

OVERSEAS

Journal of the Royal Over-Seas League

Issue 1, March–May 2009



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Front cover: Pianists Nicola Eimer, Ben Schoeman and Martin Cousin play Czerny's *Overture Fra Diavolo for 6 Hands on One Piano* at the grand piano inauguration concert. © Robert Piwko

From the Director-general

I write this in early January, having just returned from spending Christmas and New Year in Munich and Austria. Both are lovely places to visit but are now so very expensive after the drop in the value of the pound. In Munich, I stayed at the Hilton Hotel, which is comfortable but institutional. It lacks the personal touch and welcome that members enjoy when staying at ROSL clubhouses, and at a price that confirms my long-held view that our bedrooms are exceptional value for money. There is more on bedrooms on page 33.

2009 got off to a disappointing start, with more conflict in the Middle East and the loss of innocent lives, and the devastating bushfires in Victoria, which so tragically killed many people. The League has made a donation to the Red Cross's Victorian Bushfire Appeal on behalf of members.

Another cause of sadness in January was the death of former House architect Geoffrey Allen, aged 88. He first became involved with Over-Seas House, London in the late 1950s and oversaw all architectural matters until he retired in the late 1990s. I relied on him for advice on everything to do with our buildings as he knew practically every brick and pipe. He was a lovely man who we will remember with admiration and affection. To his wife Edna and his son we send sincere condolences.

On a more cheery note, I am happy to report the success of the Christmas and New Year parties at both clubhouses. Expressions of appreciation have been received from members for the service and catering provided by our dedicated staff. In early December, the Carol Service at St James's, Piccadilly, followed by tea at Over-Seas House, was, as always, a sell-out. Bedroom occupancy was good during the latter part of the year and early indications are that there was an increase in membership during 2008.

Preparations for events to celebrate our centenary in 2010 are well under way. A history of ROSL will be published towards the end of the year, and will be on sale at both clubhouses and by mail order. Written by former ROSL PR director Adele Smith, it will be available in both hardback and paperback at a very reasonable price. An attractive commemorative watch featuring the ROSL coat of arms is already available for just £29.

I am very sorry to report the death on 26 January of June Crawshaw, the widow of former ROSL director-general Philip Crawshaw. Our condolences and sympathy to her daughters Caroline and Rosaleen.

Robert Newell



Editor's letter

In 2001, when I was *Overseas'* assistant editor, the then editor, Patricia Treasure,



announced one day that there had now been a 'Focus' on every Commonwealth country and we would have to start revisiting past Focus countries. Of course, there were some countries we had yet to feature – Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitts and Nevis, and Lesotho among them – not for a lack of interest but because it had been impossible to find writers to cover them. (I went to Lesotho the following year to write the Focus.) I feel very fortunate, therefore, that in this issue we are able to include three articles on Kiribati – a fascinating country, spread over a vast area of the Pacific (page 8). The challenges it faces as climate change threatens its traditional sources of income are particularly poignant and resonate with the experiences of other parts of the world.

Also in this issue, we have an extended Grog, reflecting the large number of recent events at Over-Seas House (page 14); Margaret Adrian-Vallance's inspiring report on the continuing success of the Namibia project (page 5); and an interview with member Len Goodman, head judge of *Strictly Come Dancing* (page 24).

Last issue was Cecilia Thom's last, as she has just begun an eight-month trip to Latin America, starting with a cruise in Antarctica. Middleton Mann replaces her as deputy editor/design. Coming with years of design experience, he has fitted seamlessly into the role and done a fantastic job with this issue.

Miranda Moore

CANADA LUNCH: Pictured at the annual lunch of the ROSL Ontario Chapter at the University Club Toronto in November are (l-r) Mr Ken Foxcroft (chairman of the St George's Society of Toronto), Mrs Newell, Mrs Ruth-Ann Onley, the Hon Mr David Onley (the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, who was the guest of honour and speaker), the director-general and Miss Ishrani Jaikaran (president Ontario Chapter)

ROSL WATCH: The ROSL centenary watch, £29, comes in an attractive presentation box and is available now

Return to Namibia

Margaret Adrian-Vallance reports on ROSL's first bursary recipients, who are now teaching a new generation of Namibian students

How time flies! The ROSL school bursary recipients who Dick Chamberlain and I first met years ago as shy children are now confident grown-ups. On a monitoring visit to Namibia in October it was good to catch up with the pleasures and problems of both ROSL bursary awardees and ROSL supported schools.

Three of the first nine participants in the project are now teachers. Elias Araeb, who started at Hippo Primary, and progressed to Wennie du Plessis Secondary and then Windhoek College of Education (WCE), is now at Rakutuka Primary. "I love teaching here," he says. "When I was at WCE I had a few doubts, but not any more. Now I would like to put something back into the project

"I would like to put something back into the project this end as it has done so much for me"

this end as it has done so much for me."

Jon Noadeb, who started at Qgaina Primary, is now teaching in Windhoek, and Ellie Velskoen is teaching near Mokaleng Primary, where she first joined the project. Other teachers include Cwisa Cwi, principal of five bush schools in the Nyae Nyae conservancy; Melissa Uses, who is teaching in the far north; and Kaijandere Kaizondjou, who is back in her Himba homeland of Kunene.

Elrico Slinger is one of those now at tertiary level. Having started at Hippo Primary, he too went on to Wennie du Plessis, where he was voted head boy. His friends thought this experience would help him sail through university. "Not a bit of it,"



THOSE WHO CAN: Elias Araeb, one of the first nine participants in the ROSL Namibia project, with his class at Rakutuka Primary near Gobabis (above)



CONTINUING SUPPORT: Brenda Muharukua (above), winner of the 2008 ROSL prize at WCE for an outstanding student; and Belinda Awases (left) carries one of the renovated chairs into the classroom at Huigub Primary, which came third out of 119 schools for grade 7 results in 2007, despite past experiences of flooding, drought, near starvation and meningitis



he says when we meet. "I was totally unprepared. At Wennie, and in the school hostel, your time is organised for you – even when to get up. At UNAM I had to learn self-discipline, which was very good for me. I cannot thank all the ROSL sponsors enough for helping me – for all these experiences."

One of the project's big highlights has been the progress of the isolated but dedicated Huigub Primary School, which has

237 pupils and seven teachers. Until 2008, ROSL was the only major donor, funding everything from rice to the renovation of chairs. Having weathered flooding, drought, near starvation, meningitis and other difficulties, Huigub came third out of 119 schools for grade 7 results in 2007, and fifth for overall results. This caused something of a sensation – a relatively nearby school with huge funding from the US came near the bottom. In 2008, Huigub improved further

on its placing in the league tables.

At Swakopmund Secondary, Tanigu Gariseb was doing well, as were Loretha, Siegfried, Frolien, Veronica, Herchchristopher and Stefney at Katora Primary, while Kobus Kaiseb at Otjikoto Secondary was continuing to win prizes. Eight new bursary recipients were welcomed into the project – two at Grootfontein Secondary School and six at Windhoek College of Education. All were deeply appreciative of support from ROSL.

In search of the water of the gods

Margaret Adrian-Vallance takes time out from her busy schedule to visit the driest vineyard in the world

Allan Walkden-Davis has the driest vineyard on earth. It is near Namibia's top tourist attraction – the surreal Sossusvlei sand dunes. The highest in the world, the dunes are coloured red, orange, purple and pink. What falls out of your shoes after puffing to the top is like talcum powder. Annual rainfall is 0-1 inches.

So, in this hot and arid region, how does Walkden-Davies manage to grow grapes? How does he produce the 3,000 bottles of shiraz and

shiraz-merlot blends that wine experts such as Oz Clarke so admire? One free weekend, two project supporters took me to find out.

Getting to the Neuras vineyards from Swakopmund takes five hours. It is 40 degrees, there are no other cars in sight and the bumpy roads have mirage pools in the dips. We stop at Solitaire, the only town en route. It has a petrol station, a lodge that is famous for its apple pie, and a shop that unnervingly doubles as a taxidermist's. Outside, there are displays

of old motorbikes, cars, ploughs, knife grinders, sewing machines and just about anything that once had moving parts. Back on the road we see an equally mesmerising sight – two Rolls Royces going at a cracking pace. Who are these guys, we wonder? An hour later we pass one of them being towed. How I love this beautiful, quirky region.

At Neuras, Walkden-Davies, the British-born former managing director of Shell Namibia, tells me that he and his wife Sylvia bought the 35,000-acre estate in 1996. Curious about some old vines he found in a derelict fruit cage, he asked a friend, Jaco, for advice, and discovered that the farm sits on five springs that rise along a geographical fault line. A sloping layer of rock holds water and gives good drainage, and the soil has an enviable pH of 7.2.

"I didn't know the first thing about it, apart from liking the stuff," he says as we walk round the vines and inspect the springs. A friend said 'Why don't you go bust raising cattle like everyone else?' Things were not good at first. Then, in 2001, I sought help from Abrie Bruwer and studied on his Springfield Estate in the Cape."

Now his bottles of 2005 shiraz sell for £16 and Walkden-Davies is, himself, a good friend and adviser to other first-time wine producers, including Mike and Vera Leech, who brought me to this lovely place. In the evening, after a swim in the pool, we sit round a barbecue enjoying great food and Allan's very special wine. Under the ebony trees is my self-catering chalet. Tomorrow, there is a tour of the farm, which has mountain ranges, leopards, rare birds, wild honey, and maybe even another spring. Bliss.

ROSL members who enjoy self-catering accomodation in remote areas and are looking for a unique experience can contact the Walkden-Davies family on +264 (63) 293417 or email neuras@mweb.com.na.

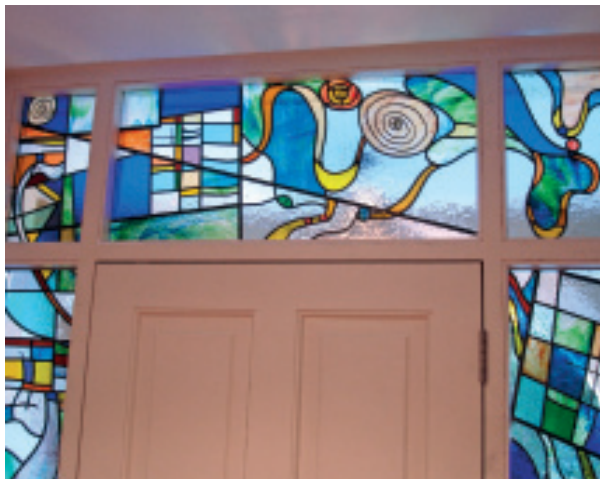


TRUE MIRAGE: Margaret with (l-r) Mike Leech and Allan Walkden-Davies in the Neuras cellars (above). The vineyard is close to the surreal Sossusvlei clay pan in the central Namib Desert (left)



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FOCUS

Beyond the point of no return

Rising sea levels will make Kiribati's islands uninhabitable within a generation, says **Lance Laack**. So what is the government doing about the problem and what are the challenges for its people today?



We all know that climate change will be devastating for small islands and that the very fate of entire nations, such as the low-lying Kiribati in the Pacific, hang in the balance. We also know that the people who live there have done little to cause the problem. But what we might not realise is that there is a growing necessity for their governments to make hard choices on these issues right now, rather than in the future.

Kiribati (pronounced Kiribass) is grappling with the complex question of whether it should focus its scarce resources on fighting back the rising seas, in what may very well be an unwinnable battle, or begin the process of relocation. As President Anote Tong told the US Public Broadcasting Corporation in June: "It's too late for countries like us. If we could achieve zero emission as a planet, still we would go down."

Indeed, there were indications even at the beginning of the climate change negotiations in the late 1980s and early 1990s that the world had already passed the point of no return when it came to the most vulnerable areas. Then, in 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that it was 'very unlikely' that action was still possible to prevent 'catastrophic' climate change that would affect millions worldwide and spell the end of some island nations.

Of Micronesian decent, the I-Kiribati people have inhabited their islands since the 14th-century, when they migrated from Melanesia

and Polynesia. Modern Kiribati comprises the Gilbert, Line and Phoenix chains of islands. The Gilbert Islands, along with the neighbouring Ellice Islands (now Tuvalu), formed the British colony of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands from 1916 to 1979. Claims on neighbouring islands in the Line and Phoenix chains, as well as the isolated Banaba, were relinquished to Kiribati by the United States in 1973.

This unique history has resulted in a patchwork of geographical boundaries. While the combined land area of Kiribati's islands is

Some land has been lost to the sea and two of the atolls have been totally submerged

little more than 800km sq, they are scattered over a vast expanse of the central Pacific. The most distant islands are separated by more than 6,000km and many are extremely isolated, even by Pacific island standards. Nearly all are coral atolls with elevations no higher than two meters above sea level.

Resource-poor and isolated, Kiribati has always had the deck stacked against it. For centuries, its people have overcome harsh circumstances and the continued viability of the country stands as testament to their

resilience and the sound decisions of their leaders. Still, economic development has been slow and climate change threatens to cancel out what progress has been made.

Climate is but one of the many pressing and serious threats facing the country. Growing populations on already scarce land resources (which stand to shrink as the sea level rises), and the resulting environmental impact, have made life difficult for many.

Even if measures to adapt to the rising sea level could be implemented, at huge cost, it seems unlikely that the Kiribati way of life and rich culture could be preserved with its islands walled from the sea or raised on stilts. The effects of climate change manifest themselves through a gradual process rather than a single episodic event, and adapting to the range of problems is a hugely complex and expensive affair.

Fresh water is increasingly becoming contaminated, taro (a staple crop for the I-Kiribati) is becoming more difficult to grow, fish stocks are growing meagre, coconut palms are beginning to die from salt water intrusion, and high tides and increasingly intense tropical storms are causing damage to buildings and infrastructure. If sea levels rise at the predicted rates, they will eventually render the land uninhabitable, but the associated problems are likely to do so long before.

Already, land on some islands has been lost to the sea and two of the uninhabited atolls have been totally submerged. The stumps of dead coconut trees line Kiribati's shores. There



© Vanessa J. Jackson

Resource-poor and isolated, Kiribati has always had the deck stacked against it

SINKING INTO THE SEA: I-Kiribati have always lived from the sea, but problems associated with climate change are destroying the shoreline and affecting their traditional way of life

is little doubt that the process is well under way.

For years, Mr Tong and his predecessors have appealed to the international community to take prompt measures on climate change. Frustrated with the slow pace of action, he now feels compelled to take a different approach. In June, he warned: "We may already be at the point of no return, where the emissions in the atmosphere will carry on contributing to climate change, so in time our small, low-lying islands will be submerged." He stated that the time had come for countries to begin admitting the people of Kiribati as some of the world's first climate change refugees, and warned that the entire population of the country may need to be resettled within a generation.

The move was controversial. Many of Tong's constituents believe that the full slate of adaptation measures should be tried before conceding defeat. Other nations in the Pacific feel that Kiribati would be better served working with them to arrive at effective outcomes in international negotiations. Many within and without the country feel that a focus on resettlement is tantamount to giving up, but Kiribati officials argue that it is only a prudent application of the precautionary principle.

Tong said: "We want to deny it, we don't want to believe this, and our people don't want to believe this. But it gives us a deep sense of frustration. What do we do? If you want to lead the people, you must always be in the position to provide options. And so this is the option that we are suggesting, in the belief that if it is going to happen we will have at least

addressed part of the problem and it won't be such a severe one to address when the time finally comes."

However, Espen Ronneberg, climate change adviser for the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), believes that countries such as Kiribati should not rule out any adaptation option. "Countries most vulnerable to climate change, like Kiribati, need assistance to rapidly undertake vulnerability assessments to determine their immediate priorities for adaptation," he says. "In the longer term, these countries also need to assess their options in light of predicted changes, and this may, in some cases, need to include relocation."

Distressingly for Kiribati, both Australia and New Zealand – likely destinations for displaced I-Kiribati people – have been less than receptive to the notion of a mass influx from vulnerable islands. Migration to New Zealand is limited to 75 people a year through a lottery system. With a population of more than 100,000, many more may need to relocate in the near future.

The possibility of relocation is also being examined by Kiribati's atoll neighbours. A representative of the Marshall Islands told the Poznan Climate Conference in December: "Potential evacuation of island populations raises grave concerns over sovereign rights, as well as the unthinkable possibility of entire cultures being damaged or obliterated." Whatever measures Kiribati takes now, it will be little more than a penny on the tracks before the runaway freight of global climate change.

Bearing fruit

The introduction of Western consumption patterns to Kiribati has created a serious problem with solid waste disposal, but SPREP's Banana Circle method for reducing organic waste, which accounts for 75% of the country's waste stream, has had some success. Based on traditional methods, it involves planting banana trees around a bowl-shaped depression in the ground. Over time, this can be filled with organic waste, such as tin cans, paper, 'grey water' from kitchens and lavatories, and kitchen scraps, which fertilise the trees as they decompose. The Banana Circle appeals to people because it is free and requires little human effort. It is particularly useful in low-lying atolls, where food crops are difficult to grow because of poor soil quality.

Lance Laack is editor and publications officer for the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme. For more information, visit www.sprep.org.

FOCUS

Heart of learning

Climate change and Western consumerism are limiting traditional sources of income and making education a top priority for the I-Kiribati government. **Batiri Bataua** looks at the country's development plans and the challenges of educating an atoll nation

Bordering Hawaii in the north and Tuvalu in the south, the Republic of Kiribati is made up of tiny atoll islands scattered on an ocean area the size of the United States. Because of this unfortunate physical and geographical formation, it is difficult to deliver basic services such as education, transport, medical services and communications to the people.

In 1977, two years before independence, Britain introduced compulsory free education at primary level. But the colonial power didn't have time to fully implement the programme before the arrival of a democratic I-Kiribati government with its own priorities.

People such as Teburae Taungea, who lives on the smallest island of Tamana in the south, continued cock fighting instead of going to class. "Why bother about school when we have plenty of fish and coconut and toddy to wash it

down with? Life on the islands is easy," he said at the time. Now 30, Teburae is full of regret. Fish, coconut and toddy are no longer in abundant supply. They have been taken over by rice, flour, tinned foods and sugar. All these cost money, and only those with a good educational background can hope to earn a decent living.

As a result, education is now a top priority

It is difficult to deliver basic services such as education, transport, medical services

for the Boutokaan Te Koaua party, which has been in government for five years. Kiribati's population is growing by 2.5% a year – one of the highest growth rates in the South Pacific region. The government believes that this increasing population, which is approaching 100,000, can be utilized as a source of revenue, and has begun to concentrate on the development of education at all levels, with the help of the bigger churches.

Currently, there are three state secondaries. The Kiribati Protestant Church has five, including a theological college; the Catholic Church has five; and the Seventh Day Adventists have one. An Education Summit was held in 2007 to pinpoint the problems and how to solve them. According to the Kiribati Development Plan 2008-2011, which was drawn up following the summit, improvements will be made to the syllabus, especially to English. The main aims are now to ensure that secondary schools and

tertiary training institutions prepare students for employment at the required level; there is sufficient outreach support for Tarawa Technical Institution to support vocational training on the outer islands; the scholarship system is strengthened; and students overseas are supported and monitored.

These initiatives stem primarily from the problems associated with climate change, which are forcing many I-Kiribatis to leave the island nation. President Anote Tong's guiding principle can, perhaps, be best summed up by a statement he made during a recent Pacific Leaders Forum meeting: "I don't want my people to be called refugees in the sense of the meaning of the word, but rather immigrants who have the capacity to work on any standard skills for any jobs required in their new homes."

However, although all I-Kiribati children at primary level have a school in their village or a neighbouring village, there are just 14 secondary schools for the 21 inhabited islands. Transport is provided by the island council in most cases, but where official transport is not available, many teenagers have to walk more than an hour to get to school. Because of this, some schools have two sessions – one for pupils travelling long distances – and schooling is usually from 9am to 1.30pm.

According to primary teacher Uen Rutati, pupils at Margaret Primary School on Tamana tend to be punctual because the island is just seven miles long. "But I know that there will be a different scenario on bigger islands," she adds. Although nine-year-old Rutati Tebwebwe lives close to Wakaam Primary School on Abaiang island, his classmates from the nearby villages Tebunginako and Takarano have to walk 30 minutes in the midday sun on their way home. "They climb coconut trees for drinks," he says.



ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE:
A SREP project to replant mangroves



© AFP/Getty Images

NEW SKILLS: All primary-age children now attend school, but many cannot access secondary education

On islands that don't have a secondary school, such as Canton, which is inhabited by less than 20 people, families usually send their teenage children to live with relatives on other islands. This is still the only way they can get schooling at secondary level. Despite this, the implementation of compulsory education has been very successful on islands where the island council enforces it. Parents can be fined or even imprisoned if their children do not attend school. The government now plans to increase the number of years of compulsory schooling from six to nine.

However, many schools still lack resources. According to Rutati, his primary does not have sufficient teaching materials or science apparatus. "Some of our classrooms are made of permanent materials, others of local. And we have leaks during heavy rains because the council and school committee lack the funds for repairs." The problem is the same on Tamana. "Tamana Island Council always runs out of budget before the end of the year and we have to encourage families to assist us," says Uen.

Primary and secondary education in Kiribati is also being assisted by donor countries and development partners, who provide some of the workforce and funds. Until recently, Peace Corps volunteers were posted to the outer islands to improve English, maths and science; Australia, New Zealand and Taiwan have provided funds for infrastructure and equipment; and some foreign churches and educational bodies, including UN agencies, provide teachers and other assistance.

Also part of the government's plan is the

development of higher education. Distance learning via radio is one way that people on some of the more remote islands can access courses. Telecommunication is usually by radiophone – now obsolete almost everywhere else in the world – and, according to Uen, a lack of modern telecommunication links, such as satellite dishes, antennae and the internet, makes distance learning impossible. Although some islands are now being connected to the internet, prolonged

The employment scheme is a gateway for I-Kiribati people to shift to higher ground

power cuts due to fuel shortages and faulty machinery, mean that they can be without internet access for weeks or even months.

The situation is hampering teacher-training initiatives – an important facet of the government's education plan. "Teachers on the outer islands do their University of the South Pacific [SUP] extension courses mostly by post because there is a lot of interference and fading with radio phones," says Uen. "Tutoring on the outer islands is done via a middle-man at the USP Centre in Tarawa, who can't answer queries or fully assist individual students with

their problems without referring the matter to the Suva campus in Fiji."

One option is to travel overseas to study, and many I-Kiribati students have been invited by the country's development partners to study at their higher education institutions. Australia invites trainee nurses from Kiribati for further training, after which they can either return to Kiribati or apply for jobs – and citizenship – in Australia. Cuba invites 50 students a year to pursue medical training, and sends 15 of its own doctors to work in Kiribati doing on-the-job training for local doctors.

President Tong said recently that the employment scheme with New Zealand and Australia is a gateway for I-Kiribati people to shift to higher ground before the rising sea level claims their land – something scientists predict will happen within 50 years. "Australia and New Zealand have agreed to come and assist the Tarawa Training Institute in the teaching of skills immigrants should have in order to find employment in both countries; skills like carpentry, mechanics, plumbing and many more," he said. Taiwan, Japan and Canada have also expressed an interest in the employment scheme, which Mr Tong believes could bring thousands of dollars into the country. Between them, I-Kiribati who have settled abroad earn around US\$2million a year, a proportion of which they send home.

While the young generations are seeking better education and better paid jobs, Teburae and his peers continue the arduous and endless tasks of cutting copra (dried coconut) and fishing in outrigger canoes.

FOCUS

Patronising a nation

How is a country that cannot support itself viable? **Batiri Bataua** looks at Kiribati's reliance on foreign aid, which accounts for 25% of its GDP, and asks whether its government is still in control

There is a famous saying in Kiribati, declared at independence in 1979 by Ata Teatou, a clerk boy during the colonial era who is now Secretary to Cabinet. "Kiribati will not go around with a begging bowl in order to stand on its own two feet. But we will open our doors for those having interests to assist us in our development," he said. The statement has echoed through the minds of Kiribati's leaders ever since.

Many countries and private organisations were eager to assist Kiribati after independence, and aid started pouring into the country, which is still one of the least developed in the world. According to the Kiribati Millennium Development Goals Report 2007, the situation remains more or less the same today. It states: "Kiribati receives several

types of assistance, namely cash grants, loans, aid-in-kind, technical assistance and supplies and equipment from a number of development partners through bilateral, multilateral and regional avenues."

Australia and New Zealand support education, health, public finance, management, the public sector, the environment, and gender and urban development interventions; Japan covers fisheries, development projects and

Many countries and private organisations were eager to assist after independence

infrastructure; Taiwan provides assistance in a broad range of areas; the European Union aids infrastructure, particularly in health and education, and energy; and the United Nations promotes economic growth, good governance, social security and environmental management. Cuba has been giving medical support to Kiribati since the two countries formed close ties recently.

At the regional level, organisations such as the South Pacific Commission, Forum Fisheries Agency and South Pacific Regional Environment Programme play a vital role in the economic development of Kiribati.

Assistance from donors represents 20-25% of its GDP, but although this figure may seem high, it is lower than that of many similar island nations in the region. Furthermore, rather than dictating to the I-Kiribati government, these aid partners are guided by the country's national development strategies, according to the report. Assistance is based on Kiribati's needs.

When introducing the development strategy for 2008-2011, the Minister of Finance, Natan Teewe, said its theme was "enhancing economic growth for sustainable development" and defined its vision as "a vibrant economy for the people of Kiribati". The six key policy areas are human resource development, economic growth and poverty reduction, health, environment, governance and infrastructure.

In the last parliament meeting of 2008, a development fund budget for 2009 of AUD81.9million was approved. Foreign donors are expected to provide at least AUD55million of that, with Australia and Taiwan contributing more than AUD10million each, and the EU putting up nearly AUD9million. Japan, the UK and France will also make significant donations. The Kiribati government contribution will be a mere AUD30,000. To make up the shortfall, the government is likely to borrow, draw on its Reserve Fund, which currently stands at more than AUD500million, and seek donations from other donor partners.

In January, when Teatou was asked to reflect on aid and development in Kiribati, he





© AFP/Getty Images

DIVIDED BY GEOGRAPHY: A traditional Micronesian canoe sits on a deserted shore in Tarawa, one of the world's most densely populated places (above); Kirimati Island (below left) is the largest atoll in the world

said: "I agree, there is a lot of development and aid pouring in from all angles... Some aid is clean and some is not." Aid that is not clean, he went on, is aid that is conditional or offered with ulterior motives. People should not, however, be too critical of the government in this area, he said.

Kiribati consists of 33 tiny atolls scattered across 3million km sq, and the country can little expect to support itself. Most of the

'A lot of development and aid is pouring in from all angles... Some clean, some not'

islands are located thousands of kilometres away from the main administration and commercial centre, South Tarawa, the national capital, making the development of infrastructure and the provision of services extremely difficult.

With a GDP per-capita of US\$1,480, Kiribati is classified by the United Nations as a 'Least Developed Country'. Fisheries and marine resources are a key industry, with income generated through licensing fishing rights and the export of fresh fish and bait to neighbouring countries such as Hawaii, Fiji, Tuvalu, Japan, Nauru and Australia. The copra



industry is the other main source of revenue. Dried copra is exported to Australia, India and South-East Asia, and copra is also manufactured into beauty products for the export market. The burgeoning tourism industry accounts for a further 20% of the country's GDP.

Unlikely though it may seem that the country will ever be self-sufficient, Teatoti believes that the country's reliance on foreign aid should be checked. "I know that some foreign aids are being used in our recurrent budget – the question of pride comes in here," he said in January. "We have our Reserve Fund – that fund is meant to balance our budget and we must use it as such, rather than to use foreign aid."

A freelance journalist based in Kiribati, Batiri Bataua writes regularly for *Island Business* in Fiji and the *Marshall Islands Journal*. He is a stringer for *Radio Australia* and *Radio New Zealand*.

KIRIBATI FACTS

LOCATION

Oceania. Group of 33 coral atolls in the Pacific, straddling the Equator

CAPITAL

Tarawa, situated half-way between Hawaii and Australia

POPULATION

110,356 (July 2008 est.)

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State and Head of Government, President Anote Tong (since 10 July 2003)

ETHNIC GROUPS

Micronesian: 98.8%; other: 1.2%

LANGUAGE

I-Kiribati, English (official)

RELIGION

Roman Catholic: 52%; Protestant (Congregational): 40%

CURRENCY

Australian dollar

Grog's notebook

News from the London clubhouse



▲ ROSL member Dr Judith Mackay from Hong Kong at Over-Seas House with her husband Dr John Mackay after the Investiture at Buckingham Palace on 26 November at which she received the OBE for services to tobacco control in Asia. John Mackay has been a member of the League for 50 years and his father was also a member, joining in the 1920s



▲ Polly Hynd joins the ROSL ARTS team as centenary and international events coordinator. A history graduate of the University of Durham with a background in event management, Polly is arranging the celebrations for the 100th anniversary of the League in 2010



▲ The garden of Over-Seas House, London on 2 February, the day of the heaviest snowfall for 18 years. Nationally, one in five workers stayed at home but, at ROSL, all services were maintained by our dedicated and loyal staff, whose determination to reach the clubhouse was much appreciated by members and was commendable. Even breakfast was on time!



▲ Professional ballroom dancers put ROSL members through their paces at 'Inspired by Fred & Ginger', the final ROSL ARTS event of 2008. Audience members also enjoyed a concert of 1920s music given by Sarah Field (saxophone/trumpet), Mike Hamnet (percussion) and Simon Lane (piano), and a dance demonstration with live music



◀ Master of the Queen's Music, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, gave the keynote speech, 'Composers: Who Needs Them?', which was widely reported in the national press, at a major conference organised by the Musicians' Company at Over-Seas House last year



▲ Following the ROSL carol concert at St James's, Piccadilly in December, Father Christmas (alias Eoghan O'Neill) made an appearance at the members' tea party. Sadly, this was Eoghan's last event with ROSL ARTS as he has moved on to further his career in marketing



▲ The Duchess of Cornwall was welcomed by a party of dogs and their owners in the garden at Over-Seas House to launch a sponsored dog walk in celebration of the Nepali 'Kukur Tihar' (The Day of the Dog). The event raised money for the Kathmandu Arts Centre (see page 18) and the Kathmandu Animal Treatment Centre



▲ A lunch for members living in the north of England was held in November in Leeds. It was hosted by the Chairman Mr Stanley Martin and his wife (left), who are pictured with (l-r) Lady Byford, Sir Lawrence Byford (former ROSL chairman) and Miss Julie Hyde



▲ The Rt Hon Lord Butler of Brockwell was the guest of honour and speaker at the Chairman's Lunch in November. He is pictured (left) with Mr and Mrs Martin

Season to be cheerful

From a ceilidh to the Christmas Ball, younger members enjoyed a sell-out season, says **Alexandra Debarge**



October

The first Inter-Club ceilidh was held at the Caledonian Club. Members and their guests warmed up with a champagne reception before a piper led them into dinner. After a delicious buffet of haggis, neeps and tatties, everyone headed to the dance floor for some ceilidh music and a lot of dancing, with numerous twirls, clapping and dances. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and it was such a success that ceilidh dancing is likely to become an annual event.

November

The James Bond Drinks Party and screening of *Quantum of Solace* took place at the Oxford and Cambridge Club in the chandelier-lit smoking room. Everyone looked as though they had just stepped out of the movie, in black tie, villain costumes and slinky Bond dresses, while they sipped Martinis – shaken

not stirred! There was an opportunity to try the marksmen shooting game before heading to the Odeon in Leicester Square, where the film stars had seen the preview just 24 hours earlier.

December

In December, the Royal Automobile Club hosted the Younger Members' Inter-Club Christmas Ball. A champagne reception was followed by a delicious dinner with a magician going from table to table. His tricks had to be seen to be believed. They were mesmerising. The party poppers and projectile balloons also provided much entertainment, until Bodkin Lane (the band) arrived to rock the night away.

For forthcoming events, please check the Inter-Club website at www.inter-club.co.uk.



DANCING FEVER: The first Inter-Club ceilidh was such a success that it is likely to become an annual event (top), while members glammed up for the *Quantum of Solace* preview (above and bottom left) and the Christmas Ball, where they were entertained by a magician and live band (below)

Pictures: James Scott





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Day 3 ♦ Journey to Zermatt

Today we enjoy the dramatic Swiss scenery as we travel on the narrow-gauge mountain railway to Zermatt, a picturesque resort overlooked by the impressive Matterhorn. You could look around the town, take a refreshing walk into the mountains or, if you have a head for heights, make the exciting train journey up to Gornergrat, situated at over 10,000 feet (3,048m).



Days 4-5 ♦ The Bernese Oberland

On Day 4 we travel to Interlaken; perhaps enjoy a lake cruise or undertake the ultimate excursion to the highest railway station in Europe, Jungfrauoch. You are free on Day 5 to explore this beautiful region or make the wonderful journey on the Centovalli Railway across 'a hundred valleys' to Locarno.

Day 6 ♦ The Glacier Express

Today, we experience the highlight of the tour; we leave Brig on the Glacier Express narrow-gauge train, probably the slowest 'express' in the world in First Class. The train climbs up the Rhône Valley to Andermatt and then snakes and spirals its way towards the Oberalp Pass, the highest point of the route. The train descends through pasture and woodland. A historic town in southeast Switzerland. We spend three nights here in the heart of the Old Town.

Days 7-8 ♦ Over the Bernina Pass

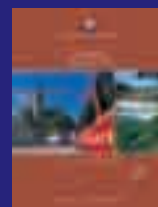
The narrow-gauge Bernina Express takes us from Chur, over viaducts and bridges past waterfalls and deep ravines into the Engadine Valley and over the Bernina Pass. Enjoy the breathtaking views as we travel to Poschiavo. On Day 8 you are free to explore Chur or perhaps visit the mountain resort of Arosa.

Days 9-10 ♦ The journey home

We leave Chur by train and travel into Germany. Our journey takes us along the scenic Rhine Gorge to Cologne for an overnight stay. We depart for Brussels the following morning where we connect with the Eurostar to London.

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Opening the door on Kathmandu art

Roderick Lakin reports on Over-Seas House's most ambitious exhibition yet

'Khulla Dhoka – The Open Door Exhibition' was the largest and most ambitious ever presented at Over-Seas House. 108 works, large and small, filled every inch of wall space in the Central Lounge and Gibbs staircase during October and November last year.

Khulla Dhoka, which means 'open door' in Nepali, symbolises and reflects an open mind. Part of the 11th annual Asian Art in London festival, the exhibition brought together, for the first time in London, works by leading contemporary Nepalese and British artists. The aim was to raise funds for the Kathmandu Arts Centre, a project to establish a cultural centre in the capital of Nepal. British artists who donated new works included Catherine Goodman,

Maggi Hambling, Nicola Hicks, Patrick Hughes, Timothy Hyman, Andrew Logan, Richard Long, Olly and Suzi, John Swannell and Bill Woodrow.

Brisk sales at two busy private views and throughout the duration of the exhibition have already generated substantial funds for the charity. Later this year, Phillips, the auctioneers, will hold a charity auction of some of the remaining unsold works, which can also be viewed and purchased from the charity's website, www.kathmanduarts.org.

Launched by the Duchess of Cornwall, a sponsored walk of 108 dogs, starting from the garden at Over-Seas House, was held during the run of the exhibition as an additional fundraising event (see page 15).

The need for the arts centre

In 2006, British artist Celia Washington spent seven months in Nepal as artist in residence at Kathmandu University. Nepal was in the final months of a 10-year civil war and she was deeply impressed by the creativity and determination of the young artists, despite their poverty and the political instability of their country.

Celia collected more than 800 art books for the university library (many donated by ROSL members), which were sent to Nepal with the help of the British Council. In discussion with Nepali artists and Sangeeta Thappa, director of Siddhartha Art Gallery in Kathmandu, she developed the idea of the Kathmandu Arts Centre. A British charity to raise funds was set up in October 2007.

"Today in Nepal there is a lack of infrastructure for the development and growth of contemporary art, and very little help for its artists," Celia explains. "We aim to establish the Kathmandu Arts Centre as a dynamic centre for both Nepalese and international artists with world-class exhibitions, workshops and symposia, and an artist exchange programme. We hope to help Nepal emerge from the cultural isolation of its past and to re-emerge as an international centre of culture, allowing the world to hear the voice of a younger generation of artists that deserves to be heard."



© DURGA BARAL



© PATRICK HUGHES

PRIVATE VIEW: Highlights from the exhibition included (clockwise from left) an untitled work by Nepalese artist Durga Baral, Andrew Logan's *The Door to Paradise*, and *Way Out* by Patrick Hughes



© ANDREW LOGAN

A royal welcome for the new grand piano

Roderick Lakin reports on a milestone in the history of music at the League

Wednesday 25 January 2006 was a landmark date for the Royal Over-Seas League when, following extensive refurbishment, the concert room at Over-Seas House, London was re-opened by our Vice Patron HRH Princess Alexandra, and renamed the Princess Alexandra Hall in her honour. Her Royal Highness graced us with her presence one again almost three years to the day, on Monday 26 January 2009, for a very special evening to inaugurate a new concert grand piano, which marks the final stage in the transformation of the hall.

Nothing in the 25 years I have spent directing musical activities at the League has given me more pride or pleasure than this 'new' hall. From the very first concert held here, it was apparent that the architects, Avery Associates, had accomplished the central aim of their brief: to create a sympathetic environment, both aesthetically and acoustically, for the performance of chamber music. It was clear to me that the warmth and immediacy of the hall's acoustic demanded an instrument with the range of colour and dynamics that only a full-size concert grand piano can deliver.

In 2007, the Central Council and Trustees of the ROSL Golden Jubilee Trust approved the purchase of a new Steinway model D concert grand piano. An appeal for funds was launched and, thanks to the generosity of League members, our fundraising target was reached by the end of 2008.

To help select an instrument ideally suited to the space and its purpose, I enlisted the help of three past ROSL Music Competition prize-winners and adjudicators who know the hall well as performers and listeners: Vanessa Latache, Simon Lepper and Frank Wibaut.

To show off the superb new instrument for the piano inauguration concert I devised a programme that encompassed the five disciplines of the ROSL Music Competition –



TOP PERFORMANCE: Princess Alexandra cuts the ribbon on the new piano before the concert (top) and meets members of the Camarilla Wind Ensemble following their performance (above left). Pianist Nicola Eimer takes a bow after her performance of a Chopin *Waltz in E Flat* (above)

keyboard, strings, wind, singers and chamber ensembles. Music by Bach, Schumann, Chopin, Rachmaninov, Strauss, Poulenc and Czerny was performed by pianists Martin Cousin, Nicola Eimer, Simon Lepper and Ben Schoeman, soprano Madeleine Pierard, cellist Brian O'Kane,

and the Camarilla Ensemble.

The warm and enthusiastic response of the audience testified to the enterprise and vigour of ROSL ARTS and the ROSL Music Competition as it enters its 57th year, and of the League itself as it prepares to celebrate its centenary in 2010.

EDINBURGH

The view from Scotland

James Wilkie

Scottish development officer

Over-Seas House, Edinburgh welcomed the Central Council in November, including Vice Chairman Sir Anthony Figgis (pictured, right, with member Mrs Judith Steiner and Edinburgh Branch chairman Mr Robert Gregor). The St Andrew's Day Dinner was a complete sell-out, while the Glasgow writer Louise Welsh was extremely well-received by a large audience at the R L Stevenson Arts Lunch. The carol concert attracted 60 people, and the festive period events were all sold out.

The main speaker at the annual Burns Supper

was Douglas Abercrombie and music was supplied by Kevin Thompson – both members of the World Burns Federation. Burns celebrations are part of this year's 'Homecoming' – a year-long festival, which hopes to bring ex-patriates from around the world back to Scotland.

ROSL ARTS promoted a splendid 'Inspired by Fred & Ginger' music and dance evening in January, and there was a Latin dance evening in February. The February Arts Lunch was addressed by Dominic Hill, artistic director of Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre.



Weekend breaks

Weekend breaks at Over-Seas House are available from £110 per person until May, including a full Scottish breakfast, and dinner on one night of your stay. All rooms have flat-screen digital TV and free wireless internet access.

For reservations, call 0131 225 1501, or email reception@rosl-edinburgh.org.

ROSL ARTS Down Under

Director of Arts **Roderick Lakin** reports on an exhausting but exhilarating concert and audition tour

The centrepiece of the tour was a four-day chamber music festival at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, where auditions were for the 3rd Annual Pettman/ROSL ARTS Scholarship for a New Zealand Chamber ensemble.

Joining me on the panel of adjudicators were the chief executive of Chamber Music New Zealand, cellist Euan Murdoch; pianist Brian Sayer, former head of performance studies at the University of Auckland; and the Cappa Ensemble: violinist Bartosz Woroch, violist Adam Newman, cellist Brian O'Kane and pianist Alasdair Beatson.

The winners, Duo Giocoso – Helen Bevin (viola) and Rebecca Garlick Grice (piano) – displayed a seriousness and maturity which, in the opinion of the judges, made them the group most ready to take full advantage of the intensive performance and coaching

opportunities that the Pettman Scholarship tour of the UK offers. It was particularly gratifying that, for the first time, all five of the country's major universities were represented at the auditions. The busy schedule of coaching and seminars ensured that all of the participants benefitted from the experience.

The Cappa Ensemble followed the auditions with well-attended concerts in Purau (near Christchurch), Waiheke Island, Havelock North and Gisborne, where they gave the opening concert of the prestigious Gisborne Competition. The Scholarship Final was recorded for transmission by Radio NZ.

En route to New Zealand, the Cappa Ensemble gave a concert at the Yong Ziew Toh Conservatory in Singapore where they held auditions for the 2008 ROSL ARTS Singapore Music Scholarship with the Conservatory director, Bernard Lanskey, and me. The winner,



SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS: Duo Giocoso

cellist Wu Sha, currently a pupil of Liwei Qin (ROSL Gold Medallist 1997) will make a study visit to the UK this summer.

We stopped off in Melbourne on the return journey to the UK to give a concert for the Victorian Branch at the home of League members and ROSL ARTS benefactors Lino and Di Bresciani (see Victorian Branch report page 22).

Books

Reviews of the latest works from League members

'Amsterdam'

Graham Byfield and Hinke Wiggers

Editions Didier Millet, 2008
ISBN-13: 9789814155991 (hardback), £19.95



The sketches and handwritten notes in this wonderful book create an immediacy that makes you feel as if you are in *Amsterdam*. As well as paintings of canals, streets and famous places, there are close-up sketches of such details as the eccentric gable stones, street chess, cafés, quirky bikes and camels at the zoo. If you have ever wondered why the 17th-century houses lurch precariously outwards, you will find the answer to this and other mysteries in the pencilled captions. An excellent guide-book-at-a-glance or intimate memento.

Margaret Adrian-Vallance

'Better Late Than Never: My Story'

Len Goodman

Ebury Press, 2008
ISBN-13: 9780091928025 (hardback), £18.99



'My life's been a bit like the waltz, but then we all need a bit of rise and fall.' From his humble East End childhood to the glitter and glamour of the professional ballroom, Len Goodman eventually found stardom at near-pensionable age when he was chosen as head judge on BBC One's *Strictly Come Dancing*. In his autobiography, some of which was written in the garden of Over-Seas House, Len recounts his journey so far with his trademark charm and humour. He also has plenty to say about his experiences on *Strictly...* and the US version, *Dancing with the Stars*.

Samantha Whitaker

'80 @ 80'

Ivor Lucas

Four O'Clock Press, 2007
ISBN-13: 9781906146160 (paperback), £14.99



Ivor Lucas retired in 1984 as Ambassador to Syria. An Arabist who spent most of his diplomatic career in the Arab and Muslim worlds, he is also a former ROSL Central Council member. Between

1989 and 2007, he contributed 80 reviews to the journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, mainly of books on the Middle East and Islam. To celebrate his 80th birthday, these are collected in *80 @ 80*. They could not be more topical in light of the current conflict in Gaza and provide an insightful perspective of the different cultures, politics, beliefs and aspirations of those living in the Middle East and other Islamic countries. Books reviewed include those by such eminent writers and commentators as Fred Halliday, Robert Fisk, Avi Shlaim, William Dalrymple, Sir Nicholas Henderson and many more – in fact, too many to mention here. If you want to understand the Middle East and Islam, Ivor's book is an absolute must.

Robert Newell

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ROSL WORLD

The latest from the global branches



MUSIC AND FESTIVITIES: Ontario Chapter chairman Ishrani Jaikaran pictured, with ROSL Canadian music scholars Katie Stillman (violin) and Todd Yaniw (piano), at a concert was held at the Arts and Letters Club, Toronto; the Hong Kong Branch president, Paul Surtees, presents an Australian flag to Carolyn Bickerton, the president of the Australian Association of Hong Kong, at the Australian Consulate-General; Western Australia Branch's Christmas lunch 2008

Australia

The Victoria Branch welcomed the Cappa Ensemble to Melbourne in December for a musical evening with ROSL director of arts Roderick Lakin. The concert was made possible by the generosity of Lino and Di Bresciani, who opened their home for the event. Also in December, the new British Consul-General, Stuart Gill, entertained members of the League and the Australia-Britain Society at his home in Toorak.

The Western Australia Branch was saddened to lose some good friends during 2008, but ended the year on a high note with a Christmas lunch, and carol singing with new member Des Wake at the piano.

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, gradick@myplace.net.au

Victoria: Coral Strahan, +61 (0)3 9654 8338

Western Australia (Perth): Jeff Turner, +61 (0)9381 2600, turners@perthpcug.org.au

Canada

The British Columbia Branch held a Christmas lunch in Vancouver at the Terminal City Club, one of the League's reciprocal clubs. Anne Marsh, president of the local West Vancouver Players theatre group, and Peter Miller, president of the local Heritage Society, spoke at the event.

Despite the exceptionally cold weather in Alberta, 27 members attended the Christmas lunch at the Royal Glenora Club, Edmonton. They were treated to a sumptuous buffet and readings of Christmas poetry and remembrances of times past.

In November, the Ontario Chapter held their annual lunch at the University Club of Toronto, at which the Hon David Onley, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, was the guest of honour and speaker. This was followed by a concert at the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto, featuring ROSL Canadian music scholars Katie Stillman (violin) and Todd Yaniw (piano).

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

British Columbia: Pamela Ducommun, +1 604 925 3719

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

Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Branch's activities are not limited to branch functions, which members and guests attend. Many committee gatherings with Commonwealth consular representatives take place each year, and recently members met both the Australian and the New Zealand Consul-Generals in Hong Kong. The committee also supports numerous local and Commonwealth charities, and the branch regularly arranges trips to places of interest in Hong Kong for groups of blind and disabled people.

Paul Surtees, president@rosl.org.hk

New Zealand

The Auckland and Manawatu branches funded scholarships for participants at the biennial NZ Singing School in Napier. Rose Blake and Tamsyn Miller are the Manawatu winners, while Ryan Bennett won the Auckland scholarship.

The ROSL New Zealand website enables potential members to join electronically and to make reservations at the London and Edinburgh clubhouses. Many new members were inspired to join by the concerts given by the Cappa Ensemble, who recently toured as part of the Pettman/ROSL ARTS Scholarship (see page 20). Lyn Milne, roslnz@roslnz.org.nz, www.roslnz.org.nz

United Kingdom

The Bath Branch's coffee mornings continued on the second Wednesday of the month at Pratt's Hotel.

In Cheltenham, local historian and artist Alwyn Sampson showed his drawings of Cheltenham's Regency buildings and talked about the Queen's Hotel at the branch's October meeting. In November, Bob Price gave an excellent illustrated talk on Chile, and League Chairman Stanley Martin joined members for a Christmas lunch at the Renaissance Restaurant.

A talk on 'The magic of India' was given by David Capel-Jones at the Exeter Branch's November lunch, and ROSL Hon Treasurer Simon Ward and his wife were welcomed to the Christmas lunch in December.

North of the border, League Chairman Stanley Martin spoke at the Glasgow Branch Christmas lunch, Brian Longworth gave a talk on Glasgow's trams in January and, in February, former Glasgow Branch chair Jim Carson revealed his family links with Scots missionary Jane Haining.

In Taunton, the branch's winter season of lunches were well attended. The November speaker was BBC sound recordist John Burgess, who shared audio extracts going back to the Second World War, and, in December, retired county historian Dr Robert Dunning spoke about the origins of Somerset folk traditions. In January, photographer Peter Trigg presented photographs of Cornwall since the 1960s. Taunton Branch weekly coffee mornings are held on Wednesdays at the Brewhouse Theatre. The Somerset-area branches are joining together for a trip to Over-Seas House, Edinburgh in May.

The West Cornwall Branch's monthly meetings with Cornish cream tea continued, and the West Sussex Branch held a lunch party in November, which was well attended, as was the traditional Christmas lunch. Its annual Christmas raffle helped to raise funds for the ROSL Music Competition Sussex Prize.

Bath: June Jessop, 01722 780518

Bournemouth: Marjorie Harvey, 01202 674857

Cheltenham: Kathleen Northage,
01242 515540

Exeter: Brian Hawkes, 01395 442017

Glasgow: Bill Agnew, 0141 884 4290

Taunton: Sally Roberts, 01823 661148,
rosli@aldith.org

West Cornwall: Ian Wood, 01736 333460

W. Sussex: Marilyn Archbold, 01444 458853

Homes from home

Coral Strahan takes a tour of four reciprocal clubs

There is a charming, old-world atmosphere at San Francisco's University Club, where I stayed during a tour of the League's North American reciprocal clubs. Centrally located on the corner of two cable car lines in the 'Nob Hill' area, the club offers a reasonable tariff that includes an ample, buffet-style continental breakfast. The dining room has views over the city through large open windows, and Wednesday is reserved for the Club Dinner. Visitors and members meet around the bar before eating a delicious meal in a very congenial atmosphere.

Calgary was next and, after viewing this rapidly changing city from the observation deck of the Calgary Tower, I took a short taxi ride to the Ranchmen's Club for lunch. As a ROSL member, I was made to feel very welcome. After a tour through the spectacular Rockies, I then boarded the Rocky Mountaineer Train in Banff for a two-day journey along the Thompson River to Vancouver, where I stayed at the luxurious Terminal City Club. As well as a king bed and

spacious bathroom, the Harbour View Suite has an open-plan lounge with a sofa-bed, dining area and kitchenette. Ten years ago, the 19th-century building was replaced with a modern high-rise glass tower, which houses a swimming pool, gym, billiard room and squash courts.

I can recommend day-trips to the delightful village of Whistler on the Whistler Mountaineer Train, which follows the ocean shores and passes through deep canyons, and to Victoria, British Columbia's capital city on Vancouver Island. The main highlight is the world-famous Butchart Gardens, and the Royal Victoria Yacht Club has dining facilities for ROSL members.

For the price of our League membership, we are fortunate to be able to visit these exclusive clubs – but remember your card of introduction!

Coral Strahan is secretary of the Victorian Branch. For information, call the University Club: +1 (415) 781 0900; Ranchmen's Club: +1 (403) 228 3885; Royal Victoria Yacht Club: +1 (250) 592 2441; and Terminal City Club: +1 (604) 681 4121.

Reciprocal clubs: terms and conditions

To apply for a card of introduction, please email info@rosli.org.uk, with 'Reciprocal club card' as the subject, and confirm that you have noted these rules:

- 1. Reciprocal club facilities are for League members travelling outside the country in which they reside or work.**
- 2. For reservations and further information, contact the clubs directly. Right of entrance is entirely at the discretion of the club's management.**
- 3. Apply for a card from the Public Relations department, giving at least 10 days notice. A discretionary charge may be made for cards requested at short notice.**
- 4. Cards of introduction CANNOT be faxed or emailed.**
- 5. Provide your ROSL membership number, club(s) to be visited and the dates between which you will be using the club. Cards can be issued for a maximum of 12-30 days a year per city, and should not span more than three months.**
- 6. League members may receive up to five cards of introduction a year free of charge. A charge of £10 per card will be made thereafter. Payment should be made at the time of application by sterling cheque or credit card. The League regrets that it cannot make a refund if the card is not used.**
- 7. Accounts incurred at reciprocal clubs must be settled on departure. Contact the clubs directly for details of their policies on payment methods, dress code, visitor charges, facilities available to reciprocal members and guests.**
- 8. If you have difficulties contacting a club, please call directory inquiries or browse the club's website.**
- 9. Cards of introduction are issued at the discretion of the PR department upon acknowledgment of these rules and guidelines.**

IN THE UK

LEN GOODMAN'S LONDON



FAVOURITE EATS: Len's love of fish takes him to J Sheekey, in the heart of London's theatreland

You spent your early childhood in Bethnal Green. What is your earliest memory there?

I was part of a typical East End family – my parents, my grandparents. As much as the East End was a community, our house was a community! We had a piano in the front room and on a Saturday night we would all gather round with a crate of beer for a sing-song while my uncle played.

Do you still like to visit the East End? How much has it changed?

I still go back to visit Nick the barber and sometimes go to [men's clothes shop] Whistles next door. The area I used to live in has changed a lot. There used to be a big Jewish community along with the Londoners but now it is far more cosmopolitan, with people from virtually every nation in the world. All those areas in the East End used to be like satellite villages of London but they have now blended into the metropolis.

Do you miss London when you're away filming *Dancing with the Stars* in the US?

Samuel Johnson said 'When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford.' And that is so true. I've been to a lot of cities but, for me, there is no city like London. I feel at home, I feel comfortable, and returning to it is like getting home from work and putting on my slippers.

Do you enjoy musicals?

As a child, I used to love going to the cinema to watch Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, Ginger Rogers. I also loved musical theatre and remember being absolutely blown away the first time I saw *West Side Story* aged 16 or 17. Recently, I saw *Sunset Boulevard*, directed by [fellow *Strictly...* judge] Craig Revel Horwood. It is an amazing play and has been turned into a very interesting musical.

Do you have a favourite London restaurant or café?

I am a creature of habit. I tend to stick to

the same places. I enjoy coming to the restaurant at Over-Seas House – there is marvellous service, a great atmosphere and fantastic value for money. I like fish and therefore go to Scott's and J Sheekey's quite often. I also like The Ivy because there is such a mix on the menu, and La Caprice, just around the corner from the League.

What advice would you give to a tourist in London?

You see far more on your feet, so start somewhere central, such as Parliament Square, and ask a policeman to direct you to the nearest interesting place. Policemen are marvellous. Sometimes my partner, Sue, and I take our bicycles on the train to Charing Cross and then cycle around the streets and the parks. We only ever do this on a Sunday, when the traffic is light, otherwise you are taking your life in your hands! You can pull up and mooch around. Just make sure you have a comfy saddle!

What would you do if you were London Mayor for a day?

Get rid of bendy buses and motorbikes, and change the phasing on lots of traffic lights so

that they let more than two or three cars through at a time. In fact, I would make far more of London pedestrianised so that tourists walking around could have a much safer and pleasanter journey.

Do you have a favourite view?

Driving from Kent into London across Blackheath, I love it when you can see Canary Wharf and occasionally St Paul's Cathedral. Also, looking out across the Thames from Greenwich Park. As an area, I love Jermyn Street – with the statue of Beau Brummel, my hero, and so many wonderful shops for men.

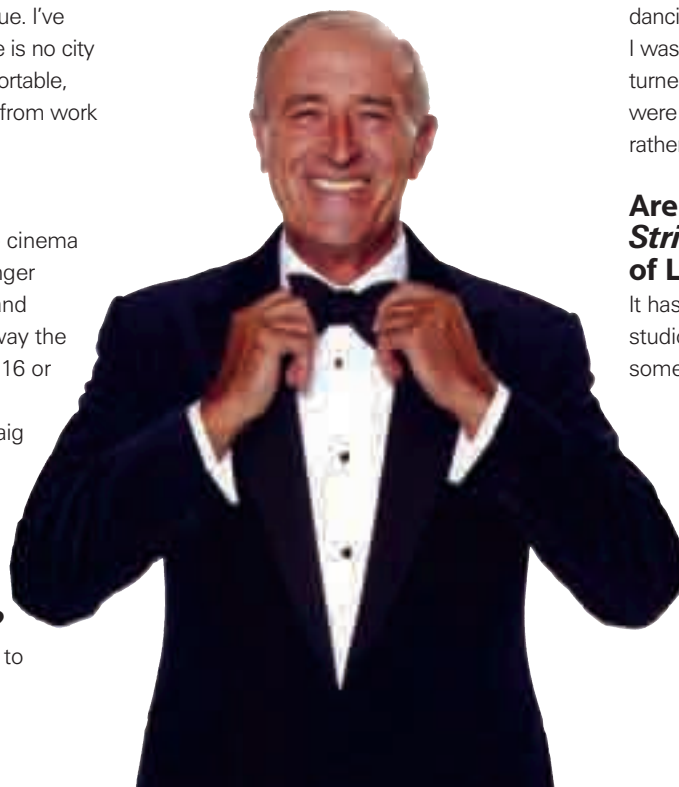
Why did you choose the title *Better Late Than Never* for your book?

Craig Revel Horwood and I were writing our autobiographies at the same time, while we were on tour with the live *Strictly Come Dancing* show. We were both trying to think up good titles, sitting in the back of a cab, when the cabbie said, "I've got a good idea, call it 'All Balls and Glitter'," which is a great title! We tossed a coin and Craig won, so I still had to come up with a title. When I thought about it, I realised that most major things that have happened in my life have happened quite late: I started dancing when I was 21, my son was born when I was in my 40s, and *Strictly Come Dancing* turned up when I was 60! All of these things were better late than never, which I thought was rather an apt title to sum up my life.

Are you pleased with how much *Strictly...* has raised the profile of Latin and ballroom dancing?

It has done brilliantly well for all types of dance studios. It's helped get the public out and doing something active. I feel lucky to be a part of it.

League member Len Goodman is a professional dancer, dance teacher and judge. He still teaches at his own dance school in Dartford when he isn't working as head judge on *Strictly Come Dancing* or filming in the US on *Dancing with the Stars*. Interview by Samantha Whitaker.



A treat for your feet

Samantha Whitaker puts on her dancing shoes and finds the best places in London to learn Latin and ballroom dance

"If you can walk backwards, forwards and side to side, then you can dance," says *Strictly Come Dancing* judge Len Goodman. So why is it that, although keen, many people are too scared to take that first step into a dance school? Latin and ballroom teacher Sylvia Overton believes it stems from our inherent shyness at being face-to-face with another person. She works to overcome this initial discomfort, and says that dance can be a "tool for communication" that brings people together.

Sylvia teaches beginners in groups of 20-25 for one hour a week as part of a 10-week course in either Latin (cha-cha-cha, rumba, jive, samba and paso doble) or ballroom (waltz, foxtrot, quickstep, tango and Viennese waltz). The courses are currently held at studios in Chelsea and Belgravia. She also coaches professional couples and brings the same sense of precision and care to her beginners' classes so that her pupils learn correctly right from the start. "Dancing is wonderful for giving people confidence in themselves," she says, and as the course progresses she sees a noticeable change in her pupils as their confidence and posture improve. Many even begin to dress more smartly, and look and feel more attractive. Men, in particular, enjoy the chance to regain control and take the lead.

At the Kensington Dance Studio, five minutes from South Kensington Tube station, co-directors Kele Baker and Ralf Schiller recommend their Wednesday drop-in class for absolute beginners. It costs £10 per session (reduced if bought in bulk) and there is no need to book. Over the course of the evening, beginner, intermediate and then advanced pupils are taught in the richly decorated ballroom studio, complete with candelabras and a glitter ball, ending with a social dance session for all levels to practise what they have learnt.

Beginners are taught two dances – one ballroom, one Latin. The session begins with a demonstration from the teacher and assistant, who then teach the basic steps. Eventually everyone pairs up and practises together, changing partners frequently. At the class I



GETTING INTIMATE: A couple perform the tango, an emotionally-charged Argentine ballroom dance that was 'beautified' for the courts in Paris and London

saw, the first of 2009, the ballroom was packed full of couples and single dancers aged 20-60, with an almost equal ratio of men to women.

Kele and Ralph, along with a host of assistant and guest teachers, including *Strictly...*'s Camilla Dallerup and Ian Waite, also offer four-week courses at each level, beginners crash courses on which four different dances are taught in just three hours, and 'Strictly Sunday' workshops. On Thursdays, up to eight private lessons take place at one time in the studio, including wedding dance lessons, which come in packages of five or seven sessions.

In South London, at a church community hall near Wimbledon, ACW Dance Studio teach drop-in sessions for beginners on Mondays and Fridays. Principal Alan Wake, along with a team of around 10 teachers, encourages pupils to attend regularly if they want to progress. The class is split into two groups – absolute beginners and improvers – and after a Latin line dance to warm up, both groups work on one or two dances. There is a good ratio of men to women, and the average age is around 40-55, although there was a keen group of teens at the Friday session I attended.

The Monday and Friday sessions are usually different, to cater for those who want to come to both, with around 35-40 people attending. Friday's session is followed by a two-hour social dance, with disco lights, a glitter ball and teachers on hand to instruct. Soft drinks are served and dancers can bring their own alcohol. There is also a tea dance on Thursday afternoons, which is run in a similar way. The social dances are open to everyone, even those not attending the group class. ACW

Dance also offers private lessons and, more unusually, holds examination sessions for those wishing to take medals.

If you've had a few lessons and want to show off what you've learnt, look out for the monthly dance nights held by Stardust Ball at the Grand Hall in Fulham. Coordinated by Mark Kendal and Melina Hamilton, the event gives dancers of all levels an opportunity to practise and demonstrate their skills in a setting that captures the glitz and glamour of ballroom dance. The evening also includes a group lesson and cabaret by top professional dancers. Mark describes Stardust Ball as the "ultimate celebration of ballroom dancing's style and its power to bring people joy," and, as the credit crunch bites, it is this power that enables dance schools to continue to thrive.

THE ACW DANCE STUDIO
www.acwdancestudio.com,
 020 8871 0890

KENSINGTON DANCE STUDIO
www.kensingtondancestudio.com,
 020 7823 9949

SYLVIA OVERTON
 The Ballroom Chelsea
www.theballroomchelsea.co.uk,
 07745 087330

STARDUST BALL
www.stardustball.co.uk

Arts in the city

James Wilkie looks at what's on in Edinburgh

The Dean Gallery continues to show the work of 'Four Scottish Painters' of the post-Second World War period: Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, John Bellamy, Alan Davie and Anne Redpath. All four painters had a significant impact on the art

SONG AND DANCE: 'Four Scottish Painters' at the Dean Gallery (right), and 'Riverdance at the Playhouse' (below)



of their own and following generations. In 'Homecoming and Portrait of a Nation' at the National Portrait Gallery, the works on display represent the five themes of Homecoming Scotland – a Scottish Government initiative inspired by the 250th anniversary of Robert Burns' birth. The themes are ancestry, the Enlightenment, whisky, golf and, of course, Robert Burns.

Moving on to live performance and Barbara Dickson is at the Festival Theatre on 15 March. The Royal Scottish National Orchestra is there on 22 and 29 March, 26 April, and 8 and 15 May. Singer songwriter Jackson Browne appears on 3 April and the great Broadway musical *West Side Story* can be seen Monday-Saturday during first two weeks in May. At the Kings Theatre, there is the Gilbert and Sullivan



Society with *Patience* and *HMS Pinafore* on selected dates, 17-21 March. The Bohemians present *Oklahoma!* (also in March) and, in April, Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart appear in *Waiting for Godot*. *Riverdance* returns to the Playhouse Theatre, 3-7 March, to be followed by touring productions of *Joseph* and *Cabaret* and, on 3 May, there is the legendary Bob Dylan on his never-ending tour.



Tuscany in Style based in Pietrasanta in the heart of Versilia together with La Dolce Vita in the Valdera region invite you to a series of autumn feasts that will delight the sight, the palate and the taste buds.

These are just a sample of the autumn delights we have in store. Accommodation will be offered in private lodgings. The events can be combined with a range of art & cultural visits. On all the events you are accompanied by a personal guide and they are tailor made to suit your time and needs

Autumn Delights in Northern Tuscany

Truffle hunt with truffle lunch or dinner

The real treasure of the Tuscan undergrowth is the rare and much sought after white truffle. The truffle hunt and tasting will be hosted by famous local truffles experts in the San Miniato area. An unforgettable experience of Tuscany.

Wine making and wine tasting

Tuscany is renowned all over the world for its D.O.C., I.G.T and D.O.C.G. wines. Discover this enchanted world which is still deeply rooted in local tradition. What better way to experience the wine making process.

Chocolate tasting and workshops

The newest 'jewel' amongst our local products is chocolate. Visit a factory and see the process of fine chocolate making, with hands-on experience in a chocolate workshop after a theoretical introduction. Taste all your unique creations.

Call us for more detailed information on tel: + 39.0584.794504 or write to info@tuscanystyle.com. A 10% discount is reserved for ROSL members on all private accommodation.



Mid-week wonders

From the red cliffs of the Jurassic Coast to picturesque Topsham village, **Adrian Nisbett** discovers Exeter and the surrounding area

True, the distant bursts of machine-gun fire do occasionally disturb the calm of the village, but the Royal Marines have been training at Lympstone for many years and residents of nearby Topsham are well used to hearing the gunfire. Fortunately, this unusual feature does not detract from the attractions of the area, which include Dartmoor, the River Exe, Exeter and the rolling Devon countryside.

Just two and a half hours by train from London Paddington, Exeter has much to offer visitors – not least the variety of landscapes and intriguing historical sites. The city itself is undergoing something of a renaissance, centred around the rebuilt quay, and there are two notable historic buildings to visit. Built largely in the 14th century, with two Norman towers, the magnificent Cathedral of St Peter is renowned for its breathtaking rib-vaulted ceiling. The vast Gothic interior contains many items of interest, including the huge oak bishop's throne, the wondrous stained glass windows and some unusual details, such as the stone carvings of the masons who worked on the chapel. One beams out with a toothy grin; the other wears an old-fashioned leather rugby helmet.

That the cathedral is built on the site of a Roman army garrison camp will come as no surprise to history students. Important trading ports and shipbuilding works lined the River Exe from the earliest times, and the cloth trade with Holland dominated for centuries. This extensive commercial history is recorded at the Guildhall.

INTRIGUING HISTORY: A dramatic view of Exeter Cathedral, known for its Gothic interior



A couple of kilometres down river from Exeter nestles the small town of Topsham. Once an important trading port and centre of ship building, it has been preserved by a unique geographical feature: it sits on a narrow tongue of land jutting into the Exe estuary. As such, it has managed to avoid the sort of ugly expansion that has marred so many picturesque English villages. The Dutch influence is evident and there are many 18th-century houses that would not look out of place on the other side of the North Sea. These, and the views across the river to marsh and farmlands, make the Strand a street of particular beauty. The Topsham Museum, which records the area's maritime history, is located in one of the many long, two-storey buildings of Dutch clinker brick that were built to accommodate a sail loft upstairs.

Follow the Exe to Exmouth, and you will come to the spectacular coastline, with soaring red cliffs dropping to secluded beaches. The famous Jurassic Coast extends from Exmouth to Bournemouth and is England's first World Heritage Site. It contains fossil forests, dinosaur footprints and coastal walks that show the breath-taking scenery at its best. Perhaps the best way to view the dramatic coastline is to take one of several boat tours that operate from Exmouth.

Further afield, visitors can take in Killerton, the National Trust's first great country house; the wilds of Dartmoor; Castle Drogo; and Buckland Abbey. A short drive from Exeter, Killerton is an 18th-century house of modest grandeur, while Powderham Castle, across the river from Lympstone, provides a glimpse of a much grander lifestyle. The strong tides of the Exe still dictate comings and goings here and the marshes that once provided roof thatches support a great variety of birdlife. In this corner of England, life goes on at a different pace. And that is not such a bad thing.

Adrian took the train from London Paddington to Exeter St David's and stayed at the Thistle Exeter in the city centre.

LONDON

What's on...

Mark Wallinger's The Russian Linesman

Southbank Centre (The Hayward)
Wednesday 18 February – Monday 4 May

The 2007 Turner prize-winner curates an exhibition exploring the threshold between physical, political and metaphysical realms.

Tickets: £6-£9. Contact: 0871 663 2500 or www.southbankcentre.co.uk.

La Línea: London's Latin Music Festival

Main venues include Koko, Southbank Centre and Barbican Centre

Tuesday 14 April – Saturday 2 May

Festival celebrating Latin music in all its diversity, from flamenco and samba to Afro-Cuban hip-hop and Argentine electronica. Performers include Bajofondo Tango Club and Cuban guitar legend Eliades Ochoa.

Tickets: £18. Contact: 020 8693 1042 or info@comono.co.uk.



Madame de Sade

Wyndham's Theatre

Friday 13 March – Saturday 23 May

Michael Grandage directs an all-female cast headed by Judi Dench in Mishima's poetic masterpiece. Set in Paris, the story of the Marquis de Sade is told through the eyes of six remarkable women.

Tickets: £10-£32.50. Contact: 0844 482 5120 or www.delfontmackintosh.co.uk.

ROSL ARTS

Anna Maciuk previews the spring season events

Music events

Over-Seas House Princess Alexandra Hall

57th ROSL Annual Music Competition, Section Finals

Friday 6 March, 7pm – Ensembles A
(strings/keyboards)

Friday 13 March, 7pm – Ensembles B
(wind/mixed)

Tuesday 17 March, 7pm – Overseas awards

With the solo sections of the music competition over, attention now focuses on chamber ensembles, and the international aspect of the competition is celebrated as the most outstanding non-UK competitors take part in the Overseas Awards evening.

Tickets: £10; ROSL members and concessions £9; Friends of ROSL ARTS £8. Wine, served after adjudication, is included in the price.

Sundays at 3

Sunday 5 April, 3pm
Daniel de Borah (piano)

Winner of the keyboard award in the 2007 ROSL Annual Music Competition, Australian pianist Daniel de Borah returns to Over-Seas House, London for an hour-long recital of Mozart and Chopin. Daniel will end the concert with a performance of Schumann's *Fantasie in C*, Op.17, composed in memoriam to Beethoven and considered by many as his greatest work for the piano.

Tickets: £10; ROSL members and concessions £9; Friends of ROSL ARTS £8. Tea and scones, served afterwards in the Central Lounge, are included in the ticket price.

Natalia Lomeiko and Friends

Tuesday 21 April, 7pm

ROSL prizewinning violinist Natalia Lomeiko was born into a family of musicians in Novosibirsk, Russia and moved to New Zealand in the 1990s. She has since established herself internationally as a soloist and chamber musician. She is joined by a string quintet to perform two intense and passionate works: Brahms' *String Sextet*, of which the composer wrote 'Here I have freed myself from my last love,' and Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence*.

Tickets: £10; ROSL members and concessions £9; Friends of ROSL ARTS £8. Wine, served after the concert, is included in the ticket price.



VIOLIN PASSION: Natalie Lomeiko will perform Brahms and Tchaikovsky



HUNT FOR ART: Lauren Porter's exhibition of quilted hunting trophies

A Celebration of Australian Musical Talent

Tuesday 19 May, 7pm

In collaboration with the Tait Memorial Trust, ROSL ARTS presents a celebration of Australian musical talent. The young musicians will perform an hour-long programme of popular classics and some less familiar musical delights.

Tickets: £25; ROSL members and concessions £20; Friends of ROSL ARTS £15. Champagne, served at 6.45pm, plus quality Australian wines and canapés served afterwards, are included in the ticket price.

Queen Elizabeth Hall

57th ROSL Annual Music Competition Final

Tuesday 5 May, 7pm

The flagship event of the ROSL ARTS calendar, the Final of the 2009 Annual Music Competition showcases the winners of the wind, singers, strings and keyboard sections as they compete for the Gold Medal and First Prize. As the distinguished panel of judges makes its decision, there will be performances by the two prizewinning ensembles.

Tickets: £12; Friends of ROSL ARTS £10 (reduced from £20; £15).

Available from ROSL ARTS, not the QEH box office.

Visual arts

Over-Seas House, London

Young Artist of Thailand 2008

Wednesday 1 – Wednesday 29 April

In 2007, the Thailand Branch inaugurated the ROSL Young Artist of Thailand, sponsored by Raimon Land Plc. The competition is open to Thai citizens and residents aged 12-20. Art by entrants of the 2008 competition was exhibited at the Eden Zone, Central World, Bangkok in January 2009. For the exhibition at Over-Seas House, London, the prizewinning work will be exhibited together with works by runners-up. As part of the prize, the winner will be in London for the opening of the exhibition as a guest of ROSL ARTS.

Lauren Porter, 'Hunting Trophies'

Friday 1 May – Wednesday 1 July

ROSL Visual Arts Scholar Lauren Porter made headlines with her full-sized knitted red Ferrari. On her 2007 ROSL scholarship, she spent six weeks travelling around Canada exploring its rich heritage in community arts. Her series 'Hunting Trophies' juxtaposes the traditional Canadian women's skill of quilting with the more masculine pursuit of hunting. The series is a collection of pure white quilted heads of animals of Canadian origin.

Book events

Over-Seas House, London

Edward Paice – 'Wrath of God: The Great Lisbon Earthquake of 1755'

Monday 30 March, 7pm

At 9.30am on All Saints' Day in 1755, Lisbon, Europe's fourth largest city and the centre of the great Portuguese empire, was devastated by the largest earthquake to hit a major city in the Western world. It is estimated that nearly 50,000 lost their lives. The largest of its three tremors measured 8.75-9 on the Richter scale. The destruction was completed by a fire that burned for a week.

Wrath of God is a gripping account of a natural disaster that had a transformative impact on European society. Edward Paice is also the author of *Lost Lion of Empire: The Life of Cape-to-Cairo Grogan* (2001) and *Tip and Run: The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa* (2007).

Tickets: £5; ROSL members and concessions £4.50; Friends of ROSL ARTS £4. Wine, served afterwards, is included in the ticket price.

Dr Ashley Jackson – 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen: The High Noon of the British Empire 1850-1945'

Wednesday 10 June, 7pm

Dr Ashley Jackson's *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* provides a visually arresting and informative tour of the British Empire at its height, when its boundaries stretched from Cairo to Cape Town and from Winnipeg to Wagga-Wagga. The empire 'on which the sun never sets' embraced peoples as diverse as the head-hunting Dyaks, Fulani horsemen, Gulf sheikhs and caparisoned maharajahs. In a sequence of thematic chapters examining every aspect of the empire, *Mad Dogs...* describes the largest imperium in world history.

Tickets: £5; ROSL members and concessions £4.50; Friends of ROSL ARTS £4. Wine, served afterwards, is included in the ticket price.



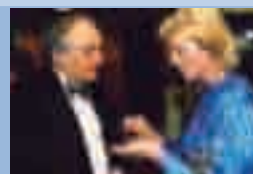
WRITING HISTORY: Ashley Jackson will talk on the empire 'on which the sun never sets'

MUSICAL LIVES REMEMBERED

It is with great sadness that we report the deaths in the latter part of 2008 of two great musicians and staunch supporters of the ROSL Annual Music Competition: pianist Yonty Solomon and contralto Marjorie Thomas. Both served on many occasions as adjudicators of the competition in the 1980s and 1990s.

As a young South African pianist recently arrived in the UK to study with Dame Myra Hess, Yonty won the gold medal in the ROSL Music Competition in 1960. He enjoyed a highly distinguished career as a soloist and chamber musician. A professor of piano at the Royal College of Music since 1977, he was a dedicated and inspirational teacher of many young pianists now at the forefront of the profession. One of his most recent students, Canadian pianist Andrew Aarons, was introduced to Yonty by ROSL ARTS during a visit to the UK in 2004 as a ROSL Yvonne and Gordon Calver scholar.

Marjorie Thomas was one of the most well-loved artists on the opera stage and concert platform in the two decades following the Second World War. She appears in many classic recordings from this period and was a particular favourite of the conductor Sir Malcolm Sargent. She joined the staff of the Royal Academy of Music in 1963 and became its first head of vocal studies, retiring in 1990. Among the many students whose careers she nurtured, is the soprano Susan Bullock (ROSL Singers Award winner 1983), now one of the most acclaimed British operatic artists internationally.



Yonty Solomon discusses a musical point with HRH Princess Alexandra after the Final concert of the 50th ROSL Annual Music Competition Final in 2002



Marjorie Thomas with winner of the Singers Prize soprano Gillian Keith at the Final Concert of the ROSL Annual Music Competition in 1998

Members' events

March–June

March

Commonwealth Day service

Monday 9 March, £6 (administration charge), G
Service at Westminster Abbey in the presence of The Queen.

Backstage tour at the Royal Opera House

Monday 16 March, 2.30pm, £12, B
This tour of one of the world's leading theatres includes a history of the Royal Opera House, an insight into its redevelopment and a look at its current productions. As it is a fully working theatre, you may even see a Royal Ballet class or the backstage technology in operation.

April

A day at Kew Palace and Gardens

Tuesday 21 April, 11am, £18, G
Explore Kew Palace, the smallest and most intimate of the royal palaces. Built in 1631 by Samuel

Fortrey, it was home to George III during his bouts of supposed madness. After lunch, there will be a guided tour of the sensational gardens, which offer the biggest display of seasonal spring colour in the country, including a crocus carpet, daffodils and snowdrops nestling in woodland.

Historic Greenwich

Tuesday 28 April, 11am, £14, G
Visit the historic St Alfege Church before walking through Greenwich Market to the park and viewing the Royal Observatory, National Maritime Museum and Queen's House. The day ends with a delightful riverside walk to see the Cutty Sark, Gypsy Moth, two historic pubs and the magnificent Royal Naval College.

May

Behind the scenes at Osterley House and Park

Wednesday 6 May, 11am, £14.50, G



OUT IN THE OPEN AIR: Osterley House and Park (above) and a player in action at The Championships, Wimbledon (top)

Explore this beautiful 18th-century mansion designed by Robert Adams. From the roof, take in the dramatic views of the surrounding gardens and farmlands. Tea and biscuits served on arrival.

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 12 May, 4pm, free, M
To follow the Chairman's Lunch. See page 33 for details.

Chelsea Flower Show

Thursday 21–Saturday 23 May, 8am–8pm, £45, B
A wonderful day out for all garden lovers, with beautiful gardens and the most amazing horticultural displays from all over the world.

June

Trooping the Colour

Saturday 30 May, Saturday 6 June, Saturday 13 June, prices tba, B
The Major General's Review is in May and the Colonel's Review,

followed by the Queen's Birthday Parade, in June. Maximum two tickets per member.

Wimbledon Tennis Championships

Monday 22 June–Sunday 5 July, B
A fantastic day out watching The Championships at the AELTC. Limited tickets are available for Court Two. Maximum two tickets per member.

Chairman's Lunch

Tuesday 12 May, £50, 12.30pm, G
Drinks will be served before a delicious three-course spring lunch at Over-Seas House, London. Hosted by League Chairman Stanley Martin. Writer and broadcaster John Julius Norwich will speak on 'Venice'. The AGM will follow at 4pm.

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 also note: We do not acknowledge receipt of applications, but tickets are always sent out in advance. Refunds can only be given if cancellations are made at least 15 working days in advance. We do not provide refunds for tickets costing less than £5. 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. Members will be sent tickets seven days prior to each particular event.

EDINBURGH

What's on...

March–May

March

Bridge Club

Friday 6 March, 12.30 for 1pm
One-course lunch with sherry and guest day. Tickets: £9.

Commonwealth Day lunch

Monday 9 March, noon for 12.30pm
Two-course lunch with speaker John Scott of Glasgow 2014 (Commonwealth Games). Sherry on arrival, coffee and glass of wine. Tickets: £15.50; non-members £18.

Coffee morning

Saturday 14 March, 10.30am
'The British Experience: A Jamaican Perspective' with Geoffrey Palmer.

Commonwealth Week concert

Monday 16 March, 6.30pm
Hour-long recital by South African pianist Ben Schoeman, followed by wine and canapés. Tickets: £8; non-members £10; Friends of ROSL ARTS £6. For tickets call 0131 225 1501.

ROSL Visual Arts Scholars exhibition

Monday 16 March – Friday 8 May, Over-Seas House, Edinburgh
Paintings by scholars Christina Papakyriakou and Jeremy Sharma.

April

Bring and buy sale/raffle

Saturday 4 April, 10.30am

In aid of the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

Quiz

Tuesday 7 April, noon for 12.30pm

Arts lunch

Wednesday 22 April
Two-course lunch, including coffee and glass of wine. Alasdair Hutton will speak on 'The Tattoo: Scotland and Australia'. Tickets: £14.50; non-members £16.50.

May

Coffee morning

Saturday 9 May, 10.30am



MUSICAL TREAT:
Ben Schoeman will perform for Commonwealth Week

Music with a view

Wednesday 13 May, 6.30pm
Recital by Australian pianist Jayson Gilham; exhibition by ROSL Visual Arts Scholars Jacob Carter and Lauren Porter. Tickets: £8; £10 non-members; Friends of ROSL ARTS £6. For tickets call 0131 225 1501.

AGM and Chairman's reception

Tuesday 19 May, 6 for 6.30pm
With complimentary buffet.

Arts lunch

Wednesday 27 May, 12 for 12.30pm
Two-course lunch, including coffee and glass of wine, with speaker Lorn MacIntyre. Tickets: £14.50; non-members £16.

Application form for members' events (see opposite)

Name.....

Membership number.....

Name of guest(s) and trip they are attending

UK address to which tickets should be sent

Telephone number

Please also provide regular correspondence address

I enclose a cheque for a total of £.....

(Payable to ROSL, crossed and in sterling)
Credit card bookings by telephone only:
020 7016 6906

Please complete this form and send with cheque only to:

Alex Debarge, Public Relations Department (Members Events Programme), Royal Over-Seas League, Over-Seas House, Park Place, St James's Street, London SW1A 1LR.
Tel: 020 7016 6906 Email: adebarge@rosl.org.uk.

PLEASE SEND A SEPARATE CHEQUE FOR EACH EVENT.

			No. of tickets
Commonwealth Day Service	Mon 9 March	£6 £.....
Kew Gardens and Kew Palace	Tues 21 April	£18 £.....
Historic Greenwich	Tues 28 April	£14 £.....
Osterley Park and House	Wed 6 May	£14.50 £.....
Chairman's Lunch	Tues 12 May	£50 £.....

APPLICATIONS FOR BALLOTTED TICKETS ONLY. MAXIMUM TWO TICKETS PER MEMBER.
DO NOT SEND PAYMENT YET. YOU WILL ONLY BE CONTACTED IF SUCCESSFUL.

		No. of tickets	Apply before
Backstage at Royal Opera House	Mon 16 March	16 Feb
Chelsea Flower Show	Thur 21 – Sat 23 May	22 April
Trooping the Colour	Sat 30 May, 6 Jun, 13 Jun	5 May
Wimbledon tennis championships	Mon 22 Jun – Sun 5 Jul	29 May

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Legacies Officer, RAFBF,
67 Portland Place, London W1B 1AR.



THE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION COUNTRY HOME ~ "HUNTLY"

Located between Teignmouth and Newton Abbot in South Devon

Short Breaks Available



Huntly is the Officers' Association's residential retirement home for elderly single ex-officers, male or female, of all three Services, and widows and widowers of ex-officers who wish to enjoy an active retirement in a peaceful and tranquil environment. Applications from other retired professionals are also welcomed. Located in the village of Bishopsteignton and situated in extensive landscaped grounds overlooking the Teign estuary, Huntly offers the comfort, security and peace of mind of a community while preserving the independence and privacy of residents. All residents have a single room with en-suite facilities, and the spacious public rooms includes a Dining Room, Drawing Room, Library, Snooker Room, Coffee Lounge and a TV room. Fast communications by both road and rail are conveniently close.

Applicants must be mobile, able to look after themselves and attend meals. There are no medical facilities at Huntly, although a local doctor visits each week and welfare officers are employed to provide support for the residents. All residents pay a standard fee that covers their accommodation, meals and welfare support.

Contact the House Governor on Tel: 01626 775223, Fax: 01626 779241 Email: huntly2@officersassociation.org.uk for further details and a colour brochure and application form. Or visit our Website: www.officersassociation.org.uk



A safe haven

The Rooms Division (reservations, reception, day and night porters, and housekeeping) at Over-Seas House, London has had a busy 2008 and brisk start to 2009, providing service to both resident and visiting members. Most of the team have been with us for many years: manager Rachid Mellah since 2002, head housekeeper Deisy Garcia since 2000, night manager Del Getaneh since 1992, and head cleaner Dean Crest since 1995. Head hall porter Mick McCall, well known to members around the world, took on the added responsibility of health and safety officer in 2005. It hardly seems possible that Mick celebrates 25 years with the League this July!

Deisy Garcia and her team look after our 80 bedrooms and Deisy's flair for interior design and furniture re-upholstery is much in evidence in the bedrooms and public areas of Over-Seas House. She and Rachid recently joined forces to refurbish all the rooms in the Westminster Wing to a higher standard. As our rates include continental breakfast, rarely the case in hotels nowadays, our rooms offer better value than ever. The staff at both clubhouses have but one objective, and that is to provide members with the best possible standards, so don't hesitate to contact them if they can

help make your stay even more comfortable.

We recently received a letter from an Edinburgh member who stayed at Over-Seas House, London on her return from Barcelona, where she had been mugged. She wrote: 'I cannot tell you the difference it made, in the circumstances, to feel that we had a home from home in the city... We had no idea at the time quite how fortuitous our membership of the League would be.' This is exactly what we hope to offer our members: a home away from home in London and Edinburgh.



ROOMS DIVISION: The staff includes (l-r) Rachid Mellah, Rosita Kazlauskaitė, Lenni Marrini, Deisy Garcia, Pia Kahonen, Paulina Gozdziowska and Dean Crest

Food and drink



Asparagus fortnight

18–30 May

Join us in the restaurant to celebrate the first taste of summer with our chef's creative selection of asparagus dishes.

Wimbledon

22 June – 4 July

Enjoy delicious champagne and strawberries when you dine in the restaurant over Wimbledon fortnight.

Annual general meeting

Dear Member,

I am instructed to inform you that the AGM of the Royal Over-Seas League will be held at Over-Seas House, Park Place, St James's Street, London SW1 on Tuesday 12 May 2009 at 4pm, to receive and consider the Annual Report and Accounts of the League and to attend to such other business as may be necessary in accordance with the bye-laws. The AGM will be preceded by the Chairman's Lunch (12.30 for 1pm; for further details contact the Public Relations Department), and followed by a reception at which refreshments will be served.

Yours truly,
Robert F Newell,
director-general/secretary

AGENDA

- To sing the first verse of the National Anthem
- Address by the Chairman
- Honorary treasurer to report on the League's finances
- To receive and adopt the accounts of the League for 2008
- To confirm appointments to the Central Council under the terms of bye-law 14.6 and 14.7
- To fill vacancies occurring under the terms of bye-law 20.1 and 20.2
- To confirm the appointment by the Central Council of the Dean of Westminster as a Vice-President of the League, under the terms of bye-law 18
- To receive and adopt the Annual Report for 2008
- To appoint auditors for the ensuing year

(Note: copies of the 2008 Annual Report will be available from the Public Relations department from 27 April 2009.)

Discussion Group & London Group

DISCUSSION GROUP

Meetings will be held at Over-Seas House, London on the following Monday evenings from 7 to 8.30pm. There is no charge. All League members and guests are welcome. For more information contact John Edwards, 01732 883556, johncoatesedward@aol.com.

A view from the back benches

2 March With Austin Mitchell, Labour MP for Grimsby since 1977, who currently sits on the Agriculture Select Committee.

LONDON GROUP

Please note that you are not automatically a member of the London Group. Please ask for an application form from the Public Relations department, Over-Seas House, London. The London Group meets at 6.30pm on the third Thursday of each month. For more information contact Beryl Keen, 020 8449 5686.

The history of dictionaries and dictionary makers

19 March A talk by Susan Purcell, a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Linguists and author of language course books and dictionaries.

London Group AGM

16 April With speaker Adele Smith, who has written a history of the Royal Over-Seas League to celebrate its centenary in 2010. Light refreshments served.

Wicked London: A history of scandals

21 May A talk by Paul Baker, who leads guided walks around London.



LITERARY TREATS: (clockwise from left) Samuel Johnson (19 March); Covent Garden, an area which can boast more than 300 years of scandal (21 May); Thomas Carlyle's house (2 April); a cake made by Beryl Keen for the London Group's 60th anniversary reception at the House of Lords in December

LONDON GROUP OUTSIDE VISITS

For more information, contact Doreen Regan, 020 7584 5879. To apply for events, write to Doreen Regan, London, c/o Porters' Desk, Over-Seas House, London.

Thomas Carlyle's house

2 April, 11am Guided tour of the Chelsea home of the well-known Victorian writer Thomas Carlyle. Tickets: £10; LG members £8.

* Please enclose a separate cheque and stamped addressed envelope for each visit.

Please note:

There may be a week-long trip to Berlin and Gdansk in September. Members should write to register their interest.

MEMBERS' ADVERTISING

FARM IN FRANCE. Wonderful 300-year-old granite farmhouse, barns and surrounding 47 acres. Only 20 mins from Limoges Airport. All major work completed, but internal arrangement and decoration to do. *Please visit www.property-for-sale-limousin-france.breezybreak.com and call Miranda Bruce: +44 (0)1450 860683 or +44 (0)7535 530881*

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Members can advertise at a cost of £1 per word plus VAT, min 30 words. Copy for next issue by 24 March.
Contact Alex Debarge on 020 7016 6906 or email it to adebarge@rosl.org.uk. No advertisements are endorsed or recommended by the Royal Over-Seas League.



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RHEEBOKVLEI SOUTH AFRICAN GAME FARM

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Transport will be provided from Johannesburg International airport or Polokwane airport.

Price: 100 euros per day/half price for under 11s.

For brochures and more information contact Connie Booth on
Tel: +44 (0) 207 629 2294 or email: connie.booth@talk21.com



Cruise to the Canary Islands

Enjoy a special garden voyage with 10 time RHS medal winner Anthea Guthrie

14 night ex UK sailing, departing 18th July 2009, from just £810 per person



The Gardening Cruise Experience aboard Braemar

Saturday	18th July	Embark Braemar in Dover
Sunday	19th & Monday 20th July	Two days at sea
Tuesday	21st July	Lisbon, Portugal
Wednesday	22nd July	Cadiz, Spain
Thursday	23rd July	A day at sea
Friday	24th July	Las Palmas, Gran Canaria
Saturday	25th July	Santa Cruz, Tenerife
Sunday	26th July	Santa Cruz, La Palma
Monday	27th July	Funchal, Madeira
Tuesday	28th July	A day at sea
Wednesday	29th July	Leixoes, Portugal
Thursday	30th & Friday 31st July	Two days at sea
Saturday	1st August	Disembark Dover

Optional Shore Excursions

We have three special shore excursions which Anthea will accompany. She will be able to answer any questions you have whilst you wander through the Botanical gardens of Funchal, Tenerife and Gran Canaria. These shore excursions are available at a supplement.

Funchal, Madeira	- Monte's Botanical Gardens
Tenerife, Canary Islands	- Botanical Gardens of Puerto De La Cruz - Garden of Risco Bello
Gran Canaria, Canary Island	- Jardín Viera & Clavijo, the largest botanical garden in Spain - Jardín de la Marquesa

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- Your expert gardening host, Anthea Guthrie
- Complimentary cocktail party
- Onboard lectures
- Anthea's expertise on selected shore excursions
- Free parking at the port

Price Information

Twin Inside Cabin	from £810 per person
Single Inside Cabin	from £1,574 per person
Twin Outside Cabin	from £1,070 per person
Single Outside Cabin	from £1,928 per person
Balcony Cabin	from £1,434 per person
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Anthea Guthrie

The winner of ten RHS medals including three golds, gained at garden shows such as Chelsea and Hampton Court, she has made a name for herself lecturing on garden history and design and has appeared on BBC 2's, 'A Passion for Plants'. During your cruise Anthea will be giving a number of lectures on a variety of gardening subjects, including 'Behind the Scenes at Chelsea' and will be on hand to answer any horticulture related questions.



For more information or to book your place on this exclusive experience call 020 7734 4404 www.mundycruising.co.uk



Prices are per person based on double occupancy unless otherwise stated and do not include shore excursions. All prices are subject to availability and change. Shore excursions are subject to confirmation and can be cancelled or changed.

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