LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In this edition we mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate on 13th December 1939. Elsewhere you will read of the tributes in Canada. See also the Spanish Section. I was not there but I do remember seeing the remains of the Graf Spee in the river as the overnight ferry passed en route to Buenos Aires, taking me to boarding school – and back!

It has been a wonderful summer that we shall refer back to in years to come. You will find reports on the Catherington Concert at Hambledon in June and the Asado in July and other very successful activities further into the Journal. On a personal note I must tell of my surprise to see the flag of Wales, the Red Dragon, flying in Rosie and Paul’s garden at the Asado. The story behind the fact was explained to me by their friend David Williams (what a name to conjure with as my husband’s grandfather bore that name, from Penryhndeudraeth!). So we talked and I talked to his wife and friends and it gave me a completely different feeling, enhancing the day further for me.

You will enjoy reading about Sybil Mumford and her friends’ visit to El Centro Karen: she fills in all sorts of details one needs when setting out to visit Salto. Of the many coloured photographs that were taken she has compiled a simple calendar which you can order from Sybil (01225-863867) and I can take it to the AGM for you, to save postage. Proceeds to the ’Friends of Uruguay’ to be distributed as usual.

The Times wine columnist Jane McQuitty, reporting on this year’s Beauty of the South tasting, wrote ‘Compared with the obvious cultural and historical links between Chile and Argentina, South Africa was the odd man out. Next year why not a “Beautiful South America Show”? Brazil has come of age, Uruguay needs a boost…’

In The Guardian the arts correspondent Mark Brown wrote that a previously unknown work by Titian has been identified and dated by the art historian Artur Rosenauer of the University of Vienna as dating from 1511 when the artist would have been in his 20s! Provenance is that the von Bulow family owned it around the 19th century until Bernhard Heinrich von Bulow (Chancellor of Germany 1900-1909) died in Rome in 1909. The subsequent owners emigrated before the Second World War and it arrived in its present home, a European private collection in Montevideo. The painting shows a full length Christ standing on the lid of his sealed tomb, his left hand holding the flag of resurrection and his right arm raised in triumphant blessing. Rosenau said ‘astoundingly well preserved’ and ’spectacular detail, the medium of paint exploited to its highest potential’.

Where is it now? Does anybody remember it in a friend’s house, or chapel, or in a church? Do write to me. JNB
DE AQUI Y ALLA

Nuevos Socios: We welcome the following new members: Mr. and Mrs. Piñon de Francisco and Ms Catherine Wilkins, daughter of Harry and Eileen.

Congratulations to Christine Ann Sarkis on being elected to the Board of the British Hospital in Montevideo, the first woman to be so elected in the hospital’s history.

ALAF: The Fair announced for 25th October 2014 has had to be postponed and it is hoped to hold it in February-March 2015 on a date yet to be fixed.

CALENARIO

Sun., 2nd November  The 4th Moo Grill lunch at the Moo Grill, 63 Brick Lane, London E1 6RF with a talk afterwards by Patricia Ralph about her great-grandfather’s life as an estanciero in Uruguay in the 1860s

Mon., 1st December  ALAF Carol Concert at St. James’s, Spanish Place

Wed., 3rd December  AGM and Christmas party at St. Columba’s Church of Scotland, Pont Street, London SW1

Sat., 13th December  Lunch to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate at Portsmouth, organised by the HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans’ Association (For tickets apply to Malcolm Collis, The Bewicks, Station Road, Ten Mile Bank, Norfolk PE38 0EU 07736 929641 malcolm.collis@gmail.com)

February-March 2015  ALAF Fair (postponed from October 2014)

Sun., 14th June 2015  The third Catherington Concert at Hambledon

RETIREMENT OF OUR HONORARY PRESIDENT

H.E. Julio Moreira Morán, Uruguayan Ambassador to the Court of St. James’s since 2009, retired on 16th September and is retiring from the Uruguayan diplomatic service, and we wish him and his wife every good thing in their retirement and thank them sincerely for all they have done for the Society during their tenure in London

THE 69TH AGM ON 3RD DECEMBER

As usual at this time of year the Committee solicits nominations of people for election to the Executive Committee at the AGM. Anyone who is a member of the Society may nominate another member, the nominations to reach the Hon. Secretary in writing at least seven days before the date of the meeting, accompanied by the written consent of the person nominated to serve if elected.

At each AGM two members of the Committee have to stand down and this year Morven Hutchison retires by rotation and Linda Curiel is standing down on retiring
from her position as Hon. Secretary (see next item). In addition the two co-opted members, Tristan Millington-Drake and Guy Bondoneau, automatically retire according to the Rules but are eligible for election as full members if so nominated. There will therefore be four vacancies to be filled this year.

THE SECRETARY’S PAGE
This is the last letter I shall be writing for El Hornero, as I shall be stepping down from the post of Hon Secretary at the end of the year. I have enjoyed the last four years, but now have increasing family commitments that unfortunately don’t allow me enough time to continue in this role.

I have had some interesting events over the past four years: attending ALAF as a helper; setting up the Moo Grill meals; running the asado etc. One event, though, really stands out and that is the Football World Cup in June. It isn’t the football that I remember, but the media interest generated by the England–Uruguay match. I hadn’t realised how important it was going to be until England started to lose their previous matches, and desperately needed to beat Uruguay to stay in the competition. Then the phone began to ring with journalists wanting the contact details of football mad Uruguayans they could interview. I had calls from local radio, local papers, national radio, national newspapers and TV stations! Luckily for me, but not for her, Carla Bertellotti was organising a wine tasting event for football fans on the day of the match, so I put a lot of journalists in touch with Carla. By the day of the match I thought I had finished with journalists, but not so. Raúl was answering the phone as I went into the kitchen after breakfast: when I came out again he was in the middle of a live interview with Radio Coventry! Then I had a call from Three Counties Radio (my local station): I tried to give them the usual information about Carla, but they insisted on the human interest story instead, and wanted to interview me about life with a Uruguayan. They conducted a rehearsal, and fixed a time for the live interview later in the day. The interview itself was interesting, if nervewracking, and of course the questions asked bore no resemblance to the rehearsal! After the interview I heaved a sigh of relief, hoped nobody I knew had been listening and assumed that was the end. Then, during the football match Luis Suárez bit one of his opponents…and the phone started ringing all over again…

So if you are thinking of a career with the media, why not become the next secretary of the B.U.S?

LINDA CURIEL
THE NEXT SECRETARY OF THE SOCIETY
As Linda says above she is retiring as Hon. Secretary at the AGM. The Committee is therefore seeking a new candidate. Anyone who feels they might be able to fill the post, or knows anyone else who might, is invited to contact the Editor, Jennifer Beazley, at beazleyuk@yahoo.com

DONATIONS TO CHARITIES

Roger Ralph, Hon. Treasurer, reports:

The figures quoted in the last *Hornero* are the totals donated to Uruguay for the financial year ending 30 June 2014. No further funds have been sent to Uruguay in the interim. However, £250 has been donated to the Royal College of Music. The Annual Accounts for 2013-14 will be circulated before the AGM on 3rd December and show that the Society has had another very successful year and made a surplus on all events held during the year.

REPORTS FROM CHARITIES

El Centro Karen

Thanks to help from good people we are well on the way to raising sufficient funds for the planned inner courtyard gallery, extension to the air conditioning and additional fencing. The Centre has a concrete raised stage in the playground and a much needed safety rail is being provided to part of it.

A valuable contribution to the Centre and wider Malvasio community is the clinic, staffed daily by a doctor and health support staff - all provided by the State. It has become increasingly evident that the present accommodation is far too small to cope with the demands and we are looking to relocate into more generous and suitable accommodation elsewhere within the Centre complex. That will involve expenditure but it has many advantages for everyone. The idea is currently being considered as a priority and I'm hopeful that maybe we can see it to fruition in 2015. More as things develop.

GRAHAM ASTON

EL CENTRO KAREN visited by one of our members

I made my first visit to Centro Karen in 2010. This February I had the great pleasure of leading a group of thirteen people to Uruguay and other Latin American countries and a visit to Centro Karen was one part of the itinerary.

Because of complicated schedules and also so as not to be too overwhelming for the children, we went in two groups two days apart. It is a six-hour bus journey from Montevideo to Salto. Two direct buses run daily. The 6 o’clock one arrives at
midnight, the morning one mid-afternoon. As many of you will know, the long distance buses in Uruguay are now comfortable and punctual. The journey is interesting, no stops, though you can get a stopping bus which obviously takes longer.

We were booked into the Art Deco Hotel in Calle Uruguay. This is a delightful, recently renovated, old house with a charming garden. The proprietors, Bogi (Uruguayan) and Marikka (German), could not have been more helpful. We were met at the bus station and greeted at the hotel by a young lady who was in charge as Marikka and Bogi were due back from the USA the same day as we arrived.

My husband and I stayed five nights as some of our group were arriving from Iguaçu and others going off to Rio. Details of the Art Deco can be found on the net.

A ten-minute taxi ride took us to Centro Karen.

Being February the children were ‘drifting back’ after the summer holidays. (This was an interesting concept for most of our group. ‘No beginning of term date?’) So we met just a small percentage of the 140 under-fives who attend. We were told about the parenting classes, the use of a room for family events, the planned covered way to connect the rooms, and the use of the outdoor space for entertainments.

The clean bright décor and spacious rooms together with the friendliness of the staff and children impressed everyone very much.

I noted how many aspects had progressed and improved since my last visit in 2010. The caretaker’s accommodation, extra rooms, a vegetable garden and the power point presentation were all new to me.

The staff and committee were delightfully attentive and even gave us a wonderful lunch cooked on the BBQ, followed by a power point presentation, explaining the work of the centre. In spite of language problems (some staff speak some English but not all) we chatted very happily, and exchanged email addresses. We were all so impressed by the cheerful décor and spacious facilities. We saw the caretaker’s new accommodation and on the second visit met him as he tended the vegetable garden.

We noticed each of the children’s rooms had a big mirror at floor level. This surprised us. We asked why they were so placed and were told the children have no mirrors in their homes and have never seen their own image. They therefore have a very limited idea of self and identity. As if to demonstrate their use, a small boy approached his image and gave a shy kiss to himself. It was a poignant moment!

Previously in Montevideo we had visited a community outside the city where no Centro Karen or the like exists. Had we not done this maybe we would have thought that these clean, well fed, happy children are the norm for poor areas of Uruguay.
We realised that here an oasis has been established. Graham Aston has performed something remarkable. How privileged we are to be able to help.

I asked some members of my group for their impressions:-

‘The thing that struck me most was the overwhelming hospitality they offered us. The fact that those with little, shared. Centro Karen radiated joy to us in its welcome and surroundings,’ (Graham and Debbie Cheshire)

‘My overall feeling for Centro Karen was how happy everyone appeared to be. I did not get the impression that this was in any way put on for our benefit. There was a real sense of belonging which came over very strongly. A real oasis in such a needy area.’ (Ann Owen)

We took our photos, wrote in the visitor’s book, and left our small gifts. As always with such experiences we took away in our hearts a lot more than we brought in our hands.

SYBIL MUMFORD

[Ed. Note: On the group’s return Sybil organised a Uruguayan evening, including a photographic exhibition, at the United Church Hall near her home at Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire, to share members’ experiences of their trip with local people.]

EVENTS OF THE SUMMER

THE SECOND CATHERINGTON CONCERT AT HAMBLEDON on Sunday, 15th June, at the invitation of Stephen and Julia Harwood

The village of Hambledon, and Stephen and Julia’s garden and drive, had been under water for 51 days during the 2014 winter floods but by June the garden looked spectacular and no one would have known anything had happened. But it had and had caused them great trouble which continued long after the waters receded and it was noble of them to have us when they were only just recovering from this long inundation.

There was a late change to the concert as the soloist, Cristina Acosta, the 17-year-old daughter of Gonzalo Acosta, the Associate Leader of the ENO Orchestra and a former Vice-Chairman of the Society who initiated our 60th anniversary celebrations in 2005, was taken ill on the morning of the day and Gonzalo himself saved the situation and performed in her stead at short notice. We were so sorry for Cristina who is a brilliant young violinist like all the students from the Royal College of Music who have performed at Catherington, but to hear her distinguished father in this intimate setting was an amazing privilege.

As he said in his introduction to the programme, it is not easy to find very many Uruguayan classical pieces, which is one of the reasons for the Society’s annual award at the Royal College of Music as it is hoped it will encourage a young student to research such pieces and in the process find out more about Uruguay in general. Gonzalo
proved that there is a fertile field and had chosen two Uruguayan pieces and one Argentine one plus César Franck’s famous Sonata for violin and piano, a perfectly balanced programme.

What made it extra special was his introduction of each piece, with vignettes about each composer, beginning with Gerardo Grasso (1864-1937) who is little known outside Uruguay but deserves to be. He was responsible for the arrangement of the Uruguayan national anthem sung in schools and composed the Pericón Nacional. Gonzalo had discovered and arranged a Tarantella by Grasso with which he began the programme. César Franck and the A major Sonata needed no introduction, and Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) hardly any more, with his Oblivion composed in 1982 and used in the 1984 film Enrico IV. The fourth composer was Gerardo Matos (1897-1948), who wrote La Cumparsita as a very young man when he was a penniless student singing in cafés in Montevideo, especially La Giralda, where this world famous piece was premiered in 1917. Gonzalo had arranged it for this occasion. He was accompanied throughout the programme by the pianist Masachi Nishiyama, to whom our grateful thanks are also due.

Tea after the concert was supplied by Paul Jarman with his own delicious home-baked cakes. Paul also invited sealed bids for a West Bromwich Albion football shirt signed by Diego Lugano, the result of the auction to be declared at the wine tasting and football event a few days later (see below).
THE WINE TASTING CUM FOOTBALL EVENT

This took place on Tuesday, 19th June, the night of the England v. Uruguay match in the group stage of the World Cup, at the Barley Mow Centre, a very agreeable space in Chiswick, and was organised by our Committee member Carla Bertellotti of Wines of Uruguay, and Red Squirrel, an online distributor of wine in the UK.

The first part of the evening was devoted to a wine match between Uruguayan and English wines, and the second part to watching the England v. Uruguay match on a splendid wide screen.

For the wine match four wines from each country were tasted, a sparkling one, then a white, then red, and finally a pudding wine. Guests were given an unmarked glass of each wine from each country and were asked to vote, using cards put on each table. This round ended in a draw, England winning the white and (somewhat to my surprise) the pudding wine categories, and Uruguay the sparkling and red categories.

As it was a draw it then went, in football terms, to a penalty shoot-out as guests were asked to vote by a show of hands for each individual wine. Not surprisingly the Tannat won in the red category by a long way but the cumulative effect of the shoot-out was that England won by one point.

We then moved to the football match which was watched in a very good spirit and much enjoyment (well, perhaps a little less so for England supporters!) and as we all now know Uruguay won by one point, thankfully without a penalty shoot-out. I don’t think we could have stood two in one evening! So in the end the honours were even.

The success of the event was due to Carla’s initiative, and the Red Squirrel people were very professional and accommodating. It was an excellent way to celebrate this occasion which seems unlikely to happen again for many years to come. To have England and Uruguay drawn in the same group when the World Cup was held in one or other of their countries, as it was this year, is probably unique.

The canapés were also exceptionally good!

The auction of the West Bromwich Albion football shirt signed by Diego Lugano, which was masterminded by Paul Jarman, was also a great success and raised £77.00. Paul began the auction at the Catherington Concert (see preceding report) when two sealed bids of £50.00 each were received but they were trumped at the football evening by one of £77.00.

TRISTAN MILLINGTON-DRAKE
THE ASADO, on 20th July, at Stowe House, Pyrford, Surrey, by courtesy of Paul and Rosie Tuckwell

The Asado was different this year as sadly Graham Aston had to pull out as the asador at the last minute owing to illness and we all send him our very best possible wishes for his recovery.

Because of this the Asado couldn’t be in its usual format as it was impossible at short notice to find anyone else who knew how to cook three whole lambs in the authentic way that Graham does. Therefore Paul Tuckwell, our host, hired an industrial gas barbecue and Roger Ralph and Paul Jarman heroically stepped into the breach and produced lamb steaks which were the nearest that could be got to Graham’s usual succulent version, but thanks to volunteers we had all the traditional accompaniments, empanadas, tortas pascualinas and salads and a variety of desserts. Paul and Rosie were the kindest of hosts and their garden looked lovely, on a very pleasant but not overly hot summer day. Their friend David Williams brought the house down with his auctioning of lamb steaks and rolls surplus to requirements, which raised some very useful extra funds, beyond what was expected. As last year music was provided by Martha Acostamino and much enjoyed. Thanks are due to Linda for overseeing the organisation of everything under difficult circumstances, and to all those who helped in so many ways to make the day so enjoyable and such a successful fundraising occasion for our charities.

VISIT TO AJAX, ONTARIO BY THE HMS AJAX AND RIVER PLATE VETERANS’ ASSOCIATION 11th-17th June 2014

Based on contributions from Jonathan and Ben Harwood and Malcolm Collis of the Ajax and River Plate Veterans’ Association.

The town of Ajax, Ontario, Canada is named after the cruiser HMS Ajax, who, along with her sister ship HMS Achilles, and HMS Exeter, fought at the Battle of the River Plate in 1939. A close relationship exists between the town and the Battle of the River Plate with many streets named after those who fought at the battle or who served in HMS Ajax during WW2. Although no veterans of the battle were present at this celebration there was one veteran from the cruiser HMS Ajax (1935-1948) and several from the frigate HMS Ajax (1963-1985) when she visited the town in 1976.

The town of Ajax was led by the Mayor, Steve Parish, and Councillors Pat Brown, Coleen Jordan and Cherry Sevigny. The Harwood family were represented by Admiral Sir Henry Harwood’s grandsons, Ben and Jonathan Harwood and Ben’s wife, Kate. On Friday 13th June Association members gathered at the town’s public library to listen to the first of Jonathan Harwood’s 45-minute presentations on The Battle of the River Plate which was very well received by the public and school children present. The Association members were also guests of honour at the 40th Anniversary review of the Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps Harwood. Jonathan and Ben Harwood were the reviewing officers. An excellent display was put on by the Sea Cadets and everyone present appreciated the amount of dedicated hard work involved. Members of the Harwood family were made especially welcome at the review. The Lady Harwood award was presented to the ‘Best Cadet’, Joseph Munarriz.

On Sunday 15th there was a Service of Remembrance at the Forest Brook Community Church to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle. Association members witnessed a moving
service, followed by a musical tribute by a local orchestra. Afterwards a dinner was held at the Royal Canadian Legion Club. Stephen and Henry Harwood’s recent book, ‘Harwood and the Battle of the River Plate’, sold well with profits being split between the Cadets and the Association’s memorial fund.

On the Monday, in Council Chambers, Jonathan and Ben formally presented Commodore Harwood’s Admiral’s uniform to the town of Ajax. This now occupies pride of place in the Town’s historic display area.* One of the visitors from the UK, Clive Sharplin, also presented a print of ‘The Battle for Crete’ featuring HMS Ajax. On behalf of the Association Malcolm Collis thanked the Mayor and town of Ajax for the invitation to visit the town. In recognition of the town’s generous donation towards the construction of the Memorial to the battle at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, UK, the Mayor was presented with the Order of Service of the dedication ceremony which was held in April 2014. Malcolm also formally invited the Mayor and Council to attend the 75th Anniversary luncheon to be held in Portsmouth in December 2014.

After the presentation delegates drove to a number of new streets in Ajax named after HMS Ajax crew members where dedications were made to the memory of John Garrad and James Weld (Captain of Ajax 1942-44) with Hawkins Crescent, Michaelman Road, Collis Lane, Sharplin Drive and Porte Road being added to the map of this thriving town in Canada.

* Admiral Harwood’s full dress Commodore’s uniform was presented by Stephen Harwood to the Naval Museum in Montevideo in 2002.
The letter below was written to The Black Country Bugle, a weekly Staffordshire local paper, by Graham Aston who was born in Bilston and has always kept up his contacts with the area. He was instrumental in setting up the Gaucho exhibition that he mentions at the Walsall Leather Museum in 1993, which the Society supported, and among the many spectacular exhibits were a series of photographs of gaucho life by Mirta Pither (see El Hornero No. 59/60, June-September 1993, with reports by Graham and by Lilliane Tunstill). As a result of the success of this very interesting exhibition, the Committee invited the then Director of the Museum, Michael Glasson, to give a talk for the Society on the Walsall saddlery trade, which he did at Canning House on 28th February, 1994 (see El Hornero No.63, June 1994)]

Uruguay link to Walsall’s leather firms
(from The Black Country Bugle, 11th September 2014)

I was interested to read in The Bugle (August 21 edition) of Walsall’s leather tradition.

The rich South American ranch owners favoured English saddles and lorinery. In the Gaucho Museum in Montevideo there are many references to Walsall firms, including some mentioned in your article. A favourite drink in the River Plate area is mate (green tea), using a seed gourd as the container. A metal straw or bombilla is used to suck the mate from the gourd.

Several years ago boxes of these tubes were deposited at the Walsall Museum after a local closure and no one knew what they were. I was able to identify them. Then a successful Gaucho Exhibition was arranged by the museum that was opened by the Uruguayan Consul Dr. Jorge Jure and supported by the British Uruguayan Society of which I was chairman at the time.

IN MEMORIAM
Flora Belle Cisneros (Florita) died on 18th July 2014. Although not directly connected with Uruguay she was one of the founding members of ALAF and a long-serving member of its committee and had worked tirelessly for it at every fiesta and fair over many years. She was therefore known to many of our members, especially those who were particularly associated with the fairs, where they will remember her as a mainstay of the Anglo-Brazilian Society’s stall, though she was actually Venezuelan by birth. All of them greatly appreciated her dedication and huge input and will miss her very much.

Graham Aston
Norah Schiele died on 5th August 2014 aged 97. One of our oldest members, possibly the oldest at the time of her death, she had been a most faithful supporter and despite being very nearly blind and quite infirm she struggled up from Cambridge, by train and alone, on at least two occasions to come to the Society’s events in the last few years, an astonishing effort which was inspiring.

China Zorrilla, the famous Uruguayan actor/director, passed away in Montevideo on 17th September 2014. She was born Concepción Matilde Zorrilla de San Martín Muñoz in Montevideo on the 14th May 1922 to a distinguished family, being the daughter of the sculptor José Luis Zorrilla de San Martín and Guma Muñoz de Campo. Her grandfather was the Uruguayan national poet Juan Zorrilla de San Martin, best known for his epic poem Tabaré. She grew up in Paris, where her father was a disciple and friend of the sculptor Antoine Bourdelle. While in Paris her father produced ‘El Gaucho’, a sculpture that is now prominently displayed in Montevideo. On his return to Uruguay he produced public sculptures for both Uruguay and Argentina. China’s mother was a theatrical costume designer.

Back in Montevideo, at the age of 21, China made her debut as an actress and director with the group Ars Pulcr a when they performed La Anunciación de María (The tidings brought to Mary) by Paul Claudel. Between 1946 and 1948 China was in the UK, having won a scholarship from the British Council to study at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London.

Back again in Montevideo, she joined the Comedia Nacional at the Teatro Solís as an actress where she stayed until 1958. In 1960 she formed the Teatro de la ciudad de Montevideo (TCM), along with Enrique Guarnero and Antonio Larreta. The company toured Buenos Aires, Paris, and Madrid, where they won the Spanish Critics’ Award for their many stagings of García Lorca and Lope de Vega.

Between 1964 and 1966, China lived in New York and worked as a French teacher and Broadway secretary. She gave performances of Canciones para mirar, a children's musical based on texts by the Argentine poet Maria Elena Walsh. She had a short relationship with the actor, singer and film star Danny Kaye, and though he was married she always referred to him as the man of her life.

As an opera director, she directed Puccini’s La Bohème and Verdi’s Un ballo in maschera at the Teatro Solis, and Rossini’s Il barbiere di Siviglia at the Teatro Argentino de La Plata. In 1971 at the age of 49 she made her debut in films with Un Guapo del 900, an Argentine production. She moved to Argentina after starring in the play Butterflies are free and lived there for the next 35 years. In 1973 she was forbidden by the military regime to perform in Uruguayan theatres, but after 1984
when the country returned to democracy she made a comeback performance at the Teatro Solís.

During her time in Argentina China made more than 40 appearances in films and on TV. She earned recognition for her performances in Conversaciones con mamá in 2005 (2004 Best Actress Award at the 26th Moscow International Film Festival and the Malaga Film Festival) and in Elsa & Fred, which won her several awards, including the Silver Condor for Best Actress.

She won numerous other theatrical awards and received civic honours from many countries including the Orden de Mayo from Argentina and the Légion d’honneur from France in 2008. She travelled a great deal, was often in London and came to one of the Society’s functions at Canning House about ten years ago when it was a great privilege and pleasure to meet her. She spoke perfect English and had been a friend of Sir Eugen Millington-Drake, the Society’s founding President. She will be greatly missed in many circles and especially in Uruguay.

MIRTA PITHER

**Patrick Sherwood MBE:** Paddy Sherwood, a stalwart of the British community in Uruguay for many years, died on 20th September after a long illness bravely borne. In his working life he had represented J. Walter Thompson in many parts of South America, ending as its managing director in Ecuador after which he retired to Uruguay. He had supported numerous British community organisations, especially the St. Andrew’s Society, and above all had served on the Board of the British Hospital for over twenty years and served six terms as its President.
BATALLA DEL RÍO DE LA PLATA
Fue la primera batalla entre barcos ingleses y alemanes en América del Sur al comienzo de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Tres cruceros ingleses formaron parte los cruceros: HMS Ajax, HMS Achilles y HMS Exeter con el acorazado alemán Admiral Graf Spee. No voy a explicar los pormenores de esta batalla pues han corrido ríos de tinta de lo mucho que se ha hablado sobre ella.

Pero es digno de destacar el esfuerzo que puso el presidente uruguayo Alfredo Baldomir en las negociaciones con el gobierno británico para llevar a un final cuando el 19 de diciembre de 1939 finaliza la batalla con el hundimiento del Graf Spee.

Recordemos a todos aquellos que pusieron sus esfuerzos en esta batalla y que a pesar del tiempo transcurrido se les sigue recordando con el afán y entusiasmo del primer día. Tenemos hoy día doce representantes, son sus veteranos y nadie mejor que ellos pueden hacer un balance de lo ocurrido.

Recordemos a todos aquellos que hoy no nos acompañan y que son parte y gloria de esta batalla…

GRUTAS DEL PALACIO
Uruguay país rico en lo que puede ofrecer al turista tiene infinidad de lugares con riquezas naturales. Unas de ellas son las Grutas del Palacio que fuera reconocido por la UNESCO como uno de los parques más hermosos. Se le conoce también como Palacio de los Indios. Se dice que su masa rocosa data de 70 millones de años y que en el pasado se creía que dada la formación rocosa perfecta se trataba de palmeras petrificadas, otros dicen que fueron construías por los indígenas.

Flores es uno de los 19 departamentos de Uruguay. Su capital es Trinidad. Este departamento es el menos poblado y su capital cuenta con 25,000 habitantes. Grutas del Palacio se encuentran a 46 kilómetros al norte de Trinidad y a unos 200 kilómetros (150 millas) de Montevideo. En este lugar se pueden apreciar diferentes etapas geológicas por las que ha pasado. Dos museos, dos parques lugares para acampar, para pesca y un lugar donde la fauna y la flora hacen que se disfrute este parque al máximo.

Una parte se ha derrumbado, puede ser que la mano del hombre que quiere cambiarlo todo o el paso del tiempo sean la causa. Además otra parte se encuentra bajo agua por un río que corre debajo y lo ha ido cubriendo. Acá se encuentran los primeros cangrejos de agua dulce. Son los parastacus pilimanus que solo habitan en cuevas y aguas subterráneas. De momento se pueden visitar 30 metros de los 400 de la gruta.
Se cuentan varias leyendas que son interesantes para el turista que las visita. Se debería arreglar y ponerlo en condiciones para atraer al turista.

**CHINA ZORRILLA**

El mundo artístico uruguayo llora la pérdida de una de las artistas más grande de todos los tiempos. China Zorrilla falleció en la ciudad de Montevideo el 17 de setiembre pasado a consecuencia de una enfermedad en el Sanatorio de la Asociación Española a los 92 años.

China viene de una familia de intelectuales. Nieta de Juan Zorrilla de San Martín, el gran poeta de la ‘Leyenda Patria’ y ‘Tabaré’, su padre el famoso escultor José Luis Zorrilla de San Martín, su madre Guma Muñoz del Campo. Nada le faltó a China para ser artista. Su vida la pasó en Francia, Inglaterra y Argentina donde se radicó en la ciudad de Buenos Aires, país en el que trabajó y evolucionó como artista.

Participó en 50 películas y 60 obras de teatro. Paseó su arte por todo el mundo y donde cosechó aplausos y se supo ganar de la amistad y simpatía de cuantos la conocieron. Se retiró de los escenarios cuando cumplió 90 años. Muy poco se conoce de su vida sentimental que supo mantener como nadie separada de su vida artística.

Ya enferma vuelve a Montevideo después de vivir 35 años en Buenos Aires donde recibe el cuidado de su familia más cercana, su hermana y sus sobrinos y así el 17 de setiembre cae el telón en la vida de la fantástica China.

Cristina Fernández de Kirchner decretó dos días de duelo. En Uruguay se declaró duelo nacional y las banderas en las instituciones del estado y embajadas permanecieron a media asta. Se la trasladó al Salón de los Pasos Perdidos del Palacio Legislativo donde se le rindieron los máximos honores como persona y como artista. El féretro pasó frente al Teatro Solís y a su paso recibió el homenaje de su público, ese público que abrazada cada vez que salía a las tablas. Descansa en el Cementerio Central.

**DELMIRA AGUSTINI**

Se cumplieron el 6 de julio pasado 100 años de la trágica muerte de Delmira Agustini ocurrida en circunstancias extrañas. Escritora de gran relevancia literaria. Desde muy niña muestra un gran interés por la música y el idioma francés. Crece en una época dominada por hombres, nació el 24 de octubre de 1886 y ya a los 10 años empieza a escribir poesía. El 1907 publica su primer libro ‘Blanco’ que obtiene una buena crítica, a pesar de esto no fue bien recibido por la sociedad. En esta joven se ve que transporta a sus versos un placer carnal, que para aquella época era una nueva tendencia literaria muy avanzada, una nueva poesía. Se inspiraba en Eros, el divo del amor y volcaba en la poesía pasión y erotismo.
En 1910 publica ‘Cantos de la mañana’ y en 1913 su famoso libro ‘Cálices vacíos’ cuyo prólogo está escrito por su gran amigo Rubén Darío. Su último libro no fue publicado hasta después de su muerte, ‘Los astros del abismo’, que se publicó en 1924 en sus obras completas. Modernista se encierra en su mundo de sueños y hay en sus versos un erotismo no real, por eso buscaba refugio en sus sueños que más tarde lo volcaba en sus poemas.

Su vida amorosa fue corta como su propia vida. Se casó con Enrique Rob Reyes, unión que se llevó a cabo el 14 de agosto de 1913. Se conocieron en el mundo intelectual donde ambos pertenecían aunque Enrique se dedicaba a la compra y venta de caballos. Este matrimonio duró solo un mes y medio. Enrique no estaba de acuerdo que Delmira volcara su viva en la poesía. Ella le pide el divorcio, Enrique no soporta la situación y le disparó dos tiros en la cabeza y seguido se dispara con la misma arma y cae muerto.

Una vida corta, apenas 27 años y se corta de repente ese hermoso caudal literario que Delmira daba al mundo de las letras. Un siglo que su vida se apagó pero dejó el caudal hermoso de sus poemas para riqueza de la literatura uruguaya y de cuantos la lean.