

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS to the A.G.M. on 16th. MAY 2013

I present my second address to you with mixed emotions. My pleasure and pride at being your President for a second year are tinged with regret that it is time for me to pass the baton on to a fresh pair of hands.

It is especially pleasing to be able to report to you that the Society has enjoyed a small, but significant increase in Membership numbers over the past year. There cannot be many Societies able to claim such success, which I think reflects the overall well-being of our Society. Having said that, I delight in paying tribute to the work tirelessly undertaken by John Harley, as Publicity Officer, which keeps the Society's activities well reported in the local press. Well Done John!

Our Meetings continue to attract good attendances, albeit at a slightly lower level than last year, encouraged by a range of interesting Speakers, with good displays throughout the Season.

Your Society has continued to engage in successful Exchange Visits with others, resulting in some interesting and enjoyable evenings. I am grateful to Carole Last for encouraging a new contact with the Henley P.S., through a relative at that Society. Proof, if proof were needed, that your Committee will respond to Members' requests. Furthermore, your Secretary and I have established a better knowledge of Members willing to be part of these Exchange Visits, which will help ensure that such duties are shared around, with adequate notice!

The Auctions go from strength to strength, due to the continuing efforts of Les Gwilliam, as well as the excellent team which he has developed for Auction Nights. It was pleasing to be able to welcome Liz Gwilliam to that team at the last Auction, which ran very smoothly.

In my last Report I noted that Alan Williams, as Packet Secretary, was developing ideas to combat the small decline in Sales from the Packets, and I am pleased to advise you this year that his meaningful review of Insurance arrangements has resulted in Boxes starting their circulation having a Value up to 50% higher than previously, which will improve their appeal to buyers and boost returns.

I want to make a significant point at this stage concerning the work of the Auction and Packet Secretaries. Apart from running two functions which give a lot of pleasure to Members, they are also responsible for generating a very meaningful proportion of the Society's Income, without

which it would be difficult to imagine how the Society could operate at all. We are so fortunate in having two such hard working Members willing to run these functions, and long may that continue. I applaud and thank Alan and Les for their efforts on our behalf!

Alan has also continued to work tirelessly as Treasurer of the Society, and I just know he will, once again, present another healthy set of Annual Accounts shortly.

There have been two Events during the past year worthy of comment here, I feel. Having won the Inter-Society Quiz Competition in 2011, your Committee set about making sure that Amersham would excel as Hosts for the 2012 Quiz Night, and so it turned out. A very good evening was enjoyed by all, with no shortage of willing volunteers to make this possible. I think you will forgive me if I single one name out for a special mention from that event, which is Nigel Perrin. Over a period of many weeks Nigel toiled away on his own, and single handedly developed all the Questions for the entire evening, and then acted as Quiz Master on the night! Well Done Nigel!

Secondly, the Competitions were all held on the same evening, using external Judges for the formal Competitions for the first time in many years, as requested by some Members. It was a difficult task to undertake, but went rather well, and has resulted in several Members making positive and encouraging comments. It was also evident that the Society had drifted away from the strict formality of Competition Rules, and as a result your Committee has undertaken to review the arrangements for the future, whilst reverting to Members self-judging all Competitions for next Season, as a holding measure.

To bring my report to a realistic conclusion I make no apology for drawing your attention to the unfailing efforts on all our behalfs by our Secretary – Jim Drummond. I am personally indebted to Jim for his help and guidance during my two years as your President, and I like to think that I have not added to Jim's problems whilst carrying out my duties. The truth is, I suspect, that were I guilty of such things, he would take it all on board and quietly find a way to put me right, probably without me even realising! I think I speak for all present when I say a very sincere 'Thank You' to Jim Drummond for all his hard work on behalf of our Society, along with the entire Committee, for their support.

Tony Bridger
President - 2012-2013