

OVERSEAS

Quarterly journal of the ROSL

Issue 4, December 2011 - February 2012



Art and soul

The ARTS scholars reveal the inspiration for their work, at the exhibition on London's Southbank

Growing trends

From the impact of mobile phones on African farming to the urban gardens feeding the world's poor

Songs of hope

How a Mumbai slum choir inspired a project to introduce the joys of song to India's poorest children

From the President

Lord Luce outlines his hopes for the future of the Commonwealth. Based on his speech in Parliament



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ISSUE 4 December 2011 - February 2012

The Royal Over-Seas League is a self-funded Commonwealth organisation that offers clubhouse facilities to members, organises Commonwealth art and music competitions and develops joint welfare projects with specific countries.

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Front cover: ROSL ARTS Annual Scholars Exhibition private view at gallery@oxo on London's Southbank in October © Jules Lawrence

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From the Director-General



WELCOME: The new Director-General, Major General Roddy Porter, and his wife, Marianne

It is an enormous privilege, and somewhat daunting, to take the helm of the Royal Over-Seas League from my remarkable predecessor, Bob Newell. Our time together, in which he has taught me the ropes, has been great fun and I would like to begin my first foreword to *Overseas* by paying tribute to Bob's extraordinary contribution to the life and health of the League; we owe him a great deal.

Thank you, Bob, for your wisdom and clear advice during our handover, and I would like to wish you and Shanaz the happiest of retirements. We shall continue to benefit from Bob's experience in the years ahead in his new role as a Vice President. Many thanks and very best wishes in her retirement also to Fatima Vanicek, who has helped my able Assistant, Arabella, and me to settle in so well.

I come to this exciting role after a full career in the British Army, which has taken me around the globe, often to its more unfortunate trouble spots. I have had the privilege to lead men and women in all manner of military endeavour, including humanitarian support to war-torn communities and post-conflict reconciliation activities. I have loved it all but I little thought that, as that career ended, I should be given such a wonderful opportunity to work in so august an organisation, and with such a fine team as operates here in Over-Seas House. I am very grateful to our President, Chairman and the Central Council for putting their trust in me to take ROSL forward – I am excited about the many opportunities that lie ahead.

Thank you to so many who wrote to wish Marianne, my wife, and me well; and to Central Council members who welcomed us so warmly at the Council Lunch in late September. Marianne is looking forward to the years ahead as much as I am and we hope to visit every branch as soon as possible, beginning with the Ontario Chapter in late October. In the short time I have been here, I have been deeply impressed by the high regard in which ROSL is held around the world; maintaining our strong foundation, delivering excellence across the breadth of our activities and ensuring full value for all members are my foremost objectives. To that end, I greatly look forward to working with you as we set out on another leg of this unique journey. May I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Roddy Porter

Editor's letter

I'll admit to thinking twice before suggesting 'agriculture' as the subject of this issue's Focus. It is not a word that shouts 'must-read'. Yet I was sure members would be interested to read about the impact of Africa's mobile phone boom on farming in the continent (page 6), and about some of the innovative farming methods being adopted to combat the extreme conditions in Bangladesh (page 8).



Equally interesting is the current trend for urban vegetable gardens, using small, previously unused spaces. At this year's Chelsea Flower Show, I was struck by the increasing mix of edible and ornamental plants – part of a growing movement (excuse the pun) for sustainable living in our cities. Not only is it popular among environmentally-conscious urbanites, but it is also helping poor city-dwellers throughout the world to feed themselves (page 10).

It seems part of a wider 21st-century return to traditional ways of life, despite – or perhaps because of – our increasingly mass-produced world. A growing interest in traditional skills in the UK has given rise to a range of craft cafés, such as Sew Over It (page 23), representing a desire among young people to learn domestic crafts.

Looking further afield, this issue takes us from Loch Ness to Kenya and from Canada to Cuba. Alex Debarge, former ROSL Events Coordinator, recommends her favourite Singapore haunts (page 14); and Joseph Walters offers a window into the lives of Mumbai's slum children (page 12). I have been shown something of India's slums recently, via the novel *Shantaram* and BBC Two's *India on Four Wheels*, and I am hoping to learn more at the fundraising screening of *The Sound of Mumbai* – one of the many exciting events in the ROSL ARTS winter calendar (page 26).

There are so many must-see events this festive season, among them the German Christmas market in Hyde Park (page 24) and Hogmanay at the Edinburgh clubhouse (page 32). As always, at this time of year, my thoughts turn to New Year resolutions, and this issue we hear from some truly inspirational people: the ROSL ARTS Scholars (page 20) and solo adventurer Felicity Aston (page 14).

Miranda Moore

Moving towards excellence

Extracts from Lord Luce's speech to the House of Lords, during a debate on the 'Century of Excellence' of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

This occasion shows that there is a growing feeling on the need to renew the strength of the Commonwealth and gives new impetus to that. The attendance at this debate is higher than at any former Commonwealth debate I have ever attended and the interest in the subject is stronger than I have ever seen.

The Commonwealth is a pragmatic, evolutionary group of nations representing a whole cross-section of the world. It is voluntary; it is not a treaty; it is not NATO; it is not the United Nations or the European Union. It looks in an informal way for practical solutions to problems, and it can add value to the work that we do bilaterally and multilaterally with other bodies. It is unique and it provides us with an opportunity which we can take if we wish.

There are two main points I want to make. First, I start on the non-governmental side because I think that the people-to-people connection in the Commonwealth is its heart; that is what it is really all about. We have a vast pattern of connections. There are more than 90 professional bodies, a mass of civic society bodies, and a mass of NGOs.

I declare an interest as President of ROSL, and President of the new Commonwealth Youth Orchestra; music, of course, unites rather than divides nations. There are so many other organisations across the board, in every field – from universities, to law, to the Commonwealth Jewish Council and the Commonwealth Press Union – which demonstrate this vast pattern of links between us all.

HEADS TOGETHER: Main CHOGM venue, the Perth Convention Exhibition Centre



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DEBATE:
Lord Luce at
Westminster Abbey

“We should devise and set high standards, and be robust with those who do not meet those standards”

The Commonwealth Foundation seems to be the basis upon which we can move forward. It can act as a catalyst and facilitator of contacts within the Commonwealth on the non-government and civic society side. I think particularly of young people. I suggest that to mark the Diamond Jubilee and the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty being Head of the Commonwealth, the Heads of Government devise some kind of Commonwealth legacy, which will devote itself to strengthening the Commonwealth for young people and civic society in particular.

The other point I wish to make regards the government-to-government side. I welcome the Eminent Persons Group's belief that it is most important that we strengthen the governance systems of the Commonwealth and methods for dealing with conflict resolution. It is here that the Commonwealth must practise what they preach. We should devise and set high standards, and should be robust with those who do not meet those standards. The

Heads of Government will have to be courageous if they are going to commit themselves to that. The Secretary-General will have to be very robust in speaking up from time to time on maintaining standards within the Commonwealth.

This Government, and Heads of Government, must be sharp in defining their priorities. If we try to do too many things in the Commonwealth, we will not achieve a great deal. Remembering that 50% of Commonwealth citizens are under 25, I hope that priority will be given to young people. As far as membership is concerned, I hope there will be a separate debate on the subject of the former British Somaliland, as well as the prospects for South Sudan and other countries to join the Commonwealth. We now have this opportunity to rejuvenate the Commonwealth and I hope the Heads of Government will take it when they meet in Perth in October.

Lord Luce's full speech was given in the House of Lords on 8 September 2011.

FOCUS

Mobile revolution

Why the mobile phone has become a farming essential in Africa, helping to improve crop yields and sales. By **Jaco Maritz** and **Dinfin Mulupi**

John Wangombe, 32, is a small-scale farmer in Kenya's rural Kinangop area, north of the capital Nairobi. He mainly produces snow peas on his 2.5 hectare plot of land. Yet even in such rural parts, Africa's mobile phone revolution is making an impact. Wangombe recently doubled his income through the M-Farm app., launched last year.

Developed by a Kenyan all-female team, M-Farm is an SMS and web-based application that gives farmers real-time price information on commodities in various markets and locations. Users simply send a text message to M-Farm and, in return, receive the required information directly to their phones. It allows farmers to group together to offer exporters and major retailers greater quantities of crops. M-Farm users can also save on the cost of products such as fertilisers and pesticides by coordinating and buying in bulk.

One of the largest challenges traditionally experienced by Africa's smallholder farmers has been a lack of transparent information about the market prices of crops. "When I was selling through the middlemen I used to sell to them 1kg of snow peas at Ksh.50 [30p]. Today I sell directly to the market at Ksh.100," says Wangombe. "From the companies I sell to I get paid every two weeks. With the brokers there was no guarantee of getting paid. It would take months." According to Jamila Abass, CEO of M-Farm Ltd, the inspiration to develop this technology was to empower Kenyan farmers who, for years, have been exploited by middlemen. "The platform enables them to get access to the market. It is a link to the market," she explains.

Mobile boom

Mobile phone technologies are presenting Africa's smallholder farmers with an unprecedented opportunity to run their operations more productively and to grow their income levels. According to the global management consultancy McKinsey & Co., African mobile operators have added more than 316 million new subscribers since 2000.

Mobile phone-based agricultural information



ECONOMIC BOOST:
An agro-dealer running the Kilimo Salama scheme

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"Through middlemen I used to sell at Ksh.50. Today I sell directly to the market at Ksh.100"

products have been in Africa for a number of years. Some of the first services were launched as early as 2002. The success of these earlier services was, however, haphazard, largely because of low mobile phone usage at the time. "A lot of the projects are donor funded and they haven't got a viable business model on the other end. Once the funding runs out the ability to sustain the project or application disappears," says Matthew de Gale, ICT Services Manager at the Southern African NGO Network (SANGONeT).

One of the most successful technologies is the Esoko service, developed by BusyLab in Ghana. In addition to providing access to market prices, it enables farmers and traders to place buy/sell orders. Esoko has attracted investment from the International Finance Corporation, the Soros Economic Development Fund and the well-known Silicon Valley engineer Jim Forster.

"I think the potential to transform value chains and market access through mobile is enormous," said Forster, announcing his



CALL COLLECT: Mobile phone technology has helped Lucy Wangeci to increase food security on her smallholding in Kuria, Kenya

investment. "I believe this doesn't need to be about aid in the sense we know it now. Here's a local company building an innovative product to meet a local need and selling it in a profitable way. That's how I want to see Africa develop its own markets and capacities, and that's why I decided to support Esoko."

In Ghana, chocolate manufacturer the Hershey Company is supporting the pilot phase of the CocoaLink programme, which uses mobile technology to provide cocoa farmers with useful information about improving farming practices, farm safety, crop disease prevention, post-harvest production and crop marketing. In the area of livestock, SANGONeT is involved with an app. that allows small-scale dairy farmers in East Africa to record the lactation history of their cows. This enables farmers to increase the sale price of their animals.

Safe agriculture

Mobile phones are also being used to distribute agricultural insurance products to farmers, most of whom cannot afford conventional insurance. A product called Kilimo Salama, Swahili for 'safe agriculture', enables smallholders in Kenya to insure their agricultural investments against adverse weather conditions, such as drought and flooding. Developed by UAP Insurance, the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture and mobile operator Safaricom, Kilimo Salama allows farmers to insure as little as 1kg of maize, seed or fertiliser. Cover costs only an extra 5% per kilo.

Mobile technology plays a central role in the scheme, as it is used both for registration of new policies and for payouts. Kilimo Salama is distributed mostly through dealers who have been equipped with a camera phone that scans a special bar code at the time of purchase. This registers the policy, and a confirmation message is then sent to the farmer's handset. Payouts are determined by automated weather stations that monitor rainfall, and paid using Safaricom's mobile money transfer service. Since its official launch in 2010, other insurance companies have introduced similar products.



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Commentators believe this type of insurance will increase productivity by encouraging farmers to invest in agricultural products. Currently only about 50% of Kenyan farmers invest in improved seeds and soil products, and a key reason is the fear that poor conditions, such as drought, will render investments worthless, robbing them of both their crops and their savings.

"This 'pay as you plant' initiative allows farmers to try out insurance, a product they have never bought before and which has a negative reputation in Kenya," said the Syngenta Foundation. "Experience shows that as farmers learn to trust insurance, they expand their coverage and are comfortable investing more in their farm, raising their productivity and increasing their food security."

Despite its obvious advantages, many farmers are still slow to adopt products such as M-Farm. "Like any other new thing, acceptance of our platform has not been easy amongst farmers. Most of them only use their phones for voice services and do not look at other ways of making it a business tool. The SMS platform itself is challenging and therefore we have to

SIMPLE: An automated weather station

train farmers on the formats," says Abass. "We have had to conduct outreach programmes, mostly in remote areas because that is where farmers are. Conducting publicity campaigns in such remote areas is no walk in the park."

Despite the challenges, she is convinced that the technology can go a long way towards alleviating Kenya's food shortages. "It is ironic that while in some parts of the country people are facing starvation, other parts experience a glut. This is so common. Using mobile phone-based agricultural solutions will create linkages and help tell where there is a food shortage and where there is a surplus. Social networking among farmers will also help them improve their farming practices and lobby for policy change, all of which will lead to improved yields to feed the population."

Jaco Maritz is editor of the Pan-African business publication How we Made it in Africa (www.howwemadeitinafrica.com). Dinfin Mulupi is a journalist based in Nairobi, Kenya.



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Farmers in Bangladesh are adapting to harsh natural conditions, says **Sayed Haq**, and growing on lands where traditional methods are impossible

As their house was devoured by the Brahmaputra river in Gaibandha District, Saleha Begum and her husband took shelter on the flood protection embankment at Singria. In the last few years, more than 50,000 people in this northern district of Bangladesh are believed to have lost their homes and arable lands, leaving them with no means of feeding themselves. For Saleha, however, there was a solution. She is now able to feed her family from a floating vegetable garden, raised on the very water that took her home.

"Merely physical labour is required to build a floating vegetable garden. I had to spend a small amount for fertiliser and seeds," explains Saleha, who received training from the UK-based NGO Practical Action, which began working in the area in 2004. "When our homes and fields get flooded by torrential rains, these vegetables of the floating garden manage to survive. I make curries out of these vegetables and feed my children," she says.

Northern districts such as Gaibandha, Rangpur and Lalmonirhat are covered by water

during monsoon season, making it impossible to grow crops using traditional methods. But according to Nirmol Chandra Bapary, Project Coordinator for Practical Action, the charity uses new technology to help farmers grow food on flooded lands. "A floating garden is constructed using water hyacinth, which is collected to erect a floating raft. This should be covered with soil and cow dung, in which vegetables can be planted," he says.

Summer and winter vegetables, including okras, aubergines and gourds, can be grown on these eight metre-long rafts. "The floating vegetable gardens provide us with food during the *monga* [seasonal food crisis]. We get very good prices for our vegetables because of the shortage in the market," says Azizur Rahman, who was also trained by Practical Action.

In the waterlogged village of Bagdanga, in Jessore District, people have begun to grow crops in hanging gardens. The Coastal Development Partnership (CDP), a research and advocacy-focused organisation, is running the programme along the Kapotakkho river, with help from Action Aid Bangladesh and Panjia

FIELDS OF GROWTH: Farmers in Bangladesh tend their pumpkins, grown in the infertile silted sands left behind following floods

"When our fields get flooded by torrential rain, these vegetables of the floating garden manage to survive"

Samaj Kallayan Sangstha, its local partner. For two decades, 2,000 acres of land, on both sides of the river, have been submerged, affecting one million people in Khulna, Jessore and Satkhira districts.

Vegetables such as pumpkins, cucumbers and tomatoes are grown in large earthen basins raised on triangular bamboo stands. The materials used are cheap, with cow dung, lime, ashes and maheguni seeds used as fertilizer. In this way, villagers produce enough not only for their own consumption but also to sell in the local market.

Growing on barren lands

When the floods recede, farmers are faced with new challenges. The water strips away the fertile soil, leaving thousands of acres of silted sand plains, known as *char*. Saiful Islam has been living with his wife and two children on the barren flood protection embankment at Kalir Khamar in Gaibandha District since 1992. He could barely feed his family until he registered with the Sand Bar Farmer project. Run by AKOTA and Practical Action, the project teaches farmers how to grow crops in the barren plains by digging metre-wide holes and filling them with compost. Seeds are planted in thousands of these holes in the area, providing poor families with food to eat, store and even sell, says Bapary.

After a one-day workshop in 2006, Saiful attempted sandbar cropping for the first time, cultivating just 50 pits because of his fear that the crops would fail. The harvest was so good he made a profit, and the following year he expanded production. Since then he has provided support to 200 landless farmers in the region.

In other parts of Bangladesh, farmers struggle with drought. In March and April about 880,000 hectares are left fallow due to a lack of rainfall. Yet new research has enabled farmers here to increase their yields fourfold. Water is taken from ponds set up to collect rainwater, and applied to the root zone using simple drip irrigation technology, increasing the efficiency of both water and fertilizer use.

High value crops, such as aubergines, tomatoes and papayas, have been shown to grow profitably using this technique. The results are similar for sandbar cropping and floating gardens. Saleha Begum and Sharifa Banu reported making a surplus from their gardens last year, the latter earning enough to pay for her daughter's marriage. Sandbar farmer Gani Miah, of Belka Char in Gaibandha, bought two cows with his profits, while Saiful Islam built two 'tin shed' houses "to improve my living standard". For many farmers, using these new methods means not only feeding their families, but economic self-reliance as well.

Sayed Haq is Rangpur Correspondent for the Financial Express in Dhaka.



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FOCUS

Growing cities bear fruit

Jennifer Stewart visits Montreal's rooftop gardens to explore a growing trend for city dwellers to feed themselves by establishing gardens in unused spaces

As you enter the gates of McGill University in Montreal, Canada, you cannot help but notice the lush vegetation growing in the small spaces between buildings and within the slim strips of land adjacent to student walkways. Not-quite-ripe tomatoes hang from vines within these small gardens around the campus, carefully maintained by a committed roster of volunteers.

Gardens like these are among a growing global trend of urban agriculture, transforming previously unused areas into green spaces for food production and community education, while also combating urban pollution. Urban gardening "is making people think about spaces in their city in a different way," says Gaëlle Janvier, of the Rooftop Garden Project. "No longer is a rooftop just a rooftop. It has the potential to be a rooftop garden and produce food that's accessible and affordable."

The Rooftop Garden Project, funded by Alternatives, an international development organisation in Montreal, works in partnership with the non-profit food distribution organisation Santropol Roulant. Vegetables and fruits grown at the campus garden are used in its 'Meals on Wheels' programme, delivering fresh and locally grown meals to vulnerable people in the local community.

Beyond food production, urban gardens play a pivotal role in community development. "It is a great community builder, here and in areas where urban gardening is used around the world," explains Janvier. "You don't just sit in a park as a 'passerby'. You actively participate and become a player. It helps community members work together toward a common goal."

The gardens use the innovative method of soil-less cultivation, or hydroponics, which

involves growing fruit and vegetables in self-watering containers, optimising plant growth by providing a constant source of water and oxygen. Not only can the containers hold enough water to sustain the plants for 3-5 days, they are also able to collect rainwater. Containers are portable and adaptable, and can therefore be used to grow food in areas with contaminated soil.

The group's work extends beyond Montreal. Alternatives is helping the residents of Haiti to rebuild following the devastating earthquake in 2010. In collaboration with APROSIFA, the Association for the Promotion of Integrated Family Health, the group is training more than 600 residents in organic urban agriculture. One of the project's main objectives is to help rebuild a sense of community through the exchange of vegetables and fruits, while also stimulating the area's local economy.

Food revolution

This simple and affordable model is being adapted in countries around the world to bolster food production in response to growing urbanisation, pollution and urban poverty. In Bangalore, India, one organisation is looking to urban gardening to reduce poverty and revolutionise how India's residents access food.

CV Prakash is the CEO of the Institute of Simplified Hydroponics. Using the soil-less cultivation method, he is looking to teach residents about urban gardening in the hope that they will adopt the practice. Since its inception in 2009, the Institute has trained more than 1,450 students from all over India, through a one-day training programme.

According to CV, it is a simple method, which anybody can learn. You only need basic recyclable materials to get started, such as



The simple model is being adapted in countries around the world in response to growing urban poverty



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GROW YOUR OWN: Havana's biggest urban food garden, known as Organiponico Plaza

wooden packaging, empty paint buckets, Styrofoam cups or old fizzy drink bottles. Beyond providing food for families, hydroponics is also redefining how citizens can make a living. Many growers bring their fresh produce to central distribution areas to sell to locals. This approach, according to CV, not only provides increased economic stability to sellers, rooted in local production, but it also fosters a strong sense of community and reduces food travel.

The technique is also helping citizens of Africa's Ivory Coast, a country ravaged by war and political turmoil, to overcome food security challenges. Currently, the country's domestic vegetable production meets less than 60% of consumers' needs. To combat this issue in the area's poverty-stricken rural areas, the Agribusiness and Contract Farming House, an independent organisation, is promoting hydroponics to local residents. The results speak for themselves.

One local resident, François Adou, used hydroponics to harvest 4-5 tonnes of tomatoes, which he sold at local markets. Others in local

villages are also taking note and investing in the economical gardening method both to feed their families and make a living.

Another country leading the charge in urban agriculture and setting examples for others is Cuba. When food shortage began in the country following the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, residents of Cuba joined forces to plant local, urban gardens in any place the vegetation would grow, including rooftops, front and back yards, and along the perimeters of buildings.

In response, the Cuban government refocused food production priorities, placing an unprecedented emphasis on urban gardening. As a direct result, the Cuban Ministry of Agriculture and Havana's city government jointly formed an Urban Agriculture Department in 1994. It focused on securing land-use rights for urban gardeners and committed itself to provide land, free of charge, to all residents who wanted to grow food in the city.

Today, the ministry remains a knowledge source for citizens on urban agriculture, often playing a key role in the start-up and sustainability of the popular gardens and horticulture clubs. They also operate various centres that sell supplies, including seeds. With 76% of Cuba's population of just under

MICRO GARDENING: Vegetables and plants are cultivated in an unused space in Montreal

11 million people living in cities, the importance of urban agriculture continues to grow in the country – and others are taking notice.

Alternatives has sent staff to Cuba to learn about their gardens and techniques, in the hope of revolutionising food production in a similar way in Canada and throughout the world, through international partnerships. "There are a lot of benefits about urban agriculture, but at the end of the day, it's about meeting a basic human need. We all need food and our society needs to continue to find ways to produce it in a way that is safe and sustainable," says Janvier. "This is what urban agriculture does. It meets the most basic of human needs."

A columnist with The Toronto Star, Jennifer Stewart has published more than 800 articles and owns JS Communications, a successful public relations company in Ottawa, Canada.

Slum choir is child's play

Joseph Walters on his film about the Mumbai choir, the outreach initiative it inspired, and his continuing efforts to bring the joys of song to poor children in India

Three years ago I decided to make a film. As a freelance horn player with no experience in filmmaking but a huge passion for India, I convinced a director and cameraman friend to join me on a self-financed reconnaissance trip. What resulted was the documentary *The Sound of Mumbai: A musical*, bought by HBO and broadcast on More 4.

It tells the story of a newly formed slum school choir joining forces with the Bombay Chamber Orchestra (BCO) to perform songs from *The Sound of Music*. The powerful disparity of the Rogers & Hammerstein score accompanying not expansive Alpine vistas, but warren-like shanty-towns, was so visually compelling that I had to put down my horn and act.

I knew the BCO well. In 2001, I was invited to conduct and play horn with them for six weeks, and I return to Mumbai to play with them every year. So dedicated to Western classical music are its musicians that many travel for hours to attend daily rehearsals before their working day begins.

The journey of making the film is a yarn in its own right, involving debts of £150,000 and a magical free day at Abbey Road Studio 2, with Lucy Crowe and the John Wilson Orchestra. However, these were merely molehills compared to the summits faced by the incredible children we spent two months filming. While lucky enough to receive a

sensitively delivered education at their community school, Mukhtangan, the children's lives are still saturated in the harsh reality of poor sanitation, hut-dwelling, enforced relocation and violence.

At the centre of the film is 11-year-old Ashish, who is given the heady opportunity of singing a solo in a big concert, accompanied by the full orchestra, in front of a thousand people. The concert venue is Mumbai's National Centre for Performing Arts, a place normally reserved for the city's elite. Encouraged by his family, Ashish hopes to win the attention of a rich patron but he lacks confidence.

Support and inspiration

Through fundraising screenings, *The Sound of Mumbai* continues to secure funds to put all 16 children through further education. However, I now hope to bring the joy and escapism of singing to many more children across India and have set up Songbound, a choir outreach initiative for the country's most impoverished children, to do so. The priority is to provide children with a weekly, fun, inspiring choir-singing experience in a safe place, where they can escape the tough realities of their lives. It is well documented that music is central to a child's development, self-esteem and confidence building.

The scheme works by effectively providing NGOs with a free choir service, allocating local,



trained leaders. Seven NGOs in Mumbai have already been helped to form their own community children's choir. The initiative is amazingly cheap to run: one choir costs just £200 a year. Of course, voices are free.

Some people have expressed concerns about what kind of music the children will sing and whether they should be singing choral music as we know it in the West. There will be a big focus on reviving rapidly disappearing, traditional Indian children's songs and reworking them in fun, inspiring ways. When I asked people in Mumbai to sing me a song from their childhood, most struggled and those who succeeded tended to choose from Bollywood's huge catalogue.

Many Western musicians are already lending their services to the project. One French choir director will be travelling to Mumbai in November to run the choir leader training day, at which he will share tried-and-tested methods of running a successful rehearsal. Friends in the Monteverdi, Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral choirs are lining up to help, as are professional instrumentalist friends across the globe. Nevertheless, in order to expand into further communities across India, Songbound desperately needs funds.

11-year-old Ashish is given the opportunity to sing a solo in a place reserved for the city's elite



SONGBOUND: Children in the Muktangam School choir at a rehearsal (above) and in front of a poster for *The Sound of Mumbai* documentary, tracking their story (right)

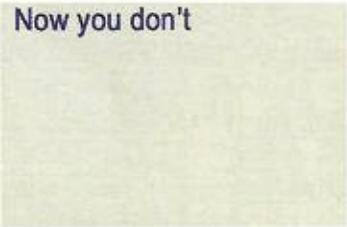


As part of Commonwealth Week 2012, ROSL ARTS will be hosting a screening of *The Sound of Mumbai* documentary on 14 March. It will be introduced by Joseph Walters.

Joseph Walters is a professional horn player and a member of John Eliot-Gardiner's Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and the English Baroque Solists. He also plays regularly with the Northern Sinfonia and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and was a member of indie-pop band Stereolab.

© JOE WALTERS

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ALEXANDRA DEBARGE'S SINGAPORE



What is the biggest difference between Singapore and London?

The weather – the humidity and the heat. The cleanliness of this city is wonderful and the architecture is also very different, as Singapore has many more high-rise buildings with condo facilities. London is a lot bigger, more diverse, and has a larger and better variety of art and culture. On the other hand, Singapore is a very safe place: the only thing I worry about when I am walking home late at night is watching where I put my feet in case I step on a snake.

Where do you go to relax?

I don't seem to have much time to relax, especially working in events. There are always social gatherings and events going on. When I do have the time, I like to relax at home lying by the pool, reading a book or going for a coffee or picnic with a friend in the Botanical Gardens.

What advice would you give someone coming to Singapore for the first time?

Singapore is really friendly and very safe, and I would say the easiest city in Asia to visit. I would recommend taking the hop on and off bus, as it's a great way to explore the city, from Chinatown to Little India, and from Orchard Road's shopping district to Marina Bay Sands

(where there is an infinity pool on the 55th floor). Everyone should go to a hawker centre and try the local Singaporean dishes: chicken rice and chilli crab.

The Botanical Gardens are a tropical paradise and there is a fantastic orchid garden there too. Singapore Zoo is also great fun. It's acclaimed as one of the best zoos in the world and you feel like you are walking with the animals – you can almost touch the monkeys swinging in the trees above. My favourite things are the rooftop bars; a great one is Altitude, which is the world's highest rooftop bar with a 360 degree view of Singapore.

What would you miss most about Singapore if you left?

The healthy lifestyle. I also love the efficiency of Singapore and how public transport is always on time. The 'condo' lifestyle is great – having access to a pool, tennis court and gym on my doorstep. It is easy to hop on a plane and go to Thailand or other places in Asia for the weekend. I would miss the jungle side of Singapore. Being surrounded by monkeys, monitor lizards and tropical plants is a real change to your average walk in Hyde Park.

Alexandra Debarge was Events Coordinator at ROSL for three and a half years. She now lives in Singapore where she is Events Manager for the American Association of Singapore. Interview by Claire Simon.

FREE TO EXPLORE:

Tooth Relic Temple in Chinatown. The hop-on/hop-off bus passes through Chinatown, Little India and other tourist areas



Alone in Antarctica: a solo expedition

Felicity Aston prepares for a 70-day solo expedition to cross Antarctica



© ROBERT HOLLINGWORTH PRESS ROOM

We are so used to seeing Antarctica as a vague white stripe along the bottom of a world map that it is easy to forget just how big the continent is. Twice the size of Australia but with a maximum population of just a few thousand, it is a truly vast and empty place. I am about to return there for the fourth time. But this time I will be alone.

My aim is to become the first woman to ski solo across the continent. The 1700km journey will take around 70 days, during which time I will be completely alone, pulling two sledges of food, fuel and equipment weighing more than 80kg in total. Each day I will pack up my tent in temperatures below -20C, put on my skis and travel for 10-12 hours across 25km of windswept snow and ice, before putting up my tent once again and falling asleep to the noise of the wind.

I have been training to improve my stamina and endurance by doing low-intensity activities, such as dragging tyres and hill walking. But this is as much a mental challenge as a physical one. In the past, my teammates have motivated me to keep going and on this, my first solo expedition, I hope to gain a better understanding of what it is within us that makes us persevere and, hopefully, achieve. To prepare, I have been working with a sports psychologist at the University of Hertfordshire, who will also analyse my expedition journals and podcasts to learn more about the link between physical activity and mental wellbeing.

Felicity Aston is sponsored by Kaspersky Lab. To access her podcasts, tweets and blog, visit www.kasperskyonetransantarcticexpedition.com. Felicity will report on the expedition on her return.

Presenting ROSL online

www.rosl.org.uk

Courtesy of Redkite Internet Web Design (www.rkinet.co.uk), the new and improved ROSL website will go live on 1 December 2011, allowing existing ROSL members to renew their membership subscription online,* book tickets for events,* request accommodation, view *Overseas* magazine, donate to the ROSL ARTS Centenary Appeal and ROSL Welfare Projects, and purchase goods from the ROSL shop. Here are just some of the exciting new features that will be available at www.rosl.org.uk:



- n Follow our live Twitter feed
- n View our delicious food and drink menus
- n Inquire about our conference and events facilities
- n View the ROSL events calendar and book tickets online*
- n Learn about ROSL's Welfare Projects abroad and donate online
- n Keep up-to-date with ROSL ARTS concerts, exhibitions and talks
- n Request accommodation
- n Apply for a card of introduction to one of ROSL's reciprocal clubs
- n Visit your personalised login area*
- n Purchase goods from the ROSL shop
- n Read *Overseas* magazine and access the *Overseas* archives
- n Easy viewing options for the visually impaired

ROSL members' login area

The new members' personalised login area will enable existing members to renew their membership through our new secure online payment system.* On 1 December, all members who have given us their email address will receive an email with a secure link to take them through the login process. If you do not receive this email, please visit www.rosl.org.uk/signup.php to register.

redkiteinternet

*Please note: this facility is not yet available to members in Australia and New Zealand.

Give membership as a gift

The festive season is a time for sharing, so why not introduce the membership benefits of joining ROSL to friends, colleagues and family members, by giving membership as a gift? Joining ROSL gives you more than just a membership card. As a part of ROSL, you can access the attractive clubhouses in London and Edinburgh, the wonderful clubhouse restaurants, take part in the extensive events programmes, visit reciprocal clubs worldwide, and join the Inter-Club Younger Members' Group, making it an original and thoughtful Christmas gift.

Contact the Membership Department by 10 December to receive a membership card gift pack in time for Christmas. Please mark all envelopes and correspondence clearly with CHRISTMAS GIFT MEMBERSHIP to avoid delays, and send to: Membership Department, Over-Seas House, Park Place, St James's Street, London, SW1A 1LR. Alternatively, call 020 7408 0214 ext 214, or email membership@rosl.org.uk.

House histories

In addition to *The Royal Over-Seas League: From Empire into Commonwealth, A History of the First 100 Years*, written by Adele Smith to celebrate the centenary, a shorter, 34-page history is now available to buy at the ROSL Shop, priced £3.50. Written and designed in-house, *A Brief History of Sir Evelyn Wrench & Over-Seas House London* is an ideal introduction to the ROSL founder and clubhouse.



News and views

The latest from the London clubhouse



▲ Louise Truslow

Artist Louise Truslow (l), with guests Julia Zaprzala, Tracy Dean and Karen Turner, at the private view of her exhibition of Thai-inspired watercolours, held at Over-Seas House, London, in July. The exhibition helped raise funds for the ROSL Young Artist of Thailand Competition, of which Louise is an advisor and judge

▲ All change at Over-Seas House

ROSL welcomed Arabella Beresford-Mitchell (r), Assistant to Director-General Roddy Porter, and said farewell to Fatima Vanicek (centre), Membership Secretary/Assistant to the former D-G Robert Newell. Fatima joined ROSL in 1979 as PA to the then General Manager, and ROSL is extremely grateful for her 32 years' service. Arabella is a graduate of the London College of Music, where she studied classical guitar. Congratulations also to Angela Farago (l), who took over as Membership Secretary. We wish Fatima a happy retirement and Arabella a long working life with ROSL



◀ Peace Prize visitor

Canon Andrew White (ROSL Member and recipient of six Peace Prizes from international fora for his reconciliation work in Iraq and the Middle East) took tea with Maj Gen Roddy Porter on his first day in office. Rev White and Gen Porter worked together in Baghdad in 2008-09

▲ Central Council lunch, July

The Australian High Commissioner to London, HE Mr John Dauth, was the guest of honour and speaker at the lunch, which preceded the Central Council meeting on 25 July. He spoke on the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth in October.

L-r: Sir Anthony Figgis (ROSL Chairman), the High Commissioner, Mrs Shanaz Newell, Mr Alan Chalmers (former Edinburgh Club Manager to whom tributes were paid at the lunch for his 22 years' service to ROSL) and Mr Robert Newell

▲ A warm welcome ▶

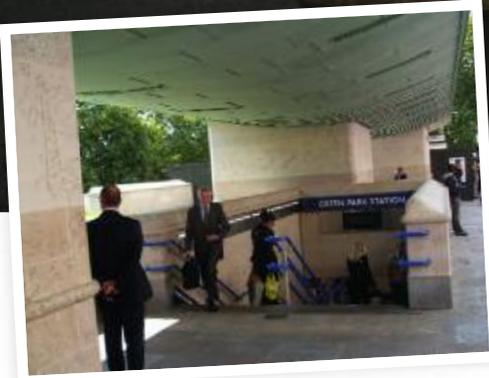
George Harwood-Smith and Mandy Murphy joined ROSL ARTS in August. Both come from arts and music backgrounds, and are excited to be part of the team





◀ **Green Park Tube station upgrade**

As part of the Tube upgrade plan to improve the network in time for the 2012 Olympics, our local station, Green Park, has undergone some recent improvements. Not only is there now step-free access to all platforms, but there is also a new sheltered area running along Piccadilly, and a new entrance to the station direct from Green Park. These make the station much more attractive and accessible for visitors to Over-Seas House. During the 2012 Games, Green Park will be a key station, where passengers can change to the Jubilee line for access to the Olympic Park, Wembley and North Greenwich



© TfL

Central Council lunch, September ▶

At the Central Council lunch on 26 September, farewells were said to Ms Fatima Vanicek (Assistant to the D-G), and Mr Robert Newell (Director-General) and his wife Shanaz, who were all presented with gifts. Welcomes were extended to the new Director-General, Maj Gen Roddy Porter and his wife Marianne. Mr Newell was the speaker, and the Chairman, Sir Anthony Figgis, read tributes from Lord Luce (ROSL President), and paid tributes on behalf of the Central Council. L-r: Maj Gen Porter, Ms Vanicek, Mrs Newell, Sir Anthony Figgis, Mayella Lady Figgis, Mrs Porter and Mr Newell



◀ **Mayor's Thames Festival**

Former ROSL Director-General, Mr Robert Newell, Events Coordinator, Ms Alex Pavry, and Chairman, Sir Anthony Figgis, enjoyed a day on the Thames, with the Central Council and staff, in celebration of the festival and in preparation for the Diamond Jubilee flotilla in 2012

A bird's eye view of the clubhouse

Members enjoyed a display of birds of prey in the ROSL garden



On Sunday 21 August, Over-Seas House welcomed some very animated winged visitors. Members were treated to a live display of owls, hawks, eagles and falcons in the ROSL garden, as well as a talk by Countrywide Falconry's Head Falconer, Randal Carey, about these amazing creatures.

Members were able to hold some of the birds and to hear incredible facts and stories about them. The event proved an extremely popular addition to the ROSL events calendar, with the characterful Scops Owl being a firm favourite.



BIRD IN THE HAND:
Member Sheila Jarvis and handler Jeff Carey with a Ferruginous Hawk

ROSL WORLD

The latest from the global branches



VICTORIA BRANCH: L-r Patricia Holdenson, Cr Robert Doyle and branch President Jason Ronald

Australia

In New South Wales the branch celebrated the marriage of Zara Phillips and Mike Tindall in July with a Scottish High Tea. At the Victoria Branch's August lunch, the Rt Hon Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Cr Robert Doyle, spoke of his vision for the future of the municipality. In August, members of the Western Australia Branch attended the final of the annual ROSL Award for Young Singers, organised by the Royal Schools Music Club and sponsored by the branch. Soprano Elizabeth Edwards won the first prize of AUS\$500.

New South Wales: Lily Murray, murraylily@hotmail.com

Queensland: Sharon Morgan, sllmorgan@hotmail.com

South Australia: Michael Kent, rosl.sa@mac.com

Tasmania: Robert Dick, gradick1@gmail.com

Victoria: Coral Strahan, +61 (0)3 9654 8338; rosl@alphalink.com.au

Western Australia: Anthony Abbott, +61 (0)8 9368 0379, losabbotts@hotmail.com

Canada

Alberta: Cynthia Cordery, +1 780 477 0001, ccordery@shaw.ca

British Columbia: Pamela Ducommun, +1 604 925 3719

Nova Scotia: Liz Stern, +1 902 678 1975, lizstern317@gmail.com

Ontario: Ishrani Jaikaran, +1 416 760 0309, rosl.ont@sympatico.ca

Terry Gavaghan 1922-2011

Terence Gavaghan MBE, known to all as Terry, died in August. He had been a member of ROSL since 1949 and was very supportive right up to the end of his long life. I came to know him well when I joined ROSL. He was a fascinating man who entertained me with stories from his life with the Colonial Civil Service in Kenya. He was an active member of the Kenya Society, of which I was also a member.

Terry was an Irishman born in India, where his father was an accountant. He was an intelligent, gregarious friend who was always good humoured and likeable. Commissioned into the Royal Ulster Rifles, he soon joined the Kenyan Administration. In 1957, he was appointed to unblock the Mwea detention system, set up in response to the Mau Mau crisis in 1952. Only 35 at the time, he had a reputation as a man who got things done, and he sorted the problem, courting controversy in the process due to claims by some of ill treatment.

Terry was appointed an MBE in 1958 and later became Acting Permanent Secretary at Government House, where he ran the process of Africanisation of the top 10,000 civil service jobs. In 1962, he was recruited by the United Nations and, over the next three decades, served on humanitarian missions in 17 developing countries, including Libya and Sudan.

Terry was an excellent writer and published two books: the autobiography *Of Lions and Dung Beetles* and an account of life at Mwea, *Corridors of Wire*. Sadly he will be remembered most for the controversy surrounding Mwea and not for all his wonderful achievements.

I liked Terry and found him to be a good man of conscience and humanity. He was married twice, latterly to Nicole, with whom he had a son and daughter.

Robert Newell

Retirement notice

Maneck Dalal OBE, who was Chairman of ROSL from 1986 to 1989, retired a few months ago as Chairman of the Indian cultural institute, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, in London. He has now assumed the role as its Founder-Patron.



SONGS FOR CHRISTCHURCH: The Rangī Ruru School choir with (l-r) Lyn Milne (ROSL NZ Director), Ruth Harwood (Christchurch Branch President), Janet Kingsbury (Director of Music, Rangī Ruru School), Judith Leckie (Branch Secretary) and Helen Charlton (Choir Mistress, Rangī Ruru School)

Hong Kong

Members living in Hong Kong can be put on the mailing list by sending their email address to publicity@rosl.org.hk.

Hong Kong: Stella Lam, www.rosl.org.hk, presidentS@rosl.org.hk

New Zealand

The Oamaru Branch and the Haiti Trust put on two concerts by ROSL prizewinners, the Neary/Plane/Rahman Trio. In South Canterbury, Irelle White gave a talk about her 30 years of missionary work in Japan, and presented a cheque to singer Elizabeth Kirby, winner of the local Music Teachers' Competition.

New Zealand: Lyn Milne, www.roslnz.org.nz, royalo-s@xtra.co.nz

Switzerland

Switzerland: Jo Brown, +334 5040 6631

Thailand

Thailand: Roger Willbourn, + 66 2649 2690, info@roslthailand.com

UK

In addition to weekly coffee mornings at the Highcliff Marriott Hotel, the Bournemouth Branch held its annual garden party in July, with guests of honour Stanley Martin, former ROSL Chairman, and his wife Hanni. An outing to Mottisfont Abbey in September was followed by an October lunch. Margaret Adrian-Vallance, ROSL's Director of PR and Development, gave a talk on the Namibia Project. The Cheltenham

Branch spent a long-weekend at Over-Seas House, London, in July. Edinburgh Branch members enjoyed a Gala Opera Evening given by students of the Glasgow Conservatoire in July, and many attended the ROSL ARTS Festival Fringe programme and Festival fireworks dinner. The annual London visit was also well attended. Bill Agnew, Glasgow Branch Chair, suffered a terrible house fire during the summer.

In September, 33 members from ROSL West (Bath, Exeter, Taunton, Torbay) enjoyed a weekend trip to the London clubhouse. The Bath Branch continued to hold monthly coffee mornings, and the Exeter Branch held its annual picnic at Cadhay in July. At a lunch in September, the new Chairman, Brain Hawkes, gave a speech on his father's life as a GP. At its Chairman's Coffee Morning in August, the Taunton Branch raised £200 for Shelterbox and Tossing a Starfish, and presented a cheque for £750 to the local 'blood bike' service, Freewheelers. The West Cornwall Branch held a social evening at Trevethoe House, with local musicians performing 'Songs from the Shows'.
Bath, Exeter, Taunton, Torbay: Sally Roberts, 01823 661148, rosl.west@googlemail.com
Bournemouth: Gordon Irving, 01258 480887, westoverirving@aol.com
Cheltenham: Kathleen Northage, 01242 515540
Edinburgh: Bill Chalmers, 0131 5572754
Glasgow: Bill Agnew, 07551313722
West Cornwall: Ian Wood, 01736 333460
West Sussex: Marilyn Archbold, 01444 458853

Cooperating with US

ROSL is happy to cooperate with American Citizens Abroad (ACA), a worldwide non-profit, non-partisan organisation of US citizens living overseas, based in Geneva. www.americansabroad.org

Art on the Southbank: works of inspiration

At the Annual Scholars Exhibition, the artists talk to **George Harwood-Smith** about their inspiration and the impact of the Arbroath residency on their work

It was evident from the Annual Scholars Exhibition in October, at gallery@oxo on London's Southbank, that the three ROSL Travel Scholars had been strongly influenced by their month-long residency at Hospitalfield in Arbroath, Scotland, in 2010. Through sculptural installation, photography and painting, each artist identified with the environment at Hospitalfield House, home to a vast collection of 19th-century paintings, sculptures and artefacts, built up by Patrick-Allan Fraser and recently restored by Willie Payne.

We ask Trinidadian-born Jaime Lee Loy, Kenyan artist Shake Makelele and Zoë MacDonell from Australia about the experience and its impact on their work. The other exhibiting artists, ROSL ARTS/Royal College of Art award-winners Hanne Enemark from Denmark and Sarah Wiberley from the UK, also talk about their work and inspiration.

Jaime Lee Loy, Trinidad and Tobago

Being given the opportunity of international exposure and to get away from everyday life, immersing myself and concentrating on my practice, was one of the most valuable

aspects. Having the opportunity to occupy a large studio meant that I could work on a larger scale, be more experimental, take more risks, and further research and address my interests in physicality and mortality, which I have been able to explore in my work since.

In Trinidad contemporary art still isn't widely recognised, and when producing work, artists feel pressure to conform to particular notions of what the public consider as art. It was fantastic to be without the pressure to produce something specific, and simply to have the freedom to practise, without being distracted, in such a peaceful environment. It was wonderful being able to work closely alongside other artists and to build up a dialogue with them.

Shake Makelele, Kenya

It was inspiring to work in a different environment, in a different country, with artists from across the globe, but also to experience two very different but very intense working environments. London was busy and relentless, and then to be placed in the incredible solitude and isolation of Arbroath in Scotland has played a role in how my work developed during my stay. My pieces are

“It was inspiring to work in a different environment, in a different country, with artists from across the globe”



always about self-exploration and trying to discover new ways of practising.

I started to use the environment there as a way of seeking inspiration, as the landscape is so vastly different from what I am used to in Kenya. My initial paintings were created without sketching, just paint on canvas, and I particularly focused on the uniformity of the British environment, concentrating on bales of hay.

I was further inspired by talking to people, especially about their personal experiences of travelling to Kenya and meeting other Kenyan people. The travel scholarship enabled me to observe working methods used in other continents, and this makes you reflect and adapt upon how you perceive your own work, which is an incredibly valuable tool.

While staying in London I was able to visit some of the world-renowned cultural institutions and I got the chance to see paintings by Gauguin, Picasso, Renoir and Van Gogh.

Zoë MacDonell, Australia

In both London and Scotland, I have immersed myself within the cultural institutions. In Hospitalfield, I was able to detach and separate myself from my normal reality. I spent time in the rooms, drawing from the patterns and elements in the architecture and furnishings. I was particularly intrigued by the beautiful and ornate, Dutch embossed leather wallpaper and chest coverings from the 17th to the 19th century. This historical site enabled me to concentrate entirely upon my work. This new body of research and inspiration has led to a new series of paintings. A previous research trip to Antarctica, where I examined the ice textures, has also informed the visual nature of this work.



© Jules Lawrence

This residency also gave me the opportunity to build a cultural dialogue with Jaime and Shake, and we will continue to keep in contact, exchanging ideas and opportunities.

Hanne Enemark, Denmark

The glass itself is what inspires me, being able to manipulate the material into exactly what you would like it to be. My work connects and emphasises my Scandinavian roots, is not precious and I hope is a little humorous and playful. You have to be incredibly quick when working with glass, so your ideas about what you would like to make have to be there before you start. The process is very labour intensive and it is very important to have a pre-conceived vision about what you intend to create.



© JULES LAWRENCE

Sarah Wiberley, United Kingdom

I enjoy making beautiful things. I draw inspiration from English 19th-century cameo glass and, in this series of work, I recollect the familiar motif of the bird as it escapes from its 19th-century scenery and explores its new surroundings. My 'Cameo Series' is a fusion of modern and 19th-century glasswork, reviving a technique that has been lost over time, and hopefully becoming an effective conveyor of an older historical practice in a contemporary context.

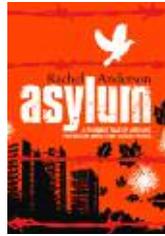
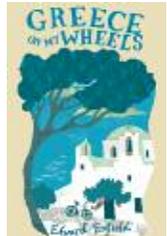
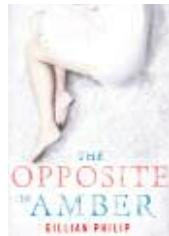
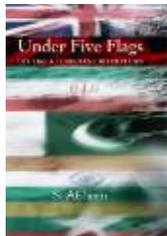
The other series of work that I am exhibiting, entitled 'Wallpaper Series', is largely based upon more recent trends in interior decoration, and I try to be playful in my approach to print techniques. I use simple image-making processes, enamel transfers and paper-cutting, so that each individual method begins to develop an aesthetic of its own.

EXHIBITING ARTISTS:

L-r Jaime Lee Loy (Trinidad and Tobago), Shake Makelele (Kenya), Zoë MacDonell (Australia), Hanne Enemark (Denmark) and Sarah Wiberley (UK); and (above) gallery@oxo during the exhibition of their work

Books

Reviews of recent works
by ROSL members



Under Five Flags: Life like a turbulent river flows

Shahrukh Afsheen

Xlibris Corp UK, 2011,

ISBN 978-1462891795. For

details or to purchase, email

mrafshen@hotmail.com

Under Five Flags traces one man's journey through some of the most remarkable periods in modern history. The 'flags' refer to the five countries in which the author has lived: Burma, India, Pakistan, Iran and the UK.

Born in Rangoon, Burma, in 1936, Shahrukh Afsheen experienced the turbulent times of the Second World War there; the communal riots and the rupture of India; and the chaotic revolution of Iran. He bears witness to the great changes in science, culture, the arts and politics that have fundamentally altered the way we think about the world and our place in it.

The Opposite of Amber

Gillian Philip

Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011,

ISBN 978-0747599920, £6.99

Set in a small seaside town, *The Opposite of Amber* follows Ruby and Jinn – sisters, best friends and closest allies – as they process the stories that begin to appear in the local newspaper of prostitutes being murdered, their bodies discovered underwater. When the no-good Nathan Baird turns up, Jinn starts to change

and then she too goes missing. This powerful thriller celebrates the love of two sisters and examines the events that conspire to drive them apart.

Greece on my Wheels

Edward Enfield

Summersdale, 2011,

ISBN 978-1-84953-168-9, £8.99

Fired by a longstanding enthusiasm for all things Greek, Edward Enfield mounts his trusty Raleigh and follows in the footsteps of such notable travellers to Greece as Benjamin Disraeli, Edward Lear and Lord Byron. In this enchanting travelogue, set against the grand panorama of Greek history, he describes his cycling adventure with great style and wit.

Asylum

Rachel Anderson

Hodder Children's Books, 2011,

ISBN 978-0340997680, £5.99

In Hawk Rise, a 17-storey block of flats, the lives and stories of inhabitants interweave. At the core of the novel are two young asylum seekers: 15-year-old Sunday came to the UK in search of a country that was democratic and respectful of human life; eight-year-old Rosa just wanted somewhere safe, away from the bad things in her past. Through their eyes, ideas of Britain and belonging are explored.

Reviews by Claire Simon.

MEMBERS' DISCOUNT ON COX & KINGS TOURS

If you would like to combine a holiday with support for ROSL Welfare Projects, here is a great way of doing so. Cox & Kings, the longest established travel company in the world and one of the UK's leading specialist tour operators, is offering ROSL members a 10% discount on a wide range of tours for 2011/12. In addition, for every booking, Cox & Kings makes a donation to ROSL's Welfare Projects, which are now operating in Namibia, Botswana and Kenya.



ON TOUR: St. Petersburg

Cox & Kings provide separate brochures for the following areas:

Africa and the Indian Ocean, Australia, Europe, the Far East, India, Latin America, the Middle East and New Zealand. Although discounts are not available on tour extensions or tailor-made tours, a financial contribution will still be made to ROSL's Welfare Projects.

To request a brochure, please call Cox & Kings brochure line on 0844 576 5518. To speak to a consultant, call 0845 527 5023. In both cases, please quote ROSLEAGUE.

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So far, sew good

As the trend for a return to domestic crafts sweeps the nation, **Miranda Moore** takes a dressmaking class at Sew Over It, London's first sewing café

The day after she was featured in London's *Evening Standard*, Lisa Comfort received calls from three publishers eager to capitalise on her success at introducing the joys of sewing to a new generation. A bidding war started on both sides of the Atlantic, with the 29-year-old sewing café owner securing a two-book deal.

This goes to show just how great the resurgence of sewing, dressmaking and domestic crafts has become. In the last two years, a handful of craft cafés have opened in the UK, but it was in Paris that the concept of the sewing café was born, with the launch of Sweat Shop in 2010. Sew Over It became the first in London when opened in May 2011. Since then, Lisa has increased the number of classes to 25 and taken on two new members of staff.

Offering courses in everything from dressmaking to embroidery, as well as a drop-in service, the Clapham café has all the requisite homeliness of a craft outlet, but with a modern twist. Bright letters in aquamarine and fuchsia spell out messages such as 'Sewing soothes

the soul' on clean white walls; enormous baskets hold rolls of patterned fabrics; gingham bunting adds retro style; while jars of buttons, zips and other dressmaking essentials spill out of a white shaker-style dresser.

Classes range from £20 two-hour 'mini classes' to a three-part 'Mad Men dress course' for £165. For £5 an hour, customers can use the sewing machines for their own projects, with tea included.

I join the two-part 'little dungarees' class (now available as a kit only) and take a quick one-on-one absolute beginner session beforehand (£40ph), to get up to speed on the sewing machine.

I am nervous. Textiles was my worst subject at school and it takes me hours just to hem a skirt. With great patience, Lisa teaches me the basics (threading the machine; basic and zig-zag stitches) in just 30 minutes, helped by the easy-use Janome, which has a sliding button to adjust the speed from 'hare' to 'tortoise' pace.

My classmate, Amy, arrives and we choose from an array of colourful fabrics, which we pin

to pre-cut patterns with Lisa's guidance. From running together the legs to the gather stitch on the bib, we are talked through each stage, encouraged by cups of tea, yummy cake and words of praise. Included in the cost, the cakes are bought in, after Lisa's mother convinced her that adding cake-making to her responsibilities would be a step too far.

As it is, she often works a 14-hour day. But then, sewing has been her passion since, aged 11, a childminder taught her to make a skirt. She went on to work for designers Bruce Oldfield and Phillipa Lepley. Realising that "fashion wasn't everything", she began teaching sewing workshops at cafés such as the Make Lounge in Islington, which also covers crafts such as jewellery making and book binding.

Lisa's love of sewing is infectious and by the end of my first class I am eager to continue. A week later and the second class is more of a challenge, involving some hand stitching, which I have to unpick and start again. The final step is to make two customised buttons using the lining fabric, which give the outfit a professional look.

It is easy to see why Sew Over It is popular with women in their 20s and 30s, but Lisa is now keen to branch out into new markets. There is already an after-school club, giving children aged 7-14 the chance to get involved; and a men's survival course has just been launched, with cold beer replacing cups of tea. Participants are taught everything from mending split seams to taking up trousers.

The range of accessories, home furnishings and dressmaking classes continues to grow, and as I leave my only question is which class to try next. Wardrobe revival, perhaps.

Sew Over It: 8 Landor Road, Clapham North, London SW9 9PH; 020 7326 0376; www.sewoverit.co.uk. Nearest Tube: Clapham North or Stockwell.



HANDS ON:

Owner Lisa Comfort organises her stock

Bright letters spell out messages such as 'Sewing soothes the soul'; gingham bunting adds retro style



Early August was not a good time to visit Scotland. The month's usual rainfall fell in the first ten days. Even in wet weather, however, the Scottish countryside beats most urban landscapes. Hanni and I are familiar with Over-Seas House, Edinburgh, with its famed view of the castle, and under the new management of Daniel Campbell (of the Highland company Cobbs), it is thriving. The smartened 'Restaurant 100' offers good fare and deserves much more custom, and there are ongoing improvements to many public spaces and bedrooms.

We went on to Inverness, the capital of the Highlands, ten miles north of the Clansman Hotel on Loch Ness. Fraser Campbell (Daniel's father), and Willie and Rory Cameron, provided a warm welcome and excellent service at the hotel. The bedrooms and dining rooms give superb views over the loch, unless heavy mist descends, when it is very romantic (did we see the monster? Guess!). The food, especially the fish, was memorable and the atmosphere busy.

There is a lot to see nearby. Inverness offers Victorian shops, a tattoo mounted mostly by local cadets, an attractive riverside walk and a lovely botanic garden. Urquhart Castle once dominated the loch and can now be reached easily by boat from the hotel, while Fort George, on Moray Firth, is still the largest artillery fortification in the country, continuing to house a Scottish battalion. Also worth visiting is Culloden, site of the last battle on British soil, in 1746, when George II's army defeated Bonnie Prince Charlie's Jacobites (and the MacMartins fought as part of Clan Cameron); and Nairn, an appealing resort of stone houses facing north, but with a micro-climate and sandy beaches.

Our return was by Highland Chieftain, direct from Inverness to London in eight hours, with a cooked breakfast, salad lunch, high tea, and unlimited tea, coffee and liquor – all served at one's seat and included in the price. The sun shone on the wonderful scenery of highland and lowland Scotland, and of northern and central England. Surely this is the longest and best railway journey left in Britain.



ROMANTIC SETTING: Urquhart Castle (above) once dominated Loch Ness (top)

Stanley Martin CVO is a former ROSL Chairman.

The Loch Ness Clansman Hotel and Loch Ness Country House Hotel are run by Cobbs, who also manage ROSL's Edinburgh clubhouse. ROSL members receive a 25% discount on accommodation, food and drink at both hotels. For further details, contact Loch Ness Clansman Hotel, www.lochnessview.com, +44 (0) 1463 230512; or Loch Ness Country House Hotel, www.lochnesscountryhousehotel.co.uk, +44 (0) 1463 230512.

LONDON

What's on...

Winter Wonderland

Hyde Park

18 November 2011 - 3 January 2012

Spread across 20 acres of historic parkland, Winter Wonderland offers festive treats such as an ice rink, 'Santa land' (including children's gifts from Santa), and a traditional German Christmas market selling festive gifts, delicacies, jewellery and handicrafts. Open 10am-10pm.

Free. Contact www.hydeparkwinterwonderland.com

Nutcracker!

Sadler's Wells

6 December 2011 - 22 January 2012

Matthew Bourne's *Nutcracker!* returns to Sadler's Wells to celebrate its 20th anniversary. Performed by a live orchestra, Tchaikovsky's glorious score follows Clara's bittersweet journey one Christmas Eve.

Tickets: £10-£60. Contact: 0844 412 4300 or www.sadlerswells.com



© BEL COOPER

Cirque du Soleil: Totem

Royal Albert Hall

6 January - 5 February 2012

As the hugely popular *Totem* returns to the Royal Albert Hall, the Cirque du Soleil traces the journey of human evolution – from its amphibian origins to its desire to fly – in this spectacular production.

Tickets: £25-£75. Contact: 0845 401 5034 or www.royalalberthall.com



FESTIVE TREATS: *Totem* by Cirque du Soleil; and (top) Matthew Bourne's *Nutcracker!*

Younger Members

December 2011-February 2012

December

Mince pies and mulled wine

Friday 16 December, 7pm, free
Get to know your fellow ROSL younger members and clubhouse at the ROSL annual mince pies and mulled wine reception. *This is a free event, but please contact Alex Pavry to reserve a ticket.*

Annual Inter-Club Christmas Ball

Wednesday 21 December
One of the highlights of the Inter-Club calendar, this year the annual Christmas ball will be hosted by the Lansdowne Club. *Inter-Club details TBA.**

January

Private evening tour, Charles Dickens Museum

Thursday 26 January, 6pm, £20
Enjoy a private evening tour (glass of wine included) of Dickens' only



** For further information on ROSL Younger Members and the Inter-Club Group, email Alex Pavry (apavry@rosl.org.uk) or Conrad Purcell (conradpurcell@hotmail.com).*

surviving London home, which opened as a museum in 1925. The museum displays paintings, rare editions, manuscripts, original furniture and many items relating to the life of one of the most beloved personalities of the Victorian age.

February

Whisky tasting and dinner

Friday 24 February, 6.30pm, £75
'Too much of anything is bad. Too much of good whisky is barely

enough' said Mark Twain. Tickle your taste buds with a tutored tasting of fine whisky, courtesy of the Scotch Malt Whisky Society, followed by a sumptuous three-course dinner in the Hall of India & Pakistan at Over-Seas House.

Mad dogs and Englishmen

Inter-Club members make the most of a typically British summer

Once again, the younger members of 18 of London's most prestigious private members' clubs spent the summer months eating, drinking and being very merry at a host of Inter-Club events. In July, the Hurlingham Club transported younger members to the Caribbean (unfortunately not literally) for a summer party of rum-based cocktails, steel band music, dancing and a sumptuous BBQ, which included red snapper, Reggae Reggae chicken and ribs.

Later that month, ROSL took Inter-Clubbers down the rabbit hole with a Mad Hatter's Tea Party. Members donned their maddest hats and enjoyed croquet in the garden, while being served giant cheese straws and Pimm's from tea pots, before heading to Princess Alexandra Hall for some scrummy delights, served on vintage cake stands, and wine supped from tea

cups. A fantastical puppet performance was provided by the Flabberghast Theatre Company, followed by espresso cups of port and a return to the garden, as the summer evening turned to night.

The Queen's Club rounded off the summer with their annual tennis tournament and barbecue. After a sturdy bacon roll breakfast, play (and Pimm's) began promptly at 10.30am. A five round/nine game format, with a tie-break at four games, led to some excitingly close matches for all but, by 2pm, James Taylor (Army & Navy) and Sarah Willis (Putney Lawn Tennis Club) had become the champions and winners of the champagne trophy. A buffet lunch and more Pimm's were served in the afternoon, and several players had to be poured into taxis by Queen's Club staff at the end of the day.



HATS OFF: Younger members at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party in the ROSL garden



Director of ROSL ARTS, Roderick Lakin, introduces the winter programme in London

MUSIC EVENTS

Wigmore Hall
**The Monday Platform
 ROSL Prizewinners**
Jonathan McGovern, Baritone
Timothy End, Piano
Castalian Quartet
 Monday 16 January, 7.30pm
 Jonathan McGovern, Gold Medallist
 of the 2010 ROSL Annual Music
 Competition, with the winner of

the 2010 accompanist prize,
 Timothy End, and 2011 Ensemble
 prizewinners, the Castalian Quartet,
 perform works by Britten, Dvorak,
 Shostakovich and Schumann, plus
 the chamber version of Vaughan
 Williams' *5 Mystical Songs*.
Tickets (reduced from £15):
£12 ROSL members and guests;
£10 Friends of ROSL ARTS,
available ONLY from ROSL ARTS.

Over-Seas House
 Princess Alexandra Hall
**60th ROSL Annual
 Music Competition
 Section Finals**

2012 is a landmark year, as the
 competition celebrates its
 Diamond Jubilee. Hundreds of
 young musicians will converge at
 Over-Seas House in February and
 March to compete for the four solo

TAKING THE PLATFORM: The
 Castalian Quartet (above) will
 perform with fellow ROSL
 prizewinners Jonathan
 McGovern and Timothy End

*For tickets, contact ROSL
 ARTS: 020 7408 0214 ext
 324; culture@rosl.org.uk.*

section awards of £5,000 (for Wind and Percussion, Singers, Strings, and Keyboard), two Ensemble awards of £10,000, accompanist award of £5,000 and prizes for musicians from overseas. The section finals are open to the public and are an ideal way to hear some of the most gifted young classical musicians at the beginning of their professional careers.

Tuesday 7 February, 7pm Wind and Percussion

Tuesday 14 February, 7pm Singers

Tuesday 21 February, 7pm Strings

Tuesday 28 February, 7pm Keyboard

Tuesday 6 March, 7pm Ensembles A (strings; strings and piano; piano duo/duet)

Tuesday 13 March, 7pm Ensembles B (wind; percussion; vocal; mixed ensembles)

Tuesday 20 March, 7pm Overseas Awards

Tickets £12; ROSL members and concessions £11; Friends of ROSL ARTS £10. Includes wine, served after the winner is announced.

'The Sound of Mumbai: A musical'

Wednesday 14 March, 7pm

As part of Commonwealth Week 2012, ROSL ARTS will host a screening of the heart-warming, if unsettling, *The Sound of Mumbai* documentary, about the Muktangan school and the power of music to transform lives. Producer Joseph Walters will talk about the charity set up to support this inspiring project, and his ambitious plans for the future (see page 12). All the proceeds from this event will be used to support the project.

Tickets £25; ROSL members and concessions £20; Friends of ROSL ARTS £15. Includes wine and Indian-inspired canapés.

Queen Elizabeth Hall 60th ROSL Annual Music Competition Grand Final

Tuesday 8 May, 7pm

Grand Final of the 2012 Annual Music Competition, on London's Southbank. *Booking opens April 2012.*

Commonwealth Resounds

ROSL prizewinners Les Neish, tuba, and Yelian He, cello, (pictured) gave ROSL members a sneak preview of their programme for the Perth CHOGM, at a Sunday afternoon concert at Over-Seas House on 25 September. Supported by ROSL ARTS, they joined the Commonwealth Resounds team of outstanding young musicians and composers from the Purcell and Chetham's specialist music schools, as leaders and mentors for a challenging programme of concerts, workshops and outreach work. Highlights included a Gala Concert with the Western Australia Orchestra at Perth Concert Hall, the closing ceremony of the CHOGM Young People's Forum in Freemantle and the Commonwealth Service of Thanksgiving at Perth Anglican Cathedral. Yelian He and Les Neish also performed at the Western Australia Branch dinner to mark the retirement of Jeff Turner, after 20 years as branch Chairman.

A full report on CHOGM and Commonwealth Resounds will appear in the next issue.



HIGHLIGHT: The Lazarus String Quartet ended their six-week UK tour in Edinburgh

Fringe success

The 12th season of Music @ 100 Princes Street, at the Edinburgh Festival, broke all box office records

Presenting 30 concerts in 12 days, Music @ 100 Princes Street showcases the best of recent ROSL Music Competition and International Music Scholarship winners and has become a Festival institution, attracting a loyal and discerning audience year after year. With its central location, relaxed ambience and refreshments, the annual series offers one of the most civilised experiences on the Edinburgh Fringe.

As always, the 9.30am Bach for Breakfast and Beethoven for Breakfast concerts sold out fast, followed by Chopin or Rachmaninov after Lunch, and Mozart at Teatime. It was particularly gratifying that our four diverse late-night concerts, at 10.30pm – Messiaen and Shostakovich Late, Jazz Piano Late, and Latino Classical Guitar Late – sold out for the first time. Overall, the series attracted several four- and five-star reviews and was featured in Radio 3's *In Tune*.

Participating in the series were ROSL/Pettman scholarship winners the Lazarus String Quartet, from Christchurch, New Zealand. The Edinburgh Fringe was the climax of an intensive six-week UK study and concert tour, before they went their separate ways to study in New Zealand and Europe. The first violin of the quartet, Emma Yoon, wrote: 'The Edinburgh Fringe Festival was the perfect way to finish an already amazing one and a half months... The most memorable concert for me would have to be our last concert together as a string quartet... I was nearly brought to tears, just remembering the experiences we had shared on the trip.'

'The best place to spot future International Festival talent is undoubtedly the Royal Over-Seas League music series', *The Herald*

'In a frenetic Festival, [Bach For Breakfast] is a lovely calm way to start the day', *Edinburgh Evening News*

Members' events

December 2011 - March 2012

DECEMBER

Festival of Christmas carols and readings

Sunday 4 December, 3.30pm, £20, G

The annual ROSL Christmas service at St James's Church, Piccadilly, followed by a delicious festive tea and a visit from Father Christmas bearing gifts.

Chairman's Christmas lunch – SOLD OUT

Thursday 15 December, 12.30pm
Due to high demand, the application for tickets to this event is now closed.

JANUARY

Behind-the-glass at the Churchill War Rooms

Monday 23 January, 3pm, £35, R

This private tour offers you an unparalleled opportunity to step back in time. Led by a highly qualified guide, you will be taken inside the historic rooms, behind the glass that general visitors only look through, and see, at close quarters, where Winston Churchill, his War Cabinet and his Chiefs of Staff met and worked during the Second World War.

Private evening tour, Charles Dickens Museum

Thursday 26 January, 6pm, £20, G
To mark Dickens' 200th birthday

Chairman's Diamond Jubilee lunch and AGM

Wednesday 9 May, midday, £58, G
Drinks will be served before a delicious three-course lunch at Over-Seas House, London, hosted by ROSL Chairman, Sir Anthony Figgis. Guest speaker tba. The AGM will take place at 4pm and will be followed by a members' reception for those attending the AGM.

year, enjoy a private evening tour (glass of wine included) of Dickens' only surviving London home, which opened as a museum in 1925.

The Charles Dickens Museum displays paintings, rare editions, manuscripts, original furniture and many items relating to the life of one of the most popular and beloved personalities of the Victorian era.

FEBRUARY

Specialised tour of the Hunterian Museum

Tuesday 7 February, 3pm, £10, G

Explore a fascinating mix of human and animal anatomy and pathology specimens, wax teaching models, surgical and dental instruments, paintings, drawings and sculpture on this tour of the Royal College of Surgeons Hunterian Museum. Spanning four centuries, the

collections are brought together by a cast of colourful characters, including the surgeon and anatomist John Hunter (1728-1793).

Behind-the-scenes at the Theatre Royal Haymarket

Monday 20 February, 11am, £12, G

Back by popular demand, this tour gives members the opportunity to peek behind-the-scenes at one of the most spectacular, historic and architecturally significant theatres in the West End of London.

MARCH

Commonwealth Day Service

Monday 12 March, tbc, £6, G

BATTLE GROUND:

Churchill's Map Room, where he met with his Chiefs of Staff and War Cabinet during the Second World War

A multi-faith service, held annually to celebrate the Commonwealth of Nations at Westminster Abbey, in the presence of HM The Queen. A £6 administration charge applies.

Hangings, Horsemen and Hyde Park: Historic Bayswater

Friday 23 March, 2pm, £15, G

Explore one of central London's lesser-known districts with an expert Blue Badge guide. Bayswater provides an interesting



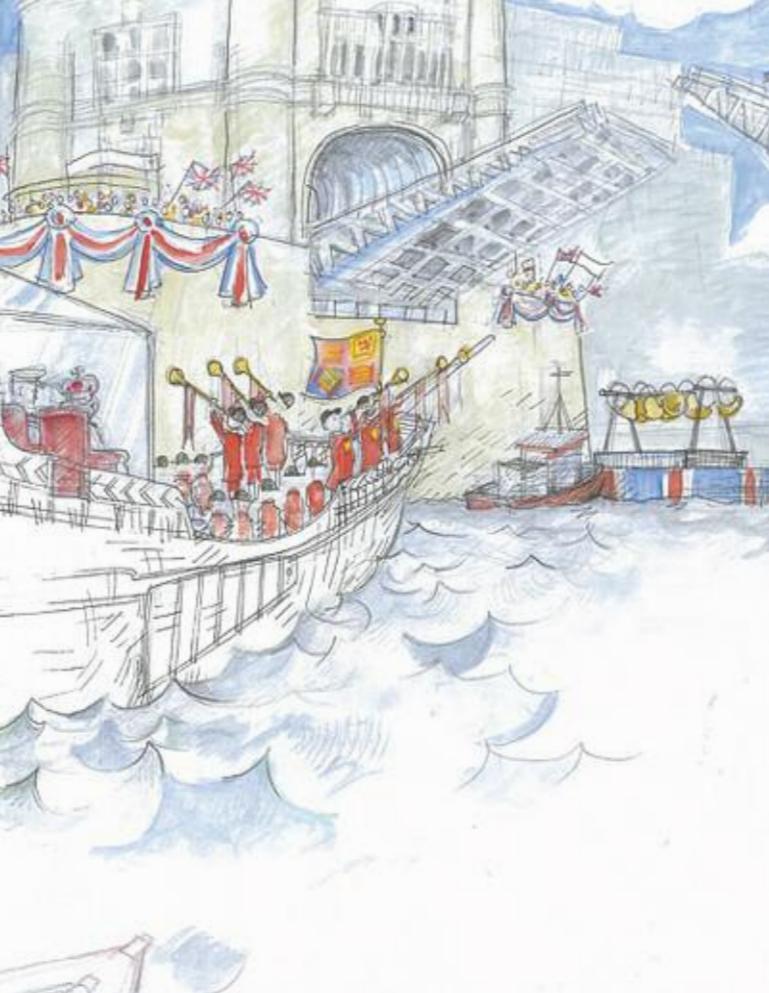
By permission of Churchill War Rooms, a branch of The Imperial War Museum

Application form opposite

These codes identify ticket availability:

- M** Members only
- G** Tickets available for members and their guests
- R** Restricted number of tickets available
- B** Tickets to be allocated by ballot. Payment for balloted tickets is not needed until tickets are allocated. Maximum two tickets per member. Only successful applicants will be notified.

Please note: A booking confirmation will be sent within 10 working days of receiving the application. Refunds can only be given if cancellations are made at least 15 days in advance. Tickets for all events are limited and members should apply early to avoid disappointment. Tickets may be restricted to two per member for popular events.



ROYAL PROCESSION:
Artist's impression of
The Queen's Diamond
Jubilee flotilla in 2012,
by Josh Knowles

and surprising walking tour, which includes a place of execution, the home of a former Prime Minister, elegant squares, cobbled mews, a hidden graveyard, an Italian Garden, a park, a famous Victorian department store and several places of worship.



BEING HUMAN:
The Crystal Gallery of the Hunterian Museum contains more than 3,000 specimens

The Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant

Sunday 3 June, tbc, £195, B

In celebration of HM The Queen's 60-year reign, at high water on the afternoon of Sunday 3 June 2012, up to a thousand boats will muster on the River Thames in preparation for The Queen to lead the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant. It will be one of the largest flotillas ever assembled on the river, and ROSL will be participating aboard the aptly named vessel, The Queen Elizabeth. *The ballot for this event will be drawn on Friday 6 April by the Director-General. Only successful applicants will be notified.*

..... ✂

Members' events Application form

Please complete this form (or photocopy) and send to: Alexandra Pavry, PR Department (Members Events), Over-Seas House, Park Place, St James's Street, London SW1A 1LR. **Tel:** 020 7016 6906. **Email:** apavry@rosl.org.uk. It is advisable to call in advance to reserve a ticket

Membership No

Name

Name of guest(s)
and trip they are attending:

.....
.....
.....

Address to which ticket(s) should be sent:

.....
.....
.....

Tel no

EVENT	DATE	PRICE	NO.	TOTAL
Festival of Christmas carols and readings	Sun 4 Dec	£20	.....	£.....
Behind-the-glass at the Churchill War Rooms	Mon 23 Jan	£35	.....	£.....
Private evening tour, Charles Dickens Museum	Thu 26 Jan	£20	.....	£.....
Specialised tour of the Hunterian Museum	Tue 7 Feb	£10	.....	£.....
Behind-the-scenes at the Theatre Royal Haymarket	Mon 20 Feb	£12	.....	£.....
Commonwealth Day Service	Mon 12 Mar	£6	.....	£.....
Hangings, horsemen and Hyde Park	Fri 23 Mar	£15	.....	£.....
Chairman's Diamond Jubilee lunch	Wed 9 May	£58	.....	£.....

BALLOTTED EVENTS DO NOT SEND PAYMENT YET. YOU WILL ONLY BE CONTACTED IF SUCCESSFUL

Maximum TWO tickets per member.

	Date	Price	No of tickets:	Apply before:
Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant	Sun 3 Jun	£195	.....	Fri 6 April

Payment – Please send a SEPARATE CHEQUE for each event.
Cheques (sterling) payable to ROSL. For CREDIT/DEBIT CARD PAYMENTS call 020 7016 6906

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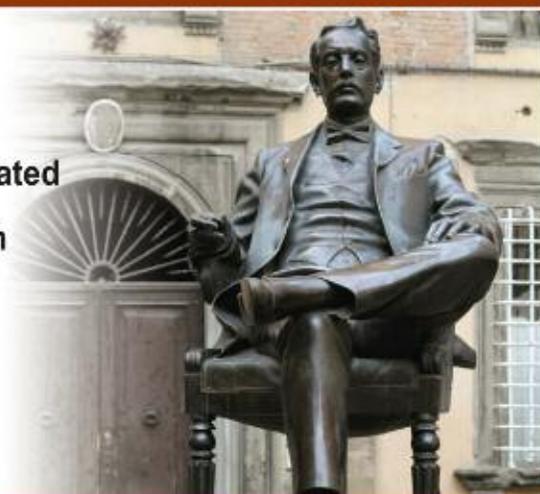
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Combat Stress, Tyrwhitt House, Oaklawn Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BX.
Charity Reg England and Wales No. 206002 Scotland No. SC038828.



EDINBURGH

What's on...

December 2011-
February 2012**DECEMBER****Bridge Club Christmas lunch**

Friday 2 December, 12.30pm
Exclusive to Bridge Club members. *Tickets: £17.*

Coffee morning

Saturday 3 December, 10.30am
Talk on the Coronation of 1953, by Norman Bonney.

Arts lunch

Wednesday 7 December, midday
Two-course lunch, with coffee and wine, and talk by renowned Scottish actor and writer John Cairney on 'The Theatrical Robert Louis Stevenson'. *Tickets: £20; members £18.*

Carol singing afternoon

Wednesday 14 December, 3pm
Carol singing followed by mince pies, tea and coffee. *Tickets: £6.*

Christmas Day lunch

Sunday 25 December, 12pm
Kir Royal and seasonal canapés followed by three-course lunch,

coffee and mince pies. Christmas presents for all. *Tickets: £52.*

Boxing Day lunch

Monday 26 December
Table reservations from 12.30pm, last orders 1.30pm. *Tickets: two courses £21; three courses £24. Includes wine.*

Hogmanay dinner and dance

Saturday 31 December, 7pm
Watch the fireworks from the finest viewpoint in Edinburgh, with reception cocktails, a three-course dinner and wine, live Ceilidh band, champagne, and black bun and shortbread at midnight. Coach home in Edinburgh area at 1am. *Tickets: £105.*

JANUARY**New Year's Day lunch**

Sunday 1 January, 12.30pm
Glass of champagne, followed by lunch with wine and coffee. *Tickets: two courses £21; three courses £24. For reservations contact Restaurant 100.*

**Coffee morning**

Saturday 7 January, 10.30am
Talk on Victorian humour by Rev John Cameron.

Burns supper

Saturday 28 January, 7pm
Traditional three-course meal with wine and whisky. *Tickets: £30.*

FEBRUARY Arts lunch

Wednesday 8 February, midday
Two-course lunch with coffee, glass of wine and talk by Adrienne Chalmers (Chair, Traverse Theatre)

JOHN CAIRNEY: The actor appears as Robert L Stevenson

on 'Theatre and me'. *Tickets: £18; members £17.*

Concert

Friday 10 February, 6.30pm
Works for violin, cello and piano performed by pupils of the Yehudi Menuhin School. *Tickets £12; ROSL members £10. Includes wine and canapés.*

Coffee morning

Saturday 11 February, 10.30am

Special deals on Christmas and New Year breaks at Over-Seas House, Edinburgh

Christmas and Hogmanay packages

Three-night stay over Christmas (24-26 December) from £320pp, including dinner on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day lunch with wine. Christmas Day lunch for just £52pp extra. On Christmas and Boxing Day nights the club closes at 4pm and a

cold buffet supper is provided in the bar at 7.30pm.

Three nights' bed & breakfast stay for Hogmanay from £295pp, including a ticket to the Hogmanay Ceilidh Dinner with a live band on 31 December. Watch the fireworks from the clubhouse roof, with black bun and champagne at midnight.

Two-day Christmas shopping break

Savour the German market, skate on the outdoor ice rink and visit Harvey Nichols, Jenners and other outlets. Two nights bed & breakfast, with dinner on one night of your stay, from £121pp (based on two people sharing) mid-week, and from £129pp at weekends.



Food & drink: London

Christmas Day lunch

25 December

Enjoy a traditional four-course Christmas lunch, followed by The Queen's speech and a visit from Santa, with gifts for all. Diners are encouraged to share tables with other ROSL members. **£81.75pp.**
Reservations: 020 7491 3644.

New Year's Eve dinner

31 December, 9pm

Celebrate with canapés and a glass of champagne, followed by a four-course dinner and dancing. **£97pp.**

Valentine's Day candlelit dinner

14 February 2012

Enjoy a romantic three-course meal in the Restaurant, including a complimentary glass of sparkling wine with dessert. **£46.50pp.**



Half-price room hire for members

Throughout January and February 2012, we are offering half-price room hire for private banqueting rooms for all members (*includes the Rutland Room, pictured*). Rates start from £65+vat per room. For more details, please call 020 7629 0406 or 020 7491 3644, or email Alastair@convexleisure.co.uk.



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Discussion Group & London Group

DISCUSSION GROUP

Meetings will be held at Over-Seas House, London on the following Monday evenings, 7-8.30pm. There is no charge, no need to book and all ROSL members and guests are welcome. *Contact John Edwards, 01732 883556, johncoatesedward@aol.com.*

Magna Carta in 2011

12 December
With Baroness Butler-Sloss, President of the Family Division of the High Court, 1999-2005.

2012: ROSL/ Goodenough Diamond Jubilee Series

Discussion Group meetings in 2012 are organised in association with Goodenough College. Founded in 1931, the college provides residential accommodation for postgraduate students from all over the world. It is proud of its rich extracurricular programme, which draws on the cultural interests of its student body. For further details see www.goodenough.ac.uk.

Pompeii and Herculaneum: Life and death in the Roman Empire

16 January
With Dr Paul Roberts, Curator of the British Museum's 2013 exhibition on Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Children in love in 'Romeo and Juliet'

13 February
With Professor René Weis, Governor of Goodenough College, Professor of English at University College London and world renowned Shakespeare expert.

LONDON GROUP

Meetings and outside visits are open to currently subscribed London Group members and their occasional guests. ROSL members staying overnight at Over-Seas House, London are also welcome. To become a member of the London Group, ask for an application form from the PR Department, or from the London Group Honorary Membership Secretary c/o Porters' Desk at Over-Seas House, London. *Contact Pamela Voice (Chairman), pawallingtonvoice@yahoo.co.uk.*

Meetings

Held on the third Thursday of the month, 6-7pm, in the Mountbatten Room, Over-Seas House, London.

London Group Christmas lunch

6 December, 12.30pm
The new Director-General and his wife will be guests at this three-course lunch in Princess Alexandra Hall, preceded by a wine and soft drinks reception. There will be a free prize draw and musical entertainment, sponsored and organised by ROSL ARTS. *Tickets: LG members £40; guests £45. Contact Alex Pavry by 25 November: 020 7016 6906 or apavry@rosl.org.uk.*

The Wesley Brothers in London

19 January
The Rev Dr Lord Griffiths, Minister of Wesley's Chapel, assesses the impact of the 18th-century methodist leaders, John and Charles Wesley, on the London of their time. The brothers spent most of their lives in London, John travelling incessantly in his mission, and Charles becoming one of the world's most prolific hymn-writers.



© Museum of Brands

The National Trust: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

16 February
Graham Archer, a member of the ROSL Central Council and Deputy Chairman for the National Trust Advisory Board for the London and South-East Region, traces the development of the National Trust from its foundation in 1894 to the present day, in a year that marks the anniversary of the death of Octavia Hill, one of the Trust's founders.

Outside visits

Contact Doreen Regan, 020 7584 5879. To apply for events, write to Doreen Regan, London Group, c/o Porters' Lodge, Over-Seas House, London. Enclose a cheque payable to London Group ROSL and a stamped addressed envelope.

DESIGN EVOLUTION: Displays of 1930s Disney memorabilia (above) and Lucozade over the ages, at the Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising

Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising (London)

Wednesday 25 January, 2.30pm
Featuring more than 12,000 original items from the Robert Opie Collection, the museum reveals the history of consumer culture decade by decade – from the charm of the Victorian era to the 21st century. *Tickets: LG Members £10; guests £12.*



© Museum of Brands

Too old to fight

For over 180 years the Gurkhas have helped to fight our wars and keep our peace. Gurkhas have won 13 Victoria Crosses and have served in most of the major conflicts of the 20th century.

If there was a minute's silence for every Gurkha casualty from World War Two alone, we would have to keep quiet for two whole weeks. But silence will not help the living, the wounded and disabled, those without military pensions following World War Two service or redundancy, or those left destitute by ill health or natural disasters.

There is no doubt that we in this country owe the Gurkhas a debt of honour, and the Gurkha Welfare Trust is seeking to repay that debt. The work of the Trust is now vital to the health, well-being and quality of life for thousands of Gurkha old soldiers and their dependants.

Please will you help us? Anything you can send now will be gratefully received and carefully used in relieving hardship and distress among Gurkha ex-servicemen and their dependants in Nepal.



Too proud to ask

This is Rifleman Lalbahadur Thapa (L) aged 93 and his younger brother Rifleman Dilbahadur Thapa. Both served with 6th Gurkha Rifles throughout World War Two.

The brothers keep each other company on the five day walk they make every three months from their home village to the nearest Gurkha Welfare Trust Area Welfare Centre to collect their 'welfare pension'. This money is their only source of income and all that stands between them and destitution.

I would like to help these proud, gallant people who served Britain so well and gave so much for my freedom. Here is my gift:

£20 supports a soldier/widow for one month

£60 supports a soldier/widow for three months

£240 supports a soldier/widow for a whole year

£..... my preferred amount

I may wish to sponsor a Welfare Pensioner each month. Please send details.



VISA/Mastercard/CAF card/Switch

Valid from: [][] [][]

Valid from:

[][] [][]

Expires

[][] [][]

Switch Issue No. [][]

Credit card security number (last 3 digits on back of card) [][] [][] [][]

I enclose a cheque (tick if applicable)

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Signature.....

The Gurkha Welfare Trust

22 Queen St PO Box 2170 SALISBURY SP2 2EX

Tel. 01722323955 Fax. 01722343119 www.gwt.org.uk

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Independent holidays for individuals including flights (Eurostar for Paris), return transfers or car hire, accommodation with breakfast, Kirker Guide Notes to restaurants, museums and sightseeing and the services of the Kirker Concierge to book concert and opera tickets or reserve a table for a delicious dinner.

VENICE

Ca' Sagredo *** Deluxe**
This historic palazzo on the Grand Canal dates from the 15th Century. Its extraordinary architectural features including grand marble staircases and beautiful frescoed halls, combined with works from important artists, give a fascinating glimpse of five centuries of Venetian history. The 42 bedrooms combine traditional Venetian decoration with some contemporary touches and overlook the Grand Canal, the rooftops or the small 'campi'.

Doge's Palace tickets included.

*3 nights for the price of 2 from
1 Nov - price from £698,
saving £220.*

MADEIRA

Choupana Hills *****
This stylish, contemporary hotel is located near the centre of Funchal, on a tranquil hillside, with views over the Atlantic. There are 63 bedrooms located in 38 bungalows in the subtropical gardens; each room has beautiful, custom-made hardwood furniture, four poster beds and a large private balcony with spectacular views. There is a spa, indoor and heated outdoor swimming pool and an outstanding restaurant.

*4 nights for the price of 3 all year
- price from £786, saving £160.*

PARIS - NEW EXHIBITION



Pablo Picasso, Nu à la serviette, 1907,
Collection particulière
©Succession Picasso 2011

**MATISSE, CÉZANNE & PICASSO...
GRAND PALAIS | UNTIL 16 JANUARY**

To celebrate this major exhibition in Paris, we are offering our clients special short breaks with timed entrance tickets.

Le Dokhan's *** Superior**

This highly individual boutique property – located close to the Trocadero – is one of the city's most sought-after hotels. Details include a lift panelled with a Louis Vuitton state-room trunk, works by Matisse and Picasso in the lounge and a beautiful green and gold 'Empire' parlour. The 45 air-conditioned bedrooms with marble bathrooms are small but beautifully furnished.

*All Kirker holidays to Paris include a Seine river cruise and 5 metro tickets.
3 nights for the price of 2 from Nov to Jan - Price from £498 pp, saving £129.*

CULTURAL TOURS & MUSIC HOLIDAYS

SICILY – AN ENIGMATIC ISLAND

Nine night escorted holiday with tour lecturer Christopher Monckton

The largest island in the Mediterranean, Sicily's strategic location has given it a rich cultural history. Doric temples, Roman mosaics, elegant yet powerful Norman architecture and a wealth of Baroque and Renaissance palaces and churches and a beautiful landscape all combine to make a visit to Sicily

a rewarding and memorable experience. Stay in Palermo for four nights from where we will visit Segesta, Monreale and Selinunte.

Spend a further four nights in Syracuse with visits to Agrigento and Taormina. The tour ends with a private visit to a palace in Catania.

*Price from £2,398 per person
including dinner every day.*

Departs 21 April & 20 October 2012



KIRKER MUSIC FESTIVAL NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Three night escorted holiday with concerts at Boughton House
Pianist Melvyn Tan, soprano Joan Rodgers, classical guitarist Gary Ryan and violist Simon Rowland-Jones play in this special new Kirker Festival which includes two performances at the beautiful Northamptonshire seat of the Duke of Buccleuch & Queensberry, and a third concert at nearby Deene Park. Boughton was transformed into the house we see today in the 17th Century and has been known as "The English Versailles" ever since.

Performances will be given in The Great Hall and there will be a private dinner at the house. The tour is based in the picturesque and historic market town of Oundle.

*Price from £889 per person
including three concerts and
three dinners.*

Departs 7 October 2012

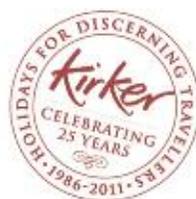


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