**President’s MAA Newsletter.**

**November 2012**

The six months since my last newsletter have been busy and eventful for the MAA and well worth reporting. Two successful reunions have taken place. The first was an extra one - the ‘Olympian Reunion’ held at the end of June at the Medical Society of London building in Chandos Street and specifically organised for Moorfields’ Alumni born either in or before the year 1952, which meant that they were alive at the time of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. In this way the MAA celebrated the Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics together with a special lunch and a showing of Hugh Williams’s DVD ‘The Olympian Ophthalmologist’, which tells the story of the impact Henry Stallard made on the world of athletics and ophthalmology. The MAA was proud to have contributed to the production of the film. For good measure Richard Keeler also gave a short talk on Philip Doyne who also took part in the 1924 Olympics as a fencer. Some 35 alumni turned up with Brenda Aveyard, our MAA administration secretary, invited as our guest. A photograph of the assembled group can be seen on the MAA website. (*To access the website: log on to Moorfields Eye Hospital, click on ‘Health Professionals’ and then go to Alumni Association*).

The other reunion lunch took place at the end of October and was for alumni from High Holborn. This was the second High Holborn Reunion, the first having been in 2010 and the next is scheduled for 2014. It was also held at the Medical Society of London which has become the regular venue for these events and a photograph of those present can also be seen on the website. After the excellent meal Richard Keeler gave a talk on the history of the Royal Westminster Hospital up to 1947 when its site became the High Holborn Branch of Moorfields. In the discussion that followed the point was made that it is now nearly 25 years since High Holborn was closed and 2016 will be the 200th anniversary of the founding of its antecedent, the Royal Westminster Hospital. If no effort is made to keep these in the public eye, two important institutions in the history of UK ophthalmology will soon disappear into obscurity. It was agreed that there should be a campaign to preserve their name perhaps by a plaque on the building or by an annual lecture or by some other way and alumni present at the reunion were asked to give some thought as to how this could best be done. As a result of this the MAA Management Committee has unanimously agreed to re-name the annual MAA Lecture requested by the Moorfields Medical Committee to be given during the Scientific Meeting prior to each AGM. It will be now be known as **The High Holborn Lecture** and its...
content should be ‘light-hearted in nature and need not be scientific’. The inaugural lecture will be given by Peter Leaver, our first Honorary President.

Richard Keeler, our Honorary Archivist, has been busy on our account. In addition to contributing to the success of the two lunchtime reunions by his presentations he has set up a special display of Stallard memorabilia in the Alumni Museum at the Institute of Ophthalmology. Apart from his many medals and awards there are newspaper tributes recording his athletic achievements and also recognition of his pioneering work in the treatment of ophthalmic tumours. The exhibition will remain on display until the end of the year. Richard’s work in the Archive Room also continues and we are building up a collection of portraits of ophthalmologists who have contributed to the MAA. The Lifetime Achievement Award Honours Board is now completed and it shows the names of the first two recipients, Alan Bird and Desmond Archer and we look forward to hearing Desmond’s acceptance speech at the AGM on January 25th 2013. I can announce that the MAA has again negotiated concessionary fees for those members who just want to attend the AGM and subsequent presentations, which include the reports of the Medical Director and the Research Director and the Residents’ Review. At the time of writing this newsletter 9 places are still available at a cost of £35.

Lastly, and perhaps more important than anything, Brenda Aveyard who is the cornerstone of our Association has volunteered to forego her salary until she retires from her full-time post at Moorfields. Attempts were made to dissuade her from this most generous gesture but she was adamant and the MAA is extremely grateful, not just for this but for all the work she puts in on our behalf. Needless to say this significant reduction in MAA expenses will allow us to develop other aspects of the Association to the benefit of our membership. And on this very positive and encouraging note I wish you all a happy Christmas and look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM in the New Year.

Tim ffytche
Honorary President,