

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT IBCA: AGM 22nd JULY 2019

A year ago on the 15th July we celebrated our 2018 annual general meeting. Following the reports by the chairman and the treasurer, we were addressed by General Ido Nechushtan, former head of the Israel Air Force. He described the various actions in which he had taken part which made for very interesting listening. He also gave us the background to the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor.

We had a very successful Balfour Dinner on the 7th November. It took place at the Hilton Tel Aviv and was attended by about 250 people. Our UK guest speaker was Lord Roderick Balfour. He gave a very moving speech about his prestigious ancestor Lord Arthur Balfour, the signatory of the Balfour Declaration. He stressed the longstanding friendship between him and Dr. Chaim Weizman.

He also told us how his great-uncle had mentioned Weitzman on his death bed.

Nathan Scharansky represented Israel at the event. We were impressed by how he had stood up to the Soviet Union in spite of prison and torture. This led to the opening of the doors of Russia and the release of Soviet Jewry. We felt that we were experiencing living history. We were honored by brochure greetings from Reuven Rivlin, President of the State of Israel and by Benjamin Netanyahu Prime Minister of Israel. It was an outstanding and memorable occasion.

Joseph Beenstock undertook the organization of the Balfour brochure at short notice due to the untimely passing of Michael Rosenfelder our honorary secretary. He was able to produce a very respectable brochure which resulted in a transfer of the proceeds to the John Furman fund. I am also grateful to all the committee members who worked so hard to make this an occasion we will remember. We are delighted that he has joined our committee and is playing such an active role.

Due to the illness of one of the surgeons who actively participates in the travelling surgeon's project, we decided to postpone this event until next year,

and I sincerely hope my assistant will be fully recovered by then, and wish him well.

We again represented IBCA at the Remembrance Ceremony at Ramle military cemetery. Some of our members joined the HOB coach to Ramle, and attended the reception at the home of the British Ambassador afterwards. Perhaps we should try to interest more members to attend next year.

On the 25th December we again enjoyed our traditional IBCA brunch at the Daniel Hotel Herzlia. We had an enthralling address and discussion with Gil Hoffman of the Jerusalem Post.

We try to reach out to other organizations with a common interest.

On the 10th February we had a joint meeting with CAMERA at Bet Hatfutzot

The subject was British Antisemitism-It's Personal with Mark Lewis and Mandy Blumenthal as well as Melanie Phillips and I24 moderator Eylon Levy.

It was a very successful meeting and perhaps we should consider further cooperative meetings of this kind in the future.

On the 30th May we enjoyed a farewell meeting at the residency of David Quarrey the British Ambassador. Mr. Quarrey reminisced about his four years in Israel, and told us about the close relationship we enjoy with Britain.

Your committee has met with various Commonwealth ambassadors. This includes the Nigerian Ambassador who will consider hosting IBCA in the future.

It would be nice to think that the former Australian Ambassador to Israel, Dave Sharma, was influenced by the time he spent in Israel. He has now been elected to the Australian Parliament, and is one of the prime movers in trying to relocate the Australian Embassy to Jerusalem. We continue having a very warm relationship with Chris Cannan, the new Australian Ambassador.

Finally we expect an interesting address by Eyal Offenbach at our AGM today.

I should like to thank all my enthusiastic committee. In spite of illness of some of the members or their partners, they continue to do all they can to make IBCA successful

I feel that I would personally again like to thank Sam Lewis my deputy chairman, who has been most active in all aspects of the Association. We rely on him to organize and supervise our major events and appreciate his attention to every detail.

Roger Lavender continues to oversee our finances.

I would again like to thank Jeanette Cannon who continues to look after our membership, and makes sure that dues are paid. We all appreciate the hard work which is carried out to keep all up to date.

Irene Gee has kindly taken over as honorary secretary which we appreciate. We continue to benefit by her wise advice and active help. Anton Felton continues to support and encourage us. We appreciate his continued support and encouragement.

Brenda Katten continues to provide us with help and advice and miraculously finds us prominent speakers. She too has actively played such an important part in IBCA. She still works hard to support us, in spite of having retired as a former IBCA chairperson. Sima Jacobs joined us last year and has succeeded in attracting Anglophile Israeli Hebrew speaking members. She too is playing an active role. We are also pleased that Philip Margolis has joined our ranks. We look forward to more of his advice and experience.

Finally our deepest thanks go to our executive coordinator Renee Singer. Renee is the person who runs IBCA and organizes us all. She makes sure that all our activities run smoothly.

On reflection IBCA has had a successful year socially, diplomatically and financially. We thank all our members for their continued support.

