



ANGLO - KOREAN SOCIETY

Newsletter July 2009

Joint Presidents: H.E. The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Mr Chun Yung-woo
Dr. Robert Hawley CBE

Chairman: Sir Stephen Brown KCVO

From the Chairman:

Dear Members,

We have had a good start to 2009.

We kicked off our year with the AGM and a reception at the Korean Cultural Centre. There was a good turnout though numbers were a little down on the record attendance of the previous year. The reception that followed was an enjoyable way for members to catch up with each other.

The "Two Ambassadors" event in the House of Commons was a great success, especially as those attending got three Ambassadors for the price of two. The attendance of the DPRK Ambassador was a "first", certainly in my time with the Society. The guardians of the Society's history may know if it has happened before. Sadly, I missed the event but for the best of reasons. I was actually in Korea. I am grateful to our President Bob Hawley for masterminding the evening, to Frank Cook for being our host, and to Ambassador Chun for taking part. The event did much to raise the profile of the Society among MPs, no bad thing for us.

Subsequently, with Sylvia Park, I called on the DPRK Ambassador Ja Song Nam. We had an agreeable exchange during which I stressed that the Society existed to promote friendship between the British and Korean people. I gave Ambassador Ja an open invitation to attend any of our events. The DPRK Embassy is on our mailing list though not officially a member of the Society.

As part of our programme of testing the market with new events, we had a fascinating evening of insights into Korean culture presented by Matthew Jackson and Hang-Jin Chang, and an introduction to the contemporary art of Francesca Cho, afterwards refreshingly washed down with the taste of Korean beer and soju. We are indebted to Matthew and Hang-Jin for their presentations and, once again to Director Choi and his staff for the use of the KCC. Director Choi is soon to return to Korea. His support has been invaluable. He has been a true friend of the Society.

We had a strong turnout for the cultural evening though the number of members attending was low. Embracing the slogan "Turn every setback into a selling opportunity", the committee and members present set about recruiting new members. So we finished the evening with over half a dozen more paid up members. My thanks to those committee members and others who staffed the door and the bar and who gently encouraged guests to join the Society. The Korean beer and soju may have helped!

On 3 July, thanks to one of our stalwart committee members, WS Shin, I represented the Society at the European meeting of the World OKTA (Overseas Korean Trade Associations). This was another occasion to gain more recognition for the Society among the Korean business community in UK and among a wider audience. Several Korean congressmen flew in to London for the event and I hope that we will be able to persuade more Korean companies in UK to join our ranks.

Cathy Kim and the communications committee continue to work on promoting the Society. The website is regularly updated, so do look at it. Also our new recruitment brochure is about to launch.



50 Years of Friendship, Understanding and Cultural Exchange 1956-2006
www.anglokoreansociety.org.uk



From the Chairman continued:

Could I ask you all to help the Society on two fronts. First, membership. We are within striking distance of the 200 mark. It would be great to achieve that this year and go on to 300 members in 2010.

Second, our annual dinner at the House of Commons on 8 October. We have taken a bigger room this year. So can I encourage you all to attend and to bring a friend or colleague. It is a unique evening and an ideal event at which to convince guests to join the Society. It is a particularly special evening for our Korean members and their guests. I hope corporate members will consider hosting a table and bring some high level contacts. As always, your committee will make an effort to keep the cost of the evening at an affordable level. Thanks to the support from our sponsors, we should be able to do this.

I hope that I will see more of you at our next event, our Chuseok dinner on 17 September.

Stephen Brown

PAST EVENTS

Korea Update

Held on 26 March 2009, this was a landmark event for the Society and a coup for our Social Events Secretary, Sylvia Park. Taking place in the impressive setting of House of Commons Committee Room 14, the event was hosted by Frank Cook MP who chaired the evening with great diplomacy. Frank is a member of the All-Party Britain-Korea Parliamentary Group.



Amb. Martin Uden, Amb. Chun Yung-woo, Frank Cook MP, Amb. Ja Song-nam, Stephen Lillie.

The speakers for the evening were Martin Uden, British Ambassador to the ROK and Stephen Lillie, Head of the FCO Far East Group. Stephen was standing in at short notice for Peter Hughes, British Ambassador to the DPRK, who was unable to attend.

Our special guests were ROK Ambassador Chun Yung-woo, and DPRK Ambassador Ja Song-nam. This unique combination resulted in a capacity turn-out of 120 members and guests, with more turned away.

The first of our main speakers, Stephen Lillie, gave us an overview of the status of relations with the DPRK. Describing the Embassy in Pyongyang as a window on North Korea, he stressed that our Ambassador, Peter

Hughes, was there to engage with the government and the people. Whilst there were opportunities for frank exchanges of views, these were not always palatable. On the positive side, English was now the most popular language at university. Programs were in place to teach English to teachers, and Government officials were visiting the UK for language training. There were also plans to extend the Chevening scholarships to the DPRK.

However there were still difficulties. Human rights presented a problem, and the nuclear situation with the proposed satellite launch, a breach of UN Security Council resolutions, represented a real challenge.

Martin Uden followed with a summary of the political and economic situation in the ROK and the role of the British Embassy. The ROK was still a powerhouse with an export led economy, and although they were having some problems, the weak currency was providing export opportunities. President Lee's foreign policy had built bridges with other members of the 6-party talks but relations with the DPRK had deteriorated with a more hard line approach replacing the 'sunshine policy' of recent years.

Dealing with the economic crisis was a priority for the Embassy. There was broad agreement on economic issues and the ROK's forthcoming chair of the G20 in 2010 had led to a close

relationship with Britain. Ongoing dialogue on climate change reflected another issue taken seriously by President Lee. Trade and investment was suffering, with British exports and Korean investment in the UK both potentially limited.

Martin updated us on his 'digital diplomacy' in particular his online blog in English and Korean, which he perceived as the best way to get his message out in hi-tech Korea.

The Question and Answer session that followed produced interesting interchanges, most notably candid accounts from both Ambassador Chun and Ambassador Ja of their respective positions on the impending missile / satellite launch. This was tempered with humour as Ambassador Ja pointed out that despite representing the 'Axis of Evil' he had no horns.

Adjourning to the Churchill Room, the lively discussion continued over wine and canapés. Many of those attending for the first time as guests agreed that the AKS was well worth joining, a successful event all round thanks to the open contributions of all our speakers.

Exploring Korea's Cultural Legacy from Past to Present

On 16 June 2009 at the Korean Cultural Centre, AKS members Matthew Jackson, Hang-Jin Chang and Francesca Cho treated us to an absorbing and enlightening evening of Korean culture. From the origins of Hangeul to Francesca's contemporary paintings inspired by the Korean alphabet, by way of some truly amazing details of ancient artefacts, the presentation gave the appreciative audience a new insight into this ancient culture.

Three very informative films were shown; one exploring the construction techniques used for the Sokkuram Grotto, another following modern attempts to reproduce a tiny part of the Sarira casket and the third detailing the incredible hidden artwork of Koryo Buddhist paintings.

After the presentation we enjoyed sampling Korean beer and soju, in keeping with the cultural theme of the evening.



*Matthew Jackson, Francesca Cho
and Hang-Jin Chang*

FUTURE EVENTS

A new initiative from the AKS - starting Wednesday 2 September 2009

Come and join us at an informal get together. This is your opportunity to get to know your fellow AKS members over a drink or meal.

We shall meet at a Korean Restaurant or a Traditional English Pub on the **first Wednesday of every month at 7.00 pm**, starting in September.

If you would like to attend our first gathering on 2nd September please contact Sylvia Park by emailing her at events@anglokoreansociety.org.uk or by telephoning on 07802 858 771.

Chuseok Celebration - Thursday 17 September 2009

This year we will celebrate Chuseok at the Young Bean Oriental Cuisine restaurant, in their bright and cheerful new premises, very close to their old location. After drinks and a chance to catch up with friends we will enjoy a sit-down meal from a self-serve buffet and be entertained by memories of this very special time of year from some of our members. The wearing of hanbok will be actively encouraged!

Annual Dinner at the House of Commons - Thursday 8 October 2009

The evening will start with a guided tour of both chambers followed by a reception. Then we will have dinner at The Members Dining Room. Our host will be Frank Cook MP and our guest speakers will be the Korean Ambassador and one other, details to be confirmed.

Piano Recital - Thursday 29 October 2009, 6.30pm at St. Vedast-alias-Foster Church, EC2
Presented by the British Korean Law Association, in association with the AKS.

Green Issues

Merton Chamber of Commerce “Go Green” Project

AKS member Sunny Lee has a wide and varied background including working for an AIDS charity in Malawi and an 18 months spell at the British Embassy Seoul. She moved to the UK in 2003 and has built upon her strong background in business administration and research and environmental campaigning. After completing an MA in Critical Environmental Theory, she joined the Go Green project managed by southlondon.biz, the enterprise arm of Merton Chamber of Commerce. Funded by the London Development Agency, the Go Green project was awarded the Green Guardian Award as the best environmental project in 2008.



Sunny Lee

As a Greening Adviser Sunny helps small and medium-scale businesses with tailor-made action plans based on energy and waste audits, environmental practice reviews, advice on behavioural change, grants and procurement, and travel. The achievements of the Go Green project include business commitment to quality marks such as ISO 14001. The project has helped over 850 businesses in 2 years, identifying over £700 of savings per business, including saving over 700,000 units of electricity and diverting 2628 tonnes of waste from landfill. As part of the next stage of the project (Go Green Plus funded by the European Regional Development Fund) Sunny hopes to help achieve a greater increase in environmental improvements by working with large-scale businesses in south London.

Sunny Lee has enjoyed helping the Korean and British business communities in south London, particularly Kingston, and was pleased that her work featured in a YTN news report in February 2009.

Contact: Go Green Plus: gogreen@southlondon.biz or visit www.southlondon.biz

Korea takes a lead from an English village when it comes to climate change action

English villages tend to be sleepy places but in May South Korean TV Channel SBS featured the dynamic attempt by citizens of Ashton Hayes to tackle climate change head on. This small Cheshire community is aiming to become England’s first carbon neutral village and has already cut carbon dioxide emissions by 20% through behavioural change – now it’s a year along the road to building a community-owned renewable power station! The project began in January 2006 and has won numerous international awards and inspired communities across the UK to take similar action.



Producer Woo Ha Gyun (in headphones)
with interpreter

The SBS crew, led by producer, Woo Ha Gyun, and well-know Korean cartoonist, Lee Woo-il, spent three days in April interviewing residents and finding out ways of living a lower carbon lifestyle. “We want to show people back home the kinds of things they can do to help Korea become carbon neutral”, said Woo Ha Gyun. The team interviewed Garry Charnock, the man behind the Ashton Hayes Going Carbon Neutral Project and a host of committed residents – some making their houses more efficient, others building an eco-house and some simply walking more or switching things off. The SBS crew were

also given exclusive access to the school and a village public meeting where they watched the world premiere of the village’s fourth film about its journey to carbon neutrality. The programme was broadcast to coincide with the G20 climate change summit.

For more on the Ashton Hayes project visit www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk

Members' Corner

The Marriage of Ages

(Lines written on visiting my wife's parents' graves in Cho'gye, Korea)

To reach the graves we crossed a dam
that holds the water to feed the fields.
We gathered boulders to ply our steps
around the concrete corner of the lake,
disturbing as we go a black, guardian snake:
shaky footfalls by the deep, dry sluice.

On up the hill where the pines had been trimmed
and all was browned in the pre-winter sun
and up to the quiet resting-place,
the twin grassed mounds
where your parents lie.

There, backed by a low-grey boulder wall
and fronted by short ever-greens,
spread tight with tough grass, short and brown -
this is where their spirits find repose.
Much-favoured views of water, sun, air and fields;
the resting-place their ageing son, with much thought, chose.

There we offered bows and rice-candies,
fruit and wine laid out in the midday sun.
Thoughtful reminiscences from four surviving children,
entering or leaving the mid-point of their lives,
talking in the clear-skied autumn sun.
Eating crudely-sliced apples, crisp and sweet.
Life-reclaiming earth beneath our feet.

Then back to the car and stopping at houses,
patched survivors of old farming villages.
We have elderly relatives to meet, russet skin and glimpses
of bright, watery eyes through wrinkled faces.
Once more plying us with fruit and rice-wine,
and working out 'how', and 'to whom' -
natural touches of tears and laughter,
when we walked into their afternoon.

And this big-framed Englishman,
clasping hands and managing the odd 'hello'
and 'good-bye'
but otherwise tongue-tied,
out-of-place,
heart-denied.

Catching something of their worries;
all their young people moved to cities,
chasing the stuff of modern lives.
And we, dropped in this scene for a moment,
not often taking time like this
to weigh the debts of inheritance
and the extraordinary connectedness of family lines.
On the floor we sit, looking into ancient faces.

Taking a moment to inwardly count our blessings,
bowing to ages, and passing round the stories
that swirl between life's stages
like so many loose-cut branches
strewn among the fresh-cut pines.

David Hanna

Taste of Korea

Kie-Jo Sarsfield is an accomplished cook who offers Korean cookery classes in her home near Chalfont St Giles in Buckinghamshire. She holds classes for small groups, providing all the ingredients and doing most of the time-consuming bits in advance. After the class you get to eat the delicious food!

If you are interested in dates and details of the next classes contact Kie-Jo by email:

kiejosarsfield@hotmail.co.uk



Meeting Mr Kim

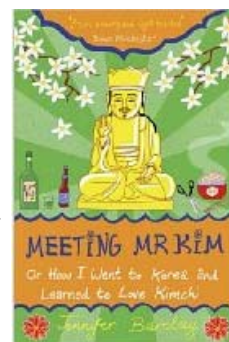
*Or How I Went to Korea and
Learned to Love Kimchi*

by Jennifer Barclay

Reading this book brought back many memories of being an ex-pat in Korea and made me feel quite nostalgic. Jennifer vividly captures the sounds, sights and smells of life in Seoul, in particular the nightlife of Itaewon where she lived with her boyfriend, a musician working at JJ's nightclub in the Hyatt.

By contrast, her solo travels around the Korean countryside visiting Buddhist temples, making friends with locals and staying at their homes, reveals an aspect of Korea rarely experienced by a visitor; the welcome, the kindness, the ancient culture and of course the memorable food!

My Korean husband also enjoyed this book, finding it interesting to see his fellow countrymen through a foreigner's eyes, and discovering that his wife wasn't the only English person addicted to kimchi.



Meeting Mr Kim is available from www.amazon.co.uk

Cathy Kim

NEWS

Seoul Sees Heaviest Rainfall Since 1940

Jenny & Peter Guest are long time members of AKS and are currently living in Seoul, where they are experiencing one of the worst summers in many years. Jenny sent us this report and some amazing photos:

Seoul has seen 685 mm of rain in July alone, the heaviest for this period since 1945, and the third heaviest since weather forecasts began in Korea in 1908, following 1940 (989.2 mm) and 1930 (731.6 mm).

The city was hit by heavy downpours and strong winds, with 140.5 mm of rainfall on one day causing many problems for motorists and homeowners.



CHOSUN ILBO
Paldang Dam, north of Seoul, 13 July 2009



AFP, AFP/GETTY IMAGES
Residents look at cars destroyed by floodwater in Busan, 16 July 2009

Jamsu Bridge under Banpo Bridge in Seoul was completely flooded and closed to vehicles. The drains in the street couldn't take the force of the water and the rain went on all day and most of the night for about two days.

A landslide on an expressway between Seoul and Chuncheon near Namyangju killed a man and four people were injured. Some roads remained closed, including sections on the expressways.

We went down to our allotment last weekend to find that the rain had washed about 2 - 3 inches of soil from parts of the field and in some areas the ground was completely waterlogged. The water level around

the Paldang Dam was still very high with no sign of the fishermen usually at the water's edge as the level nearly reached the roadside. The banks of the Han River are similarly flooded. Experts have attributed this abnormal weather pattern to climate change.

Korean Festival

The annual Korean Festival, organised by the Korean Residents Society, will be held at Fairfield Recreation Ground, Kingston-upon-Thames, on Saturday 15th August from 10am to 7pm.

The Festival commemorates Liberation Day and there will be many stalls and free performances.

The events programme is available on the AKS website.

Do you have any news items?

The next newsletter will be produced in November. If you have information about events or other news items which would be of interest to our members please send details to:
secretary@anglokoreansociety.org.uk

AKS Executive Committee

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