

OVERSEAS

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The Royal Over-Seas League is dedicated to championing international friendship and understanding through cultural and education activities around the Commonwealth and beyond. A not-for-profit private members' organisation, we've been bringing like-minded people together since 1910.

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WELCOME



“ROSL is so much more than a clubhouse”

It's become a cliché of our times that the last 18 months have been difficult. Lockdowns, furloughs, and border closures have certainly been a huge challenge for ROSL. There was no point in complaining; there was nothing we could do. So we used the time to revitalise the organisation.

That meant three things. First, the club house had to be renovated. The drawing room was repainted and refurnished. It's such a central part of our beautiful buildings, and now it looks fresh and lively. Behind the scenes, the buildings' infrastructure was modernised: everything from the heating system to the kitchens was overhauled. Outside, the garden was refreshed: new tables, chairs, umbrellas, and heaters have transformed it into one of the best club gardens in London.

There's still more to do, of course. The dining room needs to be brought back to life and there's always a pricey ongoing maintenance schedule with old buildings. But rest assured, the work will steadily continue.

Secondly, the catering at ROSL has undergone a revolution. The old contract with the catering company was terminated, a new top-level Food and Beverage Director and a highly professional chef have been employed, and they've crafted an exciting new series of menus. Members deserve no less. What is more, ROSL has become much more attractive as a venue for exciting events.

Thirdly, ROSL is so much more than a clubhouse. The music programme continues to flourish and fresh ideas abound not only to help young artists but also to offer more to members. A new public speakers series has been introduced, which brings some of the big names and controversial issues to ROSL. They are proving highly popular.

I've always said an organisation like ROSL needs to undergo constant maintenance, reform, and creativity without destroying the ethos and foundations of the organisation. I hope we've used the Covid crisis as an opportunity to revitalise ROSL, but the job will never end!

Alexander Downer
CHAIRMAN



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“The photography competition has gone from strength to strength since launching in 2019”

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Upcoming dates for your diary to stave off the winter blues, and keep you entertained and informed right through until spring

From the EDITOR

There's a sense of optimism in the air. As life and society slowly but surely recovers from the pandemic, we are all finally able to look beyond the immediate future and start making plans again. 2022 is a year we can all look forward to. We can plan our holidays again, we can go to concerts again, we can meet and be merry. In the longer term, governments are all making commitments for a net zero future. After so long spent

worrying, the optimism taking hold is palpable.

At ROSL, it's no different. In this issue of *Overseas*, we celebrate the efforts ROSL has been making to revitalise itself during and since lockdown, and what more we have coming up next year.

In page 6, Director-General Annette Prandzioch starts us off by outlining two exciting anniversaries ROSL will celebrate in 2022, her vision for the club as 'a place of ideas', and plans to reaffirm our global footprint.

After more than 60 years of doing good, ROSL's charitable arm, the ROSL Golden Jubilee Trust, is changing its name to the ROSL Foundation, and with it, its funding priorities. On page 10, Trustee Helen Prince explains why the changes are happening, what they mean and what you can do to help.

General Manager Warren Miller has set about improving facilities at Over-Seas House since his appointment in 2019. The pandemic has provided an unexpected opportunity to get cracking on the work, with more to come next year, including the reopening of our Art Deco Restaurant. Find out more on page 12.

Next up, on page 16, Artistic Director Geoff Parkin previews the plans ROSL ARTS have for the future; how we will mark the 70th anniversary of the Annual Music Competition, take our activities on the road and what will be up on the walls of the clubhouse.

In December, we will launch our new Six Park Place sub-brand, aimed at tapping into the lucrative venue hire market. On page 20, Kate McIntosh explains what the plans are and how members stand to benefit.

Plenty to look forward to, I think you will agree!

I hope you enjoy the issue. As always, please get in touch with any questions or comments.

Your feedback is always welcome.

Mark Brierley

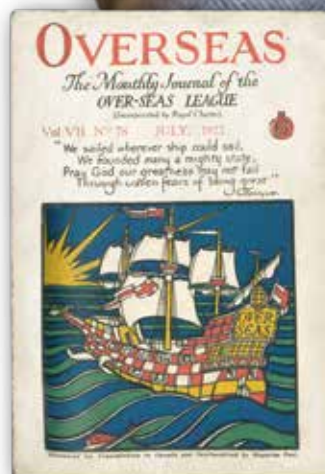
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A PLACE OF *ideas*

Director-General Annette Prandzioch outlines the exciting anniversaries ROSL will celebrate in 2022 and plans to reaffirm our global footprint

The Royal Over-Seas League has always been a progressive institution, not afraid of change or being a bit different. It's wonderful to remember that women were admitted alongside men in 1910 when ROSL was founded by Evelyn Wrench. I often show visitors the grand portrait of the formidable Lady Willingdon; our first female Chair, who was in post during the Second World War, after which the Drawing Room takes its name. On the other side of the room a family portrait with HM The Queen, our Patron, who had mused on her last visit to ROSL of the excellent likeness to her father. While in November we enjoyed a visit from our Vice Patron Princess Alexandra. As we move into the New Year, we will continue to celebrate these progressive traditions at the heart of the club.

Next year, we will be celebrating 100 years of our being granted the Royal Charter, (right, the first issue of *Overseas* celebrating the charter) a good moment to pause and reflect on what's to come in the next 100 years. We are fortunate to have a broad mandate of international friendship in the



Commonwealth and beyond. Our membership and activities reflect that mandate, and we have plans to do even more in 2022.

High Commissioners are, of course, Honorary members of ROSL, and it has been a pleasure to receive many of them in the clubhouse over the last few months. I have been delighted to hear how many have known ROSL over the years. We recently hosted one Commonwealth Head of Government here, and hope to continue to convene such leaders. With some 19 Commonwealth countries in Africa, we are establishing an Africa discussion group as many members have a connection with the continent.

International friendship in countries 'beyond' the Commonwealth is important to us too, as we have many members in the US, Europe, and elsewhere. The world is inter-connected and global issues transcend borders, as we have been reminded with COP26. All of our speakers in the new ROSL Public Affairs series this past year – such as James Landale, Julia Gillard, Karan Bilimoria, Chris Patten – share a global perspective.

A second discussion group to be launched will cover some of 'beyond' with a focus on transatlantic and European affairs. I very much hope all these events will stimulate debate and make ROSL known as a 'place of ideas.' One of the positives of the last couple of years has been the increased use of Zoom and Teams and using technology to connect us better, something that ROSL will continue with livestreaming concerts and talks.

Another significant anniversary we will celebrate together next year is 70 years of the Annual Music Competition – truly a jewel in the ROSL crown.

Previous winners include international stars such as cellist Jacqueline du Pré and pianist Piers Lane. It's been a privilege to attend concerts, most definitely a perk of my job! Of course, ROSL Arts also includes the visual arts, and we very much look forward to being able to restart our Artists in Residence programme, so we can continue to support both young artists and musicians. Artistic Director Geoff Parkin will discuss this and more in his article.

Since taking catering back in house, many of you have already enjoyed the new food and drink on offer – and I hope, in time, with international travel restrictions easing

Talking Points



LADY WILLINGDON

Our first female Chair, holding the office during the Second World War



WINTER WARMERS

Outdoor food events under the heated parasols are a new innovation this year



LORD PATTEN

The speaker at October's Annual Lecture, discussed China and a new world order

up – we will see many of our overseas members back in the clubhouse soon. We enjoyed a good season of al fresco dining and plan to introduce winter events in the garden so we can enjoy our outdoor space for even longer under our new heated parasols. The ROSL Wine Club is, as I predicted, proving extremely popular with members. Director of Food and Beverage Serge Pradier is planning more exciting tastings and wine dinners for next year. You may be interested to learn that we have recently also facilitated access for members to a gym nearby in St. James's, should you feel the need for a workout after the food and drink indulgences!

Preserving the heritage of our two Grade-I listed buildings continues to be a challenge. 2021 saw some major works to upgrade the fabric of the building, including to the main flue or chimney, and car park. Increased rainfall challenges the older roof structure, which will need tackling, and our historic gates and Brabourne staircase are scheduled for return early next year. We will also continue to upgrade our beautiful interiors with sensitivity to their heritage, the next focus being the wonderfully glamorous Art Deco dining room, where, during the course of 2022, we will offer a fine dining option to members once again. A preview of our plans will feature in General Manager Warren Miller's contribution. The newly rebranded ROSL Foundation will be well placed to assist in supporting the preservation of our heritage, which in turn of course supports the music and arts programme. I, and the ROSL Team, are extremely grateful for all the generous donations from many members over the years, which have sustained the Foundation and the amazing ROSL Arts. It would not have been possible without you!

A final word of thanks goes to the ROSL Team, including an outstanding Senior Leadership Team, who have shown loyalty and dedication to ROSL throughout a uniquely challenging period. A dedicated Central Council have also brought fresh strategic thinking and networks to this respected institution at a time of most need. Together we have used enforced lockdown periods to facilitate much-needed changes to put ROSL in the optimal position moving forward, and on a steady course for many more anniversaries in the future.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

After more than 60 years of doing good, ROSL's charitable arm, the ROSL Golden Jubilee Trust, is changing its name to the ROSL Foundation, and with it, consolidating its funding priorities. Trustee Helen Prince explains why the changes are happening, what they mean, and what you can do to help

Your background lies in fundraising for charities, most recently at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Do you see an opportunity for the ROSL Foundation to increase its fundraising activities?

For me, as a long-time member, one of the things that I really like about ROSL is that it is not just a club, it is cultural organisation and always has been. That's what I've valued and enjoyed about being a member. What a cultural organisation does is it keeps on refreshing itself, it keeps on investigating something new; new ideas, new performances, new artists, new ways for people to engage with one another and with culture. I think that adds a lot of value to life and that's one of the things that over the last 18 months, the lack of being able to attend live performances or see live exhibitions, for me, that's been sad. What you can do through a screen is great, and I think ROSL has done a lot of really good digital work, a lot more than some other bigger and better funded organisations. But equally, the development of new arts and new artists, that ability to engage with ideas and experience beauty is really important. Those kind of cultural values have an acknowledged charitable value.

When a lot of people think of charity, they think about cancer research or overseas development, animal welfare, that sort of thing. But charity is actually very broad.

Historically, the Trust has focused more on some of those other charitable areas, such as working in Commonwealth countries,



working in schools or working with deprived communities, which is valuable work, but there are lots of other organisations that do those things. We are now hoping through the ROSL Foundation to focus on what ROSL can *uniquely* do to make the world a better place. Simply put, to add cultural value for members, but not just for members. It goes wider than that.

When you support a young artist, or a musician, the cultural value is then shared more widely through their work and careers. It's not just about having a musician in to do a performance; they gain something from that performance, which they then take on to their next performance. They gain expertise. The prizes we run give musicians opportunities, the scholarships we

STEP UP

If you have visited ROSL recently, you may have noticed that there is currently a temporary staircase taking you down from the Brabourne Room to the Garden, while the original wrought-iron staircase has been removed for renovation. Funded by the ROSL Foundation, this unique piece of decorative ironwork requires the skills of specialist craftspeople in its repair and restoration, and is an important constituent in the listing of these heritage buildings. It will hopefully make a return in early 2022.

fund give artists opportunities. There is an investment in those people who take and share that cultural value to more and more people. In recent years, we have added even further activity by creating and supporting arts education projects, allowing the recipients of our competitions and scholarships the opportunity to give back to the next generation. With recent projects ranging from East London to the Caribbean, we intend to continue to educate and encourage new talent to contribute to our arts programmes.

More directly, a lot of our concerts and exhibitions are open to the public as well, so it's not just limited to members. This charitable activity is not just for the good of the club, but it is also the club doing something for the wider good. ♦

JONATHAN RADFORD

Saxophonist Jonathan Radford won the Annual Music Competition Gold Medal in 2018 and received £20,000 in prize money, £5,000 of which was specifically reserved for use in furthering his career. He chose to use this money to commission new repertoire for saxophone. The original work by composer Cheryl Frances-Hoad, *Algernon*, received its world premiere at the 2019 Brighton Festival, performed by Jonathan and fellow ROSL AMC alumni Ashley Fripp *piano*. Its performance at the festival introduced a whole new audience to both Jonathan and Ashley, as well as Cheryl, and was supported by a further performance at the Buxton International Festival later that year.



ROSL is not just a club, it is a cultural organisation and always has been. That's what I've valued and enjoyed about being a member



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Foundation's support for the arts goes beyond the clubhouse, with arts education projects around the world considered for funding. The Antigua and Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra hosted a delegation of ROSL alumni in 2019, receiving expert training, culminating in a concert celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Commonwealth at the national stadium. Plans to travel back to return to the country will happen when Covid allows.

What else will the Foundation support as well as the arts programme?

We're also committed to the care of our clubhouse, this beautiful Grade-I listed building. Looking after that, for posterity, is not only a duty, but it is charitable work. It is important that places like these are here for the future. These historic buildings connect us to the past and we have something to learn from them. It's really important that people can engage with history, and provide context to the present day world. The discussion of who we were and who we are enriches peoples' lives.

On a practical level, the Foundation supporting the protection and upkeep of the clubhouse also allows us to fulfil our charitable activities in the arts by providing spaces for us to do those things. The ability

to put on high-quality performances in a wonderful concert hall with excellent acoustics really highlights the synergy between the space and the performance.

Do you feel a big responsibility to help steer the direction of ROSL's philanthropy?

Yes! That is the duty and there is always a balance to strike. Everyone knows that spending money is easy, but you have to make those hard decisions on what to spend the money on. You can't do everything, so I think what we're trying to do as trustees, working with the ROSL team, is to try and be more integrated in what ROSL is and what it stands for, so that it fits together more clearly.

Previously, the Trust was supporting lots of things that were good in themselves, but perhaps didn't fit together so neatly into a 'Why is ROSL doing that? How does it fit with everything else we do?' question. We've supported some excellent education projects over the years, that have made a great difference to the people involved. But it was perhaps unclear why we had supported some and not others, and what they had to do with ROSL's overall aims and objectives.

That's a big part of the motivation in why we are moving towards the new vision of the Foundation, that symbiosis between the arts and the building, and linking education with arts and music, to more clearly articulate who we are and what we do. If people have that clearer understanding of what we do and why we do it, that's much easier for anyone to support and donate to.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Emily Sun, violinist

Australian violinist Emily Sun won the ROSL Annual Music Competition in 2016 and took home the £15,000 prize paid for by the ROSL Foundation. She has gone on to have a stellar international career.

"The Annual Music Competition really showcases you as an artist and what you believe in as a musician; it was my breakthrough moment in London. After that, my career really started rolling and things started happening."



Norman Oti, student

Norman is a Year 12 student at Selwyn College, which has recently opened a computer lab thanks to funding from the ROSL Foundation, the first of its kind at a school in the Solomon Islands.

"The availability of computers in the college helps me in my learning in many ways. Without the computers, I believe my learning will be affected. Thank you for donating these computers."

WHAT'S NEXT? AND HOW CAN YOU HELP?

As we celebrate 100 years of our Royal Charter and 70 years of the ROSL Annual Music Competition in 2022, you can continue to support our charitable work supporting young talent both in our heritage buildings and around the globe, and can donate at any time.

Visit www.rosl.org.uk/supportus for more information.



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BUILDING A BETTER CLUB

General Manager **Warren Miller** has set about improving facilities at Over-Seas House since his appointment in 2019. The pandemic has provided an unexpected opportunity to get cracking on the work, with more to come in 2022

It has been a genuine pleasure to be part of the Royal Over-Seas League since I joined in October 2019. Little did I know that the majority of the time would be spent in lockdown, due to the Covid pandemic. With any crisis comes opportunity and we certainly have not been idle during the closure of the clubhouse. Together with the support of Central Council and dedication of an amazing team, we took the opportunity to invest into club facilities and provide a much-improved offering to our members.

The most notable change was to bring the catering back in house, after being outsourced for over a decade. We successfully negotiated an early exit from the contract with Grayson's and after a vigorous tendering process to go with another catering company or bring catering in house, it was unanimously agreed by Central Council on the 15 December 2020 for the latter.

This led to us to review all the food and beverage areas, and it became evident that most of the facilities required much-needed investment. With only five months to build a team and complete all the works before reopening in May, it was an immense challenge. Our focus was to maximise our beautiful garden and offer a Covid-friendly space to dine in and meet safely with other members after over a year of lockdown. To achieve this, we redesigned the space and added more seating, purchased new parasols with heating and lighting, built a new outdoor Members' Bar and Alfresco Kitchen, with a BBQ and pizza oven. Although many of the equipment deliveries were hit with delays, we managed to launch the Garden with our new offering with much success.

It is often the case that the works most needed happen behind the scenes, so to allow us to deliver our new menu and improved service into the Garden and Brabourne Room, we needed to redesign and replace most of the equipment in the Brabourne Room's kitchen, which came at significant expense.

Other works completed during lockdown including the much-anticipated, yet delayed opening of our newly refurbished Willingdon Drawing Room as well as light makeovers of the Lobby, Bar, and Brabourne Room. We took the opportunity to refresh 40 of our bedrooms and are now in the process of scoping out the works needed to upgrade



The new furniture in the Willingdon Drawing Room (left), the new carpet (below left) being created for the Brabourne Room (below)



our main kitchen, which is essential in the relaunch of our Art Deco Restaurant on the lower ground floor, planned for 2022. Once these works are completed, it will allow us to offer much more to our members in terms of catering, and bring back fine dining to the clubhouse, which members have missed.

We have worked with designer Afra Affara to bring many of these new areas to life, who explains the thought process behind each room below.

Drawing Room

"My interior design journey at Over-Seas House began just before the Covid pandemic lockdown in the beautiful space of the Drawing Room. Each piece of furniture was specifically designed and made to be comfortable, practical and elegant, and to provide the club with seating that would give warmth to a 'home from home' space for its discerning members. Enjoying a newspaper, afternoon tea, a game of bridge, or catching up on email, are all daily Drawing Room activities now the renovation is complete. Central Council were so pleased with the results, that I was

delighted to be brought back again this summer to tackle other tired areas in this beautiful and historical building.

Brabourne Room

"Being asked to design a rug for the resplendent Brabourne Room, was both a pleasure and a project after my own heart. After all, I have been designing carpets for nearly 30 years, so having the opportunity to design a rug for one of my favourite rooms at Over-Seas House was like Christmas had come early!

"Again, like all the interior projects at the club, I'd come to expect that I'd be led by items that were already present. In this case, it was the pale, turquoise blue colour that was in abundance on the banquette and upholstered chairs. This blue element was added to seven more colours to produce

the tones for a specially commissioned, romantic, peacock feather rug. This traditionally woven carpet would both add interest to the room and, more importantly, be able to provide some well-needed sound proofing to the space. ➤

With only five months to build a team and complete all the works before reopening in May, it was an immense challenge



Restaurant

“One can instantly recognise that the restaurant was once a grand room with striking original Art Deco features. Being given this great opportunity to renovate the room, it was simply a question of allowing these elegant features to sing a beautifully composed melody. Complementing paint colours, wallpaper, and artwork were chosen, like a model’s make up, to simply enhance the room’s natural beauty.

“The starting point in this room was establishing which pieces were staying, and where to introduce new decorative items and bespoke items of furniture.

Both the recently purchased carpet and the upholstered carver dining chairs would remain, so it was a question of reintroducing these items, and using them as influencing elements for the design scheme. Each shade of colour

A grand room with striking Art Deco feature... allowing these features to sing a beautifully composed melody

would have a definitive purpose, that would allow the diner to distinguish the beautiful Art Deco lines. The current chair fabric, for example, was kept and complemented by a more vibrant and darker tone of the colour in the form of a shimmering velvet, which would give a subtle nod to the silk velvets worn in the form of flapper dresses, rich stoles and decadent long collared evening coats that were resplendent from that bygone era. This turquoise-teal colour was then put together with other fabric combinations to make cushions, upholster British, traditionally made, bespoke armchairs, which would further be enhanced with contrasting fabric finishes.

“All these additions were magnified with further elements that would give a deliberate complimentary nod to the the Art Deco influence of the room’s original features. These included imposing chandeliers and wall lights, shagreen panelled walls, mirror frames depicting Art Deco illustrations, and frosted, cloud like, curved glass partitions between the booths.

“Tapping into that wonderful style of a century ago, easily brought design ideas that would enhance the space, and create a room where one can dine, work, or lounge in surroundings that are sure to evoke the senses of that stylish and vivacious Deco age.”



WARREN MILLER

Warren joined the Royal Over-Sea League in 2019 as Resident Manager, having gained extensive hospitality experience at No. Ten Manchester Street Hotel, The Wellesley, The Lanesborough, and the Capital Hotel. He took on the role of General Manager in October 2021.

“The design was sent to a centuries old carpet manufacturer using traditional looms in the south of England, whose clients include the National Trust and the Royal household, amongst others. Following its production, and keeping to that love of using British, traditionally made products, the Axminster woven rug was sent to be bound on the grounds of an old mill in a small village in Worcestershire. It’s a small artisan business run by generations of the same family, where Adam meticulously hand bound and finished the edge of the rug from his small workshop positioned near an old stream that had previously provided the water needed to power an old Victorian rope mill, still standing proud, but romantically derelict, a few hundred yards away.”

LET THE LEAGUE BE YOUR LEGACY

Continue to support your home from home in the heart of Mayfair by bequeathing a gift to ROSL in your will. Your generosity will give young people around the world an education, it will give talented young musicians, artists and writers the chance of a career, and it will safeguard the future of your beautiful Grade I listed clubhouse.

To discuss email legacy@rosl.org.uk or call +44 (0)20 7408 0214

Tania Dolvers Photography London



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ART AHEAD

Artistic Director Geoff Parkin previews the plans ROSL ARTS have in 2022; how we will mark the 70th anniversary of the Annual Music Competition, take our activities on the road and what will be up on the walls of the clubhouse



Wigmore Hall, the venue for the 2022 Gold Medal Final, as it looks today and how it looked for the 1971 final, won by pianists Andrea Kalanj and Jan Latham Koenig



ROSL ANNUAL MUSIC COMPETITION

In 1952, a young Australian violinist called Robert Cooper won the first of what was to become the ROSL Annual Music Competition. Started by a group of music loving members who wished to support young talented Commonwealth musicians in London, Robert set the standard and the course of an event that was to grow in significance and stature over the decades. In fact, the second competition was also won by an Australian, pianist Geoffrey Parsons, and the third by Jamaican pianist Oswald Russell, both of whom went on to distinguished careers, and proved ROSL to be at the centre of discovering and promoting international musical talent in the UK.

2022 marks the 70th birthday of the Annual Music Competition and I hope that ROSL members will join with us with pride in celebrating this milestone birthday of our unique professional arts programme. We will be back to our normal schedule for 2022, with our section finals taking place in February and March. At 16 years old, the lighting system in our beautiful Princess Alexandra Hall is starting to fail, and I am pleased to say that, supply chains willing, we should have an upgraded system in the hall by the next competition, so that our events and performers will be lit better than ever!

I am also pleased to announce that our 2022 Gold Medal Final will take place on Thursday 7th July at Wigmore Hall. This will be the first time in decades that our final has taken place on Wigmore Street, and I am thrilled that our finalists will be able to perform in what is widely regarded as the finest chamber music venue in the world, and we look forward to seeing our members there.

Proved ROSL to be at the centre of discovering and promoting international musical talent

ROSL ARTS EVENTS AT OVER-SEAS HOUSE AND FURTHER AFIELD

As ever, many of our events will focus on the unique support we offer to our family of young musicians, not least our hope that we will be able to return to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August 2022. The unique atmosphere of Edinburgh during the festivals offers our musicians unparalleled

performance opportunities, the chance to try new repertoire in front of friendly audiences, and make new musical partnerships which in many cases have proved to last for the course of their careers. We also hope to finally welcome our young Pettman Scholars from New Zealand, who have waited so long to spend time in the UK, learning with our world-class professors, attending concerts at BBC Proms and performing with us in Edinburgh.

In summer of 2021, we programmed a series of "EdFringe" concerts in our magnificent Princess Alexandra Hall in London, which proved popular with members and audiences, and as such we hope to hold a small series again in 2022. We are already programming in further London events, including a performance of *Twelfth Night* by

The Handelbards (right) will be cycling into ROSL for their performance, while the Edinburgh Fringe concerts (below) will return in 2022



travelling (on bicycles!) Shakespeare theatre company the Handelbards, and an art talk given by Cindy Polemis on Hogarth and Europe (to tie in with the forthcoming Tate Britain exhibition). We will also meet remarkable sisters Patricia and Jean Owtram, and learn about their true story of helping to crack the Enigma code during World War II.

We also have two exciting concerts planned, one on the theme of animals, to include narration by renowned actor Simon Callow, tying in with our summer exhibition at ROSL, and a concert in late August to celebrate Australian musicians and composers as part of the UK/AUS Season of Culture.

We continue our support of our musicians around the UK, with concerts so far planned at the Buxton, Lichfield, Lake District, and Shaldon Festivals. I am also pleased to announce a new partnership with St George's Bristol, where we will support a new series of concerts featuring ROSL prizewinning musicians.

2022 will also mark the second iteration of our ROSL Composition Award, in association with the London Sinfonietta, and we look forward to receiving entries from emerging composers from around the Commonwealth, workshoping the selected finalists works with Sinfonietta, and giving those finalists the

opportunity to pass their knowledge on to the next generation of young composers studying for their GCSE in music.

VISUAL ARTS FOR 2022

The Winter/Spring visual arts schedule will see our Biennial Photography Competition on display until 6 February. Showing the shortlist of 20 entries themed around "International Friendship", our six esteemed international industry judges made an insightful and poignant selection based around images taken over the past year from all over the world (more information can be found on page 30).

We are also excited to reveal that ROSL ARTS are collaborating with influential Art Historian Ruth Millington on a curated exhibition, and series of talks and events preceding the launch of her book *Muse: Uncovering the hidden figures behind art history's masterpieces* (published by Vintage Publishing on 7 April 2022), opening 17 February 2022. As Ruth states, "For too

long imbalanced narratives have created romanticised notions of the passive, powerless female muse. This book questions such stereotypes, and instead celebrates those remarkable individuals whose immense contributions have changed art history, from the Renaissance to today." The exhibition will showcase a print series by Dina Razin from illustrations made especially for the book, alongside a 'Muse Manifesto' and loaned artworks from some of the featured artists and muses.

"Rising Stars" returns in late April, displaying semi-finalists for the RBA Rome Scholarship, a prestigious travel award for a young artist who either lives, works, or studies in the UK, which will offer development for an emerging talent.

Our own international two-month supported residency at The Art House's purpose-built studios in Wakefield also returns in Autumn 2022. This opportunity is designed to help develop the practice of two early to mid-career artists and is open to those living and working in commonwealth (or former commonwealth) countries who have not yet exhibited or studied in the UK.

With further collaborative projects due in the second half of the year, 2022 is promising to be an exciting year for the unseen and as yet undiscovered! Watch this space...

2022 is promising to be an exciting year for the unseen and as yet undiscovered! Watch this space...

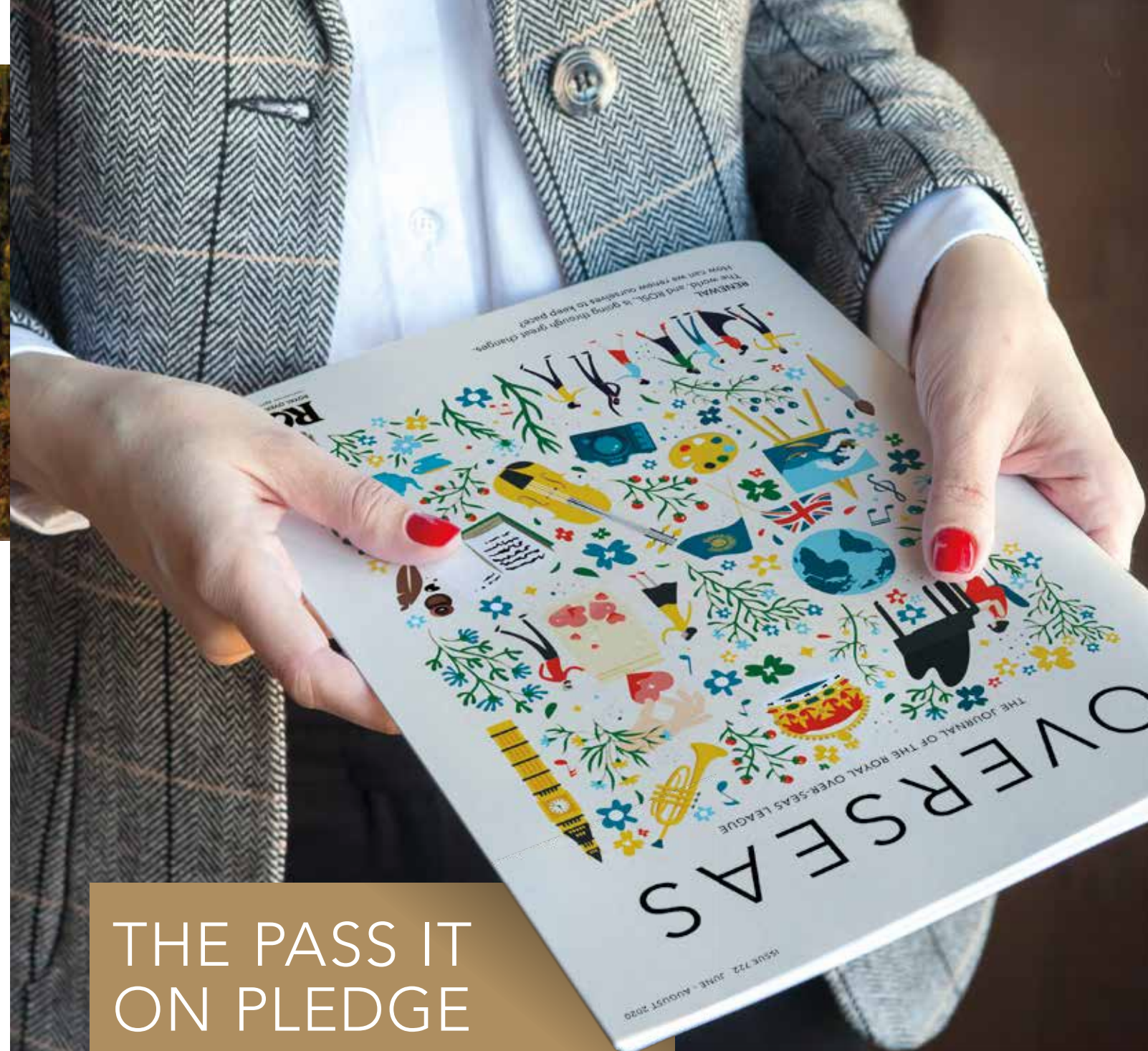
THE PASS IT ON PLEDGE

When you're finished with your copy of *Overseas*, please don't throw it straight into the recycling, pass it on!

We're encouraging our members to spread the word, so if you know any non-members that might enjoy reading the articles and the great window they provide into the world of ROSL, please pass it on to them.

If they end up becoming a member, you could even be entered into our prize draw to win a hamper from Davy's if they mention you on their application, as part of our 'Propose a Friend' scheme.

www.rosl.org.uk/proposeafriend



ROSL
ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE
ESTD 1910

WHERE TWO WORLDS MEET

ROSL is excited to launch its new Six Park Place sub-brand in December aimed at tapping into the lucrative venue hire market. Kate McIntosh explains what the plans are and how members stand to benefit

It's unsurprising that a location in the heart of St James's, a beautiful Grade-I listed buildings and exceptional food and drink, make the Royal Over-Seas League a desirable location for anyone looking to host an event. Whether it's a family birthday party, corporate conference, small business meeting, or even a wedding, the versatile range of spaces at Over-Seas House make it a perfect fit for almost any occasion.

After many years of our venue hire business being outsourced, along with our catering, both have been brought back in house in the last 12 months. This presents ROSL with a golden opportunity to generate some much-needed revenue to help us recover from the pandemic, but also improve the experience of visiting the clubhouse for members. Our express aim is to host fewer, higher-quality

external events, a break from our past, as a means of boosting revenue and reducing the disruption to members.

Not only will it mean a better experience for members during their stay, but it will also mean we can reinvest in our membership services, not least in the building itself. First up will be the renovation and reopening of the Art Deco Restaurant, which Warren Miller discusses on page 12.

Putting Six Park Place on the map

To do this, we will be launching a new sub-brand in December, Six Park Place, with its own separate identity from that of ROSL, serving members wishing to hire out private spaces, attracting the corporate market, then going on to attract weddings.

This new identity aims to engage the professional event booker with an easy-to-navigate website that shows our spaces off and how they might look for events, while also offering packages to suit most needs. The launch of the website creates a shop window in a digestible format, which will streamline the booking process. The Royal Over-Seas League is relatively unknown in this market, so Six Park Place aims to put us on the map.

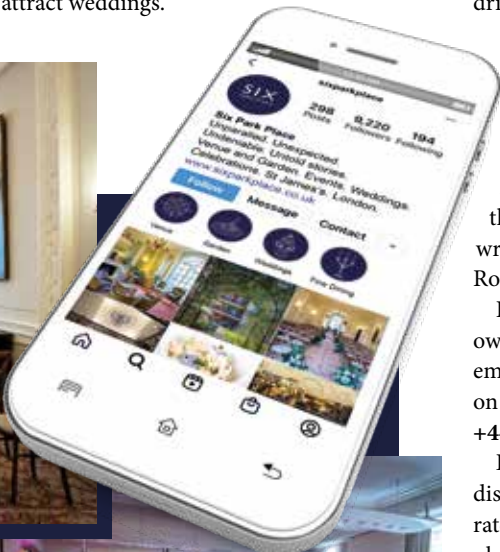
What's in it for you?

For members, you will notice very little difference when visiting the clubhouse. Our busy calendar of events will continue, such as our Public Affairs Series, soon-to-come Discussion Groups, Annual Music Competition, and exhibitions. The food and drink will be as delicious as ever. The beds as comfortable as always. And the welcome will be just as warm. The only changes will be the slow but steady improvement to facilities at the clubhouse. The aforementioned reopening of the Art Deco Restaurant, the return of our beautifully restored wrought-iron staircase from the Brabourne Room into the garden, and much more.

For those members wishing to hire their own private spaces, we are here to help. Just email the team; Magda and Polina, and me on hello@sixparkplace.com or call +44 (0)20 7016 6940.

Don't forget, members receive 15% discount on all room hire, food, and beverage rates. We offer a complimentary event planning service, and if you would like to get married at the club, we offer a complimentary bridal suite for the happy couple.

Thank you for your anticipated support, we welcome any feedback and ideas you may have. Our approach is one of partnership and collaboration, the members have and always will remain the true heart and soul of ROSL.



15%
DISCOUNT

Don't forget, members receive 15% discount on all room hire, food, and beverage rates. Contact hello@sixparkplace.com or call +44 (0)20 7016 6940.

LONDON CALLING

The first to greet you at Over-Seas House, ROSL Porters Tony Ford, Frankie Barzey, and Mikael Lorinquer are fonts of knowledge when it comes to the club and London.

Read on to find out why they love this city and ROSL

What are your favourite things about London?

TONY: Dulwich Picture Gallery in South London has an amazing collection including Poussin, Canaletto, and Rubens, but also newer exhibitions such as Helen Frankenthaler (*Radical Beauty*).

The Lido in Brockwell Park is a delight when we do manage to have a decent summer. It has a relaxing sun terrace and a café that becomes a bistro at night which is charming and reasonably priced.

The Horniman Museum in Forest Hill is an amazing building

that is home to a rather quirky private collection ranging from a stuffed Walrus to Egyptian artefacts, with wonderful gardens and a conservatory for refreshments.

FRANKIE: During my time off away from the club I am often in the recording studio or at home researching rare records such as jazz, world music, and other similar genres. I play the board game Kensington and am often looking for a worthy opponent, which these days is proving to be quite difficult

to find! If you play this rare British board game, please do let me know. Living in London and seeing how much it has evolved over the years is always a new experience with something to see and do; from exploring comedy clubs to new restaurants, art galleries and night clubs, street markets and new pop up stores, it is quite the adventure.

MIKAEL: I've been living here for almost eight years, and the best way I've found to discover London is by meeting locals. My partner is a genuine Londoner, as well as a

Living in London and seeing how much it has evolved over the years is always a new experience with something new to see and do



Limehouse



The Horniman Museum



Horniman Museum interior



Dulwich Picture Gallery



Brockwell Park Lido

writer and a journalist, so she has introduced me to all sorts of writers, singers, screenwriters, and actors. I happened to meet Brian over a beer one day, and he turned out a great singer and guitarist looking for a harmonica player, which I am. As we had a drink, I gave him a quick audition and got the job. I then started to play harmonica in Blues Jam sessions all around Camden with his band. In my spare time, I also work as a Supporting Artist in feature films, TV dramas, commercials, and documentaries, which gives me a proper opportunity to explore this industry from its very heart.

Last but not least, I never thought that I'd live on a boat but London gave me this opportunity. My neighbours turned from dodgy fellas in Camden into swans, ducks, coots, herons, and cormorants in Limehouse. No more police sirens

waking me up in the middle of the night, no more foxes ransacking the bins right out my doorstep. Love that.

What are your highlights of working at ROSL?

TONY: The flags recently installed by Artist-in-Residence Nisha Duggal are fantastic. Every time I arrive for work, I always interpret them differently. Listening to the musicians rehearse whilst I am on duty is a pleasure and very relaxing. But best of all, helping with the new member showaround tours of our club. We have so much to offer and a rich history that defines our individuality in comparison with many other London clubs.

FRANKIE: My favourite things about working at the Royal Over-Seas League is firstly the Princes Alexander Music Hall and its many

events as well as the exhibitions on display in the Central Lounge. The garden in the summer time is such a beautiful feature and also a wonderful place to dine with its jazz events and summer plays. There is always something new to look into at ROSL. The team are a pleasant lot to work alongside and always willing to help one another to improve. Its great to walk through those doors every day and be a part of the history of the Royal Over-Seas League.

MIKAEL: ROSL involvement in the arts makes a huge difference to me. The variety of artists and performers who come through our doors makes this the perfect place to work. The actual building itself and its walls and rooms are the echo of London's past and it gives this place a unique position in the history of London.



Travelling SAFE

After what seems like an eternity of lockdowns and staycations, many of us are itching to get out and see the world again. Abi Millar asks the experts how travel is likely to open up in 2022 as the world tries to move to living with the virus, and looks at how you can travel safely

2020 was a bad year for wannabe globetrotters. As stay at home orders were issued across the globe, and 'lockdown' entered the lexicon, we all had to get used to the fact we weren't going anywhere any time fast. That gap year backpacking through South America, or even just the family holiday to Spain, would need to be put on ice. Even as life has edged back towards normality, and restrictions on our social lives have eased, foreign travel has remained a complicated subject. On one hand, the vaccine rollout has been a huge success in many countries, meaning holidays abroad are no longer an absolute no-no. On the other hand, anyone wishing to travel in 2021 has had to navigate a confusing jumble of rules and restrictions.

In the UK, countries were placed on the 'green', 'amber' and 'red' lists, with the colours indicating the degree of restrictions on travel. The government came under flak for regularly changing the rules, not to mention moving countries from one list to another with very little notice.

Notably, travellers in green-list Portugal faced a frantic scramble to the airport when they heard it was moving to the amber list. The rule change meant they would face an unexpected ten-day quarantine on their return, plus the cost of two PCR tests. For many people biding their time back home, this became something of a cautionary tale and a real impediment to booking a foreign holiday.

"The pandemic has had a devastating impact on international travel," says Sean Tipton, spokesperson for ABTA – The Travel Association. "At one stage, the British government said it was actually illegal for people to take a foreign holiday. Business was down by over 90% in 2020. And this year, even though we have been able to go on holiday since July, we're running probably at about 25% of a normal year."

People have been concerned, he says, about countries moving from the amber or green list on to the red list, which requires returning travellers to fork out upwards of £2,000 for a 'quarantine hotel'. The costs of PCR tests, which can run into the hundreds, have also been prohibitive for many people.

The upshot is that the travel industry has had an extraordinarily tough couple of years. Many companies have gone bust, with others staying afloat thanks only to the furlough scheme and mass redundancies.

"In the UK, travel agents and tour operators haven't had a penny of targeted assistance," laments Tipton. "I think we're going to see quite a few more travel companies going out of business before things get back to normal, because you can't have two years of very little revenue and that have no impact at all."

“
We're seeing
restrictions
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world rather
than imposed

Other countries have had their own, similarly labyrinthine, system of restrictions, with many EU countries implementing their own country colour codes. American citizens have found it easier to visit Europe than the other way round, while Australia and New Zealand have achieved low rates of Covid-19 by effectively closing their borders.

According to a report by the Travel Analytics branch of UBS, each country has an average of 350 travel restrictions in place (relating to medical, mobility, nationality, and visa changes) with China, at 981, in first place.

Prospects for next year

The good news is that the situation could be set to turn around. While the travel industry at large isn't predicting an instant recovery – travel is not expected to return to 2019 levels until 2023 – 2022 should be a marked step up on 2021.

"For next year, things are much more positive," says Tipton. "We're seeing restrictions being lifted around the world rather than imposed, and, because of the vaccination programme, we're actually seeing a higher level of booking for next year than you would normally see this far in advance. There is a lot of pent-up demand. People want to go overseas, they really do."

Tom Hall, Editor-in-Chief of *Lonely Planet* UK, agrees with this assessment. He believes that throughout the pandemic, the appetite people have for adventure and new discoveries has very much remained in place.

"This is not an environment where people have forgotten about travel and decided to take a staycation in its absolute definition, i.e. by staying at home," he says. "What we've seen is people want to travel in pretty much any way they can. Obviously there's been a huge amount of domestic travel, but also overseas travel wherever possible."

As *Lonely Planet's* data has shown, there was a surge in demand whenever a new country appeared on the UK green list – and not just for classic holiday destinations like the Balearic Islands, but also for places like Iceland with a rather more niche appeal. ◉

WISH YOU were here



The desire for a 'trip of a lifetime' may initially be trumped by the wish to stay closer to home



Australia

Australia, home to ROSL's largest cohort of members outside the UK, has seen relatively few Covid cases and deaths thanks to swift action from each state's government, but that has also meant restrictions in place for longer and more frequently than many other countries.

New Zealand

New Zealand, along with Australia, now share a restriction-free travel bubble, and have taken similarly swift action to keep cases and deaths low. However, locking down entire cities after a handful of cases has been questioned by some. We look forward to welcoming back both countries' members to the club in 2022.



America

The US, the fastest growing group of members outside the UK, have reported the highest number of deaths in the world, approaching 800,000. As vaccination rates continue to rise, travel has opened up and its citizens can once again head overseas and welcome visitors to their shores with relative ease.

Canada

Canada, one of the traditional heartlands of ROSL membership and home to several branches, has made exceptional progress with its vaccination programme and with it, restrictions have eased. We have already welcomed Canadian members back to the clubhouse this year and look forward to seeing many more in 2022.



India

India has a large number of ROSL members to go with its huge population. Currently ranked third in the world in total Covid-related deaths, the challenges of vaccinating its more than 1 billion citizens remain, in spite of being a large vaccine producer.



"There's been this informal back channel of people saying, alright, this has come on the list, where can we go?" says Hall. "That excitement is still there, albeit tempered by the additional logistical complications around travel. I've just been to Denmark and Germany, and spent quite a lot of time getting ready to come back. The need for tests, passenger locator forms, and checking the requirements, does give people some pause to think."

In other words, travel may need to be a little more planned, a little less spontaneous, throughout the months ahead. On top of that, nobody can rule out a situation in which some new variant emerges, lockdowns are reintroduced, and holidays are once again declared illegal.

In the meantime, though, it is unlikely that people who really want to go abroad will be dissuaded. On 4 October, the UK scrapped its traffic light system with a view to making travel easier. Countries are now either consigned to the red list (travel discouraged) or the 'rest of the world' (no quarantines required). The testing requirements may end up being simplified as well.

"We do need to get through to Christmas without seeing any incidents of rules being changed at the last minute – that's the absolute worst thing we're seeing for bookings," says Hall. "But it looks to me like there is a greater optimism about booking for next summer. I think the New Year is the point at which people will think, OK, I can see the other side of this now."

Chosen destinations

In terms of where people are hoping to go, the desire for a 'trip of a lifetime' may initially be trumped by the wish to stay closer to home.

"When the pandemic first started, there was an expectation that there would be this kind of 'revenge travel' thing, with people saying, oh I've saved some money, the next chance I get I'm going to climb Kilimanjaro," says Hall. "I don't think that's going to happen. I think the initial return to travel is going to be characterised by people going to places that feel quite familiar."

For travellers from the UK and Europe, this might mean holidaying elsewhere in Europe or, as of November, the US. Longer-haul destinations – especially those with low vaccination rates – are likely to take longer to come online.

"It's partly that if you haven't been away for two years, you're probably quite keen to go somewhere you really like rather than trying a totally new destination," says Tipton. "But the other issue for some of our members, who are specialist tour operators in places like South American and Africa, is that these countries are still on the UK red list. It's clear how important overseas travel and tourism is to many countries' economies, so hopefully we'll start to see that changing."

Jonny Cooper is the founder of Off the Map Travel, which offers bespoke adventure holiday packages across Scandinavia. He says demand has been strong since restrictions began to ease.

"I think Scandinavia is well suited for reopening up for travel, because it has a very low population density," he says. "That gives people that feeling of space and helps them feel safe. People are wanting to get back to nature and reconnect with themselves, and alongside this they can get adventure with activities like snowmobiling in the winter."

Coming out of the pandemic, he has noticed an uptick in demand for longer, more in-depth trips, as well as for multigenerational families looking to travel together. He has also witnessed a wide range of attitudes regarding what it means to travel responsibly – compounded by the patchwork of restrictions that remain in place.

"We are going to need to cater towards everyone's feelings and attitudes around that as best we can," he says. "I think there's going to be an interesting picture developing over the next few months, but at the same time I think people do want to get back out there and start to experience the world again."

How to prepare for next year's holiday

Given our lack of certainty about the future course of the pandemic, travel insurance is likely to become more important than it has been in the past. Cooper feels holidaymakers want security above all else, and an understanding of what will happen if things change.

"Ultimately, I think it's all about clarity and making sure the consumer is aware of what choices they have,"

he says. "My key message would be to speak to travel experts and use their understanding and knowledge to help make decisions. As tour operators, we are there to help people find the best experience for them."

Tipton suggests taking the opportunity to book a package holiday, as many tour operators will allow you to rebook at no cost in the event of a governmental U-turn.

"In the past, if you cancelled the trip, you would be charged the cancellation fee – simple as that, up to 100%," he says. "This year, if the cancellation is caused by government restrictions, travel companies have stopped doing that. A lot of them are now saying you can rebook your flights for another destination or a later date."

Hall thinks that while the logistics may seem more daunting than usual, anyone with the urge to travel ought to embrace their wanderlust.

"If you do, it will be a very strong reminder of what it is that you love about it," he says. "The world is out there, it feels different to home, there are some wonderful experiences to be had. Re-engaging with that discovery and exploration is a brilliant thing for you as an individual, and it can be a really good thing for the places you visit as well. Yes, it can be a little more complicated, but it's worth the effort."

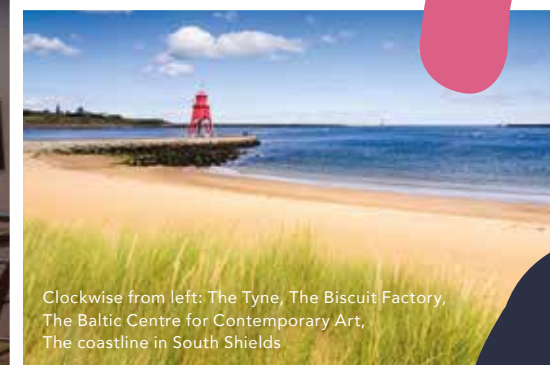
For many of us, the pandemic narrowed our horizons and made our worlds that little bit smaller. 2022 may well be a time of enlargement and expansion, as we venture beyond our own localities once again.



MY CITY

TYNE AND WEAR

Artist Ruth O'Reilly, who recently featured in ROSL's 'First Look' exhibition, tells us about her home in the North-East of England



Clockwise from left: The Tyne, The Biscuit Factory, The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, The coastline in South Shields

Newcastle is full of amazing architecture - there are so many historical monuments and beautiful buildings to see in the city centre

Describe the area in three words
Passionate, hospitable, creative.

How long have you lived there and how has it changed over the years?

I've lived in South Shields - a coastal North East town - my whole life and I studied my Textiles and Surface Design Degree at The Northern School of Art in Hartlepool. I don't think I'd ever move away. I feel like the art scene in the North-East has really come alive as I've grown up. Ouseburn is the latest area of Newcastle to really thrive through art; you can find a lot of up-and-coming artists, designers and musicians in the area's galleries and studios. It's a really exciting time for art in the North East!

What are the cultural highlights for visitors?

The galleries in Newcastle and Gateshead are a must visit. The Baltic, The Biscuit Factory and The Laing to name a few. They contain a huge variety of artwork, something to suit everyone from traditional to modern - and the buildings they're in are often an artwork in themselves. Newcastle is full of amazing architecture

- there's so many historical monuments and beautiful buildings to see in the city centre; especially on Grey Street. Follow the curve of Grey Street down to the Quayside where you can see the famous Millennium Bridge and Tyne Bridge. If you head further down the Tyne to South Shields, you'll find a beautiful coast line, a lovely place for a long walk with towering cliffs, sand dunes, lighthouses and even a bit of surfing if you fancy it!

What is the best time of year to visit?

I love the North-East all year round. Although it does get quite chilly, you can't beat getting wrapped up and taking a long walk along the beach with a nice cup of hot chocolate in the winter. However I think the summer definitely has the edge.

Sunny days at the beach with the family building sandcastles, enjoying a few drinks along the Quayside and picnics in Jesmond Dene; a beautiful park in Suburban Newcastle.

Check out Ruth's work on Instagram @loopandyarn





ROSL

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Based on the theme of 'international friendship', ROSL's Photography Competition is back and bigger than ever! Visual Arts Coordinator Robin Footitt reveals the three main prizewinners and the story behind each image

ROSL's biennial open submission photography competition has gone from strength to strength since launching in 2019, doubling in size with over 500 entries from 40 countries. Our six international industry judges; Sunil Gupta, Rakesh Mohindra, Germaine Walker (all London), Farah Mahbub (Pakistan), Veerle Poupeye (Jamaica) and Sarker Protick (Bangladesh) assessed the plethora of quality submissions taken over the past year in preparation for shortlisted exhibition entries to be displayed at Over-Seas House, London, on view from 9 December 2021 until 6 February 2022.

CAMERA CATEGORY WINNER

Nyauli, 2021

Tirtha Lawati

The series of lockdowns experienced throughout 2020 and early 2021 inspired Tirtha Lawati's ongoing project *Nyauli*. Named after the Great Barbet, a bird native to Nepal whose song, according to folklore, is that of a lost lover, reflects Lawati's own experience of growing up in the UK, born in Hangsari, Panchthar, Nepal. His nieces have become muses in between home schooling and are of a similar age to when he and his sister first arrived in the country.

Nyauli is inspired by Tirtha's own childhood fascination with the dragonflies in Nepal, translating his observations of its whirring wings across a generation to

Warwickshire – constructing a mise-en-scène with his nieces' hair plaited in a traditional red accessory worn by Nepali women (*lacha*) and decorated with a combination of fresh garden flowers, yarn, and floral crafted beads. The open blue sky and plastic dragonfly balanced on a pointed fingertip add to the unusual effect reminiscent of childhood, getting lost playing in fantastical worlds and scenarios. It was this story that captured the judges' attention, through a simple storytelling device the subject and composition were celebrated for their bold, striking simplicity and vibrant positive energy during these difficult times.



“While the image is hopeful, the metal gate reminds us that this coexistence is fragile and needs to be nurtured, and that doors can be shut quickly if mutual respect and tolerance is not observed

MOBILE CATEGORY WINNER

Reunion Place, 2021

Debarun Biswas

Reunion Place shows a Hindu monk sitting outside a Muslim Mosque. A child appears through the doorway in preparation for prayer. This sacred and beautiful moment of reunion between the two religions was captured with Debarun Biswas’s mobile phone – displaying the versatility and ability to capture a chance, fleeting moment with a portable camera inside your pocket. As international judge Veerle Poupeye observed “While the image is hopeful, the metal gate reminds us that this coexistence is fragile and needs to be

nurtured, and that doors can be shut quickly if mutual respect and tolerance is not observed.” This image was unanimously praised by the panel for its respectful observation of the scene whilst also displaying impressive technical skill despite being taken on a mobile phone. The formal qualities within the image; distinctive foreground and background, the contrast of the white wall and shadowed doorway, help tell a story and draw the eye from the monk’s confrontational direct gaze and warm smile to the child’s pathway to prayer across a sea of sandals.

THE MADIHA AIJAZ PRIZE

In a Distant Land, 2021

Shubhodeep Roy

Shubhodeep Roy is this year’s recipient of The Madiha Aijaz Prize, awarded to a young photographer of promise in memory of former ROSL ARTS alumni, filmmaker and photographer, Madiha Aijaz (1981–2019). Selected by friend and colleague Farah Mahbub, Professor of Photography at Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Pakistan – *In a Distant Land* documents a group of Afghan friends of the Kabuliwala Community playing cricket in the Maidan area of Kolkata, India, on the day after Eid celebrations. Just 24 days later Sunday 15 August 2021, Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan was captured by the Taliban. Afghan ‘Kabuliwalas’, which translates as “men from Kabul”, have been coming to Kolkata for centuries selling dry

fruits, asafoetida, and carpets. The Afghan community now consists of thousands of Afghan refugees with an uncertain future, as they are now separated from their families and friends back home. Farah Mahbub observes, “As humans we make plans for the unforeseeable future with such determination and commitment knowing nothing is or ever was in our control. Afghanistan, within fleeting moments became an unstable country that the entire world watched burn. Simple mundane activities, such as playing cricket amongst friends, maybe now just a dream.” This powerful photograph shows how even after a relatively short amount of time (just four months since it was taken) an image’s narrative can twist sharply from playing games to a matter of life and death.

THE COMMENDED TOP IMAGES SELECTED BY THE JUDGES ARE BY:

- Soumya Ranjan Bhattacharyya
- Chinmoy Biswas
- Debdatta Chakraborty
- Sandipani Chattopadhyay
- Mithail Afrige Chowdhury
- Charlotte Dobson
- Aravindan Ganesan
- S R Hossain
- MD Shamim Ul Islam
- Syed Mahabubul Kader
- Uwitonze Mussa
- Isabel Okoro
- Clair Robins
- Greg Semu



Nisha Duggal

Nisha Duggal's residency at ROSL, evident in a newly commissioned set of six flags outside the London Clubhouse (*Landed*, 2021) and her artist film *In Residence* concluded this September. Our Visual Arts Coordinator, Robin Footitt, sat down to discuss the past six months – her ROSL experience, workshops with Year 5 pupils at Riverley Primary School and ideas about heritage and community born out of this project, kindly supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Robin Footitt: When you arrived at ROSL, what were your first impressions? Did your residency change or develop these preconceptions?

Nisha Duggal: I started my residency on 21 May as lockdown was winding down. The club was still empty when compared with today, so my first impressions were somewhat shaped by that strange situation. I remember being impressed by the opulence and ease of the space, particularly the history of the building and the resonance seeping from the objects and decor. It felt very 'old England', privileged but surprisingly welcoming.

In all honesty, I hadn't expected such a relaxed vibe from the staff and from the members and guests. Everyone was consistently friendly, accommodating of me and my camera, and seemed genuinely interested in my project when we had the opportunity to chat. I found myself focusing on the staff. Like most places in London, the people working behind the scenes – behind the curtain, as it were – seem to have their own stories of travel and migration that sharpened those themes within my project. I wanted to explore the idea of the club as

an aspirational destination for a certain class of traveller, set against the recent migratory experiences of the club's staff, my own family, and those of the kids I met at Riverley.

RF: When working at Riverley, did you have any thoughts about your own experiences at school? Were you taught anything in relation to heritage or community?

ND: It's strange that I've never made a conscious comparison between the work I do with schools and my own experiences of the English education system. I went to primary school in the 1980s in North-East England. It wasn't a diverse school and I never particularly fitted in... but to be honest, it's part of the territory. You'd probably struggle to find an artist that grew up feeling that they really belonged!

As far as I can remember, heritage and community were not on the school menu back then. That was something extra-curricular that came from my family and from the community they found in Newcastle. Certainly, key parts of history, particularly narratives around slavery and colonialism, were absent, even though they are so central to what it means to be British. I'm not sure these



complex subjects are even touched upon today in many schools; there is still much work to be done.

RF: *Landed* has made quite an impact for those entering the clubhouse. Looking back at the flags now – what was your intention and how has the result matched or altered this?

ND: I wanted the flags to have a strong visual impact that was celebratory, but also clearly different to the national and institutional flags hoisted around Mayfair. The final designs were very much shaped by the mark-making we explored in the Riverley workshops, and I think some of that playfulness and vibrancy shines through. It was important to me that the children could see how their ideas developed into the final pieces. I wanted them to understand how that creative process works, and recognise the real value of the doodles and sketches they make every day.

RF: Using the multicoloured Union Jack from the Flag for London project has also made a statement...

ND: I came across the Flag for London project quite early on through my research, and I was lucky enough to connect with its original designer and discuss my residency with them. They are thrilled to have the flag up in such a central location, as this was always the intention of the project - the flag is an open-source design to be hacked and germinated in this way.

RF: Finally, with your film *In Residence* we hear your parents' voices reading back letters sent long ago. How have they responded to the project? Tell us some more about your mother's involvement with the flag-making process.

ND: It was very generous of my parents to give me access to their private correspondence! My film just touched the tip of their archive; they wrote a lot of letters! They still live in the North-East and I hadn't seen them much recently because of the pandemic, so it was a lovely way for me to connect with their past selves. We recorded the

audio over a day in the summer. I had previously read and catalogued their correspondence, but when they performed their

words, they were reading letters they had written (and hadn't looked at) for over 40 years! It was emotional in a good way; at points we were all in tears. They like the film and look forward to visiting ROSL someday.

I called in my mum's help to sew the flags – she's amazing at making things and has excellent machine skills, which I sadly lack. We had a production system that involved us both working in tandem: I cut and tacked the cloth while she machine stitched the pieces, mirroring the work so that the flags can be viewed from either side. That bit was tricky on the more complex arrangements. The job took us a couple of days of intensive effort, I'm lucky my mum has an immigrant work ethic!

“
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Clockwise from top left: Nisha Duggal *Landed* (2021), Nisha Duggal *In Residence* (2021) video still, Riverley production still courtesy of Alastair Fyfe, video still, Riverley production still courtesy of Alastair Fyfe

Excerpt letter from
In Residence:
26/6/76

7
26/6/76
Dear Veena,
It has been a terrible weekend. You really get bored doing nothing for the weekend draws on from a Friday afternoon right up to Monday morning. The weather has been lovely the past week; in fact summer has just set in. I am told this will continue till early September.
Got a phone from Shankar from London: there was no question of my going to see him there though I could have had I the money; for I was off for the weekend. He informed me about the parcel but I doubt whether he will be able

Dear Veena,
It has been a terrible weekend. You really get bored doing nothing for the weekend draws on from a Friday afternoon right up to Monday morning. The weather has been lovely the past week; in fact summer has just set in. I am told this will continue till early September.
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Children's Oratorio Our Future in Your Hands

In 2019, ROSL ARTS partnered with the Buxton International Festival to co-commission a Children's Oratorio, composed by Kate Whitley with words by Laura Attridge. The premiere performances of *Our Future in Your Hands* were due to take place in Coventry and Buxton in spring and summer 2020, but obviously could not take place due to the global pandemic. We are pleased to report that the world premiere finally happened in September 2021, given by the Multi-Story Orchestra with children from schools in and around Peckham in London.

The Multi-Story Orchestra is a ground-breaking ensemble who perform in car parks and unexpected places. They are based at Bold Tendencies, which itself is based in the multi-storey carpark in the centre of Peckham. They work closely with local schools and we were delighted that the children of Peckham were able to participate in the first performances of this amazing piece.

The resulting work by Kate and Laura is an epic piece imagining the world recovering from climate change and being reborn again in the future.

There are two choirs – one representing the voice of anger and protest, and one the voice of future optimism and change. The three soloists portray an astronaut, looking down to Earth from space and seeing the world as a whole for the first time; a man deciding whether or not to have a child; and a woman struggling to find water and survive in an apocalyptic future. Through their stories and the choir's protest songs, the piece goes on a journey from terror and destruction to the imagining of how the world could be if we survived and recovered.

The performance space at Bold Tendencies is a unique one with London commuter trains passing by on both sides

of the car park, and yet it works, because of the energy and commitment of performers, both professionals and children in bringing a work such as this to life. Erica Jeal, reviewing the premiere in *The Guardian*, said that "there was certainly an adrenaline-based reaction to be had from experiencing the sheer volume of sound amid these echoing concrete walls, for listeners and for the children too.

“The chance to be part of a big, creative, communal experience. It's more than useful – it's essential

This, not extra maths and English, is what children have been missing out on over the last year and a half: the chance to be part of a big, creative, communal experience. It's more than useful – it's essential.”

The oratorio will be next performed as part of the Buxton International Festival in 2022, with plans for future performances in Gloucester and Cape Town, South Africa.

EDUCATION UPDATE

Legacy, Language and Learning

Margaret Adrian-Vallance reports on how a generous legacy is enabling the ROSL-Namibia education project to continue supporting language and learning projects in these challenging times

A generous legacy from Dr Donald Valentine, which at his request is restricted to ROSL education projects in Namibia, is enabling three projects there to continue and develop.

Since tailor-made projects in Namibia have been so closely developed and associated with ROSL over the years, the ROSL Trustees agreed at their last meeting that ROSL bursaries for students reading Education at the University of Namibia (UNAM) will continue and that support for Maths, Reading

and English classes at Mondesa Youth Opportunities (MYO) in Swakopmund for township children will be extended for another year.

The Valentine legacy will also help MYO to enhance its training links with schools in remote areas beyond Swakopmund, one of these being with Katora Primary School at the foot of the Spitzkoppe mountain in the Namib desert. ROSL had close links with the school in the past and it was one of several project sites featured in the ROSL Centenary film of 2010.

In addition, a new project developed by Benediktus Motlatla, community leaders and a ROSL bursary alumnus in north-west Namibia started in August. This is centred on the isolated Nyae Nyae villages around Tsumkwe and will facilitate the development of IT, business and language skills and a much-needed increase in the number of translators from the local language of Jul'hoan into English and vice versa.

Jul'hoan is the first language of a group of former foragers of the Nyae Nyae



Conservancy region, but its future is threatened. Current estimates of speakers range downward from 33,600 (www.ethnologue.com) to 11,000 (Bieseke and Hitchcock2011:5). At the project site of Tsumkwe which is home to some 2000 Jul'hoan San, Jul'hoan is still learned at home and precariously holds national educational language status to Grade 4. Around 37 settlements are spread throughout the Conservancy.

Tsumkwe, originally a water source with no petrol station and only one shop, is now the administrative centre of the area. The small town is the only place to buy goods and provides access to a combined school, a clinic and other government facilities and services. At the present time there are more elephants and leopards in the area than there are laptops so it is a challenging project in challenging terrain.

Elsewhere, the agreed term of ROSL support for humanitarian/education work in India, Bangladesh and Tanzania ended in the Autumn and in Kenya our ROSL-Langalanga scholar recently graduated from University in Nairobi with flying colours (pictured left).



Staff changes

2022 has been a year of revitalisation in terms of staffing, as we continue to grow our teams after bringing catering in house earlier this year. On your next visit to the clubhouse, you will notice many new faces in our front of house staff team, whether at Reception, serving your food and drink, or cleaning the clubhouse.

We have also seen changes in leadership as several members of staff have been promoted to take on new responsibilities. Warren Miller becomes General Manager, taking on responsibility for marketing, in addition to the rooms, food and beverage, and sales teams he already led.

Kate McIntosh becomes Head of Sales, Brand & Creative, pairing the sales and marketing activities to establish a new, more commercial, business development approach.

Sofia Munoz becomes Head of Rooms & Membership, combining two core memberships services together into one department for the first time.

Welcome to all the new starters and congratulations to those who have taken on new responsibilities.



Support Us

To allow ROSL to continue funding art and music education projects in the UK and around the Commonwealth, please consider donating at www.rosl.org.uk/supportus



Christmas cards

This year's ROSL Christmas cards feature a specially commissioned cover of our Patron HM The Queen by artist Anna Rumsby, entitled *A Winter Walk with Corgis*.

With Her Majesty celebrating her Platinum Jubilee in 2022, this limited edition card brings a festive burst of colour to the season.

Anna Rumsby (b. 1979, Suffolk) lives and works in Suffolk. Rumsby studied Fashion Design at University of Derby (2003) and MA

Children's Book Illustration at Cambridge School of Art (2014). In 2016, she was awarded a scholarship to study at The Royal Drawing School and has since been teaching on their Young Artists programme alongside supporting SEN adults with art and crafts in Suffolk.

The cards are available to purchase online or in the clubhouse, £7 for five, and £10 for ten.

Buy yours at community.rosl.org.uk/s/store

Victorian Branch President Jason Ronald OAM (right) and council member Patricia McKendrick welcome new council member Andrew Spierings (left)

ROSL around the world

AUSTRALIA

Victoria

The Victorian Branch managed to hold a few events throughout 2021, even with the sporadic restrictions becoming a way of life. It has been a challenge and Council appreciate the patience our members have displayed while we endure restrictions preventing planned events taking place and rescheduling of others. We are optimistic our traditional Christmas Reception held at the British Consul General, Mr Stephen Lysaght's residence, will take place on 2 December. And in 2022, we will have a group attending a performance of *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* at the Regent Theatre in Melbourne on Wednesday 23 February. Tickets can still be obtained by contacting Victorian branch secretary Keir Watt.

We welcomed to our Life Membership, Mrs Frances Nicholls MBE OAM at our annual William Angliss Luncheon in March and also welcomed Mr Andrew Spierings at our Annual General Meeting in May, as a new council member for the branch. And many Victorian Branch members enjoyed the Commonwealth Day dinner at the Gables in Malvern, also in March.

Wishing all members a safe and very Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2022 from the Victorian Branch.



CANADA

Calgary

Close to the Rockies in Canada, the Calgary Chapter hosted a cocktail party on 1 September for some 60 guests at The Glencoe Club. The Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, the Honourary Patron of the Chapter, delighted the guests with her personal story coming originally from Uganda: robbed of her country by Idi Amin; studying in England; and finding a home in Canada, and how that experience and her gratitude for good fortune had led to a life of giving back, and valuing the Commonwealth. Since many of the guests had come to learn more about ROSL, the Chapter's leadership were able to sing the club's praises, both as a club as well as the London clubhouse itself.

The new British Consul Général in Calgary and his wife were also able to mingle with guests.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Christmas Musical Concert
Wednesday 8 December, 2pm
Holly Lea Retirement Village
We have invited some of the past recipients of our annual scholarship to perform for us as

well as some other musical groups, so it should be a great way to finish our year. Fingers crossed no more lockdowns!
\$10

UNITED KINGDOM

London Group

The London Group committee sends Christmas greetings to all our members. With so much choice of events taking place at the clubhouse, we have cut back our programme of monthly talks and are concentrating on a different experience: "Talks and Walks". So far we have had two talks since the reopening of the clubhouse in May; the first focusing on "The London Docks through History" and a second on "18th Century London". Both talks were followed a few weeks later by walks in an area featured in the talk. Our speaker, Tim Potter, draws together history, geography, architecture, social conditions at the time, key individuals, and much more. It makes for fascinating listening.

We will be planning more of these events in 2022, likely to be quarterly. The walks have a limited number of places so early booking is recommended.

We look forward to seeing you in 2022.

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News & views

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



Christmas Concert with the Temple Singers
Monday 6 December, 7pm
The Temple Church Singers, led by director Tom Allery, are our special guests in the Princess Alexandra Hall for this Christmas concert. Featuring festive music and carols, and servings of mince pies and mulled wine, this will be the perfect start to the holiday season.

Photography Competition Exhibition Private View
Thursday 9 December, 6pm
Join us to celebrate the top photographers from the 2021 ROSL Photography Competition in an exhibition of images selected by our esteemed judging panel. The winning camera and mobile images are featured in the exhibition and you will be able to learn more about all the images on show.

Annual Music Competition 2022
Tuesday 15 February 2022, 7pm
The Annual Music Competition section finals return in its 70th year, in its traditional February-March slot. As usual, we begin with the Wind, Brass & Percussion section, where four soloists compete for the £5,000 prize and a coveted spot in the Gold Medal Final, which this year will take place at Wigmore Hall on 7 July.



Muse Exhibition Private View
Thursday 17 February, 6pm
Uncovering the hidden figures behind art history's masterpieces, this exhibition in collaboration with influential Art Historian Ruth Millington, will deconstruct reductive stereotypes of the muse, and reframe it as a momentous and empowered agent of art history.

MEMBER-LED EVENTS

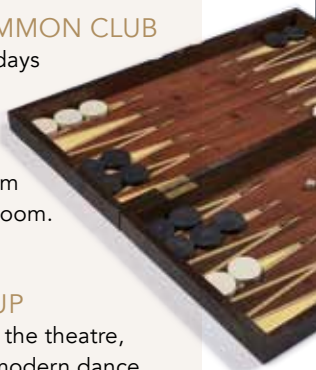
ROSL BOOK GROUP
The ROSL Book Group meets both in person at the club and on Zoom on Wednesdays, once a month, to discuss primarily novels. The discussion starts at 6pm, but we meet beforehand for a drink, and a chat and afterwards for dinner.
26 Jan - *A Long Petal of the Sea* by Isabel Allende
23 Feb - *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley
23 Mar - *Death in Venice* by Thomas Mann

ROSL BRIDGE CLUB
Meets on Mondays 2.00-4.00 for supervised play with a professional Tutor Ingar Kofoed Hansen. The cost is £10 payable to the tutor on the day. We meet for lunch beforehand and tea afterwards.
Beginners' Course 11.00-1.00 on Mondays. Refresher Courses for beginners, intermediate and advanced levels - ongoing, please contact Eve to register your interest

ROSL BACKGAMMON CLUB
Meets on Wednesdays 2-4pm in the Drawing Room and for lunch (optional) at 12.30pm in the Brabourne Room.

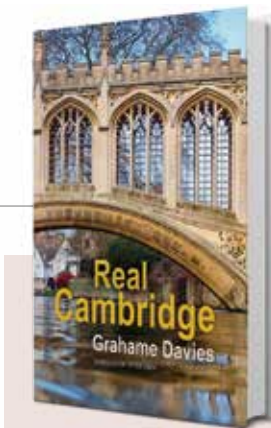
ROSL THEATRE & OPERA GROUP
We go regularly to the theatre, opera, ballet and modern dance. We will be seeing *Best of Enemies* at the Young Vic and *The Four Quartets* by T.S. Eliot with Ralph Fiennes, in December. Kenneth McMillan's *Romeo & Juliet* at the ROH and *Wuthering Heights* at the NT in February, and *Small Island* at the NT in March. We also go to Glyndebourne twice a year in Summer and Autumn.

GET INVOLVED
Please contact Eve at E.Mitleton-Kelly@mitleton-kelly.org.uk



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Go online to get full details and book your next event at www.rosl.org.uk/events



BOOK TALK: REAL CAMBRIDGE BY GRAHAME DAVIES
1 December
ROSL CHRISTMAS CONCERT WITH THE TEMPLE CHURCH SINGERS
6 December

FLORAL MASTERCLASS
7 December

BOXING DAY WALKING TOUR
26 December

PUBLIC AFFAIRS: LORD SIMON MCDONALD OF SALFORD
19 January



TRUFFLE DINNER
20 January

ART TALK: CINDY POLEMIS - HOGARTH & EUROPE
25 January

BOOK TALK: CODEBREAKING SISTERS BY PATRICIA AND JEAN OWTRAM
2 February

AMC 2022: WIND AND BRASS SECTION FINAL
15 February

MUSE EXHIBITION PRIVATE VIEW
17 February



AMC 2022: KEYBOARD SECTION FINAL
1 March

AMC 2022: STRINGS SECTION FINAL
8 March

AMC 2022: ENSEMBLES A SECTION FINAL
15 March

AMC 2022: ENSEMBLES B SECTION FINAL
22 March



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TRAVELS OF A RENAISSANCE ARTIST

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Albrecht Dürer, *Saint Eustace* (detail),
about 1499–1503. © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

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