

THA Secretary's Report

The 2015 AGM was held in College on Saturday 26 September. The AGM was preceded by presentations from two of the 2015 THA Award winners, recently returned from their time abroad. Cobi-Jane Akinrele regaled everyone with her account of helping budding young entrepreneurs in Tanzania and running a major conference with zero budget. Evie Robertson recounted her experiences working in children's homes in Nepal in the aftermath of the disastrous earthquakes that had struck shortly before her visit.

At the AGM there was unanimous support for the proposal that Bob Ely (1950), following his retirement from the Committee under the rules of the Association, should be made an emeritus member of the THA Committee. The AGM also marked the retirement of two other long-standing committee members, Dr Krishna Chatterjee and Andrew Burr. Krishna has been heavily involved in the THA Awards from their inception (indeed it was a donation by Dennis Avery to her in order to support her work on a humanitarian project that was the germ of an idea that led to the THA Award scheme) and she will continue that involvement for which we are very grateful. Andrew Burr in his long association with the THA has been closely involved in the organization of the annual Careers Seminar and we are delighted that he will continue with that work.

The AGM was followed by a superb dinner – wonderful food accompanied by some terrific wines, great service and excellent company in the magnificently refurbished Hall – before adjourning to the Aula Bar.

On Saturday 24 October we gathered in Newcastle for a North East Event held in the Discovery Museum. During pre-dinner drinks we had the run of the first floor galleries, looking down on Turbina: designed by Charles Parsons (sadly an alumni of St John's rather than TH), the world's first turbine driven yacht. It was demonstrated at (and gatecrashed) the 1897 Diamond Jubilee Spithead Review where it easily outpaced every Royal Navy ship despite the Navy's efforts to catch it. The museum provided a fascinating view of the development of Newcastle as a great and innovative industrial city, the ships built there and the numerous other inventions that helped power an Empire. The galleries made a wonderful backdrop against which people could mingle before we sat down for an intimate dinner in the Tyneside Challenge gallery. We were delighted to welcome the Master to the event.

We experimented with our first regional event in Birmingham eight years ago, and in March this year we returned to the West Midlands. Continuing our policy of choosing venues that are very interesting in their own right we selected the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, where 30 of us enjoyed a particularly fine dinner in the handsome Round Room, the Master once again in attendance. The attraction this time was a private tour of the Staffordshire Hoard, the finest collection of Anglo-Saxon jewellery and decorative artifacts yet discovered and now displayed in its own new and exciting gallery. Despite this being billed as a West Midlands event, it was gratifying that some of our guests travelled from as far as East Anglia and Lincolnshire, drawn by the opportunity to see the Staffordshire Hoard.

On Thursday 12th May we made a return visit to the Royal Geographical Society in South Kensington where about 180 alumni gathered for drinks and canapes on a lovely summer's night.

We were delighted to welcome the traveler, writer and broadcaster John Pilkington (TH 1968) who regaled those present with a fascinating talk, accompanied by some wonderful slides, on a part of his travels along the Silk Road. For a number of those present there was also the opportunity to visit a part of the RGS's collection. As is so often the case the evening went all too quickly.

Our next event will be in Glasgow on Saturday 12th November with a drinks reception and dinner at the House for an Art Lover – an iconic Charles Rennie Mackintosh design.

If you haven't sampled any THA events please to join us at one. They are superb value, usually in fascinating venues and a great opportunity to meet alumni and their partners from across the generations. Don't worry if there is no one from your year at a particular event – you are guaranteed great company – but why not persuade some others of your year to come along. And if you matriculated within the last ten years you are eligible for half price tickets.

As always we are incredibly grateful for the support that we receive from the Alumni and Development Office in organizing our events around the country and in handling most of the administrative tasks and for the active support of the Master.

Dr Chris Angus (TH 1967)