

The Oxford and Cambridge Society of Hong Kong

President's Report for the Year 2008-2009, for the AGM on 25 April 2009

I am delighted to deliver the President's Report for the year 2008 - 2009.

Events

Our society has a fairly large and diverse membership base. As a result, we set out an objective of providing a range of events of various nature and different prices to cater for all. These include Oxbridge mixers, speaker dinners, food and wine tasting, sports, watching opera and ballet, together with our traditional events such as the garden party with croquet, Christmas cocktails and Boat Race Dinner. The final count is 24 events and that shows we have a bunch of highly energetic committee members.

This year, we have made a conscious effort of reaching to the students currently studying at Oxford and Cambridge with events well timed during their term breaks. We hosted a Summer Oxbridge Mixer with the two Hong Kong student societies. The large turnout was particularly healthy for our new membership intake, and I thank Krizia Li for taking the charge in signing up new members. Carol singing at the Christmas cocktails was performed by the very talented student singers from Oxford and Cambridge. No winner was formally declared for this friendly singing contest, though our Society promotes friendship and rivalry between Oxford and Cambridge from an early age.

We had been busy with four speaker dinners. We had a dinner talk on social entrepreneurship in China; we had Sir David Tang addressing us on collecting Chinese art; Mrs Regina Ip, Member of the legislative Council and former Secretary for Security, spoke to us on Civil Service and Politics; and The Honourable Ronald Arculli, Chairman of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange shared with us his thoughts on law and finance. At the last speaker dinner, we experimented with the unlimited drinks package with free flowing wine and beverage at The China Club.

The sporting dimension of our event programme was restarted this year. We had our rowing regatta this afternoon (with a great turnout and all had great fun), in addition to bowling, croquet, and participation at the MIT sports day. We hope to be more active in sports in the future, and perhaps persuading MIT to put croquet as sport proper in their programme.

Wine tasting, True-Blue dinner cherry picked from the WOM Guide, tram party, watching opera "Don Carlo" and Royal Ballet's "Manon" rounded out our entertainment and cultural elements.

It was great to see many old friends at the events, together with a number of new faces. Only with the active participation of our members can the Committee continue to offer a quality event calendar.

Membership

The Society continues to focus strongly on membership drive with a particularly emphasis on student members and recent graduates.

The Society's membership now stands at some 500 members. There are some 409 paying members and 91 student members.

Almost all members receive the Society's communications by e-mail and 79% pay by autopay, both saving the Society time and expense. The current split of membership among active members is in the favour of Oxford, with 54% from Oxford and 46% from Cambridge.

Scholarships

During the year we awarded HK\$80,000 in scholarship grants to 8 Hong Kong students attending Oxford or Cambridge. These undergraduates pursued a wide variety of projects in the long vacation which they would not have been able to do without our support. These projects included a 5-week volunteer work in Uganda, a 6-week volunteer work to teach English in Guatemala with the Oxford-based charity TravelAid, a 6-week geology research project in Bonassola, Liguria, Northern Italy, and a trip to Spain and Portugal to study the works of the Portuguese architect Alvaro Siza.

Charity donations

We have made two donations to charities during the year. Our Garden Party took place shortly after the tragic Sichuan earthquake and the committee chose to donate the event proceeds of HK\$3,834 to Oxfam, an organisation originated from Oxford in 1942 as the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, for their Sichuan earthquake relief effort. The proceeds of HK\$16,427 from our Christmas Cocktail was donated to The Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children, which is a proven organisation for the cause of protection of children in the case of extreme poverty. The Society has received letters of thanks.

Administration

We welcome Irene Lee as our new administrator. I would like to express particular thanks to David Fu, our Honorary Secretary for keeping good order and taking charge when we underwent a period of transition with administrators. Also thanks to Professor Charles Ng for organising our web site and keep it current with so many photographs.

Thanks

It has been an honour and a pleasure to serve as President of this fine Society. I would like to thank each and every member of the Committee for their support and assistance. Without such an outstanding committee, it would not have been possible to put on such a quality event programme. It has also been a great pleasure to meet so many members and guests. Thank you all for your continued support, and I look forward to serving the Society as Immediate Past President.

Andrew Lo
President 2008-2009

25 April 2009