



ANGLO - KOREAN SOCIETY

Newsletter January 2011

Joint Presidents: H.E. The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Choo Kyu Ho
Dr. Robert Hawley CBE

Chairman: Sir Stephen Brown KCVO

From the Chairman:

Dear Members,

"Food, glorious food" proclaimed Oliver Twist. If he had not been quite so hungry, he might have reflected that food is an essential element of culture. Hardly surprising then that every AKS function this year has included an opportunity for members and their guests to share something to eat and drink.

At one end of the scale, we had the formal "dining experience" of our annual dinner, this year in the prestigious House of Lords dining room, which reeks with tradition and formality. Oh, if only those walls could speak what secrets would they reveal.

At the other end of the spectrum, and for me personally, every bit as enjoyable, have been the informal dinners at the Woo Jung restaurant. It's a great formula, designed by Sylvia Park, to help members of the society get to know each other better. The setting is very informal and the evening provides a great opportunity to get together and share a traditional Korean meal. Even with the odd beer or two to wash down the food, these evenings offer excellent value for money.

Interestingly even when the Society treads the road of high culture food is an essential part of the mix. Those of you who attended the excellent guided tour of the Korean Gallery at the British Museum will also have enjoyed another traditional Korean meal of bibimbap in the humble Korean restaurant literally outside the front door of the BM. Korean restaurants spring up everywhere!

Our high profile Korea Update in the House of Commons and the very moving talk by Andrew Salmon on his new book on the Korean War "To the Last Round" were both accompanied by a reception, the former Western in style and the latter a Korean buffet. And, of course, Korean food played a central role in our Chuseok event. In keeping with the Society's practice, the Committee hosted a lunch for the newly arrived Korean ambassador in the quintessentially English surroundings of The Reform Club.

At this stage, readers may feel that the Society is obsessed with food! Far from it, our healthy position on membership has allowed the Society to continue its outreach programme. This year we have funded two bursaries for Korean studies and given two small donations, one to the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum for their new Imjin display and the other to George Rhee's charity working in North Korea. George's mission? To provide daily bread for North Korean children.

For the Society, 2011 promises to be better than ever with some exciting new events in the planning stages ... and don't be surprised if they include FOOD.

I thank the Committee for all their hard work this year and wish them and all members of the Society a Happy New Year

Stephen Brown



50 Years of Friendship, Understanding and Cultural Exchange 1956-2006
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PAST EVENTS

Korea Update - 8 July

Michael Rank

The imposing surroundings of a House of Commons committee room was the venue for this update on Korea issues. Our Chairman, Sir Stephen Brown, welcomed guests and the speakers, the South Korean Ambassador to London, Choo Kyu Ho, British Ambassador to Pyongyang Peter Hughes and the British Ambassador to Seoul, Martin Uden. The North Korean Ambassador, Ja Song-nam, was unable to attend. Our host for the evening was Simon Hughes MP, who was unfortunately delayed due to urgent parliamentary business.

Martin Uden opened by noting how successfully the South Korean economy had weathered the global crisis. He attributed much of the country's success in defying the downturn to the government's role but he noted that voters did not seem grateful and that President Lee Myung-bak's Democratic Liberal Party suffered serious losses in recent local elections. However, Mr Uden said this was far from disastrous and he noted that mid-term elections often go badly for the ruling party, not only in Korea. He also noted that the Republic of Korea will take the chair at the G20 summit in Seoul in November, and this was a first for a non-G7 country.

Climate change is another area where South Korea and Britain have been in close cooperation in the run-up to the Seoul summit, Mr Uden added. He noted that the UK had contributed three experts to the committee investigating the sinking of the Cheonan naval vessel. He said their investigation had been "thoroughly scientific" and had proved beyond



Ambassador Peter Hughes, Ambassador Choo Kyu Ho, Sir Stephen Brown, Ambassador Martin Uden, and Simon Hughes MP

doubt that North Korea was responsible for the incident, in which 46 South Korean sailors died in March.

He said it was important not to view China and India as the only emerging powers and stressed the importance of countries including South Korea as nations which would play a crucial economic role in the 21st century.

Peter Hughes said he had been ambassador in Pyongyang since late 2008, and the sinking of the Cheonan had resulted in the greatest tension between the two Koreas for a very long time, especially along the DMZ. He said North Korea continued to deny all responsibility for the sinking, and this meant there was little

chance of reviving the Six-Party Talks, which have been suspended since December 2008. He said that in strong contrast to South Korea, the North Korean economy was continuing to deteriorate and the currency redenomination late last year had caused further political and social uncertainty. The reform had been aimed at curbing the power of the new mercantile class, but it had not been successful and there were continued signs of significant social unrest. The reform had been followed by the appointment of a new premier in June, further clouding the political outlook.

Mr Hughes said there were regular reports of food shortages, with a late spring harvest, but there were no reports of starvation in cities like Chongjin, as occurred in the 1990s. Against this background, the 10th anniversary of UK-North Korean diplomatic relations had been "tense at times but we remain engaged." The embassy was a channel for direct communication and of viewing conditions on the ground as well as of supporting a number of small NGO projects, Mr Hughes added. He also noted that there are British Council teachers at three North Korean universities and several groups of North Korean teachers have come to the UK for English-language training.

Ambassador Choo noted how South Korea had become one of the world's richest nations while North Korea was still mired in poverty, and said poverty reduction worldwide was now one of his country's top priorities. The aim was "to give back to the world what we have gone through" through a threefold rise in development assistance by 2015, he said. The Republic of Korea was also active in peacekeeping missions worldwide, including Haiti and Afghanistan, and was spending 2% of GDP on combating climate change, reflecting the importance it attached to this global problem. He underlined his country's firm response to the Cheonan sinking and said it was crucial that North Korea should not get away with such a heinous act with impunity. It was essential to the government of the Republic of Korea and to the world community that "North Korea must pay" for this crime, he added.

A lively and wide ranging question and answer session followed the presentations. The ambassadors were asked what were the chances of talks resuming on reunification, as North Korea has demanded. There was agreement that this depended on North Korea changing its stance, renouncing its nuclear ambitions and accepting responsibility for the sinking of the Cheonan, although there was no sign of this happening. There was also a discussion of China's relationship with North Korea, and Beijing's support at the UN for a resolution condemning its nuclear bomb test was seen as encouraging but also a reflection of the fact that China has little control over North Korea. China's overriding concern was stability in the region, and while it viewed the bomb test as threatening that stability, it regarded the Cheonan affair as posing much less of a threat and that was why it has refused to condemn Pyongyang for the sinking. There was also discussion of how much information about North Korea was available to the embassy in Pyongyang that was not available elsewhere, given the extremely closed nature of the North Korean regime. On the Southern side, the justification for the Four Rivers Project was questioned on environmental and other grounds and defended in terms of economic development.

Sir Stephen concluded the evening by thanking our host, Simon Hughes MP, and congratulated Sylvia Park the Events Secretary of the AKS, for all her hard work in organising and making the event an outstanding success for the Society.

Chuseok Celebration - 22 September

On Wednesday 22 September about fifty members of the Society and their guests gathered at the Korean Cultural Centre to celebrate Chuseok, the traditional harvest moon festival.



Sampling the buffet

AKS Chairman Sir Stephen Brown introduced our presenters for the evening - Hang-Jin Chang and Matthew Jackson.

For those not familiar with the Chuseok festival, Matthew told us about the many activities which take place over the holiday period, including families returning to their hometowns to pay their respects at their ancestors' graves, causing a mass exodus from Seoul. Traditional games are still played and special meals prepared to celebrate a successful harvest.

We then enjoyed two films from the KSCPP collection (Korean Spirit and Cultural Promotion Project). The first was an enlightening insight into the development of Hangeul, the Korean alphabet, considered by linguistic scholars to be the best writing system in the world. By contrast the second film gave us an update on innovation in Korea today with

the amazing use of IT in the home and advances in communications.

Having been educated on Korean traditions and way of life we were all ready to sample the food - a tasty buffet was rounded off by delicious songpyeon, the traditional moon-shaped rice cakes.

Andrew Salmon – “To The Last Round” - 15 July



Andrew Salmon

Well over 60 people came to the Korean Cultural Centre on 15 July to listen and watch Andrew Salmon talk about the epic British stand on the Imjin River in April 1951, the subject of his recent book (*To The Last Round*, Aurum Press, London, 2009).

Andrew is an experienced journalist and a good speaker who rigorously checks his sources. His absorbing talk coupled with an excellent selection of slides, divided into easy bites each with its own chapter title, and clear freehand maps of the strategic picture provided a lucid description of the causes of the war, its progress and the extreme significance of the three night stand of Britain's 29th Infantry Brigade as, outnumbered 7-1, it battled China's 'Human Wave'.

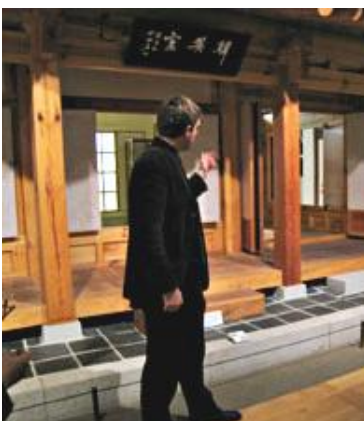
A good speaker gets good questions. We had a lengthy session including contributions from several veterans, not least KBVA President Major General Mike Swindells, and others, especially an interesting discussion of Chinese perceptions of the battle and its aftermath. The evening concluded with a Korean buffet during which Andrew signed many copies of his book.

Andrew was stimulated to understand the battle when he accompanied the annual visit of British veterans to Gloster Valley and the battle briefing on the hill overlooking the Imjin. That was in 2001 and the Duke of York was in the party. That, too, was my first experience, six weeks after I arrived in Seoul, and like most people I came to regard the veterans' visits as one of the highlights of the year, affecting and memorable in so many ways. And not too soon afterwards I bought Andrew's "Seoul Food Finder", a 265 page guide to Seoul's eateries which convinced me of the depth of his research and the breadth of his knowledge.

We are extremely grateful to the KCC for enthusiastically adopting our suggestion to give Andrew a platform during his UK visit, and also for their excellent hospitality. We know Andrew is working on a new work covering the most dramatic and terrible months of the Korean War: "Scorched Earth, Black Snow – The Commonwealth versus Communism, Korea, 1950", due out in Spring 2011. It would be great to see him again in 2011.

Jim Thomson

Visit to the Korea Foundation Gallery at the British Museum - 18 November



Sascha Priewe and the sarangbang

On Thursday November 18, 25 AKS members and guests gathered at the British Museum and were delighted to be given a tour of the Korean Gallery by co-ordinating curator, Sascha Priewe. This year is the 10th anniversary of the gallery, which was opened in November 2000 through funding by the Korea Foundation. As well as objects from the British Museum's permanent collection, the Gallery includes items from the National Museum of Korea and Hahn Foundation in Seoul.

Sascha talked in detail about some of the fascinating objects on display, including intricate gold jewellery, impressive horse armour and a decorated screen telling a royal story. An eye-catching reconstruction of a traditional sarangbang, or scholar's study, completed the tour.

After spending time exploring the gallery for ourselves, with Sascha on hand to answer questions, our Chairman thanked the curator for sharing his insights into the significance of these Korean cultural objects. Then it was off to the Bibimbab Café in Museum Street where we enjoyed lively conversation with our simple but delicious meal of soup and bibimbap, with Korean beer. Our thanks to the owner, Hong-Gyun Mok, for accommodating us.

Annual Dinner - 2 December

We were delighted to hold our Annual Dinner in the House of Lords on Thursday 2 December. Baroness Perry of Southwark, who has a long association fostering Anglo-Korean relations hosted the dinner. She welcomed us to the historic setting of the Peers' Dining Room with its Pugin wallpaper and portraits of peers, past and present.

The event was sold out well in advance, but regrettably the extreme snowy weather conditions prevented a number of members attending. Those that did attend were pleased to be able to hear our guest speaker, Edward Davey MP, speak about his constituency of Kingston and Surbiton and his work to represent Koreans resident there. He also spoke about the EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement. Mr Davey is a Minister in the Department for Industry, Business and Skills with responsibility for trade policy.



Baroness Perry welcomes the Society to the Peers' Dining Room

He emphasised the mutual benefits the agreement will bring to the EU and Korea and, in particular, to UK companies wishing to do business in Korea.

Our Guest of Honour was the Korean Ambassador, HE Choo Kyu-ho, our joint President, and Madame Choo. We were also delighted to have with us Lord Alton of Liverpool, Chair of the British North Korea All Party Parliamentary Group.

It was the last Annual Dinner for our Chairman Sir Stephen Brown who stands down at the 2011 AGM. Tribute was paid to his long standing work to improve Anglo Korean relations both in Seoul when British Ambassador and as Chairman of the Anglo Korean Society.

Derek Marsh

FUTURE EVENTS

Annual General Meeting

To be held on Tuesday 29 March 2011 at the Korean Cultural Centre.

From 6.30pm for a 7.00pm start. Open to paid-up members and partners only. Corporate members may send up to 4 representatives. The meeting will be followed by a free Korean buffet with wine.

More events to come...

We are planning a number of interesting events for the year! As well as our regular Chuseok celebration and Annual Dinner these are some of the events to look out for:

- *23 March 2011 KTO and AKS Joint Event at New Zealand House, Haymarket*
- *a slide show of Korean life in the fifties*
- *a guided walk discovering some London history*
- *an opportunity to sample the delights of whisky - 'water of life'*
- *a tour of Standard Chartered Bank (rescheduled from 2010)*

As soon as they are finalised, details of these events and more will be sent to members by email (or post where necessary) and will be posted on our website at www.anglokoreansociety.org.uk.

AKS Diners

These informal gatherings will continue in 2011 on an ad-hoc basis. Our social events secretary, Sylvia Park, will keep you informed.

Sustaining Fare

British bakeries a lifeline in North Korea

From an article by AKS member Michael Rank for the Asia Times

North Korea is a land of hunger and poverty but the children of Hahyeon primary school look reassuringly healthy, thanks to a small, British-based charity that runs three bakeries in this isolated and highly secretive country. The children receive their midday meals courtesy of Love North Korean Children, which bakes 2,500 mandu or steamed buns each day for pupils in 20 schools in and around the northeastern coastal city of Sonbong, near the Chinese border.

“If we did not provide these buns the children would go hungry,” said the charity’s founder and powerhouse, South Korean-born George Rhee.

Rhee works indefatigably to make sure that his bakeries have sufficient supplies of flour and other essential items, all of which have to be imported from China, something of a logistical and bureaucratic nightmare.



Children at Hahyeon primary school

Rhee, 52, told how he was inspired to found Love North Korean Children as a result of his own childhood experiences. He was one of eight children – he has six brothers and a sister – and when his father’s land reclamation business went bust, it left the family penniless. His parents were forced to put him and his twin brother in a children’s home. The home was a cruel place and the children often went hungry, and it was this experience that made Rhee decide that he wanted to help the children of North Korea.

Rhee first visited North Korea in 2002, and opened the charity’s first bakery the following year, in Rajin, close to Sonbong. He also runs a bakery in Pyongyang, and last year opened a new bakery in Hyangsan, about 150 kilometers north of the capital. He puts the cost of flour and equipment for the Sonbong and Pyongyang bakeries at about US\$6,300 each per month, and for the Hyangsan bakery at almost double that, as it feeds twice as many children.

Rhee is a minister in the Assemblies of God Church. Most of the costs are borne by three Dutch Christian foundations, the Barnabas Fund, Stichting Ora and Dorcas Aid International, but Rhee hopes to build more bakeries in North Korea and recently went on a fundraising trip to South Korea to talk to local companies and churches.

“There is a lot of interest in what we are doing. I am hopeful that we will be able to raise more money to open more bakeries,” he said.

Rhee said he hopes to open a fourth bakery in Haeju, the hometown of his late father, who escaped by boat to South Korea at the height of the Korean War in 1951.

Love North Korean Children is a British-registered charity and Rhee, who has lived in the UK for 20 years, is a British citizen.

You can learn more about Love North Korean Children at sites.google.com/site/lnkchildrensites/.

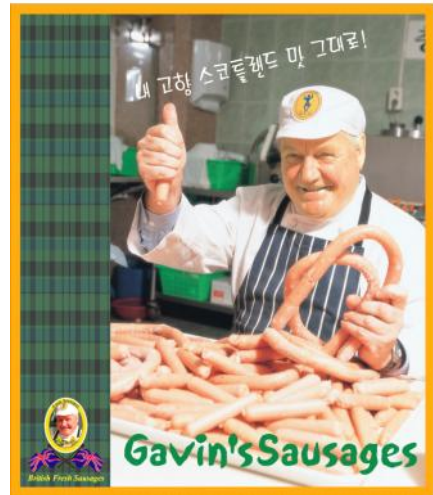
You can find more of the author’s photos from North Korea [here](#).

Sustaining Fare

Bangers for Korea

Gavin Mackay

When I first came to Korea in 1984 there were many types of Western food and drinks that were not publically available and one just had to compromise by adjusting to what there was (hence changing beer tastes from bitter to lager and purchasing US army imported food in the black market shops). After a while you get used to living with the deficiencies but occasionally one gets a sharp reminder of the good life when somebody flies back to Korea with the likes of Stilton cheese or black pudding as two examples. I got my reminder of how much I missed sausages when I stayed overnight in Macao during a Hong Kong rugby weekend visit in the late eighties and had British style sausages served for breakfast. I jumped up and started chanting “Sausages! Sausages!” and realized from my reaction that this had been a major deprivation.



I overcame this by purchasing large quantities of Marks and Spencer's Lincolnshire sausages every time I went to the Hong Kong sevens until 1991 when they stopped sending this product to Hong Kong. On the plane back to Korea I was sitting feeling pretty sorry for myself when a large white Zimbabwean asked me what was wrong and when I told him he said “Make your own sausages. All the farmers in Zimbabwe do.” He followed this up by later sending me an advert for hand held sausage makers. This was the kick start to my life as a sausage maker.

This progressed to the formation of the British International Sausage Society in Seoul with about 10 members, and we had tasting nights every so often with lavish supplies of wine and beer. I tried about 24 different recipes until I stumbled by accident on a Glasgow wholesaler's seasoning product which I found met all my requirements and dreams and I still use this today. At one of the meetings I invited the band leader for the St Andrews Ball, Simon Howie, who is the number one butcher in Scotland. As a follow up he gave me one of his 15lb capacity machines when I visited his factory in Perthshire.

After about seven years of making sausages for myself and friends I was persuaded to go commercial and opened my own factory in Pyongchangdong in 2001. Our business has grown steadily since then, at first mainly through expatriates in Seoul, Keojedo and Ulsan but there is also a growing trade on the internet and much of this is for Korean customers. We have expanded our product list to include ham, bacon, a variety of pies and haggis. We are permanently based in Shinsegae in Myongdong and also get invited to cater for many different events. The most recent was the Sungbukdong International food festival with 19 different countries taking stalls and giving 30% of their takings to charity. For the second year running we, representing the United Kingdom, were the biggest contributors. We had a continuous line of customers for 7 hours and averaged sales of 6 hot dog sized sausages cooked (one barbecue and four frying pans over gas cookers) and served for every minute, encouraging but not particularly relaxing.

I think it is fair to say that many Koreans are now into British bangers, and many expatriates are happy that these western products are now available.

Warwick Morris writes: “While I was Ambassador in Seoul Gavin's sausages were often on the menu for groups Pam and I hosted at the Residence, including the British Korean War veterans, Korean alumni of British universities and local Royal Asiatic Society members.”

Since writing this article for the AKS, Gavin has been featured in the Times and the Telegraph in the UK and the New York Times, as well as publications in Korea. You can visit his website at www.gavin.co.kr

Sustaining Fare

Korean Green Tea

Brother Anthony of Taizé

If you have never tasted Korean green tea, you might be wondering what is so special about it. The best way of explaining would be to go with me to a house on the southern slopes of Jiri Mountain in late April or early May. We would watch as our hostess prepares tea she herself dried only a day or two before over a wood-fire, using very small, just-budded leaves. The taste of the tea is so intense, so richly fragrant, that from that day on the only question can be: "When shall I be able to go back and drink that tea again?" Or we might spend a night in a temple, pick fresh tea buds on the slopes behind it, and dry our own tea in a cauldron in the garden. Then we could brew our own tea with our own tea.



Gulcheung-am, a hermitage where tea is made

Even in Korea, good tea is not easily obtained and extensive areas planted in tea are very few and far between. They are mainly found on the slopes of Jiri-san, or around Boseong, and in Jeju Island. In Seoul, green tea from a small number of recognized producers can be bought in department stores. Other, rarer teas, have to be looked for in specialized shops or obtained directly from the producer. This means that people shopping for green tea in faraway countries have to search hard to find any kind of Korean green tea, while Japanese and Chinese varieties are common. In London, East Teas www.eastteas.com and Postcard Teas www.postcardteas.com are two of the rare stores that sell Korean teas. The main thing to remember when brewing them is that the water should be a little below boiling point, brewing should not last more than a minute, and then all the tea must be poured off, to avoid a bitter taste. Try it!

Brother Anthony has lived in Korea for more than 30 years. He is the author of 'The Korean Way of Tea' and 'Korean Tea Classics' (Seoul Selection).

His home page hompi.sogang.ac.kr/anthony/ contains a wealth of information about Korean tea, Korean literature and Korean culture in general.

Your Society Needs You!

The AKS committee are looking for a Treasurer and a Newsletter Editor. Both positions involve membership of the Executive Committee which meets around four times a year in central London. To find out more contact chairman@anglokoreansociety.org.uk or secretary@anglokoreansociety.org.uk.

AKS Executive Committee

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