

OVERSEAS

Journal of the Royal Over-Seas League

Issue 2, June–August 2010



Namibia special

Looking to the past, present and future as the ROSL-Namibia project celebrates its 15th anniversary

A woman's worth

Kamalesh Sharma strives for equality; and we profile the Commonwealth's most influential women

Make it a date

Book ahead and fix dates in your diary with this issue's Events section, featuring the centenary events

ROSL on film

How the commemorative DVD was made, from the planning stages, through filming, to post-production



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ISSUE 2 June-August 2010

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

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From the Chairman

My wife and I spent four weeks in Australia and New Zealand in February and March, introducing ourselves to the membership there, and joining in celebrations to mark the ROSL centenary. It was a marvellous experience. Many of those we met were looking forward to visiting London for the centenary reception and conference in early June.

In Australia, we visited Perth, Adelaide, Hobart, Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and Brisbane. Our excellent and imaginative programme was coordinated by the Australian Chairman, Jason Ronald. All the Australian branches looked after us with warmth and generosity wherever we set foot – we're hugely grateful to them. The same was the case in New Zealand, where the director, Lyn Milne, and the branches in the South and North islands overwhelmed us with kindness. We were bowled over by the wide, rugged beauty of Australia and New Zealand, and by the friendliness we encountered everywhere. Highlights included a Commonwealth Day Service in St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne, an unforgettable day at a cattle farm near Brisbane, a performance of *Tosca* at the Sydney Opera House, a trout-fishing expedition to Lake Coleridge, near Christchurch, and a visit to a gannet colony near Auckland. There were many good discussions about ROSL, its past, its present and its future.

We called on the Governors-General in Canberra and Wellington, and on the Governors of the Australian States. All are ROSL patrons, and some are members. All were as welcoming as could be, and not only well-informed about ROSL, but also full of appreciation of its activities worldwide, especially the many things we do that benefit the young. They asked pertinent questions about our plans for the future; I said that the conference in June would set us on the right path for the next 100 years. The Governor of Queensland, the Hon Penelope Wensley AO, put her finger on another aspect, referring to 'enduring fellowship'. That, I think, is the thing that struck us most: the sense of family, of coming home in an unfamiliar land, of a welcome far beyond simple politeness. The trip made us proud to have been sent across the world in the centenary year – to find ROSL so much appreciated, and in such efficient and generous hands.

For branch reports on the Chairman's tour, see ROSL world (page 26).

Sir Anthony Figgis



Editor's letter

Commonwealth Day this year coincided with International Women's Day,



creating the perfect opportunity to discuss the position of women in our societies – and what still needs to be done to support them. In the UK, the day is barely noted by most people, but when I visit my in-laws in Mexico, I am struck by how much it is celebrated there. Living in Britain, it is easy to forget how far women are from equality, yet they make up two thirds of the world's poor. A day dedicated to gender issues – and to celebrating women – is, therefore, still extremely pertinent. It was with this in mind that we decided to run this issue's Focus on women, with an overview of the good work being done by the Secretariat, by HE Kamalesh Sharma (page 15). We also celebrate Australia's female firefighters (page 16) and profile some of the most influential women in the Commonwealth today. Choosing which people to feature was very difficult, so we selected names from a variety of fields and countries. You may have different ideas as to who should have been included; turn to page 18 to see if your latter-day heroes made our final pick.

This issue's Centenary section shows how *Overseas* took on gender issues in the early 20th century, with the anonymous 'From a Woman's Standpoint' column, which began while the Suffragette movement was in full swing (page 5). It also includes a 'Making of...' account of the hard work that went into putting together ROSL's special, commemorative DVD (page 6). Its narrator – the former Radio 3 presenter Chris de Souza – shares his memories of London, as well as his favourite haunts, on page 31.

ROSL's centenary year got off to a fantastic start. The launch event was a great success (page 28) and, as the celebrations continue, this summer's events programmes should be a must-read for all members (page 33-38).

Miranda Moore

WARM WELCOME: (l-r) Australian President Jason Ronald, Lady Figgis, Australian Governor-General Quentin Bryce and Sir Anthony Figgis

From a woman's standpoint

The June 1929 instalment of this popular *Overseas* column, which began in 1917

As I write these words we are on the eve of the elections, and it is difficult, indeed it is impossible, not to give first place to that subject. For although by the time these lines appear in print the curtain will have been rung up, at present we are still sitting in the dark, listening to the drums of battle.

There are huge advertisements on the hoardings telling us what each of the three great parties have done or will do when in office: all the leaders are busy holding meetings here, there and everywhere. And now that the B.B.C. have agreed to allow controversial topics to be broadcast, Baldwin, Lloyd George and MacDonald are each going to state their case to the British Isles. Women M.P.'s are going to broadcast especially to women.

"What are the women going to do?" That at the moment is the question which is on everyone's lips, and a great many people, including women, are a little bit uneasy.

One of our great dailies has compiled a register of voters, and declares that "the preponderance of women voters over men is far greater than the most optimistic supporters of the 'flapper' vote expected." In practically every constituency there are far more women than men – the City of London is one of the very few exceptions – but we do not know yet whether more women will vote than men; nor do we yet know how independent the women are going to be.

What are we going to do with our vote?

But it remains a fact that Great Britain, and to some extent the Empire, is now ruled for the first time, technically, by women, whether we like it or not.

What are we going to make of our opportunities?

Are we going to bring more sanity or less into public life? More beauty or less? More mercy and truth, or less? Are we going to continue to echo the cry that war and poverty must always be with us, or are we going to say that war and



other evils have got to cease?

I have so much faith in my own sex that I am sure that in the days of our grand-daughters, let us say, they will look back in amazement on conditions that kept women out of politics, just as we look back now with astonished incredulity on those strange and foolish people who told women – not so very many years ago either – that it was unwomanly to nurse the sick or to equip themselves to heal the diseased, and who repeat ad nauseum that women's place is in the home. What about turning the world into a home and every one living in it into a family? Nothing short of that should be our aim.

Women have had many hard battles to fight in the past, but let us never forget that very often it has been men and not women who have blazed the trail of freedom for us. And I for one gratefully acknowledge the inspiration I have gained all through my life from the men who have helped and not hindered us in our struggles. And now we are standing on the threshold of a new era, with a new world in the making.

An equal footing

ROSL has always welcomed women members. From Adele Smith's 'History'

The Over-Seas League had emerged from the Great War with its imperial connections greatly strengthened. The immense fund-raising efforts organised so admirably by Evelyn Wrench and Lady des Voeux, his cousin and Director of Correspondence, had drawn attention to the League from many important quarters, and internally the support of the overseas and home branches had shown that the ideals of the original club could be practically fulfilled in a way unimaginable before 1914 [...]

With the granting of the Royal Charter [in 1922], the objectives of the Over-Seas League were established. Principal amongst these were:

- to draw together in the bond of comradeship British citizens throughout the world;
- to render individual service to the British Commonwealth of Nations;
- to maintain the power of the British Commonwealth of Nations and to hold to its best traditions; and
- to help one another.

An organisation with such ideals was bound to be democratic in practice. Despite the insistence in all early magazines that the League was 'not a club' but a worldwide League of Friendship, once premises were established in St James's the unusual character of the membership must have been striking in the heart of London's club land. From the beginning no distinction was made on grounds of race, creed or gender among the membership. At that time a club in St James's that welcomed women on an equal footing was unique and did much to determine the future independent character of the League.

The President and Central Council appointed Lady des Voeux, Director of Correspondence, to be Controller, effectively in charge of all administration at Over-Seas House, an honorary post that she held for over 20 years.

The making of the Centenary DVD

Centenary Events Coordinator, **Polly Hynd**, reports on the challenges

As early as 2008, ROSL put its mind to the planning of its forthcoming centenary year. A great deal of thought was put into how best to mark such a momentous and historic occasion. Out of these deliberations came a realisation of the importance, not only of celebrating ROSL's 100-year heritage and achievements to date, but also of looking forward to its next 100 years with energy and a renewed sense of purpose. The question was how this could be accomplished.

A diverse programme of events has been scheduled, including a reception at St James's Palace, in the presence of The Queen, The Duke of Edinburgh and Princess Alexandra. ROSL has paid tribute to the past in the form of Adele Smith's excellent retrospective: *The Royal Over-Seas League: From Empire into Commonwealth, A History of the First 100 Years*. What better counterpart to a text about ROSL's past than a film that considers its present and future?

The purpose of the DVD was twofold: to celebrate the centenary, making ROSL staff and members feel proud to be a part of it; and as a promotional tool for membership recruitment. It is something that can easily be sent anywhere in the world to showcase the work and enduring achievements of a great Commonwealth organisation in its anniversary year.

In early 2009, we approached Chris de Souza, an eminent presenter for BBC Radio 3 and a long-serving adjudicator of the ROSL Annual Music Competition, to ask him whether he would narrate the film. With his usual enthusiasm, he agreed, and recommended an old friend and colleague to direct and produce it: the former BBC producer and BAFTA-winner Christopher Swann.

A month later, the Director of ROSL ARTS, Roderick Lakin, and I sat down to a meeting with Chris and Christopher to discuss the project, and work out what was achievable within a 12-month timeframe. We agreed that the importance of representing the diverse range of the ROSL's activities, both around the UK and overseas, was paramount – in particular the ROSL-Namibia Welfare Project and the music and visual arts programmes of ROSL ARTS.

With this in mind, we decided a schedule of events and locations to be filmed. In October 2009, with camera equipment in tow, Christopher accompanied Director of PR & Development, Margaret Adrian-Vallance, on part of the annual monitoring visit to Namibia. There, he recorded aspects of the long-standing collaboration between ROSL and the Namibian government, schools and colleges through the welfare project, which provides educational bursaries for marginalised young people living in remote areas.

"Namibia is half the size of Europe with only 2 million inhabitants. It is so sparsely populated that you can drive for hundreds of miles and not

"ROSL could afford to be nostalgic, but, in its 100th year, it is more concerned with the future than its past"

see a soul," commented Christopher. "And we did precisely that – driving nearly 1,000 miles up and down the Trans Kalahari highway, between Windhoek and Swakopmund, as we visited and filmed in some of the schools where ROSL bursaries have helped.

"Everywhere we went, there were smiling children, prospering in schools which were often miles from anywhere. We had songs (including the National Anthem) sung for us, spoke to former ROSL beneficiaries who are now teachers or in the media, and drank in the landscape and its wildlife. The heat was intense, the landscape stunning, and the whole experience unique and stimulating."

STILLS FROM THE DVD: The Annual Music Competition Final (1 & 3) and 2009 Gold Medallist Ben Schoeman (4); a Namibia Project beneficiary (2); Jason Ronald, Australia Chairman (5); and Hospitalfield House (6)



Later in the year, we were given an exclusive opportunity to film a visit to the Pakirikiri Marae in New Zealand, which formed part of the annual Pettman/ROSL ARTS music scholarship tour. This was a wonderful experience for all involved, and its inclusion in the DVD demonstrates the far-reaching influence of the ROSL.

Back in the UK, Christopher took the train to Hospitalfield in Arbroath, Scotland to film the ROSL ARTS Visual Arts scholarship programme in action. "I didn't know what to expect, but when I arrived, I was stunned. It is a castle of extraordinary beauty, heavily influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, and is almost a work of fantasy," says Christopher. "As a location, it is simply wonderful, and the interior boasts some of the most splendid formal rooms I have ever entered."

"The ROSL young artists live in the house and work contentedly in the studios, which were once the stables. They told me how much they enjoyed their time on the residency – the opportunity it gave them to develop their ideas, to work without interruption, and to mix with their peers."

In addition to these excursions, the filming schedule included various ROSL events, including the Annual Music Competition Final and centenary launch, as well as interviews with various staff members and individuals associated with ROSL.

Once all the footage had been shot, it was amassed and painstakingly edited at Directors Cut Films (a post-production house in central London) – a process that I was fortunate enough to oversee. When the final cut had been approved, Chris was called in to record the voiceover. "I have been involved in some way with ROSL since the mid-1970s and was very flattered when ROSL asked me to be involved in the DVD project. And as it developed and reached completion over the last year, my knowledge of the ROSL deepened greatly", he says.

"I was very pleased that my old friend and colleague, Chris Swann, was free to take on the task of welding the many strands of League



WORK OF FANTASY: Filming took place at Hospitalfield, Arbroath, the inspirational house and gardens where ROSL visual arts scholars are given the space to develop their ideas

activity into a coherent whole, as I know he is an extremely talented filmmaker. The result is a film of enthralling variety and interest, reflecting the manifold activities ROSL is involved in worldwide. It should be of enormous interest to present members, and particularly inviting to potential members. I feel very proud to be a part of the final product."

Though a newcomer to ROSL, the director shares his friend's enthusiasm: "I knew nothing of ROSL when I embarked on the anniversary film. I had, in the past, glimpsed its fine clubhouse, but I had no idea what went on there. What I discovered was a London club with a difference: a place of quiet discretion, filled with people drawn from all over the Commonwealth, which was also a hive of activity. There were dynamic programmes and competitions, encouraging and giving opportunities to young people in the arts. There is constant thought given to developing these opportunities, for instance ROSL's ongoing good works in the vast spaces of Namibia. At the same time, I was able to film at the stimulating and far-ranging events for members that ROSL arranges in its clubhouses and beyond."

"With its long history, ROSL could afford to be nostalgic, but, in its 100th year, it is more

concerned with the future than its past. It is unlike any London club I have ever entered – both in its ambition and its achievements – a place where anyone could belong."

As executive producer, I was given an invaluable opportunity to witness, from start to finish, the various stages involved in creating a DVD, and I have found the whole experience fascinating. I feel privileged to have been involved in such a diverse and exciting project, and I sincerely hope that viewers will enjoy the end result as much as we have enjoyed making it.

*Christopher Swann Associates,
www.swannfilms.com.*

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Street, W1W 8QL; 020 7637 7342;
www.directorscutfilms.com.*

SPECIAL OFFER

The ROSL DVD is available for sale from the ROSL Shop. Purchase a copy before 31 August for the special price of £5 (expected normal retail price £7.50).

15 years on...

In the ROSL-Namibia project's 15th year, **Margaret Adrian-Vallance** looks back at its developments, and wonders at how much the country has changed

2010, year of the ROSL centenary, is also the 20th anniversary of Namibia's independence and the 15th year of the ROSL-Namibia project, which helps young people in remote areas to get an education. In addition, it is the first year in which a substantial donation from a charitable foundation will supplement donations from members. Appropriately, La Fondation Espace Afrique was started in Africa, by an African, for Africa – what could be a nicer endorsement of ROSL members' support over the years than a donation from such an organisation?

La Fondation was created by Beninese Monsieur Samuel Dossou-Aworet and the Petrolin Group in 1994, to improve the social

conditions of disadvantaged rural populations. Today, it helps a wide range of humanitarian, ecological and educational projects in Benin, Congo, Gabon, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Cote D'Ivoire, and now Namibia.

In the immediate aftermath of a recession, the grant could not have come at a more appreciated time. ROSL is very grateful to the foundation for its generosity and interest, and also to Central Council member Clive Carpenter for effecting an introduction between the two organisations and for generally promoting the ROSL-Namibia project to the foundation.

At meetings to discuss the funding application, the foundation's director, Maryce Dossou, raised many interesting questions,

RIISING TO THE TOP: ROSL bursary recipient Cwisa Cwi, now a school principal, with learners and teachers at Denlui School near Tsumkwe



including 'Could it be duplicated in other countries?' and 'Why does the project work?'

The answer to the first question is probably 'yes', but this would depend on individual policies regarding education in remote areas and the availability of long-term funding to take this forward in a sensitive way. The answer to the latter is the long-term commitment by ROSL members to youngsters in isolated communities who want an education, and the Namibian government's determination to see that they get it. As many young people need support year on year – from primary to tertiary education – continuous help from ROSL has been vital. Apart from aid agencies, what other organisation would make such a commitment?

"We are very lucky to be Namibian," says Cwisa Cwi, a ROSL bursary recipient who is now back in his Ju/'hoansi homeland of the Nyae Nyae, where he is principal of five bush schools. "Some other countries do not let San (Bushman) continue to hunt in the traditional





THE SCHOOL RUN: The deserts of the Kalahari and Namib are beautiful but challenging for those who want to reach a school

way, as we can here. Others are moved from where they live. Here, we can still combine modern ways with traditional ways.”

Remote Himba communities are also combining tradition with modern life. When I first went to Namibia, in 1995, there were very few Himba students at Windhoek College of Education, and ROSL bursary recipient Kaijandere Kaizondjou, now a teacher in Otjikoto, was one of the first. In contrast, in 2008, there were 16 Himba applicants for ROSL bursaries at the college.

So what other changes have there been over the last 15 years? The ability to communicate by mobile phone and email in this gigantic country must be one of the biggest. But with some remote areas not yet on the national grid, keeping in touch can still require nerves of steel and a 4x4, at certain times of the year. Pot holes after rain, hail stones the size of plums, flooding and bush fires can all add to the excitement of travelling

in this beautiful country.

Education has come a long way too, with many more new schools and community centres. Tsumkwe, for example, now has a new school and craft centre, built with help from China. The Otjivero settlement – a community of displaced farm workers living under corrugated iron in 1995 – had a new school within two years, and is now unrecognisable.

Wonderfully, many attractive elements remain the same. Namibia is still famed for its well-maintained roads – both tarmac and gravel – and for the attractive picnic areas en route. These are usually under a large tree, with a round concrete table and seating. There is never any graffiti. The large refuse bins are made from recycled oil drums. Constantly cleared, they are even on a swing for easy emptying. Namibia is still big on recycling and tidiness in public areas. Indeed, it is said that a senior member of the government once closed

down an entire town for two days until all litter had been removed.

Some people wonder if Namibia is as barren and basic as pictures suggest. The answer is that, after heavy rain, even the deserts bloom. At Ongava near Etosha you could be forgiven for thinking you were in rural Gloucestershire. And in the luxurious lodges and city centres of Windhoek and Swakopmund, with their shops, spas, cafes, bars, restaurants and nightclubs, ‘basic’ is not a word that comes to mind.

But there is the quandary: in spite of this, it is usually the people of the wild, remote areas, and the sheer magnificence of Namibia’s desert scenery, that leave the longest impression. After all, you can find shops and cafes almost everywhere. When two ROSL bursary recipients visit the UK for the centenary celebrations, it will be interesting to learn what will be their most lasting impression of this country.

Reaching higher

Natasha Lokhun on the scholarship plan that has helped to train many Commonwealth leaders and pioneers

Commonwealth scholarships are, along with the Games, perhaps the best-known carriers of the Commonwealth brand. Since their inception 50 years ago, more than 26,000 people from every Commonwealth country have held scholarships or fellowships, enabling them to travel to, and study in, another country. Many of these have gone on to become leaders and pioneers in their chosen professions.

How it works

The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) was created by Commonwealth education ministers in 1959. The five main principles of the plan, laid down at this time, are that it would:

- be distinct and additional to any other schemes
- be based on mutual cooperation and the sharing of educational experience among all Commonwealth countries
- be flexible, to take account of changing needs over time
- be Commonwealth-wide, and based on a series of bilateral arrangements between home and host countries
- recognise and promote the highest level of intellectual achievement.

The plan still abides by these principles, and is a prime example of Commonwealth collaboration. Each member government decides if it wishes to offer scholarships and/or fellowships, and operates the selection process, asking other Commonwealth countries to nominate appropriate candidates. In this way, the CSFP has supported scholars and fellows of the highest calibre, as well as contributing to home countries' needs.

The biggest contributor to the plan is the UK, as was intended at the start. Other major host countries include Canada, India and New Zealand, and more than 20 countries have hosted scholars or fellows at some point. The nature of the awards on offer has also changed, from straightforward postgraduate research scholarships to postdoctoral research fellowships, distance learning scholarships, and fellowships for mid-career professionals.

The advantages of international study and exchange are well documented. Students have the opportunity to experience a different social and academic culture, host universities benefit from a more diverse student body, and home countries gain from the skills and expertise of the students when they return home and put them into use.

The CSFP has a unique dimension, of course: the Commonwealth. The



POSITIVE EXCHANGE: A discussion session at the 2009 Welcome Day

exchange of young people between Commonwealth countries is facilitated by a common language and similar tertiary education systems, and also encourages cross-cultural respect and understanding – a central tenet of the Commonwealth.

The alumni

Commonwealth scholarships and fellowships are highly prized all over the world, and this reputation is only enhanced by the achievements of our alumni. Of the 26,000 scholars and fellows, 16,000 were funded by the UK government, via the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC). The CSC launched an evaluation and monitoring programme in 2007, to assess the impact of its Commonwealth scholarships and fellowships on individuals, their employers, and wider society.

The findings of the programme so far paint an impressive picture of our alumni. A 2008 survey found that 88% of respondents were based and working in their home countries; 90% reported activity in at least one of 12 key priority areas for development and leadership; and 45% reported having an influence on government thinking in their countries. A quarter had held an elected or nominated public office; half reported involvement in charities and other NGOs, in addition to paid employment; and 92% reported maintaining links with contacts or institutions in the UK.

These results have helped to confirm a long record of excellence and impact. Since the early days of the plan, scholars and fellows have gone on to lead illustrious careers. More than 50 alumni are known to have served at Cabinet level, including the former Prime Minister of St Lucia, Kenny Anthony, and the former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of New Zealand, Michael Cullen. A further 53 have served as ambassadors, central bank governors, permanent secretaries and supreme court judges, in countries such as Nigeria, Canada, Singapore and Uganda. At least 80 have been university vice-chancellors. In fact, higher education is the most popular destination for our alumni, meaning that Commonwealth scholars and fellows have influenced thousands of students throughout the Commonwealth.

Looking to the future

The 50th anniversary of the CSFP in 2009-2010 was marked by plans to expand the scheme more widely than ever. Countries such as Brunei Darussalam, Botswana, Ghana, Malaysia and South Africa have started to



for new Commonwealth scholars and fellows

offer awards again in recent years, and they have been joined by Singapore this year.

The founders of the plan always intended it to be truly Commonwealth-wide, and for students from developed nations to travel to developing nations, as well as vice versa. To bolster the contributions of national governments, Commonwealth education ministers have established a 50th-anniversary endowment fund, which will support Commonwealth scholarships in low and middle income countries. As well as providing a counter-flow of exchanges, the fund will also enable more south-south collaboration, while providing a route for host universities to promote themselves and attract high-quality international talent.

Launched at the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Kuala Lumpur, in June 2009, the fund has already raised £1.75 million from governments, organisations and alumni – and we would like to thank the ROSL for their donation. We anticipate that the first awards will be held in late 2010 or early 2011. Likely host countries for these first scholarships and fellowships include Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nigeria, and the South Pacific.

As well as the scholarships themselves, our activities continue to expand. The CSC operates a series of professional networks, linking current scholars and fellows and alumni in nine specific fields. These networks, operated electronically, are part of our programme to maintain contact with our scholars and fellows after they complete their studies (we also publish a regular magazine, *Commonwealth Scholarships News*). Two new networks, in 'law' and 'faiths and civil society', were launched last year.

In addition, we are exploring ways to develop our in-country alumni activities. We currently have three alumni chapters, in Australia, Canada and Mauritius, and are exploring options for a fourth in Trinidad and Tobago.

As ever, all these plans have at their core the spirit of Commonwealth collaboration envisaged by the founders of the CSFP. We are keen, wherever possible, to build on this by working with other Commonwealth organisations and supporters, to ensure that the next 50 years of Commonwealth scholarships are as glorious as the first.

Natasha Lokhun is Communications Officer at the Association of Commonwealth Universities.



Will power.

Douglas Bader was legendary for his dogged determination and will power, refusing to let the loss of both his legs prevent him from flying Spitfires in the Second World War.

These qualities of determination and will power are shared by the men and women, past and present, of the Royal Air Force family who secured and maintain our freedom today. Qualities that, sadly, are often needed to fight different battles such as disability, age, accident, illness and poverty. The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund has a duty to assist such family members. You have the power to help by remembering the RAF family as you remember your family in your will.

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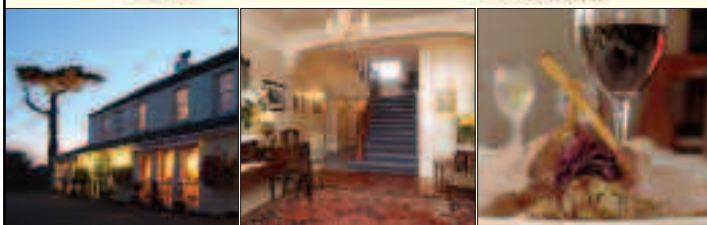
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Ashes to Ashes

Oli Broom's 14-month charity bike ride challenges his preconceptions as he travels through Sudan and Syria



Since my last installment, I have pedalled through the souks and deserts of Syria, along the Dead Sea in Jordan, haggled for every street meal in touristy Egypt, and survived a month of fava beans in the deserts of Sudan. The African leg over, I arrived in Mumbai, refreshed after a couple of weeks in Kenya, and ready to tackle the long Indian leg.

The weather occupies my mind a lot these days – I wouldn't be British if it didn't. Six weeks of rain in Turkey didn't stop when I reached Syria, and it got worse as I was welcomed by a flurry of snow in Damascus. But, within days, I was basking in warm Dead Sea air, and most of the past two months have been uncomfortably hot, with a particular lowlight being the 172km day into Khartoum in 52 degree heat.

I have loved the cycling, the sights and the solitude, but throughout the first six months, it has been the strangers I have made friends with who have made the journey so rewarding. In Syria and Sudan, I met people who both challenged and reinforced my preconceptions. In Syria, a mechanical engineer called Musab stopped me one evening to invite me to stay at his house. There, we ate *ful medammas* and bread, while his wife and sisters watched, and by midnight there were 25 men playing cards downstairs, while the women did the same upstairs. By the end of the night, my bike was the screensaver on every phone in the room.

I cycled through Sudan with four other Brits and, after a week-long slog through the Nubian desert, we reached Atbara, where a mild-mannered Arabic teacher called Muhammed soon invited us to spend the night in his home. Over the two nights we spent in the home he was born in, 63 years ago, we met more than 20 members of his family (pictured above) and ate feast after feast while they watched us, refusing to eat until we had re-fuelled for the journey ahead. Before we left, Muhammed presented us with goody bags full of drinks, sugar, sweets, milk, tea and biscuits.

I often try to remember what I expected of Syria and Sudan before I set off. Both countries have issues that are well-documented, but I met only a handful of people who were less than friendly, and had to turn down countless offers of hospitality. I wonder if a stranger in England would find themselves on the receiving end of such kindness?

Cycling to the Ashes in Association with Betfair: 25,000km – 14 months – on a bike – with a cricket bat – for charity. For information email cyclingtotheashes@gmail.com or visit www.cyclingtotheashes.com.

Closing the gender gap

Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma on the work being done to support Commonwealth women

There is no greater indicator of the health and status of a society than the health and status – literal and metaphorical – of its women. That is why the Commonwealth has long put women high on its agenda.

Last year, my wife Babli and I visited Oloshoibor in Kenya's Rift Valley, where the Namayiana Women Group have been making Maasai beaded jewellery since 1985. Alongside the Kenya Export Promotion Council, the Commonwealth Secretariat has been giving the women training in product design and development, to help make the products more attractive to an international market. The scheme, which included a course on the costing and marketing of the jewellery, allowed the women to test their new designs at an international trade fair in Germany. I remember speaking to the Assistant Project Manager, Leah Tipina. "This project has changed our lives", she said. "We are able to improve our living standards, and even build better iron sheet houses." Initiatives such as these are vital to the women they help. In the semi-arid land around the town, many women live in poverty, without an education or access to clean water. This was the Commonwealth at work: transforming women's lives.

I saw the same phenomenon a year earlier, with the launch of a project to help craftswomen in Northern Pakistan to make a profit from their work. The 'Threads of Change' project – a partnership between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Rural Support Programme Network in Pakistan – was also targeted at encouraging rural development and alleviating poverty, by enabling the women to provide a better standard of living for their families.

However, the bulk of our Commonwealth work for women is about building policy and consensus. It has been, ever since the appointment of the first women's adviser at the Commonwealth Secretariat, 30 years ago.

The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality, 2005-2015 is well under way, with programmes on Gender and Democracy; Gender and Human Rights; Gender and Economic Empowerment; and Gender and HIV/Aids. Wherever possible, it is the product of cooperation within the Commonwealth family, as when we supported the Commonwealth Business Council in setting up the Commonwealth Business Women's Network.

Beyond our own circles, we have been instrumental in the campaign calling for a minimum 30% representation of women in parliament and local government. We have also been at the forefront of global efforts towards the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Meanwhile, we continuously build on existing treaties and agreements signed by governments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

All policy change is based on research and argumentation and – alongside the World Trade Organization – we have established gender analysis as part of trade policy, so that women benefit from trade liberalisation and have access to global markets. There are many issues on which we have both lobbied governments and given training – for instance in raising awareness among magistrates, customary chiefs and faith leaders on making judgements that understand and consider gender, and on protecting women's rights to land and other resources.

And, above and beyond training female entrepreneurs, there is government-to-government policy work to be done in researching the provisions for women in the Economic Partnership Agreements now being signed between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

The challenges are many and great. Two-thirds of people living below the poverty line



TRANSFORMING LIVES: Maasai craftswomen have better living conditions following training

worldwide are women. But negative statistics showing the enormity of the challenge simply encourage us to try even harder. A positive difference can be made.

The Commonwealth's power is its convening power, and the way it can apply shared values to shared networks. The health and status of women will again be centre stage in June, in Bridgetown, Barbados, when women's affairs ministers from across the Commonwealth will meet. The theme of that meeting is that women are crucial agents of transformation in economic recovery. For the first time, finance ministers and women's affairs ministers will sit together at the same table, and ask themselves how our public finances can be channelled towards this goal. Their collective views and actions in Barbados will feed into the preparations for the G8 and G20 summits, to be hosted by Canada in June, and the UN High Level Review of the Millennium Development Goals in New York, in September.

The Barbados meeting will also see the launch of a new research project that aims to share national strategies on promoting gender equity, and to ask why ministers of women's affairs have often had limited influence in cabinet decision-making. The project will draw on the experience of the countries that have improved the life chances of women. New Zealand – which in recent years had a female Prime Minister, Opposition leader, Head of State, Governor General and Chief Justice – is just one example. Our work can provide a comparative analysis of what works, and what does not work, in diverse development and cultural contexts.

We constantly ask ourselves how we can do better; and we join hands with activists across the globe in renewing our Commonwealth determination to count women in. In 2010, Commonwealth Day fell on the same day (8 March) as International Women's Day. It was a happy convergence of ideals.

A firefighter's work is never done

Chris Pritchard meets the women battling against Australia's bushfires, and members of the Lake Tyers unit, which was the country's first all-female brigade

Heat haze shimmers from an asphalt ribbon, which snakes from the front of the vehicle into eucalypt-dotted countryside. Giant flames are on the march, roaring down a nearby slope. It's a sadly seasonal scene, epitomising the Australian outback's long, hot summer. Fallen twigs and other debris explode with 'pop-pop-pop' sounds reminiscent of gunfire. But no guerrillas lurk here. Instead, through thick smoke, a fire-fighting team in bright orange overalls is visible. Among those bravely battling the blaze are several women.

Fighting bushfires is an all-too-familiar ritual in Australia, where career firefighters are often aided by members of volunteer

brigades and other community groups. While most full-time firefighters are men, growing numbers are women. The same is true at volunteer brigades.

A unique all-female sub-brigade was formed a decade ago in a tiny rural town in the southern Australian state of Victoria. A female resident named Margie Mobourne, now retired, founded it. She certainly didn't envisage it would be comprised solely of women. Fires, rather than gender issues, were on her mind during planning. However, after she pinned up notices calling for volunteers

emergency management organisations', with 'more than 59,000 volunteers, supported by over 400 career firefighters and officers and more than 700 career support and administrative staff.'

What differentiates volunteer brigades in Victoria (where Melbourne is the state capital) from those in other Australian states, and in other parts of the world, Harrap observes, "is that we don't just fight bushfires. Our brigades also put out any other fires – house blazes, for instance – in rural areas."

The Lake Tyers unit is a component of a volunteer brigade based in the nearby town of Toorloo Arm. Harrap recalls that Mobourne "visited the CFA and argued the aboriginal settlement at Lake Tyers needed its own volunteer brigade. She complained that the Lake Tyers community had been feeling heat from some Toorloo Arm people. Bored Lake Tyers youths had been setting a spate of bushfires – and Toorloo Arm volunteers were irritated by repeatedly having to put out these blazes. The idea was that Lake Tyers residents should be enabled to fight some fires themselves, without calling on the Toorloo Arm volunteers.

"Margie Mobourne's proposal was evaluated and it was decided the CFA would give her plan the go-ahead. Lake Tyers was provided with a fire engine, a building to store it in, uniforms, training and other necessities. From our point of view, the fact that they were all women wasn't particularly relevant."

The result: Mobourne's new team began fighting fires in and around Lake Tyers. "Rapid response is essential," says Harrap. "Once the unit was up and running, the aboriginal women could either put out a fire themselves or

RAPID RESPONSE: Margie Mobourne, founder of Lake Tyers sub-brigade, with some of her team



"We've proved that women are just as competent at fighting fires. I like to think we've been an inspiration"

she noticed that everyone displaying an interest happened to be female.

So, the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Volunteer Bushfire Brigade was born, with its 10 members – all of them women – drawn from a 200-strong local community.

"It's technically a sort of sub-brigade – what we call a satellite station," explains Glenn Harrap, operations officer at Victoria's Country Fire Authority. The authority describes itself as 'one of the world's largest volunteer-based



FEELING THE HEAT: Bushfires, such as this one in Victoria, spread very rapidly and are notoriously difficult to stop

summon help from the volunteers at Tarloo Arm, a half-hour's drive away. Things are still done the same way today."

Mobourne retired from firefighting three years ago. The unit is now led by another feisty woman, Rhonda Thorp. According to Thorp: "Deliberately-set bushfires are no longer one of the problems we face – perhaps the kids got bored with lighting them. Instead, we fight other bushfires and blazes in the settlement itself."

Thorp, who works as a driver for the local health service, says her community currently has six volunteers in the brigade "with a recruitment drive planned for later this year to beef up our membership. We want to get up to about a dozen volunteers or more."

Half the unit's present membership is male. "We take volunteers as they present themselves," says Thorp. "There never was any intention to exclude men or create an all-woman team. That's just the way things turned out. Women seemed keener to join. But, later on, men started taking an interest – perhaps as a result of women's enthusiasm."

"We've certainly proved that women are just as competent at fighting fires. There are no jobs where women aren't as capable as men. What's more, we've been an example to brigades around Australia and in other parts of the world – and also to women."

More and more women are becoming involved with fighting fires. I like to think we've been an inspiration."

One indicator of change: 'firefighter' is an increasingly common description, rather than

"There never was any intention to exclude men or create an all-woman team. Women seemed keener to join"

'fireman'. While reliable data about the number of women firefighters worldwide isn't available, about 6,200 women currently work as full-time firefighters in the United States, with an estimated 40,000 more involved in volunteer programmes.

Anecdotal evidence indicates similarly significant involvement of women around the world, in both developed and developing countries. Although cultural taboos prevent or limit the involvement of women in some

countries, statistics suggest a notable female presence among firefighters in Australia, Britain, Canada, Ghana, New Zealand, and Trinidad and Tobago. The International Association of Women in Fire and Emergency Services is aware of almost 100 female firefighters being killed at work in modern times.

Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust administers the Lake Tyers hamlet, which is also known by its aboriginal name, Bung Yardna. The land on which the settlement stands and the surrounding area were handed back to the local community 40 years ago as freehold. A trend to return land to traditional aboriginal owners continues across Australia.

Fires fortunately don't happen every day. In between, the Lake Tyers unit keeps busy. "The fire engine has to be taken out for regular test drives and kept in tip-top condition," says Thorp. "Everything must be maintained – so that we're ready to roll when a fire breaks out." There is, she confides, "a sense of satisfaction in conquering fires that threaten human settlements. It's wonderful that women are playing an increasingly important role in doing this."

ROSL member Chris Pritchard is a Sydney-based journalist whose work appears in Australian, Asian, British and North American publications.

Influential women of the Commonwealth

In a world where women still do not have equal access to power and economic security, we celebrate just some of the women who are making a difference

Rebecca Lolosoli



A Founding Member and Chair of the women-only village Umoja, in the Samburu District of northern Kenya, Rebecca Samaria Lolosoli (b.1962) was forced out of her village after speaking out on behalf of women who had been raped there. Fearing for her life after being beaten and hospitalised, she established Umoja, which means 'unity' in Swahili, with 16 other homeless women. The village continues to provide a safe haven for women and girls fleeing abuse, torture and violence.

With the goal of curbing violence against women, and ending negative cultural practices that are harmful to them, Lolosoli continues to fight for women's rights, despite repeated beatings and death threats. For 10 years, she was chair of Maendeleo Ya Wanawake – a national organisation fighting female genital mutilation, child marriages and pregnancies.

Inspired by Lolosoli and her group, around

60 other women's groups have been established in northern Kenya over the last 20 years. The members of these organisations come to Umoja for training and information. Lolosoli's group also holds workshops, for both men and women, on issues such as the rights of girls and female reproductive health.

Others fighting for women's rights

Margaret Alva



Now the Governor of Uttarakhand and a senior leader of the Indian National Congress, Margaret Alva (b.1942) championed four major legislative amendments to strengthen women's rights, while an MP (1974-2004). Having helped establish a quota system, which ensures that a third of local council seats are held by women, she made it her mission to encourage women to stand for office. This year, she announced various schemes to support women in Uttarakhand, including an increase to the stamp duty exemption for women and a fund for girl babies born to below poverty level families.

Saisuree Chutikul

Thailand's representative on the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Dr Saisuree Chutikul (b.1935)

is one of the world's leading voices in the fight against human trafficking. As a minister in the 1990s, she helped to revise Thai laws to create stricter penalties against those involved in perpetrating prostitution; as a senator, she set up units for the protection of women and children. Having worked for the United Nations commissions on the Status of Women and on the Rights of the Child, she now serves on the Board of Directors of a number of organisations supporting women and children.

Indira Nath

India's leading female scientist and an internationally renowned expert on leprosy, Indira Nath (b.1938) is Emeritus Professor and Chair of the Research Advisory Committee at the Institute of Pathology in New Delhi. She trained as a doctor and pathologist at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi, and went on to become Director of LEPRO, the leprosy research centre in Hyderabad. When she began her career, as a Nuffield Postdoctoral Fellow, in 1971, India had the largest number of leprosy patients in the world. The numbers affected by the disease have since fallen from 4.5 million to less than 1 million, partly due to her work. By identifying a deficiency in the immune response system of people with the most dangerous form of leprosy, she made it possible for vital new treatments, vaccines and diagnostic tools to be developed. Her efforts also helped to minimise the number of leprosy disfigurements, which were once commonplace in India.

A distinguished Ramanna Fellow at the Institute of Pathology (Indian Council of Medical Research), Professor Nath has been presented with civilian honours in both India and France, and received the L'Oréal-UNESCO Women in Science

award in 2002. She has influenced India's health education and science policies, serving for five years on the Science Advisory Committee to the government, and is currently a member of several national and international advisory boards.

Also from the world of science

Valerie Mizrahi

A Research Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand Medical School, South Africa, Valerie Mizrahi has made significant contributions to the fight against HIV, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. Her research in molecular biology led to important discoveries about how these diseases work. As Alternate-Director, DST-NRF Centre of Excellence for Biomedical Research, and Director of the Molecular Mycobacteriology Research Unit of the South African Medical Research Council, she has trained a number of highly talented researchers.

Indra Nooyi



As the CEO of PepsiCo, Indra Krishnamurthy Nooyi (b.1955) has increased the company's profit margin while making its foods healthier and production methods more eco-friendly. Since she became President and CFO in 2001, she has directed the company's global strategy, branching out into new foreign markets. With revenues increasing by more than 70%, PepsiCo surpassed Coca-Cola in market value for the first time, making it the fourth largest food and drink company in the world.

As CFO, Nooyi oversaw the restructuring of the company and the creation of Yum! Brands, which is now the world's largest fast food corporation, operating Taco Bell, KFC and Pizza

Hut. Since 2008, she has been Chair of the US-India Business Council, a non-profit business advocacy organisation representing more than 300 of the world's largest companies doing business in India. She has been named World's Most Powerful Woman in Business by *Fortune* magazine every year since 2006, and was decorated with the Padma Bhushan in 2007.

Also from the world of business

Maria Ramos

Credited with nursing South Africa's economy back to health following the end of apartheid, Maria Da Conceicao Das N C Ramos (b.1959) is currently CEO of the Barclays subsidiary Absa, one of South Africa's largest financial services companies. In the mid 1990s, as Director-General of South Africa's National Treasury, she worked on the fiscal aspects of the Interim Constitution, helping to reduce borrowing and instil fiscal discipline. Until moving to Absa last year, she was Chief Executive of the state-owned transportation company Transnet for five years.

Blossom O'Meally-Nelson

Dr Blossom O'Meally-Nelson was Jamaica's first female Postmaster General and, as CEO of the Postal Corporation of Jamaica, she spearheaded several initiatives aimed at transforming the island's postal services. The founder of two conservation organisations in Jamaica, she is also leader of the National Development Foundation of Jamaica, which provides loans and assistance to small and micro-enterprises. She is currently CEO of the family-owned logistics company Aeromar Group.

Arundhati Roy



Best known for her Booker Prize-winning novel, *The God of Small Things*, Suzanna Arundhati Roy (b.1961) has since concentrated her writing on political issues. A figurehead of the anti-globalisation movement and a vehement critic of neo-imperialism, she has also condemned India's nuclear weapons policies and its approach to industrialisation.

Roy has campaigned vigorously against the Narmada Dam Project, which would involve the construction of a series of hydroelectric dams on the Narmada River in Gujarat. Her collection of writing, *The Cost of Living*, is a crusade against the project, which would displace half a million people. After donating her Booker Prize money to the NGO Narmada Bachao Andolan, which is fighting against the largest of the proposed dams, she took on the courts, accusing them of trying to silence criticism and dissent, for which she was sentenced to one day in jail.

Other influential activists

Helen Caldicott



An Australian physician, author and anti-nuclear advocate, Dr Helen Caldicott (b.1938) was one of the most influential women of the 20th century, according to the Smithsonian Institution. She has founded several associations against nuclear weapons and war, including the STAR (Standing for Truth About Radiation) Foundation, and written several books on the subject. The Founding President of Beyond Nuclear, which is working towards a global consensus to end all uses of nuclear energy, she has 20 honorary doctorates and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985. She hosts the weekly radio programme 'If You Love This Planet', named after the controversial Oscar-winning film of one of her lectures.

Germaine Greer

The Australian-born writer, academic and journalist Germaine Greer (b.1939) is widely regarded as one of the most significant

feminists of the later 20th century. She shot to fame in 1970, after her book, *The Female Eunuch*, became an international bestseller. Defining her goal as “women’s liberation”, Greer continues to write regularly for *The Guardian*, and appear on arts and politics shows in the UK.

Luísa Diogo



Luísa Dias Diogo (b.1958) was Prime Minister of Mozambique until January, when she took over the leadership of the Mozambican women’s business association, Activa. As the country’s first female Prime Minister, she played an important role in securing development projects and fought to reverse the spread of HIV, which has been contracted by 16% of citizens. An advocate of continent-wide health reform, she has urged other African leaders to introduce free reproductive and sexual health services, in accordance with UN targets.

Diogo was credited with ushering Mozambique to economic recovery in the aftermath of civil war, as Minister of Planning and Finance in the early 2000s. Her answer to the twin problems of poverty and slow economic growth was foreign aid, and her negotiating skills enabled her to secure grants from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other global organisations.

Diogo recently established the Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians, and as a member of the Council of Women World Leaders she continues to participate in global campaigns promoting gender equality and women’s development. As leader of Activa, which supports new, female-owned businesses, she is lobbying for improvements to the country’s infrastructure and roads.

Other national leaders

Sonia Gandhi



Although she turned down the position of Prime Minister in 2004, Sonia Gandhi (b.1946) holds one of the highest offices in the Indian Government, as President of the Indian National Congress party, Chair of the ruling United Progressive Alliance in the lower house of Parliament, and leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party. Her achievements in recent years include her key role in legislating the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which promises 100 days of employment a year to adults in rural areas, and the Right to Information Act – both in 2005. She also advocated an austerity drive for all Congress MPs and urged them to donate 20% of their salaries to the victims of India’s drought.

Roshaneh Zafar



Roshaneh Zafar (b.1968?) is Founder and Managing Director of the Kashf Foundation – the first specialised microfinance institution (MFI) managed for and by women in Pakistan.

Since its inception in 1996, Kashf (meaning ‘miracle’ in Urdu) has become the third largest MFI in the country, with more than 300,000 clients. For Zafar, microfinance is about giving women the financial means to realise their full potential and, to date, her foundation has given more than US\$225 million in loans to poor families in the Punjab and Sindh provinces.

She is convinced that training is vital to making microfinance work, so Kashf provides education and business development services aimed at increasing clients’ financial skills. The foundation has come some way towards accomplishing its goal of alleviating poverty by providing cost-effective microfinance services to low income households, while showing that investing in poor women can be profitable for private companies. It is the first organisation of its kind to become fully self sufficient, and the first NGO-MFI to provide insurance.

A Founding Member of the Pakistan Microfinance Network, Zafar participated in the UN Advisory Group on Inclusive Financial Services and was awarded the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz, one of Pakistan’s highest civilian awards, in 2005.

Others working in development

Wendy Luhabe



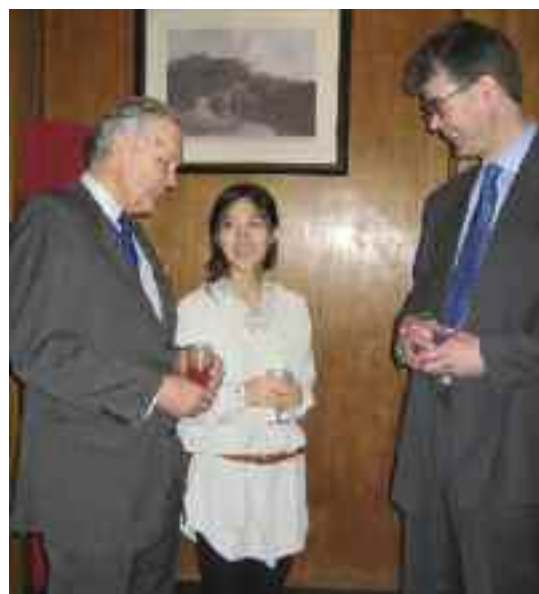
A highly respected entrepreneur and Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg, Wendy Yvonne Nomathemba Luhabe (b.1957) co-founded Wiphold (Women Investment Portfolio Holdings), an investment company for black women in South Africa, in 1994. Founded with the aim of empowering women, the organisation is now worth about R2 billion (£175 million) and is credited with revolutionising the participation of women in the economy. In 2002, Dr Luhabe launched a R120 million (£10 million) private equity fund for women-owned enterprises. Her eponymous foundation educates young disadvantaged black women, using profits from her book, *Defining Moments* (2002).

News and views

The latest from the London clubhouse



◀ Guest of honour and speaker at the January Central Council lunch was the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Duncan Sandys, pictured with (l-r) Mr Kevin Taylor (the Lord Mayor's Private Secretary), Lady Figgis and Sir Anthony Figgis (ROSL Chairman)



▼ The winner of the Easter draw in the restaurant, Christopher Mann, receives his magnum of champagne from Restaurant Manager Lauris Gudlevskis



► Sir Anthony Figgis (l) and guest of honour and speaker Dr Alex May (r) talk to Young Artist of Thailand winner, Duangtawon (Winnie) Rintanalet, before the Central Council lunch in March



◀ In March, ROSL ARTS bid Marketing Assistant Renée Jones (second from left) a fond farewell before she returned home to Australia

◀ (l-r) Gosia Struska, Maribel Angco and Zoe Padoan at a reception to mark Maribel's retirement after 26 years of service in the ROSL Buttery



UK première of Pianorama



53 one-minute pieces, nine artists, one venue: **Alison Cox** on bringing this ground-breaking work to Over-Seas House

In 2008, a group of international pianists and I embarked on an ambitious project to commission 53 one-minute piano pieces, representing each of the member countries of the Commonwealth, for the multicultural Commonwealth Resounds music festival – part of the 2009 CHOGM in Trinidad and Tobago. The performers and composers would include as many different Commonwealth musicians as possible. The project was named Pianorama, as a pun on 'Panorama', the well-known Trinidadian steel pan festival.

Over six months, Commonwealth composers were identified by phone, email and sometimes by chance meetings. It was not easy to communicate with composers in remote, developing countries, with limited access to the internet or mobiles, and the team was unable to find indigenous composers from all Commonwealth countries in time for the world première in Trinidad and Tobago on 24

November 2009. I therefore adopted an alternative strategy, and invited composers from UK music conservatories and specialist music schools to study the music of the 'missing' countries, and to write a one-minute piano piece in response. The Purcell School imaginatively organised a composition marathon to help fill the gaps.

Exactly two months after the successful world première, during celebrations linked to CHOGM, we were delighted to present the European première in Princess Alexandra Hall at Over-Seas House, London, under the auspices of ROSL ARTS. On Sunday 24 January, nine talented pianists arrived early to try out the fine Steinway piano in the hall and prepare for the event. The pianists represented a number of different countries. Teo Gheorghiu from Switzerland, Deanna Lye from Singapore, Nicholas Oliver, Kit Downes, Sean Jackson and Tyler Hay from the UK, Alexandra Gracheva

from Russia, Júlia Hámos from Hungary/USA and Men Gei Li from China/UK performed the 53 pieces between them.

Three distinguished international composers – Clarel Betsy (Mauritius), Charalambos Sophocleous (Cyprus) and Alexander Johnson (South Africa) – made a special journey to London for the event, and several other UK-based composers were also present. To accompany the performance, a colourful PowerPoint presentation had been created, showing information about each piece, and images from the different countries and of the composers themselves.

It was a particular privilege to be able to hear a group of pieces by outstanding composers from the Royal College of Music and Royal Northern College of Music. The audience particularly appreciated Tom Harrold's fiendish piece for Barbados, *Whaloss!*, meaning 'Oh My Goodness!' in Bajan, and Jamie Man's *Opus 64 no. 4* – a more than challenging minute's worth of music for Dominica.

The final pieces in the performance were written by two excellent young composers: Lloyd Coleman, a pupil from Chetham's School of Music, whose piece, *A Country Scene and Progression*, represented the UK; and Liam Paterson, whose wonderful miniature *Frigate Dancing* was a response to the music and culture of Kiribati. After the performance, members of the audience, performers and composers had a delicious cream tea, and took the opportunity to network and enjoy an intense musical discussion.

Pianorama has been a fascinating experiment. It has been extremely worthwhile for a large number of Commonwealth composers; created prestigious performing opportunities for talented international pianists; and has been informative and rewarding for audiences. The geographical spread and influence of the project has been extraordinary.

Musical tribute

Maldivian composer Shamun Hameed's beautiful and intensely moving short piano piece, *Paradise Drowning*, which was given an expressive performance by Júlia Hámos, made a particularly strong impression. Hameed wrote of the piece: 'Coastal zones were eroded, and the tsunami's waves spread solid waste around the islands. Groundwater supplies were badly contaminated, further compromising an already fragile drinking water supply system. Inundated with seawater, vegetation and crops crucial to the islanders were badly damaged or destroyed. My piece is dedicated to the people, still suffering, in the Maldives.'



PARADISE DROWNING: Shamun Hameed (above) pays tribute to victims of the tsunami (top)

Music, food and love

Younger Members enjoyed an entertaining end to the winter programme, says **Alexandra Debarge**

February

The younger members got cosy at the glamorous Valentine's Rotational Dinner, hosted by the Farmer's Club in one of their private dining rooms. With pink fizz to keep the conversation flowing, there was romance in the air, and the committee is now waiting with interest to see whether the first Inter-Club wedding is around the corner.

Later in February, a drinks reception was held in the private office and meeting rooms of the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Duncan Sandys. The stunning view over London from the top of Westminster City Hall, provided the backdrop for the Inter-Club's first charitable event, which raised more than £1,000 for St Andrew's Club in Victoria. The Lord Mayor began with a witty speech about what his role entails, and then gave a guided tour of the plate room, which is home to Westminster Council's many treasures.

March

Members of the Inter-Club group congregated at the Oriental Club to spend an evening in the company of the renowned international pianist Yuki Negishi. In what was the Inter-Club's first classical music recital, Yuki performed a variety of pieces, celebrating the 200-year anniversary of Schumann and Chopin, on the club's recently acquired Blüthner baby grand piano.

After the performance, many members sampled the Oriental Club's signature curry and took the opportunity to speak to Yuki and get an insight into the life of an international concert pianist. Several members then retired to the RAC Club to discuss the performance, ogle the Formula 1 racing car in the lobby, and sample the wide range of fine cocktails at the bar. Carriages were finally called in the early hours, with guests heading home, culturally, gastronomically and socially sated.



© Chris Bursley

POLITICS AND PIANOS: Younger members enjoy a tour of the offices of the Lord Mayor of Westminster Duncan Sandys (above); and mingle after the classical music recital at the Oriental Club in March



© Chris Bursley

Forthcoming events

Thursday 3 June

Wine tasting at the City University Club

Friday 25 June

Centenary Summer Ball at the Royal Over-Seas League

Wednesday 14 July

Garden party at the Travellers Club

Sunday 22 August

Tennis and barbecue at the Queen's Club

Thursday 9 September

Inter-Club Crawl, organised by the Savile Club

Thursday 16 September

Grouse Gourmet Dinner at the Oxford and Cambridge Club

For more information on events, visit www.inter-club.co.uk. To join ROSL's young members network, email conrad.purcell@res-ltd.com.

Thailand's top talent

Join **Jim Napier**, Chairman of the Thailand Branch, at the Young Musician of Thailand 2010 competition in Bangkok, and Director of ROSL ARTS, **Roderick Lakin**, on a cultural tour of London, arranged for 2009's Young Artist of Thailand

ROSL Young Musician of Thailand

On the evening of 3 April, the Conrad Bangkok Hotel Ballroom witnessed another superb concert, as five finalists competed for The Royal Trophy, given by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, and recognition as ROSL Thailand's Young Musician of the Year 2010.

Preceded by a magnificent reception for the finalists, VIPs and other guests, generously hosted by the Conrad Hotel, the competition lasted for more than an hour,

with each finalist playing two pieces on their chosen instrument.

The judging panel, headed by Chris Craker (former GM and Senior VP of Sony BMG Masterworks), had the unenviable task of selecting a winner from the two pianists, two violinists and one guitar player. These young men and women, aged 14-18, included students at the Mahidol University College of Music and pupils at Shrewsbury International School in Bangkok. They displayed a poise and professional maturity that belied their young ages. None of the five performances

would have been out of place in any concert hall.

Inevitably, there had to be one winner and the judges were unanimous in awarding the winner's prize to 15-year-old Nicha Stapanukul, a pianist from Concordian International School at BangNa. Nicha had entered the competition in 2008 and failed to reach the semi-final, but she made a triumphant return this year to receive the King's Trophy. In addition to this prestigious award, she received a cheque for 100,000 Thai baht and two return air-tickets to London. During her stay at Over-Seas House, London, she will perform in a concert in Princess Alexandra Hall, as well as taking part in cultural visits and lessons with prominent UK piano teachers.



PIANIST TRIUMPHS: The Young Musician of Thailand 2010 winner, Nicha Stapanukul, receives the King's Trophy from the celebrated conductor HE Admiral Mom Luang Usni Pramoj

PRIVATE VIEW: First Secretary of the Royal Thai Embassy Rutchabroon Boonrawd (left) with the winner of the Young Artist of Thailand competition, Winnie Rintanalert, and ROSL Director-General Robert Newell in front of Winnie's painting at the private view in March



ROSL Young Artist of Thailand

ROSL ARTS invited the winner of the 2009 ROSL Young Artist of Thailand competition, 16-year-old Duantawan (Winnie) Rintanalert, to spend a week in London in March. The visit was scheduled to coincide with the opening of an exhibition at Over-Seas House, London, of works of art by finalists from the competition.

Winnie's full and varied schedule included visits to major galleries and sights, including, Tate Britain, Tate Modern and the Van Gogh exhibition at the Royal Academy; theatre outings to Michael Morpurgo's *Warhorse* and the spectacular celebration of street dance, *Blaze*; a flight on the London Eye; and a traditional afternoon tea at Fortnum and Mason. The trip was a welcome break from A-level studies for Winnie, who was joined by her father and brother, who is a design student at Glasgow School of Art.

The exhibition is showing at Over-Seas House, Edinburgh until 25 June, and ROSL ARTS has arranged for Winnie to enjoy a similar trip to Scotland while it is on.



ROSL Annual Report 2009

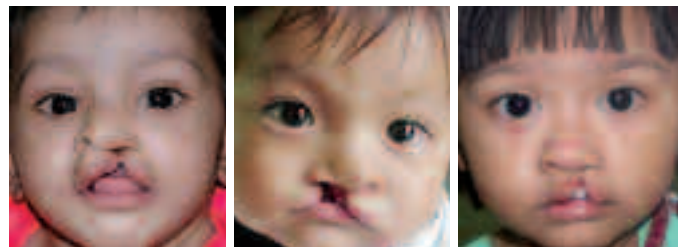
In spite of the recession, the 2009 Annual Report reflects ROSL's ability to weather economic storms, and even thrive during such downturns. Although the first six months were difficult, the Honorary Treasurer Simon Ward reports that 'happily, by the third quarter, bedroom occupancy at Over-Seas House, London, had picked up, so that the operating surplus there, for 2009, of £281,008 compared favourably with the surplus achieved in 2008'. The £1,484,706 income from subscriptions and joining fees also held up well.

This was fortunate, as unexpected and costly maintenance was required in Rutland House and the Westminster Wing. However, there were sufficient funds to refurbish several of the 80 bedrooms, repair all the 18th-century balconies overlooking the garden, and prepare for the centenary year.

The report also records the varied activities of the Discussion, House Advisory, London and Younger Members' groups; branches around the world; events programmes; ROSL ARTS and the ROSL-Namibia project.

The 2009 Annual Report was edited, designed and produced in-house by Samantha Whitaker, from the PR department, who is also the assistant editor of *Overseas*.

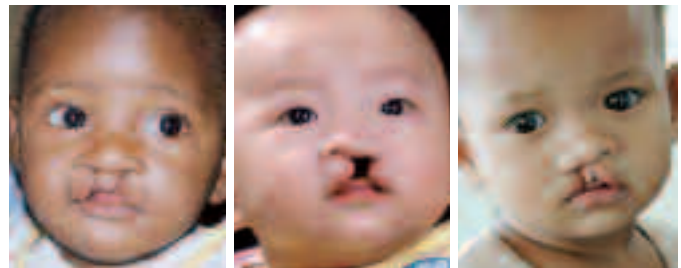
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Anu, 2 years,
India

Eduardo, 6 months,
Peru

Nisa, 4 years,
Indonesia



Kabir, 7 months,
Nigeria

Guo Sen, 6 months,
China

On Sokhorn,
13 months, Cambodia

The Smile Train provides life changing free cleft surgery for children in developing countries which takes as little as 45 minutes and costs as little as £150.

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OR call: 0870 127 6269

Registered Charity No. 1114748

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A healthy diet is a crucial part of pregnancy and can help to prevent birth defects. Make sure you eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and take a multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid every day for a month before conception and throughout early pregnancy. Folic acid has been shown to reduce the risk of neural tube defects of the brain and spinal cord (such as spina bifida) in unborn children, and could help reduce the risk of cleft lip and palate. It is also important to stop smoking. Speak to your GP for further advice, and for more information about clefts, visit www.smiletrain.org.uk

ROSL WORLD

The latest from the global branches



AROUND THE GLOBE: In Alberta, Dr Leslie Green presented a cheque for CAN\$1,000 and certificate to the 2009 recipient of the Eva Johnson Memorial Scholarship, Yeshna Neeraj; (l-r) Sir Anthony Figgis, Sir William Heseltine and WA Branch Chairman Jeff Turner at a reception for Sir Anthony and Lady Figgis when they visited Perth; Sir Anthony and Patricia Tritton (right) at a dinner hosted by Queensland Branch Chairman Sharon Morgan

Australia

Members in Australia were delighted that Sir Anthony and Lady Figgis were able to visit all six branches, as well as the capital, Canberra, on their tour of Australia and New Zealand. In **Queensland**, the branch Chairman, Sharon Morgan, and her husband hosted a dinner at their home for several distinguished guests, and a high tea at the Queensland Club, where Sir Anthony gave a speech to members. The Chairman and his wife then visited Lone Pine Sanctuary and 'Gooloowan' in Ipswich, the historical home of members Dr Graham and Genevieve Isbell, and had lunch at their country cattle property.

In Adelaide Sir Anthony and Lady Figgis were hosted by members of the **South Australia** Branch, while the city buzzed with Fringe and Festival events. They were given a tour of the city, had lunch with ROSL members, and visited the art gallery, botanical gardens and Government House.

In **Western Australia**, they viewed aboriginal art in the art gallery, and saw the permanent exhibition of Aboriginal life, in the museum. Despite temperatures of 42 degrees, they visited Parliament House and had afternoon tea with the President of the

Legislative Council, the Hon Barry House, and Clerk, Malcolm Peacock, who are both ROSL members. The next day, the Chairman and his wife met with ROSL members at a reception held by the branch.

After the formal business at the Western Australia Branch AGM in March, historian June Turner read excerpts of Adele Smith's 'History' and congratulated the author on a fine piece of work. A number of the books were purchased.

Sir Anthony and Lady Figgis's tour also took them to **Victoria**, where they stayed at the RACV Club (a ROSL reciprocal club), and to Melbourne, where they enjoyed a dinner with branch President Jason Ronald and other distinguished guests. They took a tram ride to Station Pier and joined Melbourne Branch members on a tour of the Dawn Princess. Later, they called at Government House for tea with the Governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser, and met 50 members and friends at a reception in the home of the British Consul-General, Stuart Gill, and his wife Maggie.

During the Chairman's visit, Melbourne experienced its worst storm in a century, and the Commonwealth Day Service, at which he read the second lesson, had to be conducted in the Sanctuary of St Paul's Cathedral because the

Nave had been damaged by the storm. The service was followed by a lunch at ESU House, organised by the Council of British and Commonwealth Societies, at which Sir Anthony was the guest speaker.

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

Queensland: Sharon Morgan,
sllmorgan@hotmail.com

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

Tasmania: Robert Dick, gradick1@gmail.com

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

Western Australia: Jeff Turner, +61 9381 2600

Canada

Members of the **Alberta** Chapter gathered in the Crystal Room of the Royal Glenora Club in March for brunch and the AGM, which was both successful and productive. Dr Leslie Green, Professor Emeritus of the University of Alberta and twice past ROSL President in Alberta, presented a cheque for CAN\$1,000 and a certificate to the 2009 recipient of the Eva Johnson Memorial Scholarship, Yeshna Neeraj, a second-year Commonwealth student from New Delhi, India. Yeshna thanked members for the award and gave a brief

presentation of her work in Edmonton. The scholarship is named after Eva Johnson, a founder member of the ROSL in Edmonton.

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

British Columbia: Pamela Ducommun, +1 604 925 3719

Nova Scotia: Barbara Hughes, barbara.hughes@evansec.com

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

Hong Kong

In January, Dr Judith Mackay gave an address to the Hong Kong Branch at the China Club about the dangers of smoking. Branch members were invited to join members of the British Chamber of Commerce at the stylish Grand Hyatt Hotel in Wan Chai in February, and, in March, Commonwealth Day was celebrated with a reception in the library of the China Club, which was decorated with the branch's extensive collection of Commonwealth flags. The British Consul-General, Andrew Seaton, read The Queen's message, and the Indian Consul-General, Lal Duhthlana Ralte, read the message from the Commonwealth Secretary-General. The New Zealand Consul-General, Adele Bryant, spoke about the role of women in the Commonwealth, as 8 March was also International Women's Day. The Australian Consul-General, Les Luck, proposed a toast to the Commonwealth. Later in March, the branch helped to arrange a day out at Disneyland, Hong Kong, for members of the Hong Kong Federation of the Blind and their families.

Hong Kong: Paul Surtees, president@rosl.org.hk, www.rosl.org.hk

New Zealand

In New Zealand, members of the **Southland**, **Timaru** and **Oamaru** branch committees spent an enthusiastic evening with Sir Anthony and Lady Figgis. The newly-formed Lazarus Quartet performed, and after dinner, the Chairman gave an entertaining talk, flavoured with St Patrick's Day humour. The Northern Club provided the perfect venue for a lunch for **Auckland** members, where ROSL prizewinner John-Paul Muir (piano), played Debussy and shared anecdotes of his recent interview for, and acceptance to, the Guildhall College in London. John-Paul also played with violinist Alex Lomeiko at a successful Sunday concert organised by the **South Canterbury** Branch at Chalmer's Church, Timaru.

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

UK

At the **Bath** Branch spring lunch at the Bath and County Club in April, the speaker was Dudley Thomas, a retired district judge. The branch holds coffee mornings on the second Wednesday of the month at Pratt's Hotel, and the **Torbay** Branch holds them on the last Saturday of the month at the Livermead Cliff Hotel.

The **Bournemouth** Branch began the year with a lunch and talk on al-Qaeda and northern Pakistan by the Pakistani High Commissioner, His Excellency Wajid Shamsul Hasan. There was entertainment from ROSL prizewinner Sarah Field (saxophone and trumpet), accompanied by Charlie Morland on guitar, at the branch AGM in April.

At the **Cheltenham** Branch meeting in February, Richard Watkins gave an illustrated talk on the gardens of the west coast of Scotland, and, in March, Matthew Gimmill gave an illustrated talk on Syria. The branch celebrated Commonwealth Day with a pub lunch.

In **Edinburgh**, Alistair Carmichael MP was guest speaker at the Commonwealth Day lunch and Gina McCormack (violin) performed at the Commonwealth Concert. South African pianist Ben Schoeman played at the April concert and a successful Sunday lunch was run jointly with Edinburgh Rotarians. In May, Gavin Henderson spoke on the entertainment of the seaside, with live musical illustrations. The Centenary DVD was shown at the Edinburgh AGM, and Bill Chalmers replaced the indefatigable Bob Gregor as the Edinburgh Branch Chairman.

The **Exeter** Branch held a Centenary New Year's lunch, to which they welcomed the Chairman, Sir Anthony Figgis. Attendance was good, despite the heavy snow. The branch has since held a further two lunches. In February, Sheila Christie gave a talk to **Glasgow** Branch members about her recollections of a cruise around South Africa, and, in March, Sue Hotherstall spoke on archaeological sites in the area. The branch decamped to Edinburgh in April to hear former Glasgow Lord Provost Liz Cameron's talk on Kelvingrove and the arts in Glasgow. The branch was saddened to hear of the death of Glasgow member Professor Arthur Kennedy, who was recognised as a world authority in renal medicine.

The **Taunton** Branch winter season continued with a talk in January by Sir Roger Carrick on his early diplomatic posting to Bulgaria. In February, there was a talk on the redevelopment of Taunton Museum and the building of a new Heritage Centre and, in March, Margaret Clark from the National Trust gave an illustrated talk



NEW FRIENDS: (l-r) Boyd and Colleen Squires (ROSL members), Lyn Milne (NZ President), Val Sullivan (Auckland Branch President), Sir Anthony and Lady Figgis at a lunch in New Zealand

on staircases. The branch holds coffee mornings at the Castle Green Inn on Wednesdays.

The **West Cornwall** Branch began the year with a talk on Cornish painters and their travels abroad, followed by a film about Namibia, in February. The Right Reverend Tim Thornton, Bishop of Truro, was guest of honour at the annual lunch in March, and, after the branch AGM in April, Adele Smith introduced her 'History' of ROSL.

The **West Sussex** Branch held an informal lunch party in February, and, in March, the ROSL Director-General, Robert Newell, was guest of honour at the branch AGM and lunch.

Bath, Exeter, Taunton, Torbay: Sally Roberts, 01823 661148, rosl.west@googlemail.com
Bournemouth: Gordon Irving, 01258 480887, westoverirving@aol.com

Cheltenham: Kathleen Northage, 01242 515540

Edinburgh: Bob Gregor, 0131 3321874

Exeter: Brian Hawkes, 01395 442017

Glasgow: Bill Agnew, 0141 8844290

West Cornwall: Ian Wood, 01736 333460

West Sussex: Marilyn Archbold, 01444 458853

Bournemouth Branch Service of Thanksgiving

On 17 September, the Bournemouth Branch will celebrate the centenary of ROSL, and the bi-centenary of Bournemouth town, with a service of thanksgiving at St Peter's Church, Bournemouth. This will be followed by a lunch at the Marriott Highcliff Hotel. All are welcome. Please contact Gordon Irving for more details on 01258 480887 or westoverirving@aol.com.

Turn of the centenary

Starting with the successful centenary launch, the beginning of ROSL's 100th year was full of exciting events, tours and celebrations, says **Alexandra Debarge**

So far, the centenary year has been filled with a variety of interesting and exciting events for ROSL members. The year began in style with the centenary launch event, at which 150 members came together to celebrate the founding of ROSL, while sipping the new centenary cocktail. Princess Alexandra Hall was transformed with gobos projecting the new ROSL logo around the room, and images depicting ROSL's rich history onto a screen. The evening ended with a raffle, which saw a lucky few go home in very high spirits indeed.

Since then, members have had the opportunity to explore some of London's historic gems, including the Wellington Arch and St Paul's Cathedral. On these tours, they enjoyed panoramic views and were able to access restricted parts of the buildings while learning fascinating facts from the guides.

From the rooftops to the streets, members explored the area of Westminster by foot; discovered Art Deco at Eltham Palace; and basked in the music world, on a backstage tour of the Royal Albert Hall, which included a glimpse of the Royal Family's personal suite.

At Hand and Lock, a group of members discovered the ins and outs of embroidery and were shown stunning pieces of fashion, costumes, and Diplomatic and Military court dress from all over the world. It was no surprise that this tour attracted only the women of ROSL.

Another group enjoyed a fascinating tour of H Formans and Sons smoked salmon factory, where they were able to learn the most efficient carving method from the world's fastest hand-smoked salmon carver. A delicious smoked salmon lunch followed in the

restaurant, which overlooks the new Olympic Stadium in East London.

Still to come is the Chairman's Lunch and Centenary DVD launch, and the reception at St James's Palace for 720 members in the presence of The Queen, The Duke of Edinburgh and Princess Alexandra. So there is plenty to look forward to. Over-Seas House, London, will be transformed for the Centenary Summer Ball on 25 June – an evening of music and entertainment that will complete the summer events programme.

The celebrations and festivities will continue later in the year, so keep checking *Overseas* and the ROSL website for details (www.rosl.org.uk). This is the year to really get involved, to meet new members and to celebrate ROSL's ability to entertain and to bring people together from all over the world.

HISTORIC EVENTS: (Clockwise from below) Images depicting ROSL's history are projected on to a screen at the centenary launch event; on a tour of the H Formans and Sons smoked salmon factory; and members explore Westminster; and St Paul's Cathedral



Books

Reviews of recent works by ROSL members



'Russian at Heart: Sonechka's Story'

Olga and John Hawkes

Wily Publications Ltd, 2009

ISBN: 978-0958292337, NZ\$39.99 plus P&P

Available from www.teremok.co.nz and

jjhaworth@xtra.co.nz

This attractively-produced and illustrated book chronicles the extraordinary life of Olga Hawkes' mother, Sonechka, against a background of dramatic world events. Born in 1904 in pre-revolutionary Russia, Sonechka survived the revolution, moved by way of many adventures to Shanghai, and ended her life in the United States.

Review by Sir Anthony Figgis.

'The Music Goes Round and Around'

Basil Tschaikov

Fastprint, 2009

ISBN: 978-1844266470, £12.99

Basil (Nick) Tschaikov, a regular adjudicator of the ROSL Annual Music Competition in the 1980s and 1990s, reflects on his extraordinarily varied career, spanning more than 60 years as a performer, teacher, administrator and musicians' negotiator. As a clarinettist in major orchestras, including the LPO, RPO and Philharmonia, he played for many legendary conductors, including Beecham, Walter, Giulini and the young Rattle. The book mines a rich seam of personal recollections of great performers, performances and recordings, and gives a canny insider's view on the enormous changes in the classical music industry and profession in the UK during the second half of the last century.

Review by Roderick Lakin.



'A Falklands Diary: Winds of Change in a Distant Colony'

Jean Austin

I B Tauris & Co Ltd, 2009

ISBN: 978-1845117139, £27.50

A sensitive and perceptive memoir of a culture defined by its remoteness and barren geography, which also foreshadows the impending Falkland's war and the islands' growing geopolitical significance.



'Time Well Spent'

Lyndon Jones and Paul Loftus

Kogan Page, 2009

ISBN: 978-0749456498, £9.99

An essential guide to organising your time effectively, becoming more efficient, and accomplishing more with less effort.



'One Man's Israel'

Neville Teller

Trafford Publishing, 2008

ISBN: 978-1425137540, £9.99

A collection of writings, from social and political comment to letters and poetry, that chart Israel's changing fortunes over the years.

'Traveller: Observations from an American in Exile'

Michael Katakis

Traveller, 2009

ISBN: 978-1439175705, £17

A collection of personal and perceptive letters and journal entries about the author's own experience of travelling around the world.



'A Country in the Moon'

Michael Moran

Granta Books, 2009

ISBN: 978-1847081049, £8.99

A meticulously-researched and entertaining memoir, which captures the spirit and culture of Poland.



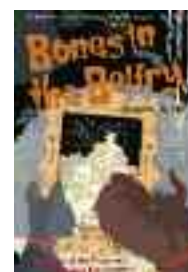
'Bones in the Belfry'

Suzette A Hill

Robinson Publishing, 2008

ISBN: 978-1849010955, £6.99

The amusing story of a vicar who accidentally strangles a lady parishioner and then becomes embroiled in the traumas of art theft.



Reviews by Samantha Whitaker, unless otherwise stated.

EDINBURGH

What's on...
June-August

June

Bridge Club lunch

Friday 4 June, 12.30 for 1pm

Members may bring guests to this one-course lunch. Tickets: £9. Includes glass of sherry.

Scottish members' dinner

Friday 11 June, 7 for 7.30pm

'Scotland and the British Empire', with guest speaker, the historian and author Professor John Mackenzie. Tickets: £28 for reception drink and three-course dinner with wine and coffee.

Coffee morning

Saturday 12 June, 10.30am

An opportunity to meet other members.

Centenary arts lunch

Wednesday 23 June, 12 for 12.30pm

Two-course lunch, plus a presentation of members' reminiscences, chaired by Central Council member David Jamieson. Tickets: £16.50; ROSL members £14.50. Includes coffee and glass of wine.

July

Friends of ROSL ARTS
gala Mozart opera evening*Wednesday 7 July, 6.30pm*

With students of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Tickets: £35; Friends of ROSL ARTS £30. Includes cocktail reception and supper.

August

Scottish members' London visit

Friday 6–Monday 9 August

A weekend trip to the London clubhouse, for members living in Scotland.

ROSL on the Edinburgh International Festival Fringe 2010

Monday 16 August–Friday 27 August

ROSL ARTS presents its annual series of chamber concerts (see page 36) and also, for the first time, in association with the world-renowned Edinburgh Printmakers Studio, an exhibition of landscape-based works by leading studio artists. (Exhibition runs July–September).

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Mozart will be celebrated at the gala opera evening in July (top); while Lochranza churchyard's gravestones on Arran will feature in John Mackenzie's talk at the Scottish members' dinner in June



EDINBURGH CLUBHOUSE BREAKS

"The tours were well-managed and our guides... informative and helpful. The staff at the clubhouse could not have been more accommodating and welcoming, and I hope you will continue to offer packages such as this. You may also think of a break focusing on the art and history of your lovely city."

ROSL member

ARTS LOVERS STAY IN SCOTLAND

Tuesday 22 June–Thursday 24 June

Three nights' bed and breakfast at Over-Seas House, Edinburgh. Pre-dinner drinks and dinner with wine on each night. Talk about Scottish painters and galleries after dinner on first night. Guided tours of National Gallery of Scotland, Kelvingrove and Burrell Galleries.

TOUR OF HISTORIC SCOTTISH BUILDINGS

Tuesday 27 July–Thursday 29 July

Three nights' bed and breakfast at Over-Seas House,

Edinburgh. Pre-dinner drinks and dinner with wine on each night. Talk about historic Scottish buildings after dinner on first night. Guided tours of Edinburgh Castle, Holyrood Palace and Stirling Castle.



PRICES FROM £360 per person per trip
(excludes meals on guided tours).

Please contact reception
at Over-Seas House, Edinburgh.

Tel: 0131 225 1501

Email: reception@rosl-edinburgh.org

Taste of summer

Enjoy the best of summer at Over-Seas House, with its beautiful garden and air-conditioned restaurant

Great outdoors

This summer, enjoy the sunshine, a fantastic alfresco lunch menu and refreshing Pimms in ROSL's beautiful private garden, which is officially open to members from 19 May though to early September. £17.40 for a two-course menu; £23.50 for a three-course menu.



Fantastic dining

Get out of the heat, and come and enjoy our air-conditioned restaurant. At lunch, a two-course menu is offered at £20.50 and a three-course menu at £25.60. In the evenings, members can enjoy the à la carte choices, from which the best value selection would cost less than £30 for three courses. All the clarets are from ROSL's own cellars, with some old and rare vintages at extremely good value.

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights, diners are entertained by a harpist – usually the celebrated harpist Ieuan Jones, ROSL prizewinner in 1985. The new restaurant manager, Lauris Gudlevskis, is happy to meet you and to answer any questions.

To make a reservation, call
020 7408 0214 ext 220.

Henley Royal Regatta

Treat yourself to a wonderful day on the banks of the most beautiful stretch of the River Thames at this quintessentially English summer event. For more than a century, Henley Royal Regatta has retained its place as one of the most prestigious events in the social calendar and a highlight of the summer.

Henley Seafood Restaurant is the perfect place to enjoy a delicious seafood lunch or afternoon tea during the regatta. Advance booking is recommended to guarantee your table. The cost of a three-course lunch, including a half bottle of wine and mineral water, is £56.50.

To make a reservation, call Bianca on 020 7629 0406.

Application form for members' events (see opposite)

MEMBERSHIP NO.....

Name.....

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

Address to which tickets should be sent:
.....
.....
.....

Tel no.....

PAYMENT

Please send a **SEPARATE CHEQUE** for each event. Cheques (sterling) payable to ROSL. For **CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS** telephone 020 7016 6906.

Please complete this form (or photocopy) and send to:

Alex Debarge, PR Department (Members Events), 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
Centenary Summer Ball	Fri 25 June £85	.....
Benjamin Franklin House	Fri 2 July £10	.....
Pepys, plague and fire	Mon 19 July £16.50	.....
History talk and tour of Fortnum and Mason	Fri 23 July £30	.....
Chairman's Lunch	Tues 9 Nov £51	.....

BALLOTTED EVENTS

DO NOT SEND PAYMENT YET. YOU WILL ONLY BE CONTACTED IF SUCCESSFUL.
Maximum **TWO TICKETS** per member.

		No of tickets	Apply before
Hampton Court Flower Show	Fri 9-Sat 10 July	.....	21 June
Henry VIII at Shakespeare's Globe	Tues 10 Aug	.....	23 July
The Merry Wives of Windsor at Shakespeare's Globe	Thur 19 Aug	.....	6 Aug

Members' events

June–August

June

Centenary Summer Ball

Friday 25 June, 7pm, £85, G

A summer treat at Over-Seas House, London, for all members, including the Inter-Club Younger Members. There will be a champagne reception in the garden, followed by a three-course meal, with entertainment by a former world champion bar flairer, magician and mind reader, live band and dancing, plus the opportunity to see a vintage Talbot Tourer from 1910. Dress code: Black tie with a twist of purple. Maximum groups of 10 members per table.

July

Benjamin Franklin House

Friday 2 July, 2pm, £10, G

Discover Benjamin Franklin, a scientist, publisher, writer, inventor, and one of the moving forces behind the establishment

of the United States. From 1757 to 1775, Franklin lived in this lovely Grade I listed Georgian townhouse, which today houses a museum and education centre. On this guided tour, live interpretation, and cutting-edge sound, lighting and visual projection is used to tell the rich story of Franklin's life in London.

Hampton Court Flower Show

Friday 9-Saturday 10 July, 10am-7.30pm, £32, B

Join in the festivities as the Hampton Court Palace Flower Show celebrates its 20th anniversary. This will be a fantastic summer's day out in the magnificent palace grounds, with the opportunity to watch live cookery demonstrations and learn how to grow your own fruit and vegetables, with experts on hand to share their knowledge.

Pepys, plague and fire

Monday 19 July, 2pm, £16.50, G

A tour of the sites associated with the 17th-century diarist and Navy official Samuel Pepys, including St



LIFE AND SOUL: Benjamin Franklin is brought to life at the museum

Olave's Church, where Pepys and his wife are buried; the site of the Navy office where he worked; and the site of his home in Seething Lane. Pepys is our best chronicler of life during the Great Plague and Great Fire of London, and we will visit sites affected by these disasters – from burial places and churches, to the site of the baker's shop where the Great Fire started and the newly restored Monument to the fire. The tour will be enlivened with extracts from the famous diary and anecdotes about Pepys' life.

History talk and tour of Fortnum and Mason

Friday 23 July, 2pm, £30, G

An exclusive opportunity to hear a talk by the Fortnum's archivist Dr Andrea Tanner, and enjoy a guided tour of the store. Tea, coffee and biscuits will also be served.

August

'Henry VIII' at Shakespeare's Globe

Tuesday 10 August, 7.30pm, £33, B

One of Shakespeare's most spectacular plays, *Henry VIII* is a pageant of masques and royal ceremony, which provides a psychological and political insight into Henry's reign.

'The Merry Wives of Windsor' at Shakespeare's Globe

Thursday 19 August, 7.30pm, £33, B

Shakespeare's brilliantly constructed farce sees the fat knight, Sir John Falstaff, unsuccessfully attempting to seduce two rich women.

Chairman's Lunch

Tuesday 9 November, 12.30pm, £51, G

The centenary celebrations continue with this three-course meal at Over-Seas House, London, hosted by the Chairman, Sir Anthony Figgis, with guest of honour and speaker Lord Patten of Barnes.

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.

ROSL ARTS

Director of ROSL ARTS, **Roderick Lakin**, introduces the summer programme

Music events

Queen Elizabeth Hall

58th Annual Music Competition Final

Wednesday 2 June, 7pm

In the presence of HRH Princess Alexandra

The Final Concert of the 2010 ROSL Annual Music Competition showcases performances by 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, under the chairmanship of Gavin

Henderson, makes its decision, performances are given by the two prizewinning ensembles. The prizes will be presented by HRH Princess Alexandra.

Tickets: £12; Friends of ROSL ARTS £10 (reduced from £20/£15). Available from ROSL ARTS, NOT the QEH box office.

Over-Seas House, Edinburgh

ROSL ARTS on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2010

Monday 16 – Friday 27 August

In August, ROSL ARTS once again heads to Scotland for its critically acclaimed sell-out series, on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Presenting 30 concerts in 12 days, with titles such as the popular early morning 'Bach for Breakfast', and 'Mozart at Teatime', the series is fast becoming a priority for discerning festival goers.

Tickets for all concerts have been reduced to £11 for ROSL members and £8 for Friends of ROSL ARTS. From July, brochures with full programme details will be available from ROSL ARTS, and to download from www.roslarts.org.uk.

ROSL CENTENARY APPEAL PASSES THE HALFWAY MARK

The ROSL Centenary Appeal to secure endowment of the ROSL Music Competition awards in perpetuity has in just six months reached almost £600,000; more than halfway towards its initial target of £1,000,000. This is thanks to a very significant donation from long-term supporters of ROSL ARTS The Underwood Trust, to a steady stream of donations from ROSL members, and substantial legacies.

If you would like to support the Centenary Appeal, but have not yet done so, you can make a one-off donation to the ROSL Golden Jubilee Trust (Registered Charity number

30695), where Centenary Appeal donations will be held in a restricted fund. Donation cheques should be made out to ROSL Golden Jubilee Trust (Centenary Appeal) and sent to Roderick Lakin MBE, Director of ROSL ARTS, Over-Seas House, Park Place, St James's Street, London SW1A 1LR.

British taxpayers can enhance the value of their donations by signing a gift aid declaration which enables ROSL ARTS to reclaim tax. To request a gift aid form or information about making a legacy in support of ROSL ARTS please telephone Roderick Lakin on 020 7408 0214 ext 325 or email rlakin@rosl.org.uk.



DREAMLIKE LANDSCAPES: 'Edge' by Michele Fletcher

FRIENDS OF ROSL ARTS

Summer Garden Parties

As a thank you for the generous support Friends of ROSL ARTS have provided over the last year, ROSL ARTS is once again hosting two complimentary summer soirees, exclusive to Friends, on:
WEDNESDAY 21 JULY*
WEDNESDAY 1 SEPTEMBER*

A champagne reception in the garden, with live music, is followed by an hour-long concert in Princess Alexandra Hall of familiar and less familiar musical delights, given by international ROSL prizewinners. Afterwards, there is a private view of the latest exhibition at Over-Seas House, with New World wines and sweet pastries. Please note, this event is exclusive to Friends of ROSL ARTS, with one ticket per member.

**Friends are invited to choose one of these two dates.*

Now is the time to join

The Friends of ROSL ARTS was launched in 1999 to encourage new supporters, develop new audiences, and to retain and foster the active involvement of our existing sponsors and donors. All income generated in 2010 will go towards the ROSL Centenary Appeal to endow the awards in the ROSL Annual Music Competition.

Please help us to invest in future generations of artists, musicians and writers by becoming a Friend of ROSL ARTS. Annual membership is only £30 for ROSL members (£35 for non ROSL members), and benefits include a free ROSL CD on joining, regular newsletters and invitations, and discounts on ROSL CDs, books at literary events, and artwork. To become a Friend of ROSL ARTS, please contact the ROSL ARTS office on 020 7408 0214, ext 324, or culture@rosl.org.uk.

SUNDAYS AT 3

ROSL ARTS are delighted to announce a further series of their popular 'Sundays at 3' concerts. Hour-long recitals by ROSL prizewinning ensembles are followed by tea and scones in the central lounge. This Sunday afternoon entertainment is the perfect weekend diversion for you and your guests.

SUNDAY 13 JUNE, 3pm

Three sisters – Suzanne (oboe), Rebecca (clarinet) and Tamsin Thorn (bassoon) – make up the Rose Trio, which performs works by Mozart, Poulenc and Saint-Saëns.

SUNDAY 4 JULY, 3pm

Australian cellist Yelina He (pictured) performs Rachmaninov's cello sonata and Popper's *Tarantella*.

Tickets for all Sundays at 3 concerts £12; ROSL members £11; Friends of ROSL ARTS £10. Cream tea included in ticket price.



Book events

Over-Seas House Princess Alexandra Hall

'Shooting Leave: Spying Out Central Asia in the Great Game' by Sir John Ure

Tuesday 15 June, 7pm

To young British officers in India in the 19th century, there was only one thing more exciting than shooting wild game, and that was spying out uncharted lands and impeding the advance of Tsarist Russia towards the frontiers of the British Raj. Former ambassador to Cuba, Brazil and Sweden, Sir John Ure, tells the thrilling story of the dashing cavalry officers who volunteered for these adventures.

Tickets: £7; ROSL members £6; Friends of ROSL ARTS £5. Tickets include wine.

Caine Prize for African Writing

Friday 2 July, 7pm

The Caine Prize is an annual literary award

for short stories by African writers and offers a unique platform for some of the best new literary voices coming out of the continent. The five shortlisted authors nominated for the 2010 prize will read excerpts from their stories before meeting with audience members over wine. With writers from Kenya, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zambia, this promises to be a compelling and diverse event.

Tickets: £7; ROSL members £6; Friends of ROSL ARTS £5. Tickets include wine.

Visual arts

Over-Seas House

Michele Fletcher (Canada) and Lilian Nabulime (Uganda)

21 July-27 August

In 2008, Michele Fletcher and Lilian Nabulime were selected as ROSL ARTS travel scholars and spent a month at Hospitalfield, a unique artist residence in Arbroath, Scotland. Ugandan artist Lilian's sculpture series focuses

on issues faced by women, while Canadian Michele's dreamlike paintings explore the artist's childhood memories of Canadian landscapes.

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, no need to book and all ROSL members and guests are welcome. Meetings in 2010 are in conjunction with *The Round Table* Commonwealth journal. Contact John Edwards, 01732 883 556, johncoatesedward@aol.com.

The Commonwealth in the age of decolonisation

7 June

With Prof Wm. Roger Louis, Kerr Professor of English History and Culture, University of Texas.

The modern Commonwealth

5 July

With Chief Emeka Anyaoku, former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

LONDON GROUP OUTSIDE VISITS

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

Household Cavalry Museum

16 June, 10.30am

The building housed the cavalry for more than 300 years, and this tour includes the Changing of The Queen's Life Guard and a look at preparations for ceremonial duties. Tickets: £12; LG members £10.

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



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ALL CHANGE: Troops of the Life Guards (r) and Blues and Royals (l) changing the Queen's Life Guard (June); Janet Porter and Nils Regan on the London Group's guided tour of Battersea Power Station in March

LONDON GROUP

Please note that you are not automatically a member of the London Group: ask for an application form from the PR department, Over-Seas House, London. The London Group meets at 6.30pm on the third Thursday of each month. For details, contact Pamela Voice, 07767 610874, pawallingtonvoice@yahoo.co.uk.

London Life: 1900-1960

17 June

An illustrated talk by Gerald Smith, lecturer at Leicester University.

The History of 'Who's Who'

15 July

A talk by Richard Fitzwilliams, critic, PR consultant and editor of *The International Who's Who*, 1975-2001.

The Kohima Educational Trust

19 August

A talk by Margaret Halnan, widow of Dr Keith Halnan, founder Trustee of the Kohima Educational Trust (www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net).



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For a free brochure ring me - Alan James Raddon - Shoemaker and retired Reflexologist - right now on +44 (0)1545 570 904 between 9am-6pm GMT.