

Outgoing President's message

My ascendancy to the dizzying role of ACIP President arose due to the resignation of Andre de Wandeler in late April, following which I agreed to act as interim until the current AGM. Over this period we needed to address the reasons stated for Andre's sudden departure, whilst steering a steady course in what is an increasingly successful and thriving Association.

Whilst it is indisputable that ACIP is a predominantly Anglophone society (with almost 75% of members selecting English as their preferred language of communication) our over-riding principles are aimed at furthering integration within our adopted community by means of providing cultural and friendly opportunities for meeting like-minded people from many different backgrounds. We see ourselves as a conduit through which people can network, make friends, learn the language (including those who wish to speak English) or simply join in with one of the many classes and activities that we provide. All of this is achieved via a strong spirit of volunteering (and perhaps 'giving back') for the benefit of others, but it does rely on goodwill, understanding and cooperation so that our disparate membership can find common goals. I hope that this will remain our *raison d'être* and collective passion for many years to come.

Whilst it was upsetting that Andre departed with the opinion that ACIP was drifting towards being too Anglophone (or at least creating that impression, to some) it did prompt the committee to have a good look at our current objectives and re-examine our trajectory and core principles. Some issues were indeed identified and we took the opportunity to reinforce communications with our Francophone membership, which in turn resulted in the recruitment of a new French member to the committee. I am therefore very happy to give my full support to this new team and I'm confident that we are in good shape to move things forward.

As for events, we enjoyed fantastic support for our summer BBQ, on a scorching hot day, and more recently reinstated our popular Vide Grenier with all the tables sold out within ten days. Both events were well supported, especially by the teams of volunteer helpers, and both contributed significantly to ACIP coffers. These successes contrast with the cancellation of the Great Gatsby event which unfortunately failed to gain the necessary support from our membership and sadly caused some upsets within the committee.

For my part, having served on the committee for almost ten years I will now return to my primary role of webmaster. Most of you will not have noticed much change regarding the website and our communications system, which is a good thing as the transition from the former ageing and clunky set-up was hopefully seamless. The website and secure membership database forms the backbone of our communications with the membership and the resource should act as a hub for both new and existing members. The processes have also been simplified, in the hope that someone new will step forward in due course to handle our web and email communications. So if you have a technical, IT or desktop publishing background and could potentially be interested in this core ACIP function then please let me know.

Once again, thanks go to all of you for your membership and continuing support, most especially to all the volunteers who make the whole thing tick along. Long may that continue...

Alec Robshaw, ACIP webmaster