

Meet Our Founder

Andre Mazur, the founder of the Boulder Brits Club, is a sociable creature. The home he shares with his family (wife Ruth, twins Olivia and Sebastian (4), MacKenzie (2), Ruth's mother Mary and pets Baxter and Jake) seems to be constantly filled with visiting friends and relatives. Add to that the many neighbors and their kids who wander in and out of each other's yards in the pleasant Louisville cul-de-sac, and you realize that Andre's life is more or less permanently inhabited by a large crowd. Just the way he likes it.

It's no wonder, then, that Andre decided in early 2006 to bring together the many Brits he "kept bumping into" as he made his way around the Front Range community and to this end formed the BBC. As a realtor, he was frequently introduced to ex-pats, many of whom became friends of his and one another's. When he realized that this network of fellow Brits added up to a number of 20 to 30, he knew it made sense to form a group.

Chatting with Andre, beer in hand, on the hammock of his front porch, it's easy to forget that as far as ex-pat life goes he is no rookie. His still-going-strong Sheffield accent, England football shirt and quirky humor disguise the fact that he's been more or less settled in the US for the last 16 years. He explains that it was his lust for travel that brought him over here in 1990, with a first destination of Boston. After a few months on the East Coast, he made his way across to California and Lake Tahoe – a place he still considers among the top places to live in the US.

However, all roads lead to Colorado and it was a natural step for the Tahoe ski-bum to come here in 1996. In 1999, Andre met Ruth, and the rest, as they say, is history. Thanks to Andre's energy and enthusiasm, Brits in and around the Boulder area and their (sometimes non-British) family and friends have been given a natural focal point for hanging out and as Andre puts it, "going for a pint and talking about the British stuff".

The first thing Andre did, once he had hatched the idea of a club, was to secure the **www.bbcolorado.com** domain online. He then worked on designing the website, attracting sponsors and networking to find members. The big visibility breakthrough for the club came in the form of a Guy Fawkes celebration, which secured an article in the Boulder Daily Camera. Since then, membership has soared to over 80 and website hits are in the tens of thousands each month. The club is growing by the week, and Andre anticipates that it will have over 200 members in a year or two. Asked to pin down who a typical member of the Brits of Boulder Club might be, he suggests a Brit in their 30s or 40s, who "knows that where their life is going to be is here, but still wants that connection, and the club can provide that".

To the question of whether he would consider moving back to the UK, Andre's answer is no. He admits that he misses many things about his home country, such as pubs, football, British humor, history and Henderson's Relish. Even so, he feels that he wouldn't come close to the quality of life he is enjoying stateside. Among the many plus points of Colorado living he lists the climate, the healthy, outdoorsy lifestyle and – grinning in acknowledgement of the slight cheesiness of it – the opportunity to live the American

dream. He adds, surprising even himself that he has begun to appreciate the food over here more than in England. There aren't many things Andre doesn't like about living in Colorado. He does concede that he has issues with some aspects of US politics, but he would of course be joined by many Americans in that sentiment.

In other words, it's likely that we'll continue to enjoy the benefits of the hard work Andre is putting into the Boulder Brits Club in years to come. He certainly has a vision for the club, explaining that one of his imminent projects is to expand and improve the website. He has a million and one ideas for events and activities that would enthuse the British community. Andre mentions a St George's Day celebration, a pub crawl, a summer cricket game, a "Day on the Green" perhaps with a game of rounders, further pop quizzes and a Fourth of July football game against an American team. The regular fish-and-chips nights at Mateo's, curry nights at the Taj Mahal and Pint at the Pot will of course continue to be offered as BBC staples.

If there's one thing to be said about the Boulder Brits Club that sets it apart from many other ex-pat communities world-wide, it has to be that it's so active. While many others depend on the involvement of people with limited time and energy, the BBC is driven by a chap who to the delight of members is happy to sacrifice other his passions like Italian motorbikes and British sports cars to invest in coming up with ever more opportunities for Boulder Brits and their families to connect and have fun.

As we wrap up our conversation accompanied by the sound of a sizzling barbecue and a perfect rendition of The Greasy Chip Butty by the three youngest Blades fans in the Mazur household, we start to reminisce about good old British beer gardens. Imagine a lukewarm pint in the sun, salt-and-vinegar crisps, kids playing nearby... Andre doesn't miss a beat. "There is a place in Louisville", he says, "on Pine Street, they have a lovely patio. Could do more with it, though, would make a great beer garden. I might start something." No one would be surprised if he did, because Andre Mazur is nothing if not a doer. And I know of about 80 Brits around Boulder who are jolly glad he is!