



ANGLO - KOREAN SOCIETY

Newsletter December 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,

The main highlight since the last newsletter has been the Society's highly successful annual dinner in the House of Commons on 8 October. I was delighted that so many members came and that so many of you brought guests.

I was also pleased that all our sponsors, Diageo, Hyundai and Samsung sent senior representatives and that some sponsors brought guests. It was a great opportunity for them to see the Society at its most vibrant and doing what it is all about.

Ambassador Chun gave us an excellent update on the situation on the Korean Peninsula and many insights into how the Republic is responding to the current economic challenges. Frank Cook, MP, was our official host and for the second time this year played an indispensable part in making the evening the success that it was.

It was a "courageous" decision of the Committee to book a larger room in the midst of an economic crisis but we attracted over 140 guests and sadly had to turn some away. I understand that the attendance was the largest at such an event in recent years.

Our thanks go to Ambassador Chun, Frank Cook MP, our sponsors and to you, the members, for supporting the evening.

Thanks also to those who attended the Chuseok dinner. I recognise that for some of you it took place rather too close to the Annual Dinner and next year we will try to separate the events more. We tried a different format this year in a smaller restaurant. Those who attended certainly enjoyed themselves.

At Sylvia Park's initiative, we have started to hold "monthly diners", informal meetings on the first Wednesday of the month in a nominated Korean restaurant. If you want to enjoy a relaxed Korean meal with other members of the Society, then come along and have fun.

The Committee met in early December to plan next year's programme. We shall kick off with our AGM on 9 March, please keep the evening free.

I hope that you all have a wonderful Christmas and New Year and look forward to seeing you in 2010.

FUTURE EVENTS

Annual General Meeting

This will be held on 9 March 2010, venue to be confirmed.

Any member wishing to propose a motion or have an item included in the Agenda must notify the Secretary by 28 February 2010. Nomination of members for election to the Executive Committee must be delivered to the Secretary by 9 February 2010.

Other Events

AKS Diners—next meeting on Wednesday 3 February 2010.

Visit to Standard Chartered Bank—date to be confirmed.

East Asian Friendship Event—13th April 2010, joint event with China and Japan Societies.



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

Annual Dinner at the House of Commons

This year's dinner in the House of Commons was a great success. Despite the tough economic climate, 142 attendees - a record we think - enjoyed drinks in the Strangers' Room before sitting down to a very good meal in the splendid Members' Dining Room overlooking the Thames. Earlier, about 60 had enjoyed highly entertaining guided tours of both Houses. Dinner attendees included representatives from banking, government, legal, business, science, academia and arts circles, and three former British Ambassadors to the ROK.



Guest Speaker Ambassador Chun

Proceedings at the dinner began with Chairman Sir Stephen Brown welcoming everyone and introducing our Parliamentary Host for the evening Frank Cook, the longstanding Labour MP for Stockton North. Our Chairman expressed heartfelt thanks to Hyundai Motor, special supporters of the dinner, and to our two other current sponsors, Samsung and Diageo. All were represented at the dinner and it was especially good to welcome Hyundai Motor's MD Tony Whitehorn and his wife Jane. The Chairman said the Society was in robust health, described its varied activities, including the

new monthly Korean dinners at a restaurant, and expressed the hope that non-members present would join. He underlined how much we valued the tremendous support given to the AKS by the ROK Ambassador and by the excellent Korean Cultural Centre in Northumberland Avenue.

Frank Cook described his involvement with both Koreas, each of which he has visited, over the years. He was especially proud to have been involved in 2002 in bringing back to Teeside the seven surviving members of the DPRK soccer team that defeated Italy 1-0 in a World Cup match at Ayresome Park in 1966. He also mentioned, as did our Chairman, the unprecedented meeting the Society held, under his chairmanship, last March, when the ROK and DPRK Ambassadors to the UK, as well as the British Ambassador to the ROK, shared a platform in front of some 150 attendees, to discuss inter-Korean affairs. Welcoming the recent meetings between divided Korean families, Mr Cook expressed his strong hope that notwithstanding the problems the two Koreas would come to together and peace on the peninsula would eventually prevail.

We then warmly welcomed **Guest of Honour and speaker HE Mr Chun Young-Woo**, ROK Ambassador to the UK, who arrived hot foot from observing the Conservative Party Conference in Manchester. Ambassador Chun, formerly leader of the ROK's 6 Party Talks team, treated us to a succinct report on the state of the ROK - UK relationship ('excellent') and described the generally encouraging progress made by the ROK - which has just become Chairman of the G20 - in overcoming current economic challenges. He went on to share with us his own thoughts on Korean peninsula security issues. He was clear that first and foremost the DPRK has to give up its very worrying nuclear activities if meaningful dialogue is to be resumed and progress made in improving relations with its neighbours, the US and others. (Earlier Dr Miriam Chung had read to us the text of the ROK Presidential Reconciliation Proposal).

After guests had enjoyed further fine fare, very efficiently served by the House of Commons catering staff, and the chance to chat to acquaintances old and new, former British Ambassador Warwick Morris brought the evening to a close. He especially thanked Ambassador Chun for his frank and enlightening presentation, underlining the striking communality of approach that British and ROK governments took these days on most major global issues, including climate change. After presenting a bouquet and giving heartfelt

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thanks to the Society's tireless Events Organiser Sylvia Park, Warwick drew three cards from a hat to give a year's free membership of the Society to three overjoyed winners! It was nearly 11 pm as the last mellow guests made their way out through the historic corridors and courtyards of the Mother of all Parliaments.

Chuseok Celebration

We were a little premature with our Chuseok celebration for 2009 - sometimes the lunar calendar doesn't quite fit with the busy schedule of AKS members. The festival fell on the 4 October, the 15th day of the 8th month of the lunar calendar, but as September is our traditional harvest month in the UK, and a good time to get together with friends after the summer holidays, the committee bent the rules a little. So on 17 September we gathered for a feast of Korean food, good wine and convivial (if rather noisy) conversation at Woo Jung Korean restaurant in St. Giles High Street near Centre Point.

Having changed the venue, partly due to a low response, we were delighted to have a more than full house on the night, with 35 members and their guests squeezing into the upstairs room. As there was no room for formal entertainment for the evening, Sylvia had gently persuaded two committee members to talk about their experiences of Chuseok whilst living in Korea. Jim Thomson, a diplomat in Seoul from 2001 - 2006, took the floor before the meal and gave us his thoughts on the festival. He explained some of the customs surrounding Chuseok and the impact they had in modern-day Seoul, particularly with regard to traffic and mothers-in-law!



Enjoying good food and wine!

The food then started arriving with many different dishes for us to try, a hot-pot of vegetables, tofu and bulgogi being the high point. The meal ended with plates of multi-coloured songpyeon, the half-moon shaped rice cakes traditionally made at Chuseok, and dishes of sweet red bean paste with fruit and shaved ice.

AKS secretary Cathy Kim then offered her contribution to the proceedings. Having lived in Seoul for 10 years with her Korean husband and two young children, with regular visits from her Rome-based sister-in-law, Cathy's Chuseok experiences were an unusual mix of Korean tradition and western expediency.

Throughout the proceedings the wine flowed and an enjoyable evening was had by all. Our thanks to the owner of Woo Jung who accommodated us at short notice and provided such a splendid feast, also to her staff who managed to serve so many of us in fairly tight surroundings.

Piano Recital

The fascinating church of St Vedast-alias-Foster near St Paul's Cathedral was the setting on 29 October for a delightful and well-attended piano recital by Ka-Hyun (Susanna) Kim, arranged by the British Korean Law Association, in association with the AKS. Only 20, the poised and very talented Susanna, who trained mainly in Europe from an early age including at Britain's Yehudi Menuhin School, showed great maturity in playing and introducing pieces by Debussy, Chopin and Schumann. Some may know Susanna as the daughter of the former KOTRA Director-General in London. The proceeds from this enjoyable evening were shared jointly between the Church's repairs fund, the BKLA and the AKS. The Society's joint President HE The ROK Ambassador and his wife, as well as Warwick Morris, Hon President of the BKLA, were among the appreciative audience. Special thanks to the Church and Martin Day of the BKLA for the arrangements.

NEWS from SEOUL

North Korea's Nuclear Bomb: Optimists cling to hope but the cynics are winning

So far, none of it has worked. Despite more than two decades of tortuous efforts to convince, cajole or coerce, North Korea has hung on to its bomb. The diplomatic workload has been enormous, but for every breakthrough there's been a setback.

The cynics have been proven correct. Forget the Joint Declarations and Agreed Frameworks, they say. Ignore the false hopes of the historic inter-Korean summits, or the fleeting moments of optimism raised by the Six Party Talks. One glaringly obvious fact remains. If you were sitting down to play poker with Kim Jong-il, would you expect him to give us his trump card?

Following the criticism of its nuclear test in May this year, North Korea seems to have been busy making the same point itself. It shares a border with two nuclear powers, China and Russia. It shares another with South Korea, along which 28 thousand American troops are stationed, and South Korea and Japan both shelter securely under the US nuclear umbrella.

Pyongyang's logic is simple. When you are one of the most isolated and criticised countries on the planet, and when your immediate neighbours have their defence underwritten by nuclear force, you can find a lot of comfort in your very own nuclear bomb.

To summarise that logic isn't to support it, of course. But all foreign policy is based on a calculation of national self interest and North Korea is no different. We should try to understand its rationale.

Perhaps there is evidence that Washington is beginning to take the same view, a growing suspicion that North Korea has never intended to disarm. Defence Secretary Robert Gates was giving a nod to the idea that the international community has simply been strung along when he said that there was no chance the US would buy the "same horse twice" in negotiations with North Korea.

Optimists still hope North Korea can be persuaded to disarm through dialogue. And perhaps by better understanding North Korea's position the diplomacy can be improved, the incentives beefed up and the security guarantees strengthened. But for the moment, no one seems to have any big ideas, other than the goal of returning to the Six Party Talks as an end in itself.

Twenty years ago, Eastern European communism was swept away on a tide of popular resentment. The same still looks highly unlikely in North Korea, a country that has learnt to be more Stalinist than Stalin's Russia itself. "Have you ever heard of a North Korean dissident?" one Seoul based university professor asked me recently. "No," he went on, "because all North Korean dissidents are dead."

So if this nuclear armed and highly repressive state won't change from the inside, and neither will it bend to pressure from without, what's to be done?

There are, and probably always have been, only three options when it comes to North Korea.

Hopefully we can all agree that option one, war, is a terrible idea with unimaginable consequences both for Koreans and for the rest of the world.

The second, a policy some have suggested the Obama administration may already be pursuing, can be called benign neglect. You refuse to accept North Korea's status as a nuclear power, but privately acknowledge the present reality. You work hard to enforce sanctions to prevent proliferation of nuclear technology, and you continue to invest in negotiations, but without much hope of a breakthrough.

The third option is engagement, a strategy that draws its lessons from those events in Europe two decades ago. The Berlin Wall fell, the argument goes, partly because of the aid, trade and cultural exchange between the two Germans in the decades prior to communism's collapse.

It's expensive, risky and it's already been tried here. South Korea's efforts to fund rapprochement with the North fell out of fashion with the change of power in Seoul from a liberal to a conservative administration in early 2008. But for its supporters it remains the best of a bad lot.

Engaging with your nuclear armed foe may seem like folly, the argument goes, but backing it into a corner, pushing it into deeper isolation, is much, much worse.

Kindly contributed by John Sudworth, the BBC Correspondent in Seoul

NEWS from SEOUL

Grow your own and escape to the countryside—a healthy combination



On a lighter note, our own AKS correspondent in Seoul, Jenny Guest, has sent us the following article and photos of their allotment near Seoul where she and her husband Peter have been successfully growing vegetables.

Allotments have been in the newspapers a lot recently, usually in the UK, but lots of friends are amazed that we have an allotment in Korea. A friend introduced us to this about 2 years ago. The farm is located near Songchon in Namyangju City next to the North Han River – a beautiful spot. We arrived at the allotment the first time unsure as to what it would be like and were totally amazed at how well it was organized. You were given garden tools, seeds to start you off, cabbage and lettuce plants and then shown to your strip of land which was already marked with your number. Plots are allocated by contacting City Hall in Seoul who put your name down on a list. They then contact you again in January/February to tell you in which area your allotment will be. There are several such places dotted around Seoul.



First day at the allotment in April, planting the seeds



Transformation—the allotment in May

The drive out of Seoul at the weekend is wonderful and once you get to the farm everything is so worthwhile. We went down “seed street” in Seoul and stocked up with extra seeds and planted everything on our first visit — lettuce (assorted), cabbages, moo, radish, tomatoes, peas, carrots, melon (which were not too successful), potatoes and sweet corn. The next time we went we were stunned at how the seeds and plants had flourished and the field was not just brown soil, but covered like a green carpet.

Everyone is so nice and very helpful, the farmer’s wife sits and watches all the goings on and makes

you feel so welcome. We are the only foreigners there so quite a novelty! At the end of the growing season we came away with superb vegetables – too many for us so we gave a lot away to friends and neighbours. We would recommend having an allotment to anyone who is keen on gardening and the outdoors.

The farm is about 60km east of Seoul. Follow Route 6 along the north side of the Han River, past the Paldang Dam, then turn north on Route 45 alongside the North Han River. Past Sujong Temple and the village of Songchon, the farm is on the right by the river.

The location is idyllic - right by the lake, so quiet and tranquil - we usually have lunch there and then go off hiking afterwards up the mountains nearby, and perhaps stay and have a Korean barbecue late in the afternoon - perfect.



Peter harvesting lettuce in June

NEWS

AKS Diners

This is a new venture for the Society and is proving very popular, seventeen members and guests attended the last meeting on 2 December at the lively and accommodating Woo Jung restaurant.

The idea of holding a regular, informal gathering, where members can meet and get to know each other was the brainchild of Social Events Secretary Sylvia Park.

The next meeting will be on 3 February 2010, the choice of restaurant to be decided. After the success of our Chuseok event when two AKS members talked about their experiences of living in Korea, Sylvia would like to repeat this format at a Diners evening. These informal events are ideal for sharing experiences and learning about each others customs and culture.

Thank you to all those who have supported this venture so far, we are looking forward to even more of our members joining the fun and discovering just how diverse our membership is.



AKS members enjoy the Diners evening on 2 December at Woo Jung restaurant

Farewell to Ambassador Chun

A hastily arranged but well attended farewell reception was held by Ambassador Chun Young Woo and his wife at their residence on 26 November. Guests included representatives from many walks of life, including business and government, the House of Lords, academic and cultural circles, the BKVA, BKLA and the AKS. All were sorry to see the Chuns departing after only 18 months, whilst congratulating the Ambassador on his promotion to Vice Minister responsible for management and administration at headquarters.

On behalf of the veterans, General Mike Swindells presented the Ambassador with life membership of the BKVA, while Lord Kerr, Chairman of the UK Korea Forum for the Future, spoke warmly of the Ambassador's time in London and, as a former Head of the Diplomatic Service, wished him well in his new role. On behalf of the AKS Warwick Morris thanked him for his strong support for the Society and his work in strengthening UK - Korea links generally. Amid warm applause, Ambassador Chun expressed the hope that he and his wife would at some point be able to make up the time they felt they had lost by returning to the UK.

Memorial Event for Kim Dae-Jung

A moving event to Remember and Honour former President Kim Dae-Jung was held at Clare Hall, Cambridge on 17 November. KDJ was a visiting Fellow at Clare Hall for 6 months in 1993 and an Honorary Fellow from 2001 until his death in August of this year.

Amidst images from his life story, there were addresses by Clare Hall President Sir Martin Harris (recently back from visiting the ROK with Cambridge University's Vice-Chancellor), representatives from the ROK Embassy and the Cambridge University Korean Society and former Ambassador Warwick Morris, and a fine tribute from Clare College Alumnus Lord Hacking. AKS members Jim and Susan Hoare were among the 60 or so attendees.

AKS Executive Committee

Chairman:	Sir Stephen Brown
Treasurer:	George Harvey
Secretary:	Cathy Kim
Social Events Secretary:	Sylvia Park
Membership Secretary:	Peter Poole
Committee:	Miriam Chung
	Peter Corbishley
	Hyun-key Kim Hogarth
	Grace Koh
	Derek Marsh
	Hugh Merrill
	Warwick Morris
	Woo Seung Shin
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