

# Connections

## Making our voice heard

*In October our President, Clare Dobie, represented CWN members' views publicly to a Parliamentary Committee*

On 14 October I appeared as a witness before the Treasury Select Committee, which is carrying out an inquiry into Women in the City.

John McFall, the Committee Chairman, and his ten colleagues (including one woman) are well known for their ferocious questioning. Despite this, I felt reasonably confident. I was clear about the key points I had to make; these were drawn from our submission which was, in turn, based on contributions from members.\* Also, I was on a panel with three other women who, like me, all had a background in the asset management industry. I thought we would hold similar views. I was wrong!



Clare Dobie

Nichola Pease, another witness, who is deputy chairman of JO Hambro, said that the shortfall of women at the top reflected women's choices. More surprisingly, she went on to say that maternity rights should be rolled back (for business reasons). Here was a successful woman calling for rights to be reduced, not extended. Unsurprisingly, she received plenty of press coverage over the next 24 hours.

While agreeing with Nichola that there are supply problems, I said the problem of demand is far bigger than that of supply. I cited figures from last year's

Female FTSE report, showing that there are 1,800 women on the boards of FTSE 250 companies and on management committees, an ample supply for the boards of FTSE 100 companies. I was asked 'Why are they not being taken up?' My answer: 'Lack of demand.'

I was delighted to hear two MPs take up this point with the witnesses on the subsequent panel, who included representatives from Barclays and RBS.

Dr Ros Altman, another witness and a pensions expert, said that if there had been more women at the top, the crisis in finance would not have been as bad. She supported mandatory pay audits. Sandra Curtis, the fourth member of our panel, who has long experience as a fixed income manager, said that if banks 'applied some of the imagination given to financial instruments to flexible working, we would see a lot more of it'.

For CWN this was a rare chance to gather members' views, to present them in a public forum and to raise our profile on a relevant topic. There was coverage of our contribution in The FT and on the BBC website. My thanks to all those who contributed to this success.

Clare Dobie

\*The submission is available in the Resource Library of the Members' section of CWN's website; it has also been published, together with other written evidence, by the Treasury Select Committee on its website.

### Models wanted!

CWN and Britt Lintner have teamed up to offer members and guests a truly stylish evening, probably on 27 January, at one of the most elegant restaurant/bars in the heart of the City: Prism.

Members will have the chance to listen to Britt's inspirational talk, witness the fashion show, network with drinks and nibbles on hand AND be part of the show! We are looking for three CWN members to join in the fun and become models for one evening. This is a great opportunity to show off Britt's designs – made famous by some of the most influential women in Britain including Sarah Brown.

Please contact Simona Composto, no later than 10

December, at [simona\\_composto@live.com](mailto:simona_composto@live.com) or 07811 337 122 for more details.

### Making her mark

India Gary-Martin achieved an exceptionally high profile recently when she was included on the JP Morgan 2010 Powerlist of the 100 most influential black people in Britain and attended the official launch of the Powerlist at a reception at No 10. These people, all at the top of their own particular fields, serve as encouraging and powerful role models for the next generation of young black people.



India Gary-Martin

India was featured because of her outstanding career history: she is one of the most senior black women in UK banking, currently heading up RBS's asset protection scheme for global banking and markets. In 2007 she was awarded the Women in Banking accolade.

### For your diaries

- 1 Dec Female FTSE report 2009
- 3 Dec Mrs Klein
- 3 Dec RSA lecture: Russia & Europe
- 10 Dec Christmas party

Fuller details and a booking form enclosed.  
For more information, see [www.citywomen.org](http://www.citywomen.org)

# Exceptionally successful networking!

When Yang-May Ooi and I met at a CWN event, we would have never believed we would end up writing a book together.

I began my career in financial journalism and, for a long time, I thought I would not have the time or patience to write anything longer than a 4,000 word feature.

Little did I know. Only a few months later, Yang-May, a successful blogger, convinced me to start writing again (and this time about something else than bonds and derivatives) and to launch my own blog XCulture.

In 2007, when Kogan Page asked me to write a book on cross-cultural communication, I thought of Yang-May. We had both spent many years studying and working in environments different from the ones where we grew up. I was born in Italy and Yang-May in Malaysia. With the world becoming more interconnected, we felt the time had come to put our experiences on paper.

The resulting book, 'International Communications Strategy', examines the cross-cultural challenges facing communication and PR practitioners. Multinationals from emerging economies like China and Brazil are globalising aggressively and reshaping world-wide industries. They are developing new communication practices that will soon dominate our way of working. At the same time, technology and Web 2.0 are creating new on-line cultures and new audiences for communicators. Blogging and citizen journalism are transforming the way in which people consume information. The banking crisis and the economic downturn have made publics around the world more sophisticated; they want more than quarterly results. Social entrepreneurship is changing business and challenging the collective thinking. It needs communicators to spread its message on a global scale.



*Silvia Cambié and Yang-May Ooi signing their book at its City launch in September.*

The book also explains how the focus of the communication profession is shifting from content creation to relationship management and the study of cultures.

The International Alliance for Women (TIAW) hosted the book's launch which was attended by several CWN members including President Clare Dobie and Vice-President Roz Morris. Diane Morris, TIAW President and former President of CWN, made the opening speech.

Yang-May and I had the opportunity of thanking our friend and former CWN President Nicola Stevens for having introduced us back in 2006.

*Silvia Cambié*

For more information about 'International Communications Strategy – Developments in cross-cultural communications, PR and social media' visit [www.Amazon.co.uk](http://www.Amazon.co.uk).

## Recent CWN events

### *Henry VIII at the British Library*



*Some members and guests followed the fascinating and thought-provoking Henry VIII exhibition at the British Library with a toast at the champagne bar in nearby St Pancras station.*  
Photo: Erica Gut

### *Kathleen O'Donovan on women in leadership*

Who better than Kathleen O'Donovan, who has served as director on several boards, to talk to CWN about the skills needed to become a NED? Apparently accounting expertise and intellect are pretty low down the list, but experience of running a business ranks very highly: the right experience is essential to make your CV stand out.

While it may seem that AIM and private companies would be good ground to cut your teeth, Kathleen explained that these boards, perhaps more than any other, are looking for experienced NEDs to help the company go public. You can gain the right skill set and experience by volunteering for NED positions at not-for-profit and non-departmental government bodies.

It is worth remembering, pointed out Kathleen, that it is not just who you know, but who knows you!

*Natalie WinterFrost*

# May we recommend...

## Six of the best

*Since our membership has such widely differing experience and tastes, we thought it would be fascinating to discover what your particular favourites of the moment are. We start with Kari Hadjivassiliou who gives us her top six recommendations.*

### National Theatre: 'The Power of Yes' by David Hare

I know that this play got mixed reviews but, for someone like me not well versed in the intricacies of the City, this play, or rather, stage documentary, was a crash course on the evolution of the financial sector. Refreshingly, it was not a tirade against bankers, but a systemic approach to what went wrong. It is based on research by David Hare in the City and beyond and the actors impersonated real City people like David Marsh, Adair Turner, Howard Davies and George Soros, giving a particular piquancy to the action.

### Restaurants: Hakkasan, off Tottenham Court Road

Please visit Hakkasan if you want to feel that you are eating in a traditional Hong Kong restaurant. The food is excellent (it has after all, a Michelin star) and creative. I have tried such mouth-watering combinations as sea bass cooked in a clay pot with dried lily flower and scallop shu mai with roe. I don't drink, but my friends say the wine list is very good, albeit a bit pricey.

### Books: 'The Great Crash 1929', J. K. Galbraith

Although I have studied economics I am not an economist by trade, so I approach books on economics with trepidation. J. K. Galbraith's book, however, is a pleasure to read both for its analysis of the crash and for his lively and lucid style. What struck me re-reading this classic was not so much the quality and depth of the analysis as our collective failure to learn and avoid making the same mistakes. So if you want to understand the current crisis, please read about the 1929 one!

### Exhibitions: Anish Kapoor, Royal Academy of Arts

I do not usually like monumental sculptures, but I was really taken by the current Anish Kapoor exhibition. From the silver balloons in the Academy's courtyard which reflect the surrounding buildings to the cannon that shoots red wax in a corner I got the impression that Kapoor was both playful and serious, a contradiction that I think characterises the whole exhibition. My favourite piece was the mother as mountain sculpture, not least because its soft curves brought to my mind the Cycladic statuettes from ancient Greece.

### Film: The White Ribbon, London Cinemas

If you are a history buff like me then this is a film for you, though not if you want something light and short. The action takes place before the First World War in a remote German village and can be described as a ghost story without a ghost or a whodunnit without a solution. It also provides psychological insights into a community, outwardly serene but really repressed and dysfunctional, that would go on to embrace national socialism. This film is quite dark, but its honesty, depth of analysis and superb acting make for compelling viewing.

### Shop: Algerian Coffee Shop, Soho

Despite living in London for over 20 years, I remain a committed coffee drinker, so I was really grateful when a friend of mine introduced me to the Algerian Coffee Shop in Soho. The shop, now over 100 years old, is tiny, more like an Aladdin's cave, and stacked from top to bottom with coffees and teas from all over the world. When you enter, the smell of freshly ground coffee and the crammed layout of the shop make you feel that you are in a Middle Eastern bazaar rather than the heart of London. For me it brings back memories of my childhood in Sudan so buying fresh coffee from there is always a treat.

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## The 1-2-3 Luncheon group

Just to remind you, our aim is to network in luxury, in a top London restaurant while playing food critics for the benefit of other CWN members.

Our second, most enjoyable lunch was at a prestigious venue – Galvin at Windows, at the top of the Hilton Park Lane. Besides the pleasure of meeting old friends and networking with new ones, we all set our ratings (1 – 5):

**Ambience – 5\*** Actually exceeded our expectations. The view is superb. 'Just right if entertaining guests from overseas. Comfortable seating and no intrusive music so we could hear each other as we chatted.'

**Food – 4** Well above average but not Michelin star level. Very good value as a 3-course set lunch. Portions are not overly generous, though well presented, perfectly cooked and very tasty. Fine for the ladies but a hungry male?? The deserts, which we shared, were scrumptious!

**Service – 5** First-class staff: pleasantly polite and attentive but not intrusive. We had time to chat while making our choices and were not kept waiting too long for the food to arrive. A very warm welcome on arrival. Those who came early were served with a coffee and biscuit, sitting comfortably by the bar with a view.

However, surprisingly enough they didn't have the facilities to manage the credit cards at the table with hand-held machine. 'I was quite shocked that they took our credit cards away to the reception area. I insisted on following the waiter to the reception to check.'

On the whole, an excellent choice of venue and highly recommended!

Tammy Mindel