

How to show that you are truly British

Margaret and John were in Rwanda in 1994 when trouble broke out there following the death in a plane crash of the Rwanda President. What followed was genocide – and Margaret and John were embroiled in the chaos. Thanks to their fluency in several languages and a Union Jack on their vehicle they made their escape into Uganda and there they managed to buy some time on a satellite telephone.

John knew that the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office had been keeping Dorothy and me informed of Margaret's and John's safety so he thought he should contact us. I answered the phone and he said 'We are both safe and well and we are being evacuated. Can't keep this phone long. Others are wanting to use it. And it's costing me £35 a minute to use it!' I thought Dorothy would like to hear his voice and know that he was safe, and I passed the phone to her. John spoke, apparently with bullets and mayhem reigning round him, and Dorothy said to him 'Hello, dear. What's the weather like there?'