

NOT A KING'S RANSOM... BUT A LIFELINE

When GTC member Chris Yacoubian was struck down by a critical illness last year, the Cinema and Television Benevolent Fund (CTBF) provided Chris with support and financial assistance as he battled the disease. Many GTC members may not have been properly aware of the charity, so this year the Guild chose to donate all the proceeds from a prize raffle held at its 'Day in the Country', raising a very gratifying £2500. The CTBF offers assistance to those who have worked in the film and television industries in many different ways, as Paul Pirie from the charity explains.



The London Party is one of the main CTBF fundraisers

A helping hand

Way back in 1924, leading figures in the UK's fast-growing film industry decided to establish a charitable organisation to help employees of this rather fragmented industry when they were suffering poverty, hardship or poor health. This was the beginning of the Cinema and Television Benevolent Fund, a safety net for TV and film employees, and their families, in times of need.

Ninety years on, life is quite different but in many ways no less difficult. Thankfully, the core values of the Fund remain the same and the CTBF continues to help employees and their families in challenging times through the provision of care and financial support.

The CTBF is somewhere film and television employees can turn to when life deals a tough hand. Pride can often become a barrier to reaching out for support in such circumstances but with financial commitments and a family to support it is all too easy to quickly spiral into debt.

During the past 12 months the CTBF welfare team has made over 1000 house visits to beneficiaries and their families, and has provided welfare grants to more than 6500 recipients across the country.



CTBF President Barry Jenkins in London Party fancy dress receiving cheque from GTC members John Tarby and Anna Carrington

The CTBF hopes that when you read the real life stories of Chris and Cassius below you will feel able to overcome such barriers in asking for help and will think of contacting the charity sooner rather than later. The CTBF is your charity; it is here to support you and your family.

Chris Yacoubian's story

This time last year, as a busy director of photography, GTC member Chris Yacoubian's biggest concerns were familiarising himself with the latest bits of kit and making sure the likes of will.i.am were happy with his lighting design.

Then, on 2 July 2013, Chris's world fundamentally changed. He was diagnosed with a very aggressive and rare form of cancer in his neck. He was advised to stop working immediately and to clear his diary of all commitments for the coming year. His treatment would be as extreme as it gets; receiving the highest doses of both chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Coming to terms with this diagnosis was surreal for Chris; he had just got engaged, bought a house by the coast and had a number of really exciting projects lined up, but his immediate thoughts were of survival and, sadly, also how he was going to make ends meet.

Chris says, "The one thing you don't want to worry about when going through this dark journey is money, but the reality is not only did I have to give up work, but so did my fiancée, Camilla, as I was in need of full time care." Chris and Camilla (a TV producer/director) were only entitled to Statutory Sick Pay and then Employment Support Allowance after the sick pay finished.

The CTBF was completely unknown to Chris prior to his illness. It was brought to Chris and Camilla's attention by GTC Welfare Officer Brian Rose and Amy Brooks at Shift 4.

After a single call from Camilla (Chris lost the ability to talk completely for three months), a simple form was sent and within two weeks a wonderful, bubbly welfare visitor from the CTBF, Patsy May, came all the way to West Cornwall to visit them. Chris says:

"As an ex-nurse, Patsy was so understanding. She took the time to discuss all our needs and what we needed to survive financially. With almost immediate effect, a small monthly allowance was put into place by CTBF which took a huge load off our minds. It wasn't a king's ransom, but the truth is it has made a big difference to Camilla and myself and has kept the wolf from the door.

I am eternally grateful for CTBF's generosity and understanding. And I know that if Zerb readers should be knocked for six by whatever the world may throw at you,

Right: Chris and Camilla in Iceland before the diagnosis



Left: Chris undergoes chemotherapy via a line direct to his heart

Below: Chris filming for a surfing documentary in Hawaii just before the illness



your family or colleagues in the industry, the CTBF will come to your aid in whatever way you may need."

At the time of going to press, we have just received the wonderful news that Chris has received the all clear from his cancer and so, as well as getting fully back to work, he and Camilla can now happily concentrate on plans for their wedding next year.

National Care Plan

In the first venture of its kind, the CTBF has launched its National Care Plan, which enables those who have worked in the commercial television or film industries (for at least two years) to receive a discount in any Anchor Care Home across England; and their parents too!

The partnership with care and housing provider Anchor, which operates almost 100 care homes and retirement housing to rent at 700 sites across England, means that those who work in film and television from all parts of the country can now access care homes at preferential rates and receive help with finding retirement housing from a trusted and highly regarded provider.

This new offering builds on the CTBF's tradition of caring for older beneficiaries at Glebelands their well-known and long-established care and nursing home in Berkshire.

If your parents are seeking residential care and may be eligible for a discount, or would like to find out more about the National Care Plan, please contact the CTBF welfare team: Freephone: 0800 138 2522 or email: welfare@ctbf.co.uk





John Babourne

The John Brabourne Awards

As one of Britain's most prolific film producers John Brabourne had an illustrious career creating some of the greats of British cinema, including *A Passage to India*, *Murder on the Orient Express* and *Romeo and Juliet*. John Brabourne was also a Chairman of Thames Television and Director of Euston Films and Thorn EMI. Throughout his career Brabourne consistently championed the need to support new talent entering the film and television industries, a cause he

furthered in his time as a Trustee of CTBF (1985–1988).

Today, CTBF's John Brabourne Awards (JBAs) are still embracing emerging talent and aim to give a hand up to those faced with hurdles in progressing their career. Director and JBA recipient Amanda Boyle shares how the JBAs gave her the important career boost she needed:

"I was lucky enough to receive my John Brabourne Award at a key turning point in my career. I was broke, juggling a series of part-time jobs, trying to finish my third short film and keen to get myself seen as a director rather than a jack-of-all-trades filmmaker. The monies I received from the award got the bank off my back and more importantly gave me a little time to finish my film.

*That piece of work, which won at a couple of international film festivals, helped me get my first proper directing job on the Jack Thorne/Channel 4 show *Cast Offs*. Not only was directing that series an incredible experience that introduced me to great friends and collaborators, but the drama went on to be RTS nominated and was even mentioned in a House of Lords debate as "brilliant, funny, touching and completely unsentimental".*

JBA

JOHN BRABOURNE AWARDS

*After *Cast Offs*, I was chosen as lead director on the multi-BAFTA award-winning Channel 4 show *Skins*, and then a few months later, director of the finale of the Channel 4 comedy drama *Sirens*. I was also taken on by Academy Films and since then things have basically gone from strength to strength including working with the wonderful Gina McKee on a 30-minute drama 'Care' for Sky Arts and also picking up a Vimeo Best Fashion Film award for my film 'Skirt'.*

I am convinced that you can trace my career back to that pivotal moment when the CTBF's JBAs supported me. Directing in the UK is often an act of faith, and for someone to have had belief in me early on, as well as to have given me cold hard cash, was incredibly valuable. I'm very grateful to the CTBF and still can't thank the John Brabourne Awards committee enough.

For more information about the JBAs visit: www.jbawards.org.uk

Amanda Boyle, whose career took off after a helping hand from the JBAs



Cassius Rayner's story

Cassius Rayner is a director and camera operator. For the last seven years he has dedicated his skills to mentoring, training and supporting disadvantaged young people in film production.

In March 2011, his second daughter Jessica was born with severe heart problems and subsequently diagnosed with Noonan Syndrome, a disease that causes abnormal development in many parts of the body. Jessica was not expected to survive and still needs continuous daily care.

At that time, Cassius lost all his future work contracts due to Jessica's continued hospitalisation. In the summer of 2011 the family was given notice to vacate their flat and couldn't find anything suitable close to the hospital. By April 2012, the family was registered as homeless with their local council, which was not able to offer alternative accommodation or any other support.

Around this time CTBF started to support the family with a weekly grant, an immediate needs grant, and help towards bills and living expenses.

Eventually a flat became available near the hospital and the CTBF was able to help the family secure the flat.



Left: Director/camera operator Cassius Rayner



Below: Cassius Rayner meets the Duke of Cambridge at last year's Royal Film Premiere in aid of the CTBF

Give a little back to CTBF

- Make a donation online – visit www.ctbf.co.uk/donate
- Make a £3 monthly subscription donation to CTBF and the CTBF will receive 100% – just text FILMTV10 to 70660 to donate £3 per month until you choose to reply with a 'STOP' text.

(Customer care 020 7437 6567. Charity No.1099660 Company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales no: 4816786).

- Add CTBF to your will and leave a lasting legacy to support others who are struggling – email info@ctbf.co.uk if you require help in drafting or amending your will.
- Volunteer – CTBF has a number of activities that need to be filmed and edited throughout the year. Visit www.ctbf.co.uk/londonparty to see how GTC members John Tarby and Anna Carrington volunteered their time, expertise and kit to help CTBF at this year's London Party.
- Attend a CTBF event – the CTBF holds film screenings, including the high-profile Royal Film Premiere™ each year, plus other fun events such as the London Party at the Tower of London and the forthcoming Best of British Comedy Lunch at BAFTA.
- Many companies, both big and small, pass on the chance for their customers to make a charity donation. By adding a fixed amount or between 2–5% 'of total invoice' voluntary donation to your invoices, CTBF could receive over £1000 per year each from GTC members.



John Tarby helping out by filming The London Party

If you need some help

If you, your family or a work colleague are experiencing financial hardship, require help in getting back into work or need other practical assistance then please contact the CTBF today.

Confidential help line: Freephone 0800 138 2522
Email: welfare@ctbf.co.uk

To read how CTBF can help or to download an Assistance Application Form visit:
www.ctbf.co.uk/what-we-do.php

See more about CTBF:
www.ctbf.co.uk
info@ctbf | 020 7437 6567

