decided to go ahead and work in a democratic way without a President.

Thanks to the following members of the committee, Brits Abroad was able to continue. Caz Johnston took over the Social Coordinator's role, Mandy Gill continued as Membership Coordinator and Lidel Freeman continued as Treasurer. Anita Aggarwal stepped into the role of Discounts Coordinator, Mary Bardet took over the role of Book Club Coordinator and Sarah Eckersley continued her role as Walks Coordinator.

In September Mandy had to give up her Membership role and Pam Gray kindly agreed to step in. In December, long-time supporter of Brits Abroad Caz Johnston, moved to Thailand and Alexandra Archer kindly agreed to take over her role.

As Shanghai gained some normalcy, so did Brits Abroad. With a much-reduced committee we did our best and tried to create opportunities for some much-needed social interaction and enjoyment.

Our regular weekly games of Mahjong and May I? re-commenced as did our regular monthly events - Drop in Drinks, Walks, Coffee Mornings and Book Club and we organised lots of other activities (see the following pages) to try and get Brits Abroad back onto its former footing.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered during the year; to the hard-working and dedicated committee and to everyone else who helped organise, run or prepare for an event. Brits Abroad would not be able to function without you.

A reduced membership means, of course a reduced income so we were unable to donate as much to charity as we would have liked but we did manage to donate to More Than Aware, the breast cancer awareness charity, the details of which are shown later in this report.

Having read back over previous years' reports, it's evident that Brits Abroad always plays a significant part in people's lives while they are in Shanghai and this year has been no exception. We aim to make Brits Abroad a welcoming and friendly club and we feel that in this, post-covid year especially, there has been a great feeling of comradery. Long may that continue.

We are always open to suggestions from members as to events and activities you would like to see included in our schedule. Please don't hesitate to contact one of the team if you think of anything.

And finally, if you enjoy working as part of a team for the benefit of the wider community, we are always looking for volunteers, so again, please get in touch with one of us.

Brits Abroad Committee

2. Membership

At the end of 2023 we had 151 members, including 42 children aged between 1 and 18. We had 63% Full members (British) and 37% Associate members, which fulfilled the membership rules as set out in our Constitution. Our membership fee remained at RMB300 for the calendar year, with a special offer being given to those who joined at the Pink Ribbon Lunch in October. This offer gave them membership from the date of the lunch to the end of 2024 for RMB300 and attracted 4 new members. Any new members joining in November or December were also given memberships which ran to the end of 2024.

60% of our members lived in Puxi and 32% lived in Pudong. Please see below a breakdown of our membership figures for 2023.

No. of Families	61
No. of Adults	109
No. of Children	42
Total No. of members	151
British Adults	63%
Associate members	37%
Live in Puxi	60%
Live in Pudong	32%

We have not yet reached the heady height of our pre-covid membership level but we are always pro-active in encouraging new members to join our merry band - the more the merrier. Please reach out to newcomers in Shanghai and encourage them to join our friendly club.

The main purpose of Brits Abroad is to help our members, so please contact me or any member of the committee, if you have a query or a suggestion or if you would like to join our friendly team.

Pam Gray
Membership Coordinator

3. Social

Our social calendar was awash with activities in 2023. Our weekly Mahjong & May I? games re-commenced during the year at *Abbey Road*, our monthly Book Club took place at the *Bull & Claw* and our monthly 10K Walks, Drop in Drinks and Coffee Mornings took place at various locations during the year.

As well as our regular activities we had lots of other events. You can read about these below.

Pink Ribbon Luncheon

On 19th October 2023 we held our annual charity Pink Ribbon Luncheon. This took place in *Kathleens Waitan* in Puxi. The food was delicious, the staff were great and the raffle, thanks to our generous donors and members, was very successful. In addition to the raffle, we had ladies doing henna tattoos, we had a 'guess the pink ribbon length' game and we had a photo booth where members had their photos taken with various wacky accessories. Afterwards some of us retired to the rooftop terrace to enjoy the lovely weather and the view. The event was a great success, and we raised a staggering RMB20,540 for More Than Aware which we topped up from our reserves to RMB40,000.



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Brits Abroad Bake-Off



A lot of fun was had at our Bake-off in November, organised by Mandy Gill. Our theme this time was *cookies*. We had 7 bakers, 2 judges and plenty of tasters. The judges had a difficult job choosing the winner but, in the end, after allowing the tasters to vote, the well-deserved winner was announced - Irene with her amazing shake xmas cookies. *Epermarket* very kindly supplied the baking-themed prizes

for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. Rebecca came 2nd with her gingerbread cookies and Pam came 3rd with her vegan chocolate & orange cookies.



1st Place



2nd Place



3rd Place

Comedy Night

This event in November was a roaring success and a bundle of laughs. 27 members gathered for a pre-show dinner in Xintiandi, followed by a 60-minute comedy show and a private drinks reception to meet the comedians in person. Highballs and high jinks were the order of the night!



Alexandra Archer - Social Publicity Coordinator

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Bauble workshop



Christmas Bauble workshop 2023



The bauble grotto was full for the bauble-making workshop in December, just in time to add them to our Xmas trees. 6 members attended and were instructed on how to make a no-sew bauble. With Christmas music playing and mince pies on hand, a fun and creative time was had by all.

Pam Gray
Membership Coordinator

Women's World Cup Matches

The Women's World Cup 2023 with the Lionesses participating, was one that had to be celebrated together by Brits Abroad. The venue was *Temperature and Temptations* and they gave us an exclusive space in which to watch the game on the big screens. That first game was attended by 15 people and resulted in a great win for the Lionesses. The next games that played on a weekend were also hosted by *Temperature and Temptations* until the Lionesses reached their final game. It was a fun way to meet, socialise and celebrate the game with like-minded Lionesses' fans.



Annie Gaertke
Social Team

Panlong visit

This event, organised by Caz Johnstone, included a brisk stroll, boat ride and lunch in the new Panlong Tiandi area. This area blends both East and West and has revitalised a historic water town, respecting its legacy while establishing a new identity as a 21st century hub.



King's Coronation

In May Caz Johnstone flew the Union Jack high in celebration of the King's Coronation. In a room of red, white and blue we sat down to traditional British food, dressed in our British props and did some British brainteaser games.



Burns Night

In January some of our members – Chris Justham, Keith and Shelly Nicholson, Hannah Liping and Caz Johnstone, worked together with Rebecca Xie to organise



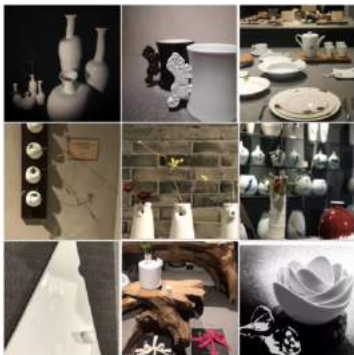
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an event to celebrate Burns Night. Bagpipes, kilts and tartan transformed *Geneva*. Delicious food of haggis, tatties and neeps, smoked salmon and Irish Cream cheesecake gave a taste of Scotland and we all danced the night away to the highland music.

Caz Johnston
Social Coordinator

Other Events

We organised many other events for our members throughout the year, including an art exhibition with *Affordable Art Fair*; a fun midweek Ladies Night of at *Shake* and a water forest visit both organised by Anita Aggarwal. And an exclusive pre-sale viewing at *Spin Ceramics* which was organised by Mandy Gill.



London originated brand Affordable Art Fair has first come to Shanghai, after its opening in other 10 art cities including London, New York, Amsterdam. You can expect 47 domestic and overseas galleries bringing a wide variety of art from a few thousand up to 100,000 RMB! There are also inspiring special projects with young and established artists, talks, and guided tours to sign up to. The fair aims to allow more people to discover the joy of collecting art at affordable prices!



4. Regular Activities

Drop In Drinks

Drop In Drinks is an ongoing Brits Abroad event which is scheduled once a month on a Friday evening. It is hosted at different locations in and around Shanghai to provide the opportunity to members and non-members who live in different locations to be able to attend. Since Caz left in December, one DID was held in Xuhui and one in Jing'An. Hosting it on a Friday evening also allows the working partners, who can't participate in our morning events, to attend. DID is a fun and casual event which allows everyone to meet, network and socialise in an informal way. Non-members are also welcome to attend in the hope that they will want to become a member. It's a fun and relaxing way to start the weekend so hopefully more people will join us.



Annie Gaertke
Social Team

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May I?

May I? is a great way to get together with other Brits Abroad members for a card game. The game is easy to learn and oh so much fun to play. For only RMB60, members play for approximately 3 hours and receive 2 drinks of either coffee, tea or soft drinks. Come join us for a game of May I? on Wednesday afternoons at *Abbey Road* on Taojiang Road at 1:30pm.



Lidel Freeman
May I? Coordinator

Mahjong

Mahjong is a game that originated in China but is now played all over the world. Sure, we play a British version rather than Shanghai style, but it makes it even more of a game of skill, strategy, calculation and, of course, chance.



Is it as difficult to play as people say? No! We'll teach you how to play step-by-step and all of a sudden you'll be a master of the game. Plus, there's the great fun of getting to know your fellow Brits Abroad members as the games are played.

We play British-style Mahjong every Monday afternoon (1:30pm – 4:30pm) at *Abbey Road* on Taojiang Road. It's a popular event and lots of fun. It's open to everyone and is a great way to relax, chat and meet new people. We have a beginners' table every week so don't worry about not knowing how to play. We only charge RMB60 to play, which includes 2 beverages for the afternoon and money for the charity pot. We have a lot of fun! Come join us!

Karen Carrington
Mahjong Coordinator

10K Walks

Unfortunately, 2023 was a disappointing year for the Brits Abroad walks. Many of the committee members were travelling and I spent a lot of time in the UK during 2023. Walks were held in February, October, November and December. In February we enjoyed a walk from West Bund to Cool Docks finishing at *The Dutch Bakery*. In October we held our annual Breast Cancer Awareness walk



starting from The Bund and walking along the north side of Suzhou Creek before doubling back along the south side and finishing with a delicious lunch at *Adesso*.

In November we enjoyed a guided walk around Hongkou led by Clarisse from *Arcade*. We learned the history of the Jewish refugees in the area and visited the Shanghai Jewish Refugee Museum, finishing with a coffee at the *White Horse Café*, originally built in 1939 as a refuge for Jewish immigrants escaping Nazi-occupied Germany.



In December we held our annual Christmas walk on the Bund followed by lunch at *Goodfellas*.



Sarah Eckersley
Walks Coordinator

Book Club

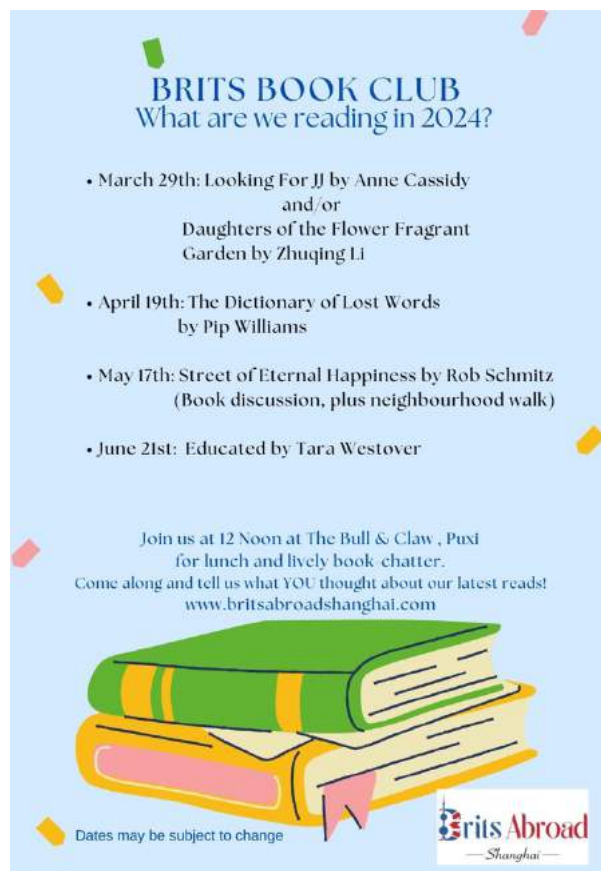
Having originally joined the Brits Abroad book club as a newbie myself back in 2014, I was happy to take over the reins once again when we returned to Shanghai in late January 2023.

Book Clubs have always held a special place in my heart; they are a great way of integrating into a new community and a special bond always seems to quickly develop within a group of fellow booklovers.

Our monthly reads in 2023 were chosen from amongst a selection of books proposed by the members themselves and covered a wide range of topics and literary genres. The titles ranged from brand new books hot off the press, such as *Broken Light* by Joanne Harris, to old favourites like December's read where we delved into Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol*.

Once or twice a year we try and link further activities to the books we are reading, and this year was no exception. In November we coupled our book choice, *Ten Green Bottles* by Vivian Jeanette Kaplan, with a guided visit to the Jewish memorial museum, plus a fabulous evening at Jaguar Symphony Hall, where we attended the world premiere of *Emigré*, an Oratorio based on the experience of Jewish refugees in Shanghai.

We are a very casual group and warmly welcome new members to join us. You'll usually find us on the third Friday of each month at our regular corner table in *The Bull and Claw*, Puxi where the group meets for lunch and plenty of lively book chatter....so please don't hesitate to get in touch and come and join us.



Mary Bardet

Book Club Coordinator

Coffee Mornings

There was no coffee morning in January due to covid restrictions. Our first Meet and Greet Coffee was held at *Melbourne*. Once the new committee took over, our next two were held in April at *Bread Etc* on Nanjing Road. We moved the June Meet and Greet closer to the river at *Brokking Dutch Bakery* to make it more convenient to those members living in Pudong. We switched it up again in July and August and held them in *O'Mills Bistro* at the Kerry Centre in Jing'An.

The September coffee morning had a slightly different agenda in that we took a stroll first along Huaihai Road to enjoy the weather and then had coffee at *Baker & Spice* at the IAPM. The October Coffee was at Cotton's to celebrate the Pink month and they very kindly added a touch of pink to their decor.

November's event was at *Overlaps* on Hengshan Road and in December it was back at *Bread Etc.*

The casual drop-in nature of our coffee mornings is popular with our members. As well as sharing experiences with current members, we welcome new members to join us. It's also been a good forum for members getting to know about upcoming events.

Anita Aggarwal

Coffee Morning Coordinator

Breakfast with Brits

We re-introduced our popular Breakfast with Brits at *Paulaners* in 2023, post-pandemic. *Paulaners* have been laying on a special spread for Brits Abroad for over 10 years. The breakfast is quite hearty with an assortment of cold cuts, bread, scrambled and fried eggs, sausage salad, fruit platter, individual yoghurts and a choice of 2 drinks. We had this special event a few times in March at the AGM and then in May, August and November.



Anita Aggarwal

Breakfast with Brits Coordinator

5. Community Outreach

More than Aware is a Shanghai-born support group that has been empowering women to be proactive in the prevention and recovery of breast cancer since 2011. The staggering amount of RMB20,540 was raised at the Pink Ribbon Lunch in October which we topped up to RMB40,000 from our reserves.

6. Internal and External Communications

Internal Communications

There are a few ways in which we keep you informed about what's happening with Brits Abroad. We have a WeChat group, to which all members are added and if you are a Facebook user, we hope that Brits Abroad is one of your Facebook friends.

Finally, don't forget our members' request facility. Members are encouraged to use this feature to ask for help from fellow Brits Abroad members. All you need to do is fill in the form on the website and we'll get back to you.

External Communications

We have continued to promote Brits Abroad to potential new members, partners and sponsors. We attended the BritCham event at Wellington School in May and we also set up a stall to promote Brits Abroad at the November British Chamber Q & A session where the British Consul-General Matt Burney was in attendance. We had the opportunity to chat with both Matt and Stuart Dunn (Executive Director at the British Chamber) and they were both keen to collaborate with us in the future.

Discounts

Throughout the year we work with our discount partners to bring you great discounts around town. Our biggest achievement in 2023 was with *Epermarket*.

After many talks, they agreed to re-introduce their 10% discount on orders. The discount comes off the following order.

We also had a special offer with *Sanctuary Spa* for the month of May where they gave our members 20% off all facials.

Some of our discount partners also gave generously towards our Pink Ribbon Lunch raffle prizes.

We currently have 20 discount partners, giving us discounts on Food & Beverage, Shopping, Health & Wellbeing, Education, Tourism & Other Services.

Please have a look at our discount page on our website to see if there is anything of interest to you. It is constantly updated with the latest offers and gives instructions as to how to access each offer.

The more we use our discounts, the more our vendors see the benefit of the partnership with us and future discounts are easier to maintain or negotiate.

Our current discount providers are:

Abbey Road Restaurant – 10% off their midweek à la carte menu, excluding any specials or promotions.

Australia Expat Travel – 10% discount off the consultancy fee.

Elle's Home Beauty Spa – 10% off all services.

EMW Fine Wines – 20% off all wines.

Epermarket – 10% discount on 1 order per month. Code shared on the members WeChat group.

Geneva Restaurant – 10% off their midweek à la carte menu, excluding specials or promotions.

Greenwave – 25% off water filters, excluding replacements. 30% off Blueair air purifiers and 20% off Blueair filter replacements.

Husk – a welcome drink when you order a main course. Choice includes wine, draft beer, classic cocktails, soft drinks, tea and coffee.

Kebabs on the Grille – 10% off à la carte dining.

MeatMaster – 8% off their full range of products.

Mikael Botteri Hair@Armani Salon – 10% off on any 2 of the following: full head highlights, roots colour, cut and blowdry.

MinuteCare – 10% off regular services (minimum 3 hours a week) for the 1st month. 10% off any service if you successfully sign up a friend.

Pera Indian and Turkish Restaurant – 10% off à la carte menu.

Phoebe - Mobile Nail service – 10% off all nail services including manicure, pedicure, Shellac or regular varnish to foot treatments for men.

Spin Ceramics – 10% off their range.

StudioNoosh – 10% off, in store or online.

That's Mandarin – 5% off all adult courses.

The Tavern – Butler and Whites with Guinness – a free house wine or Becks with every meal purchased.

Tian Yi Corp Identity Design and Printers – 15% off all printing.

Times Grocery – 10% off all online shopping.

We are continually looking for more vendors who may offer some specials to our members.

Anita Aggarwal

Discounts Coordinator

7. Financial Report

BRITS ABROAD INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2023

		<u>RMB</u>
<u>INCOME</u>		
Mayl ?		6,210
Mahjong		2,080
Membership Fees		7,800
Walks, etc		1,666

		17,756
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Donations	19,460	
Pink Ribbon Lunch Expenses	409	
Marketing Expenses	400	
Xmas Party DJ	4,500	
AGM Breakfast	1,300	
Sundries	540	26,609
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<u>EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME</u>		8,853
		=====

<u>BALANCE SHEET</u>	<u>31/12/22</u>	<u>31/12/23</u>
	<u>RMB</u>	<u>RMB</u>
WeChat Pay	-	12,447
Cash in Safe	50,715	29,415
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<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>	50,715	41,862
	=====	=====
	<u>NET DECREASE</u>	8,853

Lidel Freeman - Treasurer

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8. The Brits Abroad Team

The Committee members and representatives who served during 2023/24 are set out below:

Committee

Treasurer	Lidel Freeman
Social Coordinator	Caz Johnstone to Dec. '23
Membership Coordinator	Mandy Gill to Sept. '23 then Pam Gray
Book Club Coordinator	Mary Bardet
Discounts & Coffee Morning Coordinator	Anita Aggarwal
Walks Coordinator	Sarah Eckersley
Social Publicity Coordinator	Alexandra Archer Nov. 23 onwards
Website Coordinator	James Dyson
Newsletter Creator & Secretary	Paula Pynenburg Oct. - Nov. '23

Representatives

Mahjong Coordinator	Karen Carrington
May I? Coordinator	Mandy Gill then Lidel Freeman
Social Team member	Annie Gaertke Oct. '23 onwards
Proofreader	Vicky Creissen