

Thinking About

Today, we think of charities of mainly helping in the third world, or caring for sick animals, or perhaps trying to find a cure for cancer. Until the Second World War, charities had an additional responsibility of caring for hundreds of thousands of poor people, functions which have now been largely absorbed into the Welfare State, although certainly not totally.

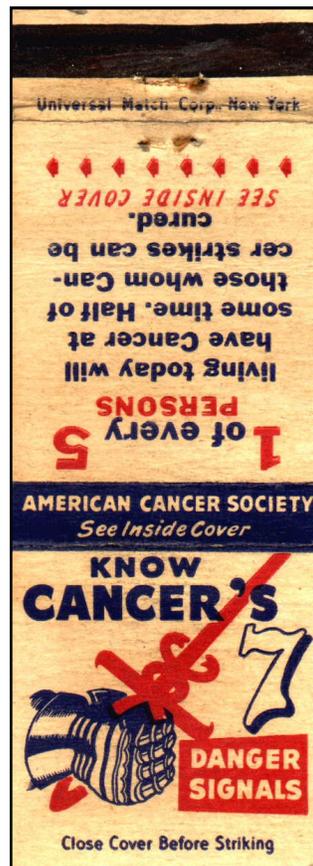
The earliest charities go back nearly nine hundred years. One of the earliest is the Hospital of St Cross in Winchester which was founded by Bishop Henry de Blois, a grandson of William the Conqueror, in 1136. The Hospital, even today, still looks after old people and provides bread and ale to passing travellers who demand it.

Until the nineteenth century charities were largely established as the result of bequests made in the wills of rich merchants, and others, charitably minded or with perhaps half an eye on an easier passage through the pearly gates. As a result, most towns had an almshouse or two housing elderly, but always respectable, men and women. Many schools were also established as the result of the result of these charitable bequests.

Top 10 charities in 2002 [*latest stats I could find*] according to the Chronicle of Philanthropy, by private donations:

American Red Cross, \$1.74 billion

Salvation Army, \$1.37 billion



Collecting Charities?

Gifts In Kind International, \$793.15 million

American Cancer Society, \$777.40 million

Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund, \$735.45 million

Lutheran Services in America, \$723.25 million

YMCA of the USA, \$713.85 million

Nature Conservancy, \$628.34 million

University of Southern California, \$585.16 million

Feed the Children, \$546.98 million

[http://www.freep.com/news/nw/give27_20031027.htm]

An analysis of fifty of the largest charities in the United States shows that, on average, 82.5 per cent of total expenses are devoted to programs, according to *U.S. News and World Report*. The highest ratio (99.7 per cent) was for **Second Harvest**, which raises \$426.8 million to feed 26 million people each year through a network of 185 food banks. Lowest (70.7 per cent) was the **American Lung Association**.

[<http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/archive/aneu/aneu96/aneu9602.html>] Forbes. Com, by the way, posts statistics on the top 75 of the largest US charities annually [http://www.forbes.com/forbes/2002/1209/186tab_print.html]

I don't save Charities, myself, but it *is* and interesting category. No one has ever reported any numbers in this category, but it would definitely be a smaller category. Even so, I didn't have any problems coming up with these eight saples shown here. There are also Foreign entries to be had, as well.

