

It is indeed a great honour to be re-elected as your President for a second 3 year term, and I would like to thank my proposer Ian Mitchell and my seconder John Hidrio for their very kind words.

The past 3 years have indeed been very busy and I must admit at times the task has been extremely stressful, but when one is as passionate about something as I am about this Society, its members and all its activities, the role is made so much easier.

Taking over as President just as the world-wide recession was starting to become a reality, was not brilliant timing, I must admit, and I personally and the Society generally could really have done without that extra burden and worry at that time, together with the on-going consequences that continue to this day.

The old cliché “the world will never be the same again” has been used so many times, but the deeper we go into the world-wide downturn, the more it affects us all in our everyday business.

We have to be able to do more (or at least the same) for much less, and I am pleased that careful budgeting and cost controls have improved the trading position of the Society over the past couple of years – but we’re only a little way down the road to securing a sustainable financial future for our Society, and there are HUGE challenges ahead on a number of fronts.

Having been here at our “new” headquarters for over 10 years, we need to be looking at developing these premises to equip us for the next 10 years and well beyond into the future. From a real estate perspective, we would dearly love to have another “permanent” facility on the site of the marquee footplate, and/or to the north of the building – as from the bookings pattern we can see that we need to have more than one big facility here, as on many weekends throughout the year we have the demand from existing users of the building for two fairly large events taking place in two totally separate and flexible individual facilities.

One of my goals over the next 3 years is to modernise the way that the RJA communicates and interacts with it’s members, and this will through a dynamic web site and infinitely better use of e-mail and the Internet. Whilst there has been some preliminary work done on this recently, I will be putting this at the top of my list for the new Council to consider at their first meeting as a major priority.

Ways of communicating and doing business are progressing very fast, and we are in danger of being left way behind if we are not careful, and I would like to see great strides being taken in this area within the next year.

Generally we as a Society are not very good about promoting ourselves when we have something to be proud of that the rest of the world should be knowing about, and basically we must all learn to “blow our own trumpets” more often – of course only when it’s appropriate.

As a Society, we are truly at the heart of the countryside and the rural economy, and we must continue to play a leading role along with other organisations to ensure that our rural environment is not only maintained, but also enhanced whilst still providing that all-important natural resource of land so vital to viable agricultural and horticultural units.

Just a few things I wish to achieve in the next 3 years to move the Society forward and to make it more relevant to the modern world and to Jersey's modern day multi-cultural population. We mustn't stand still, or else we will fall behind, again another cliché – but oh so true and something that all of us must be continually aware of not only as members of this Society, but in other areas of our lives as well.

I would like to thank all members for putting their faith in me to lead this Society over the coming 3 years, and I promise that I will continue to do my very best for you all and for the furtherance of the good reputation of this wonderful and esteemed organisation. However, it is very much a team effort here at the Society, and whilst the buck does very much stop here (with me), I could not do this without the support of my Council, the two General Committees, all the members who give so freely of their time to help to run Society events, and of course the staff who do such a wonderful job on behalf of us all.

On a personal note, I couldn't do justice to the role without the support of my family and particularly my wife Suzanne who is such a great help in so many ways, allowing me the flexibility that the role of President really

demands. And of course, I mustn't forget to mention my staff and partners in my business (Lysaght & Co.), who help to cover my workload when I am called away to attend meetings or to deal with some issue that has arisen and that needs attention.

In conclusion, I thank you all again for allowing me the opportunity to lead you for another 3 years, and it is truly an honour and privilege to be able to serve as President of this treasured and well-respected Society.

Thank you