

National Presidents - Newsletter December 08

Dear Skålleagues,

It hardly seems two minutes since my last newsletter on my return from the World Congress and yet so much has been happening.

World Travel Market in Excel London turned out to be quite an adventure! The transport difficulties are now well catalogued and indeed following the show at Paul Follows suggestion I wrote to Boris Johnson Lord Mayor of London to voice Skål International UK concerns and we also copied in the Minister for Tourism, Visit Britain, Visit London and London Transport. Despite the problems in getting to the show Paul and his fellow Skålleagues had a successful time on the Skål stand and have built a list of potential members from both the UK and Worldwide.

The London Club held their annual lunch on the Tuesday, which I was pleased to attend and I was delighted to see the event, was actually sold out! Clearly now a must do event in the WTM calendar. It was lovely to see so many of our Skål friends from all over the world so soon after being with them in Taipei.

During WTM Jayne Byott, Paul and Jim Power were able to secure a special deal with Travel Weekly for a series of 4 adverts promoting membership of Skål to be shown in December and January so well done all concerned and keep a look out for the adverts and hopefully some enquiries. The cost of the promotion was split with Skål International, Skål UK development funds and contribution from a number of UK clubs so many thanks for your speed of response and support.

Three days later we were on another flight back to Britain to attend the Brighton & Sussex Presidents weekend in Eastbourne when President Anthony and his fellow members put on a fantastic programme hosted at the Lansdowne Hotel on the Saturday night for the Presidents dinner and the celebration of a twinning ceremony with the Belgian Coast Club who had a party over for the weekend.

On the Sunday we were delighted to attend the English Wine Centre who had recently joined Skål Brighton & Sussex for an excellent wine tasting and lunch before Graham & Susan Appleby were kind enough to whisk us back to Gatwick. I am also delighted that Anthony is coming over to Belfast this week for our Presidents lunch, which will be a first visit for him to N.Ireland.

The tragic events in Mumbai and the unrest in Bangkok has badly effected many Skålleagues and for those who have attended recent World Congresses in India and Thailand the impact of these events are all the more real. On your behalf I have written to both Presidents with our thoughts at this time and we can only hope a return to normality as soon as possible although for those in Mumbai who have lost loved ones I doubt if that will ever be possible.

Looking forward we have our Skål UK AGM planned for Thursday 29th January 2009 in the Novotel at Birmingham Airport and I would encourage as many as possible to put the date in your diary and attend.

Our National Secretary Sally Gray has requested nominations for positions on the National Executive to be with her by 19th December 2008 and positions vacant include Second Vice President, Secretary and two Executive Officers so please consider these important roles in your National Skål Executive and lets see some new faces taking our organisation forward.

Finally may I wish you and all your loved ones a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas and here's hoping 2009 surprises all those doom and gloom merchants and turns out successful for us all!
Best wishes,

Mark W. Alexander - National President