Greetings to you all

In OB 158, I was introduced to the membership as the new Secretary. As this OB reminded you, the Secretary position was created to take account of the huge demands on time which the previous Chair position imposed on its incumbent.

The OB then included a report I made, in which I asked what sort of an organisation you wanted, and invited you to reply with your views.

I have good news and disappointing news to report. The good news, two very interesting suggestions were made of activities we could pursue. The bad news, only 6 of you (out of over 300) replied.

You will recall that the question was asked whether you were prepared to pay an annual subscription of $25, so that the cost of VOCS events could be subsidised. One obvious event to be so subsidised is the annual Boat Race Dinner, but no doubt others will also occur from time to time.

Although your Board does not need a formal mandate, it is clear that we do need a general acceptance from the membership before embarking on such a radical change. And it is even clearer that 6 responses is nowhere near sufficient to constitute “general acceptance”, even though 3 out of the 6 were wholly in favour of the idea, 2 were partially in favour and one was strongly opposed.

So, no change here.

As to the 2 suggestions of new VOCS activities, one is weather dependant and will not therefore see the light of day until Spring (but I have made a diary note to remind its proposer in March!). It concerns a bike ride through the cherry blossoms, which strikes me as an excellent idea. More on this later, then.

The second suggestion is not at all weather dependant, and is very COVID appropriate. It concerns the creation of a VOCS Movie Club, like a book club substituting movies for books!

I now quote the email I have received:

*Dear VOCS members*

*A couple of us are floating the idea of a movie club for those film buffs among you. How it develops will depend on the response and what ideas people might have of the best way it would work. But the basic idea would be to individually watch a movie and then set a date to chat about it on Zoom (in these COVID times). In other words, like a zoom book club, but with movies instead of books.*

*To get the ball rolling we thought we’d put forward 4 movies of different genres that are readily available on Netflix. Obviously, any movie selected will need to be easily available for home watching, and although there are a number of streaming platforms, Netflix is the most common.*

*Here are the 4 movies:*

*A documentary: The Trial of the Chicago 7*

*A satire / comedy: The Forty-Year Old Version: Radha Blank pokes fun at how black female actors are co-opted by white producers, “burning with sharp but often understated humour”*

*A classic : Rebecca. Ben Wheatley’s 2020 take on Daphne du Maurier’s novel*

*A drama: The Life Ahead with Sophia Loren, directed by her son Edoardo Ponti (this starts streaming on 13th November).*

*If you are interested in joining a VOCS movie club, please reply to vanoxbridge@gmail.com Can you please reply by November 23rd, so we have time to watch and discuss the first movie before Christmas.*

*When replying that you would like to join this club, please also select which of the above 4 movies you would like to watch as the club’s first outing, and on the assumption that you would like to see some or all of them, please rank them in order of priority. The “election” will be held on November 24th, it will be a first past the post election, and all votes received by the November 23rd deadline will be counted!*

*Isabel Lowe*

I think this is also an excellent suggestion, and urge those of you interested in joining a VOCS Movie Club to both reply and rank the 4 movies quoted above in order of preference.

Both these suggestions are great examples of the sort of society VOCS can become. It doesn’t take much time or expertise to organise an activity and I hope further suggestions will come from you as you become more familiar with the idea.

If any of you have any more ideas of ways in which this society can become more relevant in the lives of its members, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Our email address remains vanoxbridge@gmail.com

I look forward to receiving your emails.

Simon Taylor