

Visit to Scotland

Ambassador Gunnlaugsson visited Glasgow and Edinburgh on 24-28 November. He met the Lord Provosts of both cities and familiarized himself with the two chambers of commerce. He paid a special visit to the Scottish Parliament, where he met the Speaker, Mr. George Reid and the Scottish Ministers of Culture, Finance and Fisheries. He hosted a reception at the Fettes College for the Icelandic community and personalities from government, culture and commerce. On Sunday 28 November, the Embassy Chaplain, Rev. Sigurdur Arnarson, held a service for the Icelandic community. Mr. Norman Hamilton and Mr. Cameron Buchanan, Iceland's Honorary Consuls in Glasgow and Edinburgh, rendered invaluable assistance in preparing and implementing the visit. Furthermore, the Embassy wishes to acknowledge the contribution of Mrs. Kristin Hannesdóttir, who has for more than thirty years played an important role in the Icelandic society in Scotland.

Reykjavík Male Choir

The Reykjavik Male Choir, which was founded in 1926 and consists of 70 singers, held a Christmas concert at Southwark Cathedral in London on 3 December. The President of Iceland, Mr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson and his wife, Mrs. Dorrit Moussaieff, were special guests at the concert, which was also attended by a large number of Icelanders in London. The Choir also sang in the Canterbury Cathedral on 2 December, where the Ambassador and his wife hosted a "picnic" reception.

University College London

The Ministry of Culture and Education in Iceland and the University College London have come to an agreement in principle on replacing the present three plus three year sponsorship arrangement for the post of Halldór Laxness Lecturer in Icelandic Language and Literature into a permanent post. The new arrangement will enter into force in the autumn of 2005. Since 1999, Dr. Daisy Neijmann has held the present post. The University College London is the only university outside Iceland which offers a BA degree course in modern Icelandic.

British Icelandic Chamber of Commerce

The Annual General Meeting of the British Icelandic Chamber of Commerce was held at the Embassy on 29 November. The meeting was chaired by its chairman, Mr. John Quitter. Over 30 members attended the meeting. Mr. Sigurdur Einarsson, Executive Chairman of Kaupthing Bank Ltd., was the guest speaker and spoke on the future vision of Kaupthing. At the meeting, one change was made to the present Executive Committee of the Chamber; Mr. Jon Scheving Thorsteinsson took over the Iceland Chapter from Mr. Erlendur Magnússon.

On 10 December, the British Icelandic Chamber of Commerce held a Christmas lunch at the Embassy for its members. The lunch was well attended and was entertained by Mr. Ólafur Kjartan Sigurdarson, baritone and a special Yule Guest.

Iceland Stock Exchange

The Iceland Stock Exchange arranged a presentation seminar at the London Stock Exchange on 13 December, introducing leading Icelandic companies to UK financial institutions and investors. Ambassador Gunnlaugsson invited the participants to a reception at his Residence the same day.

Iceland's Consul in Glasgow in leading role

The Embassy wants to congratulate Mr. Norman Hamilton, Iceland's Honorary Consul in Glasgow, for his election as the Deacon Convener of the Trades House of Glasgow. This position, one of the most prestigious in the city, is a reflection of the high esteem Mr. Hamilton is held in and without doubt adds luster to Iceland's image in Glasgow.

Icelandic "invasion" into the UK market

The daily newspaper Morgunblaðið printed on 25 November a special supplement on the recent investments and acquisitions of Icelandic companies in the UK market. The supplement includes a specific overview of the substantial activities of various Icelandic companies based in London, the Humberside area and elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The supplement will be published in English before the end of this year.

The Embassy wishes the readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

