Australia-Britain Society (W.A. BRANCH) INC.

November-January 2010

# NEWSGRAM

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**From the President**

Thanks to those members who responded to my first piece of editorial in the September-October 2009 Newsgram. It is always good to have feedback, complimentary or otherwise, as any group can only grow and prosper with good communication between its members. So please write or email me with any comments at all. All communications will be read and acknowledged. Ideas or suggestions will be placed before the branch executive committee. I will handle any complaints. One complaint has come in on my watch and concerns new members not being welcomed in the Newsgram following their joining. New members are of course very welcome and there should be no further omissions. My sincere apologies to those new members whose names were omitted in a previous Newsgram.

In my first Newsgram, the third paragraph, I referred to the nine goals and objectives which my predecessor Malcolm Allen set out last year. I am setting them out again and would ask you please to give serious attention to them and see what input you might be able to give in assisting your volunteer executive committee members in tackling them. The 'Objects' are set out here with extra emphasis as it is essential for all members to understand and help implement them.

- **Membership**

Every club or society I have joined in the past ten years since retiring from paid employment has the same big issues to deal with. Number one issue is maintaining membership numbers and in particular recruiting younger people. There is a real need to attract new members to ABS, in our case I think, from the 45-65 age group as an ongoing strategy. This will help bring down the average age base of our Society members which has several potential benefits. These people have more funds and energy to support events which in turn will hopefully rejuvenate the Society.

It is a well known fact that the best form of advertising is by "word of mouth". This is where I appeal to all of you to set yourself a goal of recruiting new members. Surely you know another friend or relative who you can persuade to join – we are, to the best of my knowledge, the least expensive Society to join anywhere in Perth.

- **Corporate Memberships**

The next big issue, as raised by Malcolm but which can be substantiated by most other small not-for-profit organizations, is gaining financial support from the business sector to enable us to further the 'Objects' for which the Branch is established. These 'Objects' are set out in the Constitution, paragraph 3 Objects, which members should have received. If you are not in possession of a copy of our Constitution then please ask.

- **Newsgram**

Without knowing the developmental history of our Newsgram I can only say at this stage of my presidency that I am working literally within the 'margins' already set out and following very much the theme of recent issues. If any member has experience in producing a similar size newsletter and would care sharing ideas or suggestions regarding improvements please feel free to contact me.

- **Constitution**

It should go without saying that membership of any organization really does require reading, understanding and being in agreement with the legally drafted paragraphs. Malcolm made it one of his Presidential commitments while in the chair to see that every member was given one. Ours is worth reading, in particular paragraph 3 which sets out the 4-points of the Objects for which the Branch is established and to note the Special Resolutions passed at the Annual General Meeting held on 13 August 2007, the most recent of any changes made.

- **Easier communication with members**

Approximately 25% of our members have advised the Membership Officer of their email address. This percentage can only increase in time as more members take on the challenge of joining the computer age. I really do understand how mind blowing the computer age is to so many of the senior members as even those of us who have attempted to keep abreast with the technology often wonder if we could ever be considered totally computer literate. But the changing world of communications requires us to at least make an effort to ride the tide. To those not yet 'hooked' try a visit to your local library and explain to the staff there your situation; start in a small way and build your confidence using publicly available computers.

- **Develop the social programme**

Two very charming and public spirited ladies, Mary and Gina, have volunteered their services to plan, prepare and put into place a few social events. Now I know that not everyone has joined ABS for socializing but quite a few do and what better way to meet other like-minded people than to come

along and support the social sub-committee. Please read the yellow social page coming with this Newsgram and come along to at least one event. And don't stop there, bring some friends with you.

- **Grants Programme**

Your branch executive committee will be looking next year for ways to fulfill some of the Objects of our constitution. This will include rewarding winners and finalists in the Plain English Speaking Award (please read separate paragraph on this national competition). Our objects are to support the interchange, especially of young people, between Australia and Britain in a diverse range of activities.

- **Improve ties with national and UK branches**

Here the web pages offer a great deal of information to those with internet connections and space in the Newsgram prevents exclusive coverage of all ABS affairs. However if members would like to make contact with a UK branch in a part of UK you either originate from or have particularly close links to then let me know and I will pass on to you the details of existing branches and reserve you a spot in the Newsgram where you can occasionally report on your connection.

- **Involvement with Australia-Britain Foundation**

In my capacity as your WA Branch President it has been my pleasure to accept a position as a Trustee of The Australia-Britain Foundation. Further details and news of this in future editions of Newsgram.

**LotteryWest**

I recently attended a LotteryWest half day seminar held to give advice to potential applicants. To obtain grants for purchase of equipment, such as a computer driven screen presentation system, a sub-committee of myself and treasurer Swain Thambyappah has been formed.

**The Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship in WA(Inc)**

In September, by invitation of Mr. Charles Curtis, Chairman, I attended, as your President, the Centenary Dinner of The Victoria League. This function was held at Royal Perth Golf Club in the presence of His Excellency Dr. Ken Michael Governor of Western Australia and Mrs. Michael. Mention of the Australia-Britain Society WA was made by Mr. James Lush of the ABC who acted as MC during the evening's speeches.

**Scottish Parliament is 10 years old**

The 10th anniversary of the formation of the Scottish Parliament was the occasion of a visit to WA in October of a four person delegation of Members. As well as a busy time visiting our State Parliament and meetings with local Parliamentarians and officials they spoke in the evening at UWA. I was invited, as your representative, to this forum and later to a Reception by the Senior Vice Chancellor through our Vice Patron and Head of Post at the British Consulate Mr. Philip Orchard.

**PESA or Plain English Speaking Award**

I have been obtaining information from a variety of sources, both here and in the eastern states as well as from The English Speaking Union's office in Sydney and their internet web page in UK. All that I have learnt so far convinces me of the correctness in ABS WA supporting this English speaking competition within the 'Objects' of our Constitution and the legal constraints imposed on us as an Incorporated Association.

So it was my pleasant task when presenting my President's Report to the branch executive committee last week to recommend that ABS WA resume contacts with the PESA coordinating people. I shall move a formal motion at the next branch executive committee meeting on 6 February 2010 that this recommendation is accepted on behalf of the Branch. Please send me your views on this by email, letter or by phone.

In order to fast forward this connection I was able, at very short notice and with her willing cooperation, to arrange for the WA coordinator of PESA Mrs. Juliet Park to address the branch executive committee at the end of its recent meeting. This elicited the news that next year's Australian 2010 National PESA Finals will be held in Perth on Monday 23 August.

The meeting with Mrs. Park has stimulated me sufficiently to offer to sit in on her PESA organising committee. I will then assess where ABS WA might be able to help next year and report back to the branch executive committee accordingly. Those of you who were involved in the PESA previously tell me there will be lots of jobs for willing hands.

Stay tuned!

***DID YOU KNOW?***

That the English language has official or special status in at least seventy five countries with a total population of over two billion.

That the young Australian 2009 National Finals winner of the Plain English Speaking Award which took place in Melbourne last August was 16 year old Sam Scaife from Perth Modern School. I have spoken with Sam on the phone with a view to introducing him to members at a yet to be planned function next year before he flies off to compete with the world's finest in London in May.

I am tentatively thinking that a fund raising dinner, with profits going specifically towards Sam's expenses, would be a good start before further involvement in the 2010 PESA National Finals in Perth.

Next year I propose to introduce some casual monthly outings which do not need the high level of organization required for the Yellow Page Social events. You can make last minute decisions as to whether to attend as RSVP's will generally not be needed. Just to get the idea off the ground, so to speak, before 2010 is a trial outing for those of you who would like to 'have a go' on the Perth Wheel which is revolving daily from 10am to 10 pm at its site near the Swan River side of Riverside Drive and just to the west of Barrack Square. Meeting place will be around the outdoor refreshment kiosks adjacent to the Barrack Square ferry terminal at 10.30 am on Thursday 10 December.

My plans for these casual outings next year will include separate tours around the two cathedrals in Perth both of which have had or are in the process of renovations etc., National Archives of Australia in East Victoria Park where RSVP will be needed for seating and refreshment requirements, day trip by train to Mandurah (this was cancelled earlier in the year due to a rail strike). These are just a few ideas which I hope will bring members together informally and a way of socializing during the day between 9.30 am and 3.30 pm thus fitting in with the free public transport for holders of a Seniors Card.

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**Social Scene - Report from Social Co-ordinators**

We kicked off in October with a quiz night. It was good fun and eventually well attended; mainly due to Gina's Herculean efforts. Some of our members even went so far as to say they would come again. Wow!

Trafalgar Day Dinner with the Royal Naval Association was reasonably well attended by our members. We made two tables. Guy Fawkes lunch was a let down. No fireworks there - the pun is intended. But still we had some fun and a quiz about the life and times of bad boy Guy and friends.

We would please, please ask for feedback about what events, happenings, functions you would like us to make on your behalf. More, or less of the same? Or different things? All legal ideas considered. Use us or lose us. Please contact:
Mary: 9330 2208 email: welshdragon@westnet.com.au; or
Gina: 9337 6407 email: ginadawson@iprimus.com.au

**Saint Andrew's Day**

Scottish members of the Society and Scots worldwide are sent greetings for their Patron Saint's celebration. Saint Andrew's Day is on Monday 30 November.

**Welcome New Members**

May Mc Innes

Catherine Fraser

Edward and The Rev'd Sylvia Hancock

Ms Deborah McMil

Gillian Simon

## Wishing all members a Happy Christmas and a very Healthy New Year

The next Newsgram will be the February-March 2010 issue.