Mrs the President of the International Association of Lyceum Clubs, Muriel Hannart

Mrs the Vice-President of the Northern Hemisphere, Monique Gächter

Mrs the President of the French Federation, Sabine Coiffe,

Mrs the Past-President of the French Federation, and my godmother Jacqueline Suttin,

Mrs the Past-President of the Swiss Association, Janet Blümli,

Mrs the Vice-President of the German Association, Erika Partsch

Mrs the President of the Club of Amsterdam, Bettine Polak

Mrs the President of the Club of Edinburgh, Diane Burrow

Mrs the President of the Club of Florence, Giovanna Corsi

Mrs the President of the Club of Paris, my sister, Pascale Anderson Mair

Mrs the Past-President of the Club of Orléans, my mum, Anne-Marguerite Chupin,

Dear Ladies and Friends,

May I compliment you all for your elegance! What a beautiful and sparkling assembly! Thank you very much for being here tonight to celebrate this very special moment in the life of the Lyceum and particularly for our Club in London. On behalf of my committee and my members I thank our friends from France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Switzerland for joining us tonight and for their support.

This afternoon we paid tribute to Constance Smedley and to those pioneers’ women and followers who created 120 years ago something unique which brings us together: the Lyceum! It was also an opportunity to present our vision for the months and years to come and I will say a few works later.

Recently a friend asked me how I was managing this. My answer to this question is very simple and comes in 4 points:

1. I strongly believe in the value of the Lyceum and what it has to offer. I had many opportunities in my life to realise that there was something unique in the Club: whether in Moscow, Paris, Berlin or recently in Rabat or Athens, the Lyceum offered not only a curated programme but a vibrant and caring environment for its members and Friendship is the cement of the Club and the Association. We need this friendly environment where we can satisfy our curiosity and our need to continue to learn.
2. I am grateful to my proposer, Jacqueline Suttin who introduced me to the Lyceum Club of Paris 30 years ago. I also have the chance to have in my family a past-president, my mum, a president, my sister and I benefit from their experience and knowledge of the lyceum. My nieces and daughters (and in brackets my husband) are also very supportive. It is almost a family affair.
3. I am surrounded by a beautiful talented team. And each member is bringing her enthusiasm, her skill in a specific field and her determination to see the success of the club.
4. But above all I am doing this for you. The members are the most valuable asset of the Club. Without you we would not be here. The Lyceum Club exists for its members, through its members and by its members.

Earlier today I thanked those who have been working on the Committee and I would like to name them tonight: Helen Dalton, Lorraine Rienecker, Caroline Rio, Elisabeth Hagmann who will set down once we have found a new treasure. My members today, Anne Ariss, who welcomed you and Barbara Brouwers who did a fantastic work designing the invitation and the booklet. I am particularly grateful to two committee members who for the last 18 months have been my most dedicated supporters in this enterprise: my niece Lauriane Anderson Mair who among many things, set up the website and design our communication tools in record time and Anne Cavell with her multiple hats: from membership director to honorary secretary, leading activities and recruiting at the same time, my very loyal right hand. Their encouragements and initiatives have been priceless. So, it is with a little pinch of sadness to see my niece leaving the committee after this event for professional reasons. Thank you, Lauriane, for your very valuable contribution to the relaunch of the Club.

I am delighted to announce that Emma Cavell will take over from Lauriane and lead the difficult task of creating a young members circle. Welcome Emma to the team.

Knowing the story of the Lyceum it is part of the journey to understand where we are aiming. We have defined our raison d’être et set three objectives:

* Increasing our membership
* Creating visibility and notoriety
* Making the most of the IALC

The committee will be leading different projects which should help us to reach those objectives, but they are only achievable with you. We do count on our members to spread the word about the Lyceum, when meeting friends, inviting friends to our events and by following us on social media. Each member should be an ambassador of the Lyceum.

Creating visibility and notoriety will be achievable through different projects and particularly the Followher@ which will be led by Barbara who without doubt can count on your support. We are also looking to find make sure that our club is not perceived as an expat club. We need to find our ‘Lady Balfour’.

And the third objective is making the most of the IALC. Our Club is a sparkling star in the Lyceum Constellation. There is so much to discover from other clubs, and I warmly recommend you to attend the international events whenever it is possible. We will also develop some interclub exchanges.

Tonight, we are starting a new chapter in the history of the Lyceum! To take part of the beginning of this chapter is fantastic and I hope that there will be many more anniversaries to celebrate together.

I would like to invite you to raise your glass to Constance, to our guests, to our club, to our friendship and to our future! Long Live Lyceum!