



Réunion des Gastronomes

President's Report 2022

Fellow Gastronomes, welcome and thank you for joining us at today's AGM.

As I complete my second year as President, I would like to spotlight those that have supported me throughout this period, and especially the Committee, Vice President and Past Presidents. Their prompts and suggestions have helped me steer our wonderful organisation through what has been one of the most difficult periods in our sector, certainly in my lifetime.

Succession planning has been a continuous theme across these two years, with the most recent including Treasurer following the sad loss of our dear Cyril Freeman and looking ahead as Brian Andrews – Independent Examiner has prepared our Year end Accounts for the last time, we will be seeking a replacement as well as supporting our General Secretary – Vic Laws with Mark Emmerson as Assistant General Secretary, so he can handover elements of the role as and when he wishes to reduce his support.

In reflecting on the last 12 months, there is light and dark as there always is in life. **The dark** included those members and past Presidents who died, namely Alan Fairbrass, George Goring, Peter Bramich Cyril Freeman, Keith Pattison, Ronald Jones, Adrian Bannister, Bev Puxley, and Peter Pitham many of whom we have paid tribute at some of our events.

The light began with the first live event in August 2021 at Le Talbooth, hosted by member Paul Milsom, and 18 months after I had been elected President of the Réunion des Gastronomes. Subsequent events hosted by members include:

- a traditional Grouse Supper at L'Escargot in September
- an entertaining Annual Banquet at The Caledonian Club in October with Highland Dancing and Address to the Haggis
- a member get member event at the newly refurbished Royal College of Surgeons in November, where we welcomed 10 new members and interviewed member Chris Moore
- the Advent Service in St George, Hanover Square followed by lunch at ROSL in December and accompanied by a wonderful pianist, carol singing and lots of merriment with member David Cowdery's rendition of 12 days of Christmas
- The Guildhall Club in January 2022 including a tour of the Guildhall
- Mosimann's Club in February also welcoming new members Mark Mosimann and Ben Purton

At Christmas we once again let our members know we were thinking of them with a **Christmas Pudding gift** for UK resident members prepared by Food Show – member Andrew Gosling's company, and a handwritten card from me to all members which this time included that it was from the Réunion des Gastronomes. All carefully wrapped by Gastronomer Elves Vic Laws, Mark Emmerson, Theresa Maw and Andrew Gosling.

We continue to **strengthen our relationship with Kate Nicholls** OBE and CEO of UK Hospitality, with a Round Table in December and 2 Round Tables scheduled for this year – one on 25th April and one in September (date to be confirmed).

Our continued affiliate membership of UK Hospitality enables us to keep you informed through cascades and updates on how we can help our sector with campaigns.

We successfully introduced our **online booking system** in January:

<https://bookwhen.com/gastronomes> This platform enables you to book and pay for the next event and register on the waiting list for future events which are booked for the rest of this year and a few in 2023.

We have purchased a CRM cloud based software for easier communication cascades, enabling us to move away from using Vic's own database software.

Newsletters created by Committee member Paul Wenham, whether of venues where we are hosting events, or simply keeping us informed of Réunion des Gastronomes news have received positive feedback.

Visual reminders of events for those unable to attend, were created by Paul Wenham and Demir (our photographer at events): all of which can be found on YouTube under Réunion des Gastronomes

Future Plans:

We are focusing on the following for the forthcoming year:

- Reintroducing the **Réunion des Gastronomes Award** for managers, and which member John Cousins will be kindly leading.
- **interviewing** members or guest speakers at events to add interest and focus on one of the organisations objectives:

To promote, principally by its social reunions, mutual understanding, exchange of ideas and opinions between colleagues which may be of value on all questions concerning their profession.

- **Increasing membership** of active professionals in our sector through personal invitation.

Future Events:

We are conscious of the cost of attending events and so in 2023 we will introduce a few informal networking supper events which will be more casual and affordable.

To be Raised in AOB

- Many of you will be experiencing challenges in recruiting and with your permission, later in this meeting we would like to propose using £500 of the money raised from the raffle at the Mosimann's Club event and **supporting Hospitality Rising** with a donation towards the biggest hospitality sector recruitment advertising campaign to help with the 400,000 current vacancies in our sector.

I think that covers my second year and thank you for your confidence in me and suggesting I should extend my tenure by a further year.

I am happy to take any questions.

