

Chairman's Report – 2024

I begin this report with some of the highlights of the year, both in Lisbon and Porto. The annual lunch was held on 13 January at the Hotel Riviera in Carcavelos. Around 80 members and guests were present and it was announced that former long-standing Council member Patricia Lamb would become an honorary member. The Lunch was preceded by a talk and film about the Urgeiriça uranium mine and the nearby hotel. The presentation was by Gonçalo Byrne and Ramsay Cameron, both sons of former general managers of the mine. By good fortune our member Marcus Harbord was present. Marcus is the grandson of Charles Harbord who owned the mine, and then the hotel for many years. He was able to offer insights into his grandfather's varied life. The hotel was a popular meeting place for British families from Porto and Lisbon in the 1950's and 60's. Many members present enjoyed exchanging reminiscences of holidays there.

To commemorate the Revolution which took place with effect from 25th April 1974 in Portugal, we organised a dinner and talk by Richard Mayson on "The Music of the Revolution" on Friday 19th April, also at the Hotel Riviera. Richard has been a member of the Society for many years and is an expert on Portuguese wines. He was a schoolboy at the time of the Revolution, and shared with us his recollections and excerpts of the music that became symbolic of profound cultural change in the country. Richard's enthusiasm for the music soon overcame misgivings which some members may have had about this event.

The Annual General Meeting was held on 6 July at again, believe it or not, the Hotel Riviera. Filipa Lowndes Vicente gave a well-received presentation on "Goa is a place an Englishman ought to visit: British Travellers in Goa (1850-1950)" and presented her latest book "Entre Dois Impérios- Viajantes Britânicas em Goa-1800-1940". Filipe Lowndes Marques, chairman of the General Assembly, then presided over the AGM proceedings which were quite short as no elections were necessary this year. Lunch was then served.

Twenty-six Lisbon members enjoyed the weekend 13-15 September with a trip to Urgeiriça. We stopped at Belmonte for lunch, arriving rather later than expected due to the bus driver having to take his compulsory 45-minute rest stop shortly before we approached Belmonte. Fortunately, the owner of the *Taberna Fio de Azeite* was very understanding and we had an excellent lunch, followed by a visit to the Jewish Museum and Synagogue. Our two-night stay at the Hotel de Urgeiriça was extremely comfortable, and included on Saturday morning a guided walking tour of the mine's surface installations, now disactivated, and an afternoon visit to Gouveia which included a visit to the Casa de Vivência Judaica. On Sunday we returned to Lisbon, visiting the recently opened Casa do Passal – Museu Aristides de Sousa Mendes at Carregal do Sal, and then enjoying a self-guided visit at the Roman ruins of Conimbriga. Another excellent lunch was taken at the nearby *Restaurante Museu* and we arrived back in Lisbon and Estoril in late afternoon. Other events are mentioned in the resumé in this report.

Our Porto group, under the enthusiastic leadership of Alan Dawber, had excellent attendances at a number of talks which are mentioned in the resumé. Two of the Lisbon speakers, Filipa Vicente and Richard Mason, reprised their presentations in Porto. On 5 October, a very wet afternoon, Michael Rothwell led a walking tour from the Torre dos Clérigos down to the Ribeira, following the line of the 14th century city walls. Three members from Lisbon came up specially for this event. As always, we are very grateful for the assistance given by Mrs. Janice Bain and Alan's wife, Maria, for their support in making sure these events move smoothly, and of course to the OCTLC which has made available its premises for our events and suppers afterwards.

Alan undertook to be the leader of the Porto Group in early 2022 for two years but agreed to remain in post for a third year, i.e., up until December 2024. Unfortunately, despite his best efforts, Alan was not been able to find anyone willing to replace him as the leader of the Porto Group. Accordingly, the Council of the Society

agreed with Alan that he should stand down at the end of the year. So, since January 2025, the Porto Group has ceased to exist with no events being organised in the Porto area. The Council believes that it is in the interest of the Society to have a Group based in Porto, but it does depend on local support and leadership and the Council would be very interested to hear from any member, or potential member, who would be prepared to be leader of that Group. Administrative support would be certainly forthcoming from the Council based in Lisbon.

2024 saw the finalization of the project to digitize the newspaper Anglo-Portuguese News, published every fortnight from 1937 to 2004. This project was initiated by Filipe Lowndes Marques in memory of his grandparents Susan Lowndes Marques and Luiz Marques, who were owners and editors of the newspaper for many years. Members of the British community, including the Ambassador Mrs. Lisa Bandari, representatives of the Câmara Municipal de Cascais and the Lowndes Marques family gathered at St. Julian's School on the evening of 26 September to formally launch the Anglo-Portuguese digital archive, a new website that contains downloadable copies of all issues of the paper from 1937 to its closure in 2004. Also present were representatives of those organisations who had kindly sponsored the web site. We are very grateful to Filipe and his family for their support, and also the support of our sponsors, in making this project possible. The Society made a contribution of €2,500 to this initiative and a further €500 towards the donation of a period 'Brown Bess' musket to the Lines of Torres Vedras Museum at Sobral de Monte Agraço.

Turning to administrative matters, the Council decided to automate our processes for membership and events registration procedures. After a review of the relevant software applications available, the Council decided to invest in the Wild Apricot application, as used by our friends the Royal British Club. Member Mark Davies agreed to oversee the implementation of the software, with valuable advice coming from John Hughes of the RBC. Council member Andrew Shepherd has agreed to oversee our day-to-day operations of Wild Apricot. Initial bugs and glitches have been few and the Council is very pleased with its functioning.

A resumé of our activities during 2024 can be found elsewhere in this report. And full details of past and future events can always be found on our web site www.bhsportugal.com. We are very grateful to Council member Andrew Shepherd for administering Wild Apricot, keeping our website up to date and compiling our quarterly newsletters. The newsletters include links to past and forthcoming events, articles and book reviews, many of which are written by Andrew himself. As usual our thanks are due to Dani Monteiro for looking after our library, listening to our members, and liaising with the Hotel Riviera over lunches and dinners. We are very much indebted to Mark Crathorne for his role in organising many of the events, compiling this Annual Report, and constructive advice. Curtis Stewart continues to be a valuable member of the team as secretary.

Our Annual Accounts for 2024 continue to reflect a satisfactory situation with bank and cash balances totalling 15,400€ at 31 December (2023 – 16,574€) and a small deficit of payments over receipts for the year of 1,174€ (2023 - excess of receipts over payments – 1,253€).

As a final note, I should mention that next summer, 2026, the mandate of all current members of the Society's statutory bodies will end. Elections will be held at the Annual General Meeting for members of the Council (Board of Directors), Fiscal Board and General Assembly. Currently the Council has five elected members. In view of the increasing activity of the Society and the need to provide for succession, we believe that the Council should ideally have seven elected members. Accordingly, I appeal to members to consider standing for election in summer 2026 and so ensure the future of the Society.

Edward Godfrey – Chairman