

OVERSEAS

Journal of the Royal Over-Seas League

Issue 1, March–May 2008



Sands of time

The forgotten 'Afghan' cameleers who helped settle Australia's interior

Rebel writer

Whale Rider author Witi Ihimaera speaks out on Maori tradition

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OVERSEAS

ISSUE 1 March–May 2008

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Front cover: Sydney Opera House at dawn. Photographer: Phillip Hayson © 2008 Photolibary.com

From the Director-general

Having lived and worked in Kenya for 10 years, prior to joining the League, I was very saddened by the tragic events that followed the elections at the end of December. It is a wonderful country and Kenyans are fine people. They will overcome these current troubles as they have others in the past.

On behalf of my colleagues on the staff, I convey grateful thanks to all those members who contributed to the staff Christmas fund. My thanks also go to the team at Over-Seas House, Edinburgh, led by Alan Chalmers, and the caterers at the clubhouse in London for making the festive season so enjoyable.

Despite full-house events over Christmas, maintaining membership at the present level of just over 20,000 is no easy task. I would, therefore, encourage members to join our drive to introduce new members. Please ask the membership department for brochures and application forms to pass on to friends, family and colleagues.

Meanwhile, current members can look forward to numerous enjoyable events in 2008, not least the special Discussion Group dinner (see pg. 34), at which General Sir Mike Jackson is the guest speaker, talking under Chatham House rules and, therefore, allowed to speak relatively freely.

Discussion Group chairman, Tim Toyne Sewell says: "From July there will be just one lecture per month so as to ensure high-calibre speakers and larger audiences. I welcome suggestions about possible speakers who will challenge, amuse and inform."

At the time of going to press, we were all saddened by the news of the death of Lady Barbirolli. A full obituary will feature in the next issue.

Robert Newell
Director-general



Editor's letter

Not long after the last *Overseas* and its Focus on Pakistan arrived on your doorstep, the country's turbulent story took another turn for the worst with the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. "Democracy is the best revenge," Bhutto once said. Let's hope we see it restored soon.

Back to this issue, we turn our attentions now to Australia (pp. 10-15), with stories on its forgotten Afghan cameleers, the climate-change debate and the cultural outpourings of the Tiwi Islands Aborigines.

The last time *Overseas* focused on this vast Commonwealth country was in 2002, the year I started to work on the magazine. It seems we've now come full circle, as this issue will be my last. I'm currently preparing to embark on a four-month trip to South America.

I hope to be able to report back for *Overseas* (particularly on Guyana), but, until then, you can read about my trip in the *Guardian* travel section, or on their website, from mid-March. And who knows? Maybe while in Venezuela I'll go in search of the world's best chocolate, as recommended on pg. 24.

Finally, I'd like to say how much I have enjoyed working on *Overseas*. Heartfelt thanks go to all who have contributed and to the fantastic team at the League.

Vicky Baker
Editor, *Overseas*

PRIZE PERFORMANCE: Pianist Miaomiao Yu, a 2007 ROSL ARTS prizewinner, gave a recital for Ontario Chapter members in Toronto in November. She is pictured (centre) with (l-r) Robert Newell; her parents; and chapter president Ishrani Jaikaran

COMMONWEALTH NEWS

Unity giving strength: CHOGM 2007

News from November's Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Uganda

It was once named as the 'pearl of Africa' by Winston Churchill, and, in late 2007, it got to shine on the global stage. In November, Uganda played host to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, a gathering that, according to the UK's Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, cemented the Commonwealth's status as a representation of "democracy, human rights and the rule of law".

The Chairman of the Royal Over-Seas League, Mr Stanley Martin, his wife, Hanni, and Dr Chris Nonis, honorary corresponding secretary for Sri Lanka, travelled to Kampala to represent the League. They were able to attend not only the opening ceremony but also many events at the Commonwealth People's Forum and the People's Space, as well as a service at Namirembe cathedral, which included performances from League musicians. On their way to Kampala, Mr and Mrs Martin also gave a reception for League members in Nairobi.

The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, used her opening address to comment on the theme chosen for this CHOGM, 'Transforming societies'. She said this conveyed "a clear commitment to change for the better". She quoted the Ugandan proverb, "Those who walk together warn each other".

She said: "In its sense of unity giving strength, this could just as easily be a Commonwealth proverb as a Ugandan one. Over the next two days, I wish you and your fellow leaders well in continuing the Commonwealth tradition of strength in our diversity as well as strength in our unity."

The CHOGM was also attended by the Prince of Wales, who participated in some of the proceedings and officially launched a finance fund for Ugandan youth.

Subjects tackled during the meeting included trade and development, the fight against poverty, bridging the digital divide, human rights, terrorism, ongoing territorial disputes (Belize, Cyprus, and Guyana) and health (notably the fights against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis).

Also discussed was the future of Pakistan and Fiji within the organisation, following their respective suspensions in 2007 and 2006.

The 2009 CHOGM will be held in Trinidad and Tobago and the president of Sri Lanka invited heads of government to Sri Lanka for their 2011 meeting.

Dr Chris Nonis

TALKING HEADS: (right) ROSL Chairman Mr Stanley Martin (left), with His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka (centre) and Dr Chris Nonis, ROSL's honorary corresponding secretary for Sri Lanka



REBECCA NDUKU © COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT



REBECCA NDUKU © COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

THE WORLD STAGE: The Queen and Commonwealth Secretary-General Mr Don McKinnon (top). Traditional dancers entertain Commonwealth heads of government and delegates during CHOGM's opening ceremony (above)



Return to the homelands

ROSL bursary recipients are coming back to Namibian communities with new skills. **Margaret Adrian-Vallance** travels to the Nyae Nyae to report on their progress



© MARGARET ADRIAN-VALLANCE

In the heat of the Nyae Nyae Conservancy (well over the usual 40°C last October), paper takes on a new consistency – tearing up draft notes is like ripping crisps. Skin cream melts, biro's drip. But a strange thing happens: the area is so fascinating one hardly notices the heat.

The 9,000 sq km conservancy, registered with the Namibian government in May 1997, is home to the Ju/'hoansi who have lived here for

40,000 years. Considered the most traditional of all Bushman groups due to their isolation until 1951, they are still allowed to hunt in the traditional way.

Nowadays most Ju/'hoansi wear western clothes; the person in traditional leather who teaches tracking one day will be in jeans and T-shirt the next. Pastor Hendrik van Zyl, who lives in Tsumkwe, used to exchange food for

traditional clothes; now the Ju/'hoansi need them back – the growing number of tourists want tradition not trend. This desire for 'the authentic' may even help the Bushman culture survive.

Tsumkwe is the largest village near the Nyae Nyae. It has one shop, with meat hanging outside under a tree, and no petrol station (for safety reasons; it's too hot). However, the Chinese are investing here, as in the rest of Namibia. They have funded an attractive craft centre and are building new classrooms at Tsumkwe Secondary School.

Helping to combine tradition with modern life (which has arrived in a relative blink of an eye in Ju/'hoansi terms) are former ROSL bursary recipients Cwisa Cwi and his sister Katrina. Cwisa is now principal of the Nyae Nyae village schools, set up in 1995. Katrina is a broadcaster and administrator at NBC Radio Tsumkwe, where manager Patrick Zudan speaks warmly of her competence. Katrina now efficiently juggles news reading, music editing and administrative tasks, and says that being a ROSL bursary recipient greatly helped to give her confidence.

So how does Cwisa find his new role? He says he is happy to be back in his homeland and feels very grateful to the League. "I wouldn't be here if it was not for their help." His main concerns are the high drop-out rate in the village schools and the difficulty of finding teachers who speak Ju/'hoansi. In his office, copies of the



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BUSH LIFE: Principal Cwisa Cwi (above, far right) with pupils and teachers, pointing out the tree brought down by elephants in the night. Dom lights a fire in the traditional way (top)

new school reader *Life in the Nyae Nyae* have just arrived. In both Ju/'hoansi and English, these well-illustrated histories feature contributions by local people, including Cwisa.

Around 3,000 Ju/'hoansi live in the conservancy, formerly known as Eastern Bushmanland, and each of the 36 villages now has a bore hole and tap. In the dry season this can bring elephant-human conflict. "We had to hide under the desks during the night," say teachers Magdalena Sorvas and Batseba Gamses when we arrived at Denlui School. "We could hear the elephants rubbing against the walls and windows. We thought they'd come in."

Getting to schools and villages requires skilful driving over sunken sand tracks. These are also used by elephants, so it pays to know their droppings (how recent are they? Is the herd ten minutes away or ten miles?).

"We had to hide under desks. Elephants were rubbing against the walls"

A rapid learning curve is essential, so Kaeqce Gery, a guide in the Nyae Nyae, and Kxoara Kosta, who is a guide and former Tsumkwe School pupil, give a brief introduction to droppings, tracking and bush food. We roam around a deserted pan area finding medicinal gum, tasting salt circles and munching water root.

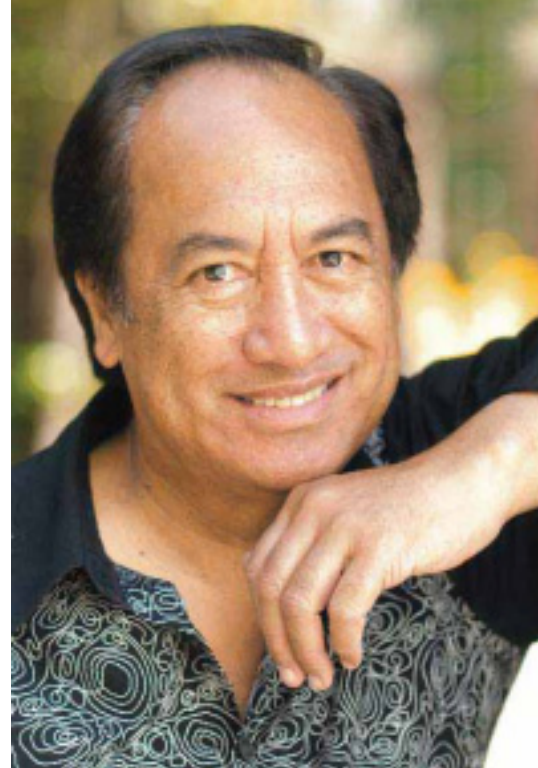
Nllao Mapepe, who has a watch tattooed on his wrist, carefully removes a piece of violet tree root, which is good for muscle pain. It smells wonderful, just like Vicks Vapour Rub. To this day, it lingers on my notebooks so that back in the UK I still have my own little bit of the wonderful Nyae Nyae.



SIDE BY SIDE: Kxoara Kosta and Kaeqce Gery search for the water root (above). Broadcaster Katrina Cwi in NBC Radio Tsumkwe's recording studio (left). Her brother Cqui is a ROSL bursary recipient at Grootfontein Secondary School

The whale writer

Author Witi Ihimaera talks to **Bryony Weaver** about social rebellion, the 'Maori Renaissance' and New Zealand's bicultural future



"One of my publishers says that when my name comes up, there are people who turn and walk away. My work is often too political for the gentle reader." Witi Ihimaera, Maori author, lecturer, father, rebel, is, you feel, very proud of this fact.

I'm visiting his native New Zealand – he's happy that I've given it its Maori name, Aotearoa, The Land of the Long White Cloud – but due to work commitments he's unable to meet me in Auckland, so we're chatting via email. Any worries I had that the medium

would be inadequate for conveying the colour and emphasis of his words are needless, because he has, as he says, "been at the business so long, the words just come up and out without hitting the sides. Something would be terribly wrong if they didn't."

Witi, who came to the attention of the wider world through the adaptation of his children's book, *The Whale Rider*, into an award-winning film in 2002, has "been at the business" of writing novels and short story collections since 1972, when *Pounamu Pounamu* (his first collection) was published.

But he has been writing from a much earlier age. He was born in Waituhi, north-west of Gisborne on the North Island, the inspiration for many of his fictional villages. He remembers scrawling stories across the wall of his room at the family farm at Whakarau.

Writing has been a valuable opportunity for him to express in print his experience of being a Maori. The Maori language (*te reo*) had been severely marginalised; oral and visual traditions of storytelling and communication had been all but subsumed; and European tools of expression, significantly the written word, were dominant.

But in the mid-1970s, there was a sea change. Many Maori began reasserting their identity, thanks to a number of successful submissions for compensation under the

Treaty of Waitangi. There was a rediscovery of *tino rangatiratanga* (sovereignty) and a parallel flowering of art, literature and culture in what became known as the 'Maori Renaissance'. Witi is considered one of the authors of that resurgence.

"I realised that there was no 'Maori novelist', and I was very happy to take on that persona. The 'renaissance' was more politically orientated" – his responses to my questions are becoming longer; he's warming to his own story – "but, you know, there are two streams now to New Zealand's literature, Pakeha (Europeans) and Maori, and we all have a role in writing Maori life and culture into existence – in the written word."

Part of his vision for Aotearoa is unpopular: the championing of women and homosexuality in the Maori communities. The tribal families around Gisborne have always done things differently. There, women are allowed to dance the haka and to speak at formal meetings (*te koreoreo*), both traditional male preserves.

He has a history of social rebellion in his family. "Patriarchy and I are old enemies. The new world must make way for women. As the father of two daughters, it's important for me to affirm equity in all relationships. This also applies to gay relationships, in particular those of indigenous gay men and women (*takatapu*)."



© STUART CORLETT/DREAMSTIME.COM

SEA CHANGE: Gisborne, where Ihimaera grew up, is an area where tribal families have always done things differently

Witi's two books *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* (1995) and *The Uncle's Story* (2000) explain his discovery of his own sexuality and that of his uncle in later years. Like the protagonist of *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, Witi was also a father of two when he came out. "There are few novels that look at the condition of indigenous gay men and women and homophobia within patriarchal cultures. It's important for me to stand up against this," he says.

The title of an early book, *The New Net Goes Fishing* (1977), referred to a Maori proverb, 'The old net is cast aside, the new net goes fishing', and he has often cast his net in new waters, and come up with very original fish.

"The new net is about those coming up behind us, but also about taking old stories and reworking them for a new world," he explains.

The Whale Rider (1987) was a transposition of a legend from his tribe's canon of tales about place and being into a more modern story. The male rider of mythology, Paikea, was substituted for a young girl named Paikea Kahu, who, in the face of her koro's (grandfather's) antagonism and indifference,

shows herself worthy of being her family's chief. It's a coming-of-age tale of a girl who defies the odds to achieve her goals.

Since 1990 Witi has been a guest lecturer in creative writing at the University of Auckland, and his words sparkle with enthusiasm as he writes: "I'm loving the opportunity of passing on all I've learnt to younger Maori writers who are coming

"I'm loving passing all I've learnt to younger Maori writers who are coming up fast"

up fast and biting at the ankles of older writers like myself, Patricia Grace and Booker Prize winner Keri Hulme (*The Bone People*)," he says.

I ask him whether he still sees himself as a novelist or if he's ready for another medium. "I have no idea what I am!" comes the response.

"I write novels, short stories, children's stories, opera libretti... I've edited over 25 books, I'm now getting into TV and film. And," he adds ingenuously, "when I grow up, I'd love to be a poet."

But that, I write back, is something he is already. While his style seems simple, it's full of mytho-realistic reference to the world view of his family and tribe (he is of Te Aitanga-a-Mahaki descent), supported by a deep core of human experience and observation that speaks to anyone. It goes quiet. Have I offended him? Then comes the response: "There's a great need to make sure that the legacy of the oral Maori tradition joins the legacy of the written Pakeha tradition so that the country benefits from both. We write to keep our end up in the building of a bicultural future." He has sidestepped the literary analysis.

Where does he see himself in that bicultural world? "I'd prefer to say that I'm free of any of those constraints of identity – culturally, racially, sexually – trying to live as honestly as I can in the sunlit blaze of the world."

Bryony Weaver is a freelance journalist.



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FOCUS

Political climate

The environment played a crucial role in the last election, says **Phil Mercer**. But what lies ahead now Kyoto is signed?

Australia can be a cruel paradise. It is home to more than one million species of wondrous animals and plants, many of which are found nowhere else. Yet this vast island is a harsh and unforgiving land.

It is the driest inhabited continent on earth, where a long-standing drought has ruined the livelihoods of farmers and forced unprecedented water restrictions on much of the population. The 'Big Dry' has brought the issue of global warming into the minds of Australians. Many are convinced the parched conditions across much of the country are the result of man's excesses, while others see it as part of a natural cycle.

Either way, Australians are having an impassioned debate about what makes the

natural world tick. At a federal election last November, many went to the ballot box on a warm Saturday, eager to see decisive leadership on environmental challenges. The veteran Prime Minister John Howard, considered by his critics to have dragged his feet on green issues, made a last-ditch promise that things would improve if he was re-elected.

"We're going to have an emissions trading system which will be world-class," Howard told Australian television on the eve of the poll. "We've brought forward the investment of billions of dollars in renewable and alternative energy sources. We have a clean energy target. We have a balanced approach that will achieve reductions in emissions but will not damage our economy."

The electorate wasn't convinced and, after more than a decade in power, the Howard government was dumped from office. Unpopular industrial laws and Australia's involvement in the Iraq war played a part in Howard's downfall. So did the environment.

"He will be regarded as not having responded adequately in a political sense to the concern about climate change," said Gerard Henderson, a former Howard adviser. The conservative leader refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, insisting it would damage Australia's coal-powered economy.

"The Howard government did quite a bit about climate change, but John Howard was a stubborn man and he held out on ratifying Kyoto," Henderson explained. "He regarded Kyoto as essentially an agreement which favoured European nations and did not favour countries with economies like the United States and Australia."

The Iraq war played a part in Howard's downfall. So did the environment

After the election, the first formal act of the new Labor government under Kevin Rudd, a former diplomat, was to put Australia's name to Kyoto, thus ending Canberra's international isolation on climate change. Rudd had tapped into the green mood of the moment. He said the accord was "considered to be the most far-reaching agreement on environment and sustainable development ever adopted."

Australians will be hoping that endorsing Kyoto amounts to a lot more than opportunistic political fluff.



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ULURU: Australia has seen the worst droughts in over a century and the cracked ground in the outback is making people conscious of environmental practices

"Kevin Rudd has certainly shown that he's focused on the topic, and the symbolism of Kevin Rudd is much more environment-friendly than the symbolism of John Howard. Whether the policies will be dramatically different remains to be seen," said a cautious Gerard Henderson.

Australia is one of the world's worst per capita emitters of greenhouse gases, and coal production remains one of the bedrocks of a buoyant economy. Government scientists say that with 0.32% of the global population, Australia contributes 1.43% of CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels, which researchers believe is the main cause of climate change.

It is clear that major challenges lie ahead for Kevin Rudd's team.

"I think we saw a great pent-up frustration with Australia's laggard position internationally reflected in the election campaign," said Professor Frank Muller from the University of New South Wales. "The fact that climate change had such prominence and we so quickly ratified Kyoto were important, but the underlying forces are still there and there will be a lot of resistance to change, so it will be a very interesting period."

"Australians, generally, are very aware of and sensitive to the environment," Professor Muller said. "It is very much part of our national identity. Being a dry continent, there's a real understanding of water resources among our people."

"We have fossil-fuel industries, we have mineral export industries and there are very powerful political forces and intellectual reasons why under the former conservative government the fossil-fuel lobby tended to prevail over those strong [environmental] views amongst many Australians."

The burning of coal to generate electricity accounts for about a third of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. Ralph Hillman, executive director of the Australian Coal Association, says the industry is moving with the times and has been working on ways to

'Australians are very sensitive to the environment. It is part of our identity'

find 'cleaner coal' for the last seven years. Carbon capture and storage is emerging as a favoured solution not only in Australia but overseas, where the vast majority of the country's coal is exported.

"It is important to get the technology right, not just for Australia," said Ralph Hillman. "Coal

is one of the biggest sources of greenhouse emissions globally. If we are going to get a global solution to climate change, it is important we get this technology right in Australia but also for use in other big coal-burning countries, such as the United States, but above all in China and India."

Environmentalists believe 2008 will be a pivotal year in the battle against climate change in Australia. A recently elected prime minister has the chance to reinforce his green credentials, while industry and consumers will be scrutinised to make sure they are doing their bit.

Cate Faehrmann, from the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales, says it's time for ordinary Australians to make more sacrifices. "People will start to realise that it's not as simple, perhaps, as electing a new government and hoping that emissions come down," she said. "We all need to play our part and look at real sustainability. I don't think the majority of Australians are getting that at all when we look at consumption and lifestyle."

"When people are really aware of climate change and yet they are still going out and buying big four-wheel drives and plasma TVs, clearly something is not cutting through."

Phil Mercer is a British-born BBC stringer, based in Sydney.

FOCUS

Aboriginal optimism

Chris Pritchard visits the Northern Territory's Tiwi Islands, where indigenous creativity is booming



© SUREE PRITCHARD/ASIA-PACIFIC NEWS

A milestone went largely unreported early this year when Marion Scrymgour became the first Aborigine to head an Australian government. Northern Territory Chief Minister Paul Henderson went on two weeks' holiday and while he was away his deputy, a Tiwi Islander, was in charge. Agreeing the honour was "a long time coming", 47 year-old Scrymgour said she wouldn't be reflecting – just "getting on with the job".

As a territory rather than a state, the rugged Northern Territory is a rung below statehood: its government is subject to greater federal constraints than states but is also entitled to more direct help from Canberra. Its small population, barely 220,000 scattered over a vast expanse, is the reason for its lesser status – despite occasional campaigns promoting statehood. Darwin, the territory's capital, is fast-growing and modern, billing itself as a gateway to booming Asian economies. Mining, agriculture and tourism are important.

The NT – as it's generally known – also has Australia's largest proportion of indigenous people: more than 28% of the population. Compare this to the national picture: Aborigines comprise just 2% of Australia's 20.5 million inhabitants.

Aboriginal Australia boasts a rich past, much of it complicated by the vagueness of oral

history. However, a common theory holds that Aborigines came from Asia and settled this red-brown land more than 50,000 years ago. By contrast, European explorers first spied Australia in the 17th century.

About 100 kilometres north of Darwin, the Tiwi Islands (Bathurst and Melville, two of Australia's largest isles) are renowned as important hubs of Aboriginal art. Only 2,500 people live on the Tiwi Islands but many of them are extraordinarily talented. Some galleries in southern cities obtain more than half their Aboriginal art stocks from these parts. Studios in and near Nguiu, Bathurst Island's key settlement, produce intricately painted wood carvings, as well as attractively dyed cloth. Experts assert almost all the output can be categorised as art, rather than as the kitsch filling many souvenir stores.

Tiwi Islanders welcome visitors. Last year, close to 4,000 people arrived. Typically, they come on short flights from Darwin. Only package tourists on day trips are admitted. The only exceptions are for government or other business. I was lucky enough to arrange an overnight stay, in order to write about the islands, and lodged in a small guesthouse. The lights of a nearby art studio twinkled late into the night as an indicator of just how compulsively creative many residents are.

I joined day trippers at morning tea provided

The Tiwi Islands are renowned as important hubs of Aboriginal art

by a group of elderly island women who served 'damper' (Australian 'bush tucker' bread) and freshly-baked scones with clotted cream and jam. A little knowledge of Australian Football League – a game headquartered in Melbourne – would have been useful since the women are diehard fans and asked probing questions about specific plays.

We stopped at several galleries and walked in the bush with Tiwi Islanders who explained medicinal and nutritional uses of plants. At the end of the day my fellow travellers departed, leaving me feeling privileged to stay overnight and shoot the breeze with islanders.

Local officials told me the tours are one of the Northern Territory's more popular diversions, attracting a mix of Australians and foreign visitors because of growing interest in Aboriginal history and culture.

This trend has been noticed too by Willie Gordon, an Aboriginal tour guide who takes



DREAMTIME: Aboriginal dancers don traditional dress for an annual Cooktown festival that marks James Cook's 1770 landing

Campaigners demanded the government said 'sorry' for the stolen generation

visitors to see ancient rock paintings north of Cooktown in tropical Queensland. "There's increasing fascination with the Aboriginal story," he said. Across the country, in South Australia's ochre Flinders Ranges, a similar view is expressed by Hayden Bromley, operator of another Aboriginal-run business. Bromley leads travellers into remote areas where they eyeball 40,000 year-old rock paintings and etchings. "Interest in our past is booming," he told me.

For all this enthusiasm about Aboriginal history, the present possesses ugly aspects: the average lifespan of Aboriginal men is around 55 years, while women typically die at 58. White people generally live longer: 83 is average for women, 77 for men.

Health and social problems take a terrible toll: 30% unemployment scars some Aboriginal communities; half of Aborigines smoke (compared to fewer than 20% of whites, thanks to an internationally-lauded campaign); alcoholism is rampant; drug abuse is common (even in the remotest areas); diabetes, hypertension, kidney failure and family break-ups are stubbornly stuck at high levels; sexually transmitted diseases are commonplace. Traditional Aboriginal diets – rich in fibre, wild meats and simple sugars – are but a memory in many communities, where the current taste is for junk foods laden with fat and sugar. Fresh fruits and vegetables have

been replaced by canned foods.

Front-page reports of sexual abuse of children, along with revelations of worsening alcoholism and illegal drug use, led former prime minister John Howard to sanction direct federal intervention in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities last year. Some Aboriginal groups argued the action smacked of paternalism and electioneering. Interventionist policies are likely to be allowed to slide, under the new Labor Party government of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

Aborigines also lag in education and representation in the professions, despite noteworthy exceptions. Labor politicians contend more money should be spent on efficiently targeted programmes aimed at promoting health and education.

The most contentious issue of all concerns the 'stolen generation'. From 1869 – but mostly in the 1900s until 1969 – many Aboriginal children (up to 30%, say some calculations) were forcibly separated from parents who were allowed no further contact with them. The children were deemed wards of the state and housed in mission or government facilities. Some were made available to middle-class white families for adoption. The aim was assimilation, based on beliefs that Aboriginal ways were inferior. The most strident of Aboriginal political campaigns in recent years

involved demands that the federal government 'says sorry' on behalf of white Australia for the stolen generation.

Former prime minister John Howard, representing conservative beliefs, steadfastly refused to do this. However, Rudd's Labor government apologised on 13 February, with all-party support. His deputy, Welsh-born Julia Gillard, insists, however, that there won't be a compensation fund to pay people who suffered pain and distress while part of the stolen generation. "We won't be having a national compensation fund," she announced. But "we will be apologising to the stolen generation. Our focus is on providing assistance to close the life expectancy gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Our focus is on health and education services – and economic independence."

Some stolen generation members see a different route to compensation: court action against the government. Officials seem resigned to this happening and do not oppose such suits.

As Aboriginal tour company chief Willie Gordon put it: "Things are gradually changing for the better in respect of attitudes to indigenous Australians. But there's a long way to go. Change isn't happening dramatically or overnight."

Chris Pritchard is a Sydney-based journalist and League member.

FOCUS

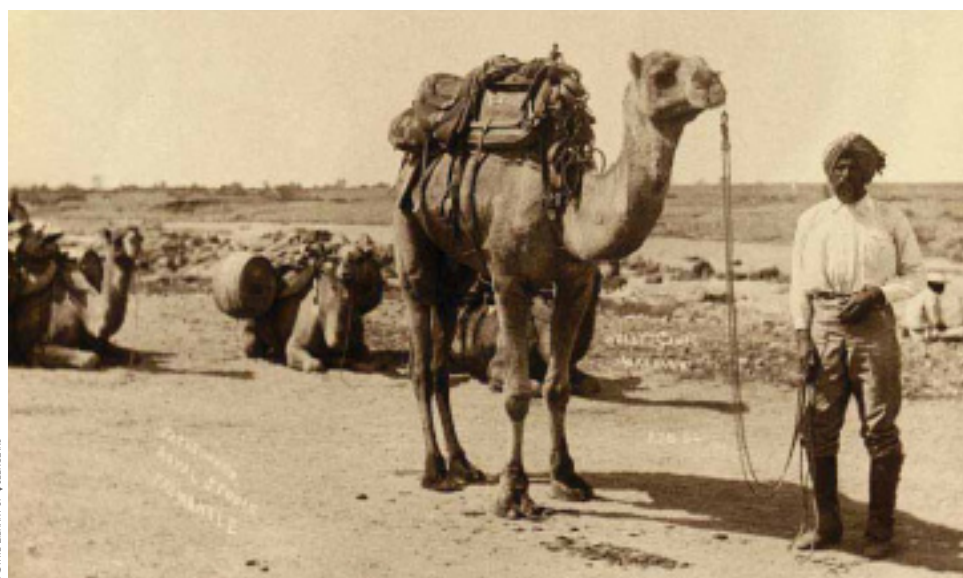
The forgotten settlers

A recent exhibition in Canberra has revealed the significant role Muslim 'cameleers' played in the early explorations of the Australian interior. **Kathy Marks** reports

The relationship between Anglo-Celtic Australians and Muslim immigrants has been fractious of late. A year ago, riots broke out at Sydney's Cronulla Beach, where white surfers attacked Australian-Lebanese youths visiting from the suburbs. A proposal to build an Islamic school elsewhere in the city has sparked bitter opposition, with public meetings guarded by armed police.

The Australians involved may be a minority of the white population, but even in the wider picture few realise that Muslims played a significant part in the settlement of the country. The vast desert interior was unsuitable for horses or bullock teams, which needed plenty of water. So colonial officials decided to import camels and their trainers from a similarly arid part of the world where

The 2,000 cameleers were known collectively as 'Afghans'



© STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND

CALVERT OPERATION: Bejah Dervish leaving for the Calvert Expedition, 1896

immense distances had to be traversed: Afghanistan and northern India (now Pakistan).

The cameleers were known collectively as 'Afghans', and their role in the exploration and development of Australia was celebrated in a recent exhibition at the National Library in Canberra. Nearly 9,000 people visited the exhibition in its first six weeks, and, according to a library spokeswoman, many of them marvelled at "this neglected part of our history".

About 2,000 cameleers came here in the late 19th and early 20th century, along with 15,000 camels. They were men who performed the same work at home and, as a result, were accustomed to being away from their families for long periods. The wages, although low by Australian standards, were far higher than their usual pay. The men were sustained by their camaraderie, and their religion: Islam.

It was an era when Australia's white colonists, having settled the coast, were keen

to push into the inhospitable interior. The cameleers and their charges carved routes across the continent and delivered supplies to remote communities, cattle stations and mining towns. They transported the produce of the outback, including wool and minerals, back to the ports and railheads, to be sold at overseas markets.

Philip Jones, a historian at the Museum of South Australia, says: "The cameleers were absolutely crucial to the development of Australia. For 50 to 70 years, until the advent of mechanised transport, the inland was dependent on these individuals. But it's a subject that for some reason never really made it into mainstream history teaching."

Dr Jones hopes that the exhibition of old photographs and artefacts, which he co-curated, may have helped to pierce the "heroic white explorer" myth. William Gosse, for instance, is credited with being the first non-Aboriginal person to climb Ayers Rock, now called Uluru, in 1873. But in a scenario not dissimilar to the ascent of Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, it may have been Gosse's cameleer, Kamran, who reached the summit first.

The reality is that all of the famous explorers, such as Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills, who led the first expedition across the forbidding heart of the continent, were accompanied by these forgotten Muslim immigrants, says Dr Jones. And they did more than lead their baggage-laden beasts. "The diaries show that when it came to crucial points of the expeditions, the cameleers made the decisions about which way to go. They were explorers too."

They also helped to construct the 2,000-mile-long overland telegraph line, which connected Australia with England via a submarine cable that ran from Java, in the Dutch East Indies. When the first railway was built from Adelaide to Alice Springs, it was named 'the Ghan', after the pioneers who had forged the route.

Otherwise, though, recognition is lacking. Iconic outback highways such as the Birdsville Track began life as rudimentary stock routes. Travelling along them with their heavy loads – "the equivalent of the semi-trailers whizzing up and down the highways now," says Dr Jones – the Afghans and their camels transformed them into dirt roads. Yet the Birdsville Museum features barely a mention of their contribution, and nor does another major outback museum, the Stockman's Hall of Fame.



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WALK THE LINE: Cameleers saved to buy a small string of camels and, if successful, employed others to take on extra contracts to carry goods around the developing country

That is frustrating not only to historians, but also to descendants of the cameleers, many of them still living in towns that were important camel junctions, such as Alice Springs, Broken Hill in New South Wales, and Marree and Port Augusta in South Australia. In fact, descendants such as Eric Sultan, whose grandfather, Sultan Mohammed, came to Australia from Kandahar in Afghanistan, played a key role in the genesis of the Canberra exhibition.

The first railway was named 'the Ghan' after the pioneers who forged the route

Mr Sultan, who has mixed Irish, Aboriginal and Afghan ancestry, believes that Australians are slowly learning about the role of the cameleers. He points to events such as the re-enactment a few years ago of the last mail run by camels from Oodnadatta, in South Australia, to Alice Springs – a one-way trip of 340 miles.

Recalling his grandfather, Mr Sultan, who lives in Alice Springs, says: "They were pretty hardy sort of men, and with the help of

Aboriginal people they were able to join up the dots between the towns. It's a harsh sort of country out here in the middle of summer, but both the camels and the cameleers adapted pretty quickly."

Like other immigrants, they met hostility from white Australians. Confined to enclaves – known as 'Ghan towns' – on the outskirts of established communities, they mixed mainly with each other, and with Aboriginal people, with whom they shared a spiritual view of the landscape. The Afghans also built Australia's first mosques, in Adelaide in 1980 and Perth in 1905.

With the advent of the motor car in the 1920s, their skills became redundant. Certain cameleers returned home; others stayed on. Cut off by their employers, some were reduced to living off charity. Their camels, meanwhile, were turned loose in the desert, where they still roam in increasing numbers today and are considered a pest.

At the National Library, meanwhile, comments recorded in the visitors' book indicate changing attitudes. One person wrote: 'We owe a lot to the cameleers. Their role should be recognised.' Another observed: 'Those people who protest against the (Islamic) school should come here and see what the cameleers did for Australia.'

Kathy Marks is the *Independent's* Asia-Pacific correspondent.

Grog's notebook

Happenings at the London clubhouse



▲ Anne Njenga (l), a graduate of Kenya Utalii College, has joined our reception team, where she works alongside Catherine Onyango (r), from Kisumu. Both are concerned by the unrest in their country but are optimistic that peace will prevail

► (L-r): December Discussion Group speaker HE the High Commissioner for Cyprus, Mr George Iacovou; Mrs Iacovou; a Cypriot student; Discussion Group chairman Maj Gen Tim Toyne Sewell and Mrs Toyne Sewell



▲ The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall leaving Princess Alexandra Hall, after attending a reception for the War Widows Association in November. Conference and banqueting manager Tony Hanmer is in the foreground



► Chairman Mr Stanley Martin with pianist Miaomiao Yu at the Christmas tea after the carol service



▲ At the November Central Council lunch: (l-r) guest speaker Mr David Buckingham, Agent-General for Victoria, Australia; deputy chairman Mrs Marilyn Archbold; Nik Raof Daud and honorary treasurer, Mr Simon Ward



Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 6 May at 4pm
Chairman's lunch, 12.30 for 1pm

Dear member,
I am instructed to inform you that the Annual General Meeting of the Royal Over-Seas League will be held at Over-Seas House, Park Place, St James's Street, London, SW1 on Tuesday 6 May 2008 at 4pm, to receive and consider the annual

report and accounts of the League, and to attend to such other business as may be necessary in accordance with the bye-laws. The AGM will be preceded by the Chairman's lunch, at which the guest of honour, Sir Robert Balchin, will speak on 'the Imperial Society of Knights Bachelor' (details on pg. 31 or from the PR department), and followed by a reception at which refreshments will be served.

Yours truly,
Robert F Newell
DIRECTOR-GENERAL/SECRETARY

AGENDA

- To sing the first verse of the national anthem
- Address by the Chairman
- The Honorary Treasurer to report on the League's finances
- To receive and adopt the League's 2007 accounts
- To confirm appointments to the Central Council under the terms of Bye-law 20.1 7 20.2
- To receive and adopt the 2007 annual report
- To appoint auditors for the ensuing year

Note: Copies of the 2007 annual report will be available from the PR department from 22 April.

High spirits

Alexandra Debarge joins the Younger Members Inter-Club Group at home and away

It's been another extremely social season for ROSL's younger members.

Autumn brought a return visit to Paris and the lunch at Le Cercle de L'Union Interalliée, an event that is already becoming established as an annual tradition. This year, the majority of the group decided to turn the event into a long weekend, so the entertainment continued with afternoon tea on the Champs-Élysées, champagne at the Travellers Club and a very late-night dinner. After a Sunday spent exploring the city, most members found themselves heading back to London with more shopping bags than intended.

Back in the UK, the Caledonian Club kindly invited the group to an evening of Scottish hospitality in November. The evening began with a whisky-tasting session, led by connoisseur Roger Mallindine, and was followed by a three-course meal of traditional fare, including haggis and neaps, sirloin beef and cranachan.

The final event of the year took place in the height of style at the Inter-Club Christmas Ball, hosted by the Lansdowne Club. The venue was spectacularly transformed into a winter wonderland complete with real snow and ice sculptures.

There are more events coming up in 2008. To get involved you must be a member of one of the 14 participating clubs and under the age of 35. No additional subscription is required. For more information, visit the website (www.inter-club.co.uk) or email richard.white@axicom.com.

Now you can even keep in touch via Facebook – simply join Inter-Club Younger Members Group.

Pictures: James Scott



CLUB HOPPING: The younger members indulged in a whisky-tasting event at the Caledonian Club (above left), before ending the year in style with the Inter-Club Christmas Ball at the Lansdowne Club (above right and below), where decorations included an indoor snowstorm



Trio wins in New Zealand

Director of arts and jury member **Roderick Lakin** on the Pettman scholarship

Professor Barrie Pettman's generosity and great passion for both chamber music and New Zealand last year enabled ROSL ARTS to expand its annual New Zealand scholarship from one musician to a chamber ensemble (duo, trio or quartet). Auditions for the 2007 Pettman ROSL Scholarship were held at the University of Waikato, Hamilton in November.

Eight ensembles were invited to participate, from which three were selected for the final concert: the Montana String Quartet (University of Canterbury), The Leonari Duo (University of Waikato) and the Trio Scintillatium (University of Auckland). The winners were the Trio Scintillatium – Amalia Hall, violin (18); Sophie Williams, cello (22); and John Paul Muir, piano (21) – who plan to take up the scholarship in July.

The intensive four-day schedule at the university included concerts given by the Orpen, Myerscough, Beatson Trio; the New Zealand Chamber Soloists; Ingrid Culliford (flute); and

Matthew Marshall (guitar). All the candidates also benefited from career development seminars and mentoring by the judges.

Concert FM New Zealand recorded the final on 25 November and John Myerscough and Timothy Orpen also gave the station a live half-hour interview, in which they talked about the support they have received from ROSL.

Following the auditions in Hamilton, the Orpen, Myerscough, Beatson Trio gave concerts in Wellington at Government House and the Great Hall of the Arts Centre in Christchurch. The concert and reception at Government House, hosted by his Excellency the Governor General The Hon Anand Satyanand and Mrs Susan Satyanand, was well attended by ROSL members and representatives of the arts and diplomatic communities.

The success of the scholarship and prizewinners tour owes a great deal to the enterprise and commitment of the League's

New Zealand director, Lyn Milne. The profile of the League in New Zealand has been greatly enhanced by its association with this high-quality project dedicated to supporting outstanding young musicians.

● The 2007 judging panel were pianist Alasdair Beatson (ROSL Accompanist Award 2006); Roderick Lakin, ROSL director of arts; Euan Murdoch, chief executive of Chamber Music New Zealand; cellist John Myerscough (ROSL Gold Medallist 2006); clarinettist Timothy Orpen (ROSL Gold Medallist 2005); and Peter Walls (CEO, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra).

Pettman/ROSL ARTS International Scholarship

The Pettman/ROSL ARTS scholarship offers:

- return flights from New Zealand to London
- accommodation and hospitality for four weeks in the UK
- a cash award of £500 each
- a lunchtime concert in London at St Martin in the Fields
- concerts for ROSL in London and Edinburgh
- consultation lessons and coaching with prominent UK-based teachers
- tickets for cultural events, including BBC Proms and Edinburgh Festival.



SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESS: Judge Euan Murdoch with winners the Trio Scintillatium

ROSL Young Artist of Thailand inaugurated

Roderick Lakin reports on another outstanding initiative from the Thailand Branch

Following the successful launch of the ROSL Young Musician of Thailand competition in March 2007, the dynamic committee of ROSL's Thailand Branch, guided by its chairman Mr John Pawson, has inaugurated the ROSL Young Artist of Thailand.

The competition, sponsored by leading Thai real estate developer Raimon Land plc, was open to Thai citizens and residents of the country for over one year, aged between 12 and 20 years old, and nominated by a school, university or college. Out of entries received from all over the country, 61 semi-finalists were selected.

The winner – 17-year-old Yu Hsin Hua (Sheana) – was a unanimous choice by the distinguished panel of judges.

In November, Yu Hsin Hua and 11 runners-up were presented with specially commissioned trophies at a gala reception for 400 guests at Bangkok's Siam Paragon Fashion Hall. The prizewinning work, entitled *Life should be Simple*, and the runners-up were then exhibited at the city's Conrad Hotel.

This exhibition will be shown at Over-Seas House, London (1–30 April) and Over-Seas House, Edinburgh (14 May–27 June). In addition to the 100,000 baht prize (£1,650), Yu Hsin Hua will travel to London for the UK opening as a guest of ROSL ARTS.

● The judging panel: Anthony Baloghy (New Zealand), Almond Chu (Hong Kong), Steven Pettifor (Asian Art News), Dr Padoung Prommu (Thailand), Thaiwijit Puengkasemsomboon (Thailand), Kato Sangkhae (Thailand) and Dr Suchart Vongthong (Thailand).

For further information about the competition and to view a gallery of the finalists' work please visit the ROSL Thailand Branch website: www.roslthailand.com.



FIRST PRIZE: Yu Hsin Hua, winner of the inaugural ROSL Young Artist of Thailand, receives her trophy from the Thailand Branch's vice patron, Mon Ratchawong Sarisdiguna Kitiyakara, for her prizewinning work, *Life Should be Simple* (below)



ROSL WORLD

The latest from the global branches



WORLDWIDE MEETS: The Taunton Branch celebrates its 60th anniversary (left-hand picture, l-r, Mr Robert Newell; Mrs June Jenkins; Cllr Nigel Stuart-Thorn; Mr John Edwards; Mrs Anne Rooke; Lady Gass (Lord Lieutenant of Somerset); Mr Ken Lowson; Mrs Hazel Lowson; Maj-Gen John Carpenter; Ms Sally Roberts; Mrs Sylvia Becker). At the South Australia Branch, Mrs Isabel Klau (centre picture, left, with branch president Mrs Marjorie Scriven) was presented with an honorary life membership after serving as secretary and treasurer for nearly 20 years. At the New Zealand chamber-music evening at Government House (right-hand picture, l-r): Mrs Susan Satyanand, Mr Alasdair Beatson, Mr John Myerscough, Mr Timothy Orpen and HE The Hon Anand Satyanand

Bath

The next event will be a lunch at Pratt's Hotel, Bath, on 6 March, when Mrs Geraldine Lindley will talk about her life in Cyprus.
June Jessop, 01722 780518

Bournemouth

At the October meeting, Mr C Bladen entertained the Bournemouth Branch with a talk about his 30 years working with NATO. In November the annual raffle raised £180 for its chairman's charity, Macmillan Cancer Relief. The branch Christmas lunch was held at the Tralee Hotel, and was attended by Margaret Adrian-Vallance, the League's director of public relations.
Eric Jones, 01202 752124

British Columbia

A members lunch was held at Vancouver's Terminal City Club in December, followed a few days later by a recital by pianist Grace Mo, a 2007 ROSL ARTS prizewinner.
Pamela Ducommun, +1 (604) 925 3719

Cheltenham

December brought a good turnout for the Christmas lunch at the Gloucestershire College

Renaissance Restaurant. From January until May, a variety of talks are being given on the third Wednesday afternoon of every month. Topics include Singapore, Spitsbergen and Cuba. To celebrate Commonwealth Day on 10 March, a special lunch will be held.
Kathleen Northage, 01242 515540

Exeter

Dr Elizabeth Earland, HM Coroner for Devon, gave an extremely interesting talk on her work in medicine and law in October, and Lt Col the Rev Tom Hines entertained the branch with his talk on 'A military miscellany' in November. The branch's Christmas lunch was held in December.
Brian Hawkes, 01395 442017

Hong Kong

In November the branch arranged a fundraising function in aid of the Hong Kong Ex-Servicemen's Association (HKESA), sponsored by branch patron Dr Hari Harilela and his family. Members and guests (including many old soldiers from the HKESA) enjoyed a delicious Indian buffet at the palatial Kowloon Tong residence of the Harilela family.
Paul Surtees, president@rosl.org.hk



DUNSTER CASTLE: The head warden of the National Trust property gave a talk in Taunton in January



NATO: The Brussels' headquarters was the subject of a talk at the Bournemouth Branch in October

New Zealand

November brought a chamber-music soirée, held at Government House in Wellington, where previous ROSL Annual Music Competition prizewinners – Timothy Orpen, John Myerscough and Alasdair Beatson – performed music by Beethoven, Janacek, Stravinsky and Brahms. Jason Hicks, Visual Arts Scholarship winner 2003, then presented his painting, *Follow Me*, which joins the excellent collection of historic and contemporary art already in Government House. In other news, this year sees the introduction of electronic payment as well as email renewals, where possible, for New Zealand members, which should simplify payment for the branch's 1,000 members nationwide. Lyn Milne, royalo-s@xtra.co.nz

Ontario

In December, Shakespeare on the Platform, the annual English-speaking competition for schoolchildren of Ontario, was held. Students compete by reciting a sonnet and delivering a soliloquy or monologue on a bare stage with no costume or props. This year's winner was Adam Bornstein, a student at St Thomas of Villanova College, King City, while the Sir Evelyn Wrench Trophy – the runner-up trophy, which is donated by the League – was awarded to Emily Lamond of Westmount Secondary School in Hamilton. Ishrani Jaikaran, ishrani@sympatico.ca

South Australia

At the branch lunch in October, Mrs Isabel Klau was presented with an honorary life membership by the branch president, Mrs Marjorie Scriven (pictured above, centre). Mrs Klau joined the League in 1979 and is now retiring from the position of secretary and treasurer after nearly 20 years of dedicated service. Peter Armitage, armitage03@bigpond.com

Taunton

October saw more than 70 members celebrate the branch's 60th anniversary with a gala lunch at which the Lord Lieutenant of

Somerset, Lady Gass, was a special guest. The League's director-general, Mr Robert Newell, attended, as did Central Council member Mr John Edwards, who gave the keynote speech. In November, the branch presented a cheque for £725 to SURE, a Somerset-based cancer charity providing radiotherapy equipment for the local hospital. This was the largest sum the branch has ever raised, but wasn't the only record-breaker for the year: in December there were more attendees at the Christmas lunch than ever before. The first event of 2008 was a branch lunch, accompanied by a talk from the head warden of the National Trust's Dunster Castle. Sally Roberts, sar@aldith.org

Western Australia

In October, the branch welcomed guest speaker Mrs Ruth Marchant James, a well-known author and historian, who gave a vivid account of the pioneering days around Perth. The year ended in festive mood with the annual Christmas lunch. Jeff Turner, +61 9381 2600

West Sussex

In November, the branch held one of its very popular lunch parties. The year concluded with a Christmas lunch, where funds were raised for the branch's contribution to the ROSL Music Competition's Sussex Prize. Marilyn Archbold, 01444 458853

RECIPROCAL CLUBS Turning down in Toronto



We are delighted to announce that reciprocity with the University Club, Toronto, was arranged during a recent visit by ROSL's director-general, Mr Robert Newell, and the Ontario Chapter president, Ms Ishrani Jaikaran. Mr Newell was most impressed with the club's modern, refurbished bedrooms and the first-class food served in the beautiful restaurant, with its impressive columns, glittering chandeliers and roaring fire. The building is modelled on Boodles Club in St James's Street, and is perfectly positioned downtown on University Avenue. Members throughout Canada are also invited to use the club's facilities, which include a fitness centre, library and several private function rooms.

**The University Club of Toronto, 380 University Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
Tel: + 1 416 597 1336. Fax: +1 (416) 597 2994.
Email: frontdesk@universitycluboftoronto.com**

Prices: Between C\$135 (£67, queen or twin room) and C\$466 (£230, double suite with king room, queen room and living room).

The Royal Over-Seas League has over 80 reciprocal clubs across the world. Contact the PR department for a list, guidelines for usage, and a card of introduction. TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY.

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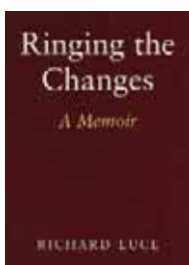
Books

Reviews of the latest works from League members

‘Ringing the Changes’

Richard Luce

Michael Russell (Publishing) Ltd, 2007
ISBN: 978-0-85955-312-4, £16.95



Many members of the League will have been personally involved in the events that Lord Luce describes in his short memoir. His experiences ranged from those of a national serviceman fighting EOKA terrorism in Cyprus and a district officer working in pre-independence Kenya, to those of a minister resigning over the Falkland crisis. Later unexpected appointments followed as Minister for the Arts, Vice Chancellor of the University of Buckingham, Governor of Gibraltar, and as the Lord Chamberlain.

His comments are usually sympathetic, but can be trenchant and remain relevant. On the Falklands War he reports that ‘the intelligence flow was not given adequate priority or properly coordinated’, and ‘both sides misread the other’s mind’. He describes how on one sensitive visit of the Queen of Jordan, King Hussein offered to sleep on a mat outside her bedroom door to protect her. As the first civilian Governor of Gibraltar for 300 years he found that there was too much nannying from the Foreign Office. ‘Diplomats seek instructions to deal with a crisis; a governor resolves it and then informs Whitehall.’

His seven years at Buckingham Palace were eventful. Apart from the far-from-ordinary daily tasks, he was involved in the Queen’s Golden Jubilee, her 80th birthday celebrations, and the funerals of Princess Margaret and the Queen Mother. He describes clearly the somewhat arcane workings of the royal household.

His humour frequently surfaces. How does one respond to someone at a banquet who says “You need not talk. I will meditate, and probably levitate”? Or to a general whose moustache one has accidentally singed with a long Havana cigar?

He praises members of the Colonial Service and their wives for their fairness, justice, and incorruptibility, and the Commonwealth as ‘a lubricant in an intolerant world’. His devotion to his family, and especially to his wife, Rose, shines through the book. He is an outstanding example of what he most admires in people: ‘humility, self-discipline, humour, a sense of responsibility, and a real interest in our fellow human beings’.

Sir Colin Imray,
immediate past chairman of the League

The book is available from the shop at Over-Seas House and can also be mailed to you. Please call Michele Bogen at Over-Seas House for more details: 020 7408 0214 ext 338.

Bridging cultures

Denys Johnson-Davies, leading Arabic-to-English translator and ROSL member since 2001, has been awarded The Sheikh Zayed Award for Personality of the Year in the Field of Culture. The prize, sponsored by the United Arab Emirates, pays tribute to his role of putting Arab literature on the map and for introducing the works of Arab writers – such as Naguib Mahfouz, Tayeb Salih and Yahya Hakki – to the English-speaking world.



PRIZED TRANSLATOR: Denys Johnson-Davies, left, winner of the Sheikh Zayed Award, pictured at home with Naguib Mahfouz

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DISCOVERING LONDON

Chocs away



From Roald Dahl's favourite chocolatier to pink champagne truffles fit for The Queen, **Vicky Baker** finds chocolate ecstasy on a sweet tour of the capital

"Chocolate is like wine," says Jennifer Earle, a self-confessed chocoholic. "Where it comes from makes an amazing difference to the taste."

Few people could put their hand up to disliking chocolate, but how many of us can be considered connoisseurs? Within minutes of embarking on a Chocolate Ecstasy Tour of London, I realise I have a lot to learn. Although, this sort of education is hardly a chore...

Four years ago, British-Australian Jennifer Earle decided to turn her sweet tooth into a business venture and develop London's very first chocolate-themed tour. She pored over history books, befriended the capital's finest chocolatiers and compiled a unique,

four-hour route. Now, roughly once a month, she guides a group of chocolate lovers around the streets of London. And the best part for League members is that it begins in St James's, right on the doorstep of Over-Seas House.

The tour starts in the new 1950s ice-cream parlour at Fortnum & Mason and our first treat is one of their renowned cappuccinos, drizzled with Amedei. Jennifer assures us this is one of the best brands of high-quality chocolate: there's none of that nasty vegetable fat or vanillin found in the cheap corner-shop varieties.

Fuelled with caffeine and sugar, our group of seven turns its attention to discussing that all-important issue: our favourite chocolate. As a male member of our party confesses deep feelings for dusted truffles, with the names of his favourite chocolatiers tripping off his tongue, I'm wondering if I've given enough thought to discovering my own chocolate preferences.

Fortunately, there's no snobbery here. Even white-chocolate enthusiasts are accepted into the fold – although their preference does induce a sharp intake of breath from the truffle specialist. After all, some say that white chocolate, due to its lack of cocoa solids, isn't chocolate at all.

But like a good wine tour, this is about discovering what you like, and not what you should like. And with that in mind we move to our first shop: Prestat in Piccadilly's Princes Arcade. Inside is like a chocolate box itself, just a few metres square, sweet smelling and decorated with vibrant turquoise, purple and pink. Rows of sugar mice, rainbow buttons and chocolate figurines make us rub our hands with childlike glee.

As we squeeze around the counter, Jennifer fills us with truffle samples and anecdotes. The Napoleon truffles are apparently still made to the French leader's own recipe (or rather his chef's); the violet creams were created for actress Sarah Bernhardt, with the cream on the inside so she wouldn't get sticky fingers before a show; and the boxes of mint creams were made especially for the Queen Mother, under her royal warrant and decorated in her favourite colour, pale green. Perhaps the shop's biggest claim to fame, however, is that it was Roald Dahl's favourite chocolatier. Surely you can't get a much higher recommendation than one from the man behind Willy Wonka.

Tearing ourselves away from Prestat, we move on to nearby Charbonnel et Walker, another supplier to the royal family and famed for its incredibly rich pink-champagne truffles. Then it's time for some chocolate trivia, as we pass through Burlington Arcade, and on to Sketch's fabulously flamboyant tearoom for a hot chocolate break.

By this point, we're all feeling thoroughly spoilt, and yet we're only halfway through. As we set off on our way, I ask Jennifer, "If good chocolate really is like good wine, where's the place to go for the best cocoa beans?" "Venezuela," she says, with little hesitation. This is a woman who knows her chocolate and would no doubt travel a long way for the good stuff. Fortunately for us, if Venezuela seems a little far to go, you can always start in St James's.

Chocolate Ecstasy Tours runs half-day excursions in London for £60 per person. Private tours can be arranged for groups of five or more. www.chocolateecstasytours.com, 0798 180 9536.



BOX OF TREATS: Violet creams and Napoleon truffles await inside Prestat



© DOL BANGAY

IN THE UK

CHLOË HANSLIP'S LONDON

LONDON

What's on...

Do you have a favourite venue for performing?

I've performed in an extraordinary range of venues, including the Barbican, Guildhall, Royal Albert Hall and St James's Palace. I'd have to say my favourite is probably the Royal Albert Hall – I first played there aged 10, at the last Joy to the World charity concert, with an amazing array of famous artists. That is also the venue where I was presented with my Classical Brit award when I was 15.

You enjoy a bit of retail therapy; do you have any off-the-beaten-track favourites?

My schedule is quite highly pressured so most of my retail therapy is firmly on the beaten track! I don't suppose airport shops count as off the beaten track? Top of the list otherwise has to be Bond Street, Sloane Street and Harvey Nichols.

Where do you go to unwind after a concert?

I love to go for a meal in a restaurant close to the hall. So, after a concert in Cadogan Hall I'd go to Oriel in Sloane Square – a great French restaurant – then maybe to the Mandarin Oriental Hotel for a cocktail with my family and friends.

What do you miss most about London when you're touring?

There is no city in the world like London, no city that has such vibrancy and things constantly going on, and I feel very at home here. I really



© MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL

SHAKEN OR STIRRED: The Mandarin Oriental Hotel is a good place for post-performance cocktails

miss the Royal Over-Seas League and everyone who is part of Over-Seas House when I'm elsewhere – it has truly been a home from home for me and I never feel fully settled when I come back from a trip until I've been to the club.

Which classical concerts do you recommend?

The best place to start is the BBC Proms as there is a wide range of music. The Classic FM Live series at the Royal Albert Hall, and anything at the Barbican, are also well worth checking.

Which restaurant do you return to again and again?

There's more than one! I like to go to La Richoux or Patisserie Valerie (both dangerously close to the League) at any time of day, Nobu and Itsu for Japanese food, Sale e Pepe for Italian, the League buttery – obviously – and The Wolseley.

How do London audiences compare with those from other places?

London audiences are friendly, appreciative and well informed. Having said that, I'd also say that they are some of the most critical public. Luckily for me, they seem to like how I play.

League member Chloë Hanslip is a 19-year-old established international violinist, who has been playing since the age of two.

www.chloehanslip.com

Interview by Michelle Slade.



© PANGS ASPROUOS

FIRM FAVOURITE: The Royal Albert Hall is one of Chloë's favourite performance venues

China Design Now

V&A Museum

15 March–13 July

From the 2008 Olympic stadium to modern fashion, this exhibition captures a dynamic phase of Chinese design, focusing on its three rapidly expanding cities: Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Tickets: £4.75–£9.40. Contact: 0870 906 3883 or see www.vam.ac.uk

Shutting up shop

National Portrait Gallery

Until 4 May

Shot over a 15-year period beginning in the early 1970s, this exhibition is a tribute to an institution under threat – the traditional British shop. Taken from the book

Shutting Up Shop: The Decline of the Traditional Small Shop, John Londei's photographs show proud shopkeepers inside and outside their stores. In 2004, Londei returned to the 60 shops he had photographed; sadly only seven were still in business.

Admission free. Contact: 020 7306 0055 or see www.npg.org.uk



© JOHN LONDEI

Tosca at the Garden

Royal Opera House

Various dates between 12 May and 5 June

Jonathan Kent's monumental 2006 Royal Opera production of Puccini's operatic 'shabby little shocker' makes a welcome return in May. Set amid the revolutionary fervour of Rome in 1800, this new production stars Micaela Carosi in the title role.

Tickets: £7–175. Contact: 020 7304 4000 or www.royalopera.org

Walk this way Judith Steiner dons her walking boots to enjoy London in springtime

I admit to it. I'm a nerd in huge shoes. In short, I'm a rambler. I love walking – at home or abroad. I've walked the Downs and the Chilterns, the Moors and the Highlands, and all over Italy and Spain, France and Switzerland. But what does one do for an invigorating and energising trek when in London? The answer is simple. London is a wonderful place to walk. In fact it is possible to walk in London and barely pound the pavement at all. London is full of green space. I have walked from my north London home to the Barbican, barely touching tarmac.

You, however, are not starting in Highgate but at League headquarters in St James's. The possibilities from here are endless, both in terms of historic trails and park walking. A tip before you set off: don't wear ordinary shoes. Pack your softest soled walking boots or shoes.

Set out from headquarters and when you get to the end of Park Place, turn right onto St James's Street. The large, anonymous houses with the gorgeous ceilings are the old and exclusive gentlemen's clubs: White's (37), Boodle's (28) or Brookes's (60). The lack

of identification is because a gentleman knows where his clubs are. But you are heading beyond them, towards St James's Palace, now home to various members of the Royal Family.

St James's Palace was built during the 1530s by Henry VIII, who went through three wives during the process. It was superseded by Buckingham House, now Buckingham Palace, in the middle of the 18th century when George III moved out. He couldn't stand the cold and the damp.

Tucked around the corner of St James's Palace is Clarence House, former home of the Queen Mother, and now home to Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall. Unfortunately, you can't get in to look at it.

Once you've crossed Pall Mall, head down Marlborough Road, cross The Mall, and you are in St James's Park, an enchanting park that has everything going for it: wonderful views of Buckingham Palace, Horse Guards Parade and the Houses of Parliament. There are flowers blooming in profusion for most of the year, starting with the bulbs in February through to late flowering shrubs in October. It is heaving with wild fowl, sometimes even pelicans. (However, even though I was born in Toronto, I refuse to take responsibility for the Canada geese.)

On Sunday, the whole area is pedestrian heaven. Closed to traffic, you can meander or power walk past the Queen Victoria Memorial and along Constitution Hill through Green Park.

Make your way across Hyde Park Corner, taking in the Australian and New Zealand War Memorials, and you will find yourself in Hyde Park, where the world is a walker's oyster. Just make sure you have a map or an A-Z with you so you find your way round.

If you are feeling truly vigorous, you might attempt the Jubilee Walkway (www.jubilee-walkway.com). It's 14 miles, or 23km, long and can just about be walked in a day. It's the capital's best walking trail as it connects all the best sights. Set up to celebrate The Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, the Jubilee Walkway Trust has been taking care of it since 1978. You can't get lost. There are directional discs in the footway at every junction. Over-Seas House is also on the walkway map, so you can take it from there.

The Ramblers' Association (www.ramblers.org.uk or 020 7339 8500), will happily provide you with a huge variety of walking maps for London. There are 15 walking guides to The Capital Ring, wittily called 'Sole searching'. The London Loop, a 150-mile circular route in 24 stages, takes in the best countryside of the outer London boroughs.

So next time you feel like a dose of escapism, why not start in the heart of the capital itself? Put the city to the test and see how far you can get without touching the tarmac. I have a feeling you may be surprised...

Judith Steiner is a League Council member and a regular contributor to *Theatre World* internet magazine.



ST JAMES'S PARK LAKE: The view over the water, with the Shell Tower and London Eye seen behind the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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EDINBURGH

The view from Scotland

James Wilkie

Scottish development officer

ROSL in Edinburgh had an excellent 2007 and, as it drew to a close, we continued to record very good house figures and attendances at members' events. A particular highlight was the RL Stevenson Lunch, for which journalist George Rosie was speaker. This event attracted around 70 people, including a guest of Miss Evelyn Small who has agreed to sponsor students annually at this event in memory of her late brother, John Small, a past Edinburgh chairman.

ROSL Chairman, Mr Stanley Martin, spoke to a similarly large gathering at the St Andrew's Day Dinner and the 'house full' notices were out again for the ROSL ARTS gala opera evening and Burns supper in January.

In February, Mr Nat Edwards, from the National Library of Scotland, spoke on the remarkable John Murray Archive – the Scottish publisher's papers that include correspondence with Charles Darwin, Lord Byron and many others. That month, members were also treated to a whisky-tasting, sponsored by The Balvenie Single Malt, and were delighted to welcome the return of pupils from the Menuhin School for a concert that has become an annual treat.

We now look forward to our annual Commonwealth Week celebrations. On Monday 10 March, the new Scottish Minister for Culture, Linda Fabiani MSP, will be guest speaker at the Commonwealth Day lunch. On Wednesday 12 March, Howard Purdie returns

with another afternoon of traditional music and poetry, this time with the Linties vocal group and, on Monday 17 March, ROSL ARTS will present a concert featuring the Zephyrus Saxophone Quartet at the Scottish Parliament.

Finally, on Wednesday 23 April, Edinburgh members will be joined by their Glasgow counterparts, plus friends from the Scots-Australian Council, for an arts lunch on the theme of 'The Singing Line: Australia's telegraph'. The speaker will be Ian Robert, the Glasgow Branch treasurer, who has spoken previously and with great success. Another well-known Glaswegian, the former STV journalist and newsreader Shereen Nanjiani, hopes to be available to speak at our arts lunch on Wednesday 21 May.



ST ANDREW'S DAY: Dinner guests (l-r) Mr Bill Chalmers, Mr Ian Shaw, Mr Bob Gregor (Edinburgh Branch chair), Sir Michael Atiyah OM, Mr Stanley Martin (ROSL Chairman) and Sir Kenneth Scott

Arts in the city

A look at what's on in Edinburgh

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra returns to the Festival Theatre with Tchaikovsky's Fourth on 9 March and, later that month, Stephane Deneve conducts Ravel's great

ballet, *Daphnis et Chloé* (Friday 28 March). Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* follows on 20 April and Nicola Benedetti appears as a soloist with the orchestra on 4 May. There is also dance from the Scottish Dance Theatre on 19 March.

I'm Sorry I haven't a Clue – BBC Radio Four's multi award-winning anecdotal panel game – starts its first live tour in 35 years and visits the Festival Theatre on 30 March. Humphrey Lyttelton, Barry Cryer, Graeme Garden, Tim Brooke-Taylor, Jeremy Hardy and pianist Colin Sell will all be part of this unmissable evening of inspired nonsense.

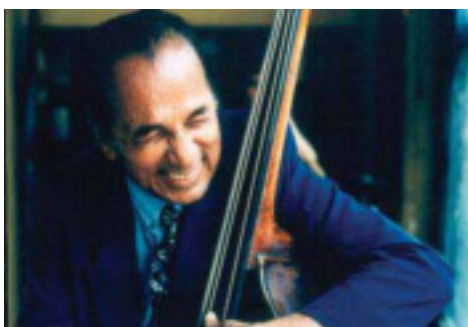
March also sees Britain's most celebrated female comedians embarking on their first UK tour in a number of years. French and Saunders's characters and sketches, together with brand new material written by the first ladies of

comedy, can be seen at the Playhouse Theatre on 14 and 15 March. The Beach Boys are at the same venue on 8 April and Cuba's Buena Vista Social Club is performing on 12 May.

There is top-quality drama at the Royal Lyceum Theatre: William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* runs from 14 March until 12 April and *Trumpets and Raspberries*, Dario Fo's political satire on surgical procedures, plays from 18 April until 10 May.

In the visual arts, The Queen's Gallery at Holyrood Palace has a couple of blockbuster exhibitions. Bruegel to Rubens: Masters of Flemish Painting will be held until 6 April, followed by The Art of Italy in the Royal Collection: The Renaissance, which will run from 25 April until 26 October.

The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism: Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff is at the Modern Art Galleries until 20 April and if you want to see the BP Portrait Award Show, catch it at the National Portrait Gallery in Queen Street before 27 April.



CUBAN CLASSICS: Cachaito Lopez of the Buena Vista Social Club

ROSL ARTS

Roderick Lakin previews the spring arts programme



BARBIROLLI QUARTET: At Wigmore Hall

Music events

ROSL 56th Annual Music Competition: section finals

Princess Alexandra Hall

Ensembles A (strings; piano and strings; piano duo/duet): Friday 7 March, 7pm

Ensembles B (wind, brass, mixed ensembles): Friday 14 March, 7pm

Ensembles B (wind, brass, mixed ensembles): Friday 14 March, 7pm

With the solo section finals already having taken place, the attention now focuses on the best of the non-UK entrants competing for awards for musicians from overseas, and the two ensemble finals. Concurrent with the competition is an exhibition of recent prizewinners in the Central Lounge by photojournalist Richard Smith.

Tickets: £10; ROSL members and concessions £9; Friends of ROSL ARTS £7.

Monday Platform

Wigmore Hall

Monday 7 April, 7:30pm

Barbirolli Quartet, Zephyrus

This bi-annual showcase of ROSL prizewinners brings together two contrasting chamber quartets: the Barbirolli Quartet and the Zephyrus saxophone quartet, led by ROSL Gold Medallist Amy Dickson.

Tickets: £10, reduced from £13–15, available only from ROSL ARTS, NOT the Wigmore Hall box office.

56th Annual Music Competition Final

Queen Elizabeth Hall

Monday 19 May, 7pm

The flagship event of the ROSL ARTS calendar sees the winners of the wind, singers, strings and keyboard sections competing for the Gold Medal and First Prize.

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

Music at Over-Seas House

Tait Memorial Trust concert

Wednesday 28 May, 7pm

This celebration of young Australian musical talent will include performances by 2007 ROSL Gold Medallist Pei-Sian Ng and scholarship winners of the Australian Singing Competition, baritones Andrew Moran and Shane Laurencev. Champagne will be served on arrival, followed by an hour-long concert, after which Australian wines and canapés will be served.

Tickets: £25; ROSL members and concessions £20; Friends of ROSL ARTS £15.

Book events

'The Last Concubine' Lesley Downer

Wednesday 5 March, 7pm

Lesley Downer is an expert on geisha culture, after living in the geisha district in Gion. Having

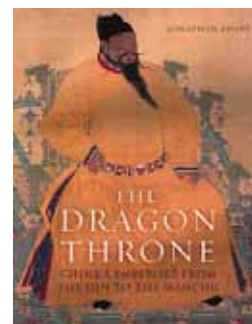
previously given a highly successful talk at Over-Seas House on Madame Sadayakko, the geisha who inspired Puccini to write *Madame Butterfly*, she returns to talk about her new epic love story, *The Last Concubine*. Chronicling a period of extraordinary change in 19th-century Japan, it is the story of a shogun, a princess and 3,000 women of the women's palace, and of the civil war that brought their way of life to an end.

Tickets: £5; ROSL members and concessions £4.50; Friends of ROSL ARTS £4.

'The Dragon Throne' Jonathan Fenby

Wednesday 2 April, 7pm

Former editor of the *Observer*, Jonathan Fenby has written books on Europe and Asia, many articles on both continents, and a survey of



contemporary France, *On The Brink*, that was universally hailed by critics. His new book, *The Dragon Throne*, is the story of China's imperial dynasties from the Qin to the Manchus, taking in legendary emperors like Kublai Khan and Hongwu, the founder of the Ming dynasty.

Tickets: £5; ROSL members and concessions £4.50; Friends of ROSL ARTS £4.

Tickets for all ROSL ARTS events are available from the ROSL ARTS department.
Tel: 020 7408 0214 x324; Fax: 020 7499 6738; Email: culture@rosl.org.uk; Web: www.roslarts.org.uk

Exhibitions

ROSL Young Artist of Thailand 2007

Over-Seas House London

1 April–2 May

An exhibition of works of art by the 12 finalists of the ROSL Young Artist of the Year 2007 competition, including the prizewinning work, entitled *Life Should be Simple*, by Yu Hsin Hua.

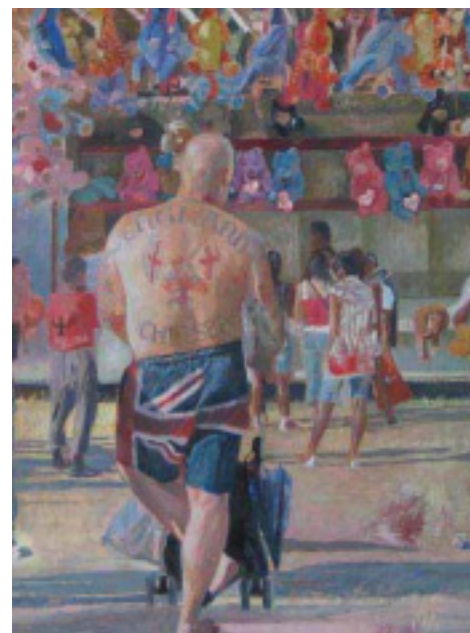
More details of this competition, which was conceived by the Thailand Branch, and its winner are given in director of arts Roderick Lakin's report *ROSL Young Artist of Thailand Inaugurated* (see pg. 19).

Bella Easton: Made in England

Over-Seas House London

7 May–13 June

Bella Easton was a ROSL Visual Arts Travel Scholar in 2001. Her work combines irony, humour and suspense within eclectic, idiosyncratic and dramatic thematic compositions. Her current work uses London as a backdrop and, through a snapshot of the 'everyday', evokes the rapidly changing society we live in. While her paintings and etchings derive from direct observations and recent personal experiences, she also manipulates the images, drawing on past memories to create contradictions.



BELLA EASTON: *Everyone's a Winner* (detail), oil on linen

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Members' events

March–July

March

Commonwealth Day service

Monday 10 March, 3.15pm, £5, G
Takes place in Westminster Abbey in the presence of HM The Queen.

April

Tour of King's Cross and St Pancras

Tuesday 8 April, 11am, £13, G
Explore the newly-renovated St Pancras station and get an insight into the area's regeneration projects.

St James's Palace

Thursday 10 April, 10.15am, £5, B, M
Sir Anthony Figgis, HM Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps, hosts this rare opportunity to enjoy a private tour of St James's Palace, including the State Apartments, the Chapel Royal and The Queen's Chapel. In the unlikely event of the State Apartments being needed by a member of the Royal Family, the visit will be rescheduled.

St Paul's Cathedral

Tuesday 22 April, 11am, £14, R
Admire the iconic interior designed by Sir Christopher Wren. The construction of St Paul's was overseen by five monarchs who were determined that London's leading church should be as impressive as their private palaces.

Tower of London

Monday 14 April, 11am, £16, R
This guided tour looks at the architecture of one of the world's most famous historical buildings in the world and tells tales of its most infamous prisoners.

May

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 6 May, 4pm, no charge, M
To follow the Chairman's lunch.

Spencer House

Monday 19 May, 11am, £13, R
This magnificent private palace reflects the style of the first neoclassical interiors in Europe. A guided tour will include marvelling



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St Pancras station (top); guests at the Buckingham Palace Garden Party (above)

at the house's fine collection of 18th-century paintings and furniture.

Chelsea Flower Show

Thursday 22–Saturday 24 May, 8am–8pm, £43, B
See stunning gardens and vibrant horticultural displays. Maximum two tickets per member.

June

Trooping the Colour, B

The Major General's Review, Saturday 31 May, £6; The Colonel's Review, Saturday 7 June, £14; Queen's Birthday Parade, Saturday 14 June, £25
Max two tickets per member.

Highgrove Gardens

Wednesday 11 June, £tbc, B, M
Joint visit with the London Group to the family home of the Prince of Wales. Limited tickets.

Wimbledon Tennis Championships

23 June–6 July, B
Limited tickets available for Court Two. Max two per member.

July

Buckingham Palace Garden Party

Date and time tbc, no charge, B
If you have **never** attended, please submit your request, membership number and contact details for you and your guest to the director-general by letter, fax (+44 20 7499 6738) or email (rnewell@rosl.org.uk) **by noon on 25 March**, when a ballot will be held. Invitations are sent out in late June. Unsuccessful entrants will not be informed.

Chairman's lunch

Tuesday 6 May, 12.30pm, £45, G
Mr Stanley Martin CVO will host a reception and three-course meal to mark the centenary of the Imperial Society of Knights Bachelor. Guest speaker will be Sir Robert Balchin, Knight Principal of the society. The AGM will follow at 4pm. All applications must be in before Monday 28 April.

Application form on pg 32

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.

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Dine in one of our seven elegant function rooms. All have period features and natural daylight, with many offering wonderful views over our private garden and Green Park. We are exclusively offering ROSL members complimentary room hire for private dining at weekends, and half-price room hire during the week for a three-course lunch or dinner. Menus from £30 (+ VAT) per head; reduced-rate room hire from £200 (+ VAT). To make a reservation, call Bianca on 020 7491 3644.

Afternoon tea

For a truly English afternoon, why not relax in the drawing room at Over-Seas House with a newspaper and a traditional afternoon tea? Comprising freshly prepared finger sandwiches, warm scones with clotted cream, and a variety of homemade pastries and cakes, it is served between 2.30pm and 5.30pm, costing £12.50 per person.

Asparagus fortnight

19 May–31 May

Join us in the restaurant to celebrate the first taste of summer with our chef's creative selection of asparagus dishes. Two courses: £18.50, three courses: £23.50.

Wimbledon

23 June–6 July

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

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

Application form for members' events *(see pg. 31)*

Name.....
Membership number.....

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

UK address to which tickets should be sent
.....
.....
.....

Telephone number
.....

Please also provide regular
correspondence address
.....
.....
.....

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

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

Please complete this form and send with cheque only to:

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

Commonwealth Day
Tour of King's Cross and St Pancras
St Paul's Cathedral
Tower of London
Chairman's Lunch
Annual General Meeting
Spencer House

Mon 10 March £5
Tues 8 April £13
Tues 22 April £14
Mon 14 April £16
Tues 6 May £45
Tues 6 May
Mon 19 May £13

No. of tickets

..... £.....
..... £.....
..... £.....
..... £.....
..... £.....
..... £.....
..... £.....

Total £.....

APPLICATIONS FOR BALLOTTED TICKETS ONLY

MAXIMUM TWO TICKETS PER MEMBER. DO NOT SEND PAYMENT YET.

St James's Palace
Chelsea Flower Show
Wimbledon Tennis Championships
Trooping the Colour
Highgrove Gardens

10 April
22–24 May
23 June–6 July
31 May, 7/14 June
11 June

No. of tickets

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

Apply before

17 March
21 April
26 May
28 April, 1/5 May
12 May

EDINBURGH

What's on...

March–May



© JULES LAWRENCE

SOUNDS OF THE COMMONWEALTH: Zephyrus Saxophone Quartet

March

Bridge Club lunch

Friday 7 March, 12.30 for 1pm
Over-Seas House, Edinburgh
 One-course lunch plus sherry and guest day. Tickets: £9.

Coffee morning

Saturday 8 March, 10.30am
Over-Seas House, Edinburgh
 'Edinburgh Trams.' Speaker: Phil Douglas.

April

Coffee morning

Saturday 5 April, 10.30am
Over-Seas House, Edinburgh
 The Co-operative Society. Speaker: Audrey Middleton.

Arts lunch

Wednesday 23 April, 12 noon for 12.30pm
Over-Seas House, Edinburgh
 'The Singing Line: Australia's Telegraph.' Speaker, Ian Robert. In association with the ROSL Glasgow Branch and the Scots Australian Council. Tickets: £14 (£16 non-members) including a two-course lunch plus coffee and glass of wine.

May

Coffee morning

Saturday 10 May, 10.30am
Over-Seas House, Edinburgh
 Please note the change of date from the programme.

Music with a view

Wednesday 14 May, 6.30pm
Over-Seas House, Edinburgh
 Musicians tbc. Tickets include wine and canapé reception.

Exhibition by ROSL Visual Arts Scholar, Ryan Mosley (UK).

AGM and Chairman's reception

Tuesday 20 May, 6 for 6.30pm
Over-Seas House, Edinburgh
 Complimentary buffet.

Arts lunch

Wednesday 21 May, 12 noon
Over-Seas House, Edinburgh
 Speaker tba. Tickets: £14 (£16 non-members), lunch, coffee and wine.

Commonwealth week

Commonwealth Day lunch

Monday 10 March, 12noon for 12.30pm
Over-Seas House, Edinburgh
 Speaker: Linda Fabiani MSP, the Scottish Minister for Culture. Tickets: £15 (£18 non-members). Sherry on arrival. Two-course lunch plus coffee and glass of wine.

Traditional music and verse

Wednesday 12 March, 2.30pm
Over-Seas House, Edinburgh
 Celebrations with the Linties and Howard Purdie. Tickets: £7 (£9 non-members). Lunch optional.

Commonwealth concert : Zephyrus Saxophone Quartet

Monday 17 March, 6.30pm
The Scottish Parliament
 Tickets: £8 (£6 Friends of ROSL ARTS; £10 non members). Includes post-concert wine and canapés.

GLASGOW

What's on...

March

An island odyssey

Friday 7 March, 2pm
Conference room, Western Club, 32 Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow
 Speaker: Marjorie McRae.

April

Glasgow members' visit to Edinburgh, arts lunch

Wednesday 23 April, 12 noon for 12.30pm
Over-Seas House, Edinburgh
 Australian arts lunch (see Edinburgh entry for 23 April, left), followed by a gallery visit (tba). Tickets: £14.

May

AGM and year-end review

Friday 9 May, 2pm
Conference room, Western Club, 32 Royal Exchange Square, Glasgow
 James Wilkie, ROSL's Scotland development officer. Tea/coffee and biscuits, £2 donation.

Discussion Group and London Group

DISCUSSION GROUP

Meetings will be held at Over-Seas House, London on the following Monday evenings from 7pm to 8.30pm. There is no charge. All League members and guests are welcome.

Access to arts and the Royal Opera House

7 April Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas DBE, former chairman of the Royal Opera House.

Higher education and the University of London

21 April Sir Graeme Davies, vice chancellor of the University of London.

Discussion Group dinner

30 June With General Sir Mike Jackson, GCB CBE DSO. There will be a cash bar from 7pm to 7.30pm, followed by a two-course dinner (£30, including wine and coffee).

LONDON GROUP

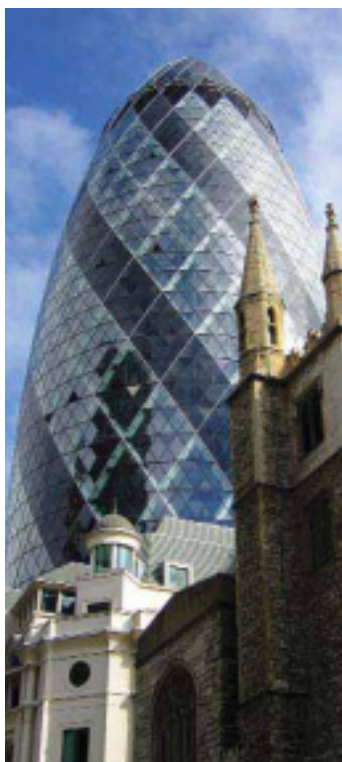
Kindly note that you are not automatically a member of the London Group. Please apply for an application form from the membership secretary, London Group, Over-Seas House, London. Meetings are held at 6.30pm on the first and third Thursdays of each month.

The Danube from Regensburg to Budapest

6 March An illustrated talk by Mrs Beryl Keen.

Exploding the Wilde myth — the real life of Oscar Wilde

20 March A talk by Mr Jonathan



COMING UP AT OVER-SEAS HOUSE: (clockwise from left) the London 'Gherkin' (9 April); Indonesia (15 May); University of London (21 April); Budapest and the Danube River (6 March)

Fryer, writer, lecturer and broadcaster.

Women in Russia today

3 April A talk to be given by Mrs Susan Purcell.

London Group AGM

17 April After this year's Annual General Meeting, Sir Anthony Figgis, HM Marshal of The Diplomatic Corps, will speak on the topic of 'Marshalling London's diplomats'.

The railways of England: how, why, where — and their effects

1 May A talk to be given by Dr Ron Cox, educationalist, author and scriptwriter.

Indonesia

15 May A talk by Mr Chris Goostrey, a retired Whitehall civil servant and specialist in foreign affairs.

LONDON GROUP OUTSIDE VISITS

A guided tour of Lancaster House

17 March, 2.30pm A tour of Lancaster House, which is now used as a venue for government hospitality. Tickets: LG members £9; guests £11.

A guided tour of the 'Gherkin'

Wednesday 9 April, 10.30am London's most distinctive city

skyscraper. Tickets: £10. London Group members only.

Behind the scenes at the new Wembley Stadium

Monday 21 April, 2.15pm The tour will take in the new stadium's changing rooms, Royal Box and the tunnel. Tickets: LG members £11; guests £13.

Iceland

There will be a possible London Group visit to Reykjavik in early September for four nights. Details are not yet available, but if you are interested, please send an SAE to the London Group (address above) and information will be sent in the near future.

Italy & the Black Sea



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SIMON ROWLAND-JONES – DAME JOSEPHINE BARSTOW – THE DANTE QUARTET
DMITRI ALEXEEV – GARY MATTHEWMAN – GIDON SAKS

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DESTINATIONS INCLUDE:

A CRUISE TO NORWAY AND THE NORTH CAPE

(11 – 24 June 2008)

The combination of the rugged beauty of the Norwegian Fjords, continuous daylight and inspiring talks and music should lift the spirits and enrich the soul.

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE MEDITERRANEAN TO THE BLACK SEA

(26 September – 24 October 2008)

Three versions available: i) Depart 26 September for a 10 night cruise plus 2 nights Istanbul.
ii) Depart 26 September for a 28 night cruise iii) Depart 4 October for 2 nights Istanbul plus 18 night cruise

Both music cruises will be aboard Fred. Olsen's Black Watch



CHATSWORTH

with concerts at Chatsworth House
(17 – 22 September 2008)



ISCHIA

with concerts at the home of
Lady Walton, La Mortella
(24 – 31 October 2008)



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(29 August – 3 September
and 3 – 8 September 2008)

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