

Have you got what IT takes?

This year's Autumn paper, sponsored by Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, was held at Merchant Taylors Hall on 16 November. It was extremely topical, entitled The Electronic Marketplace and Your Business: Can you afford to be left out?

Sir David Walker, Chairman, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter Europe, spoke first, about The Electronic Marketplace and Your Business. He gave a valuable insight into the development of all aspects of electronic market places and placed it into the wider economic context. The next speaker was one of Sir David's colleagues, Ruth Porat, the Managing Director of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter's Investment Banking Division. In her talk, B2B Exchange Development: Practical Challenges, she explained the developments taking place within the field of business-to-business exchanges. This is an area to which most treasurers have comparatively little exposure, but which is

revolutionising the way in which companies trade goods and services with one-another.

The next speaker, Per Larsson, President and Chief Executive Officer, OM Gruppen AB, has had a very high public profile in recent months. He talked about How Technology Benefits Securities Trading and Issuers and left us much better informed about the effect internet technology is having on the securities markets.

The final speaker, John Taysom, founder and joint CEO of The Greenhouse Fund, gave an intriguing talk. In Hedging Your Technology Risk he explained how Reuters was going about the challenge of staying at the forefront of technological developments in its markets without attempting to do everything in-house.

The evening closed with a panel discussion, in which the speakers were joined by another Morgan Stanley Dean Witter colleague, Ravi Bulchandani, Vice President.

The panel dealt with a number of questions from the floor, several of which reflected the audience's sense that the development of internet technology in the treasury area (for example, the integration of payments into B2B exchange processes) were lagging behind the wider commercial arena. ■

MARTYN SMITH

ACT Annual dinner

This year, a record number of guests attended the Association's Annual Dinner.

Over 1,460 guests filled the Great Room at the Grosvenor House Hotel on Wednesday 8 November. The guest speaker was Chris Gent, Chief Executive of Vodafone – pictured right with outgoing Association President, Philippa Foster Back.

