

OVERSEAS

Quarterly journal of the ROSL

Issue 3, September – November 2011



Prize perfect

How guitarist Sean Shibe won First Prize: an overview of the Annual Music Competition Final

The Royal couple

ROSL members celebrate the Royal Wedding in style at Over-Seas House: a view in pictures

Volunteer special

Why it is the norm in Sri Lanka; the professional benefits; and efforts to get young people involved

Fond farewell

The D-G's valedictory message with comment from the Chairman; and a special 'My London'



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OVERSEAS

ISSUE 3 September-November 2011

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

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From the Director-General . 4

As he prepares to retire, Robert Newell looks back on his career with the ROSL

Hail and farewell 5

A message from Chairman Sir Anthony Figgis

World**Good citizens of tomorrow . 6**

Insight into the UK's youth volunteer projects, showing how young people can benefit

Where people like to share . 8

Why volunteering is so widespread in Sri Lanka, which is second in the world for giving time

Rewarding experience 12

Why volunteering your professional skills is no 'gap year': the rewards of skilled, unpaid work

ROSL news**A sound Fondation 14**

How ROSL-Namibia students are benefiting from a Fondation Espace Afrique donation

The write stuff 15

Discover the winning works with this report on the Caine and Commonwealth Writers' prizes

Royal wedding celebrations . 16

The view in pictures, as members gathered to mark the big day, at Over-Seas House, London

News and views 18

Staff changes and clubhouse events

Musical high note 20

How 25 eminent adjudicators found one outstanding winner, following 372 auditions: an overview of the 59th Annual Music Competition

ROSL world 22

Branch reports from around the world

Clubhouse makeover 24

Inspired interiors at Over-Seas House, Edinburgh

Books 29

Reviews of the latest publications by members



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In the UK**Robert Newell's London ... 25**

The Director-General offers his tips for visitors, including the gems of the South

What's on: London 25

Round-up of some of this autumn's top events

Blind taste 26

Why dining in the dark is a surprising and unique experience that everyone should try

Events**ROSL ARTS 28**

Forthcoming music, art and books events

Younger members 30

Event listings, plus 'Sherry, music and jelly beans' on the successful summer programme

Members' events 32

Highgrove Gardens, a Russian banquet and more

Food and drink 34

From the autumn seafood festival to New Year

What's on: Edinburgh 35**Discussion Group and London Group 37**

Front cover: © Jules Lawrence

From the Director-General



CENTENARY RECEPTION: Robert Newell and his wife, Shanaz, are presented to HM The Queen at the reception at St James's Palace

When I walk out of Over-Seas House, in October, for the last time as Director-General, it will be almost 32 years to the day that I walked in. I started as General Manager on Monday 1 October 1979. I was greeted that day by Lyn Milne, who is now ROSL NZ Director. My successor has been appointed (see the Chairman's welcome on page 5) and so I will retire at last. I had meant to do so in 2008 but was persuaded to stay on to oversee the arrangements for the ROSL centenary last year. I didn't take much persuading, having been with ROSL for almost a third of its first 100 years.

I am very fortunate to have had an interesting working life. The highlight was taking a position in Iran in 1967, for it was there that I met and married Shanaz, my wife of 42 years. We spent the first few days of our honeymoon at the fabulous Shah Abbas Hotel in Isfahan, en route to Nairobi, Kenya, where we were to spend the next ten wonderful years, working and raising our two daughters.

Shanaz was with the Iran Embassy and I worked first in hotels and latterly for Swiss Technical Assistance at Kenya Utalii College, the Swiss Hotel and Tourism School, as Head of Administration.

We were sad to leave that wonderful country and our many Kenyan and expatriate friends, but the timing was right, with the job at ROSL becoming available soon after our return. In 1983, I became a visiting lecturer for the world famous hotel management school in Lausanne, Switzerland, a post that I held for 18 years.

I was interviewed in 1979 by, among others, the then Chairman (later to become Grand President), Lord Grey of Naunton, and Godfrey Talbot of BBC fame. Since then, I have worked with a further eight chairmen, with all of whom I have become close: the late Sir David Scott (he died, aged 91, earlier this year), Mr Maneck Dalal, Sir Lawrence Byford (the Chairman responsible for my appointment as Director-General in 1991), the late Mr Peter McEntee, the late Sir Geoffrey Ellerton, Sir Colin Imray,

Mr Stanley Martin and our current Chairman, Sir Anthony Figgis. They have all been wonderful to work with and all have been very supportive of my initiatives and projects. I convey to them all, along with our current President, Lord Luce, my very grateful thanks.

I do not wish to use this message to express my opinion about the future direction ROSL should take, as I did so in chapter IX of Adele Smith's *History* of ROSL, published to mark the centenary (copies are still available from the ROSL shop). However, I will say this: I am confident that the future of ROSL is in very good hands with the appointment of my able

I was persuaded to stay on to oversee the centenary. I didn't take much persuading



Congratulations

Our congratulations to Margaret Adrian-Vallance, ROSL Director of PR and Development (2nd from left), for being appointed MBE in The Queen's Birthday Honours for her service to the education of children from disadvantaged communities in Namibia. She is pictured at Windhoek College of Education with ROSL bursary recipients and the Rector, Emma Kirchner (3rd from left).

successor, Major General Roddy Porter, and our very experienced and able Chairman, Sir Anthony Figgis, our outstanding Honorary Treasurer, Mr Simon Ward, the eminent and wise President, Lord Luce, all members of the Central Council and, of course, our very capable staff. Special thanks to my Assistant, Fatima Vanicek, who has been with ROSL even longer than I have and who will also retire in the autumn. She has been a dedicated and loyal stalwart of ROSL and will be much missed by members and her colleagues (see page 19).

My wife has been a wonderful support and has travelled with me throughout the UK and overseas on ROSL business. She often tells how she heard one of my speeches 19 times during a tour we made of ROSL branches in Australia and New Zealand. She demonstrated her loyalty by laughing at the same jokes 19 times! At Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs) and trade fairs she manned ROSL stands to promote membership. Her experience in public relations, with the oil company in Iran and with

the embassy in Kenya, helped enormously when attending and hosting social events.

We have made close friendships with many members throughout the world and with many colleagues. We have witnessed the formation of new overseas branches; the strengthening finances of the organisation as a whole; improved clubhouse facilities; the expansion of the arts programme; and the ability of ROSL to adapt to ever-changing economic circumstances.

I am confident that the sound foundations that are now established will ensure a prosperous and meaningful future for ROSL under the leadership of my successor. I offer my very best wishes to him, and his wife Marianne, for a long and happy time with this unique and special society, with which I have enjoyed working so much. My sincere and heartfelt thanks to you all, and to my colleagues on the staff, for making my ROSL life so happy.

We will keep in touch. Au revoir.

Robert Newell

Hail and farewell

A message from the Chairman, Sir Anthony Figgis

Our much loved Director-General, Bob Newell, will be leaving us on retirement in October. Bob has given truly extraordinary service to ROSL, for 20 years as DG and for 12 years before that as General Manager. He has made a huge number of friends, raised ROSL's profile and given us financial stability. We say farewell to him and Shanaz with gratitude and real regret.

But, as King Arthur says in Tennyson's poem: 'The old order changeth, yielding place to new.' In that spirit, we most warmly welcome Major General Roddy Porter as Bob's successor, with his wife Marianne. Roddy has had an outstanding career in the Army. Among his other talents, he is a multiple musician (he plays the guitar, violin and saxophone). With him as Director-General, ROSL will, as in our motto, be sailing into new waters. We are lucky to have Roddy Porter's hand on the tiller.

A farewell lunch will be held in honour of Bob Newell in December (see page 33).

RODDY PORTER: New Director-General



FOCUS

Good citizens of tomorrow

Samantha Whitaker looks at the organisations and programmes that aim to get young people in Britain more involved in volunteering



This year is the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (known as IYV+10) and, to mark it, the European Union has designated 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering (EYV). The objective is to celebrate the people who are already volunteering and to promote the value of it to those who are not. The EYV tour will reach London in October, for a week of events, giving volunteers the opportunity to meet one another, engage with policy-makers, and convey their enthusiasm to the public.

In England, 23% of 16-25 year-olds volunteer formally at least once a month (through groups, clubs and organisations), and 32% informally (giving unpaid help to people who are not relatives). The figures do not differ hugely from other age groups, but the motivations do. For young people, volunteering is very much a two-way street.

With around 618,000 unemployed 16-24 year-olds in the UK (ONS, April 11), graduates increasingly need to add another string to their bow and, according to Is Szoneberg, of Community Service Volunteers (CSV), volunteering can make them more employable. "Thankfully now employers recognise the work as relevant experience and for many young people, volunteering is the only way that they can get any experience", she says.

When Rui Jorge Octavio graduated from Brunel University with a degree in Business Management and Accounting, he lacked the confidence and communication skills needed to do well at interview. Sensing that he was not alone, he created Grab Your Mike, a comedy club that helps young people to develop their confidence and performance skills.

The project was funded by v_{cashpoint}, a programme run by the independent charity v, which was launched in 2006. v_{cashpoint} offers grants to 16-25 year-olds to run their own volunteering projects, giving them "the opportunity to volunteer on their own terms", says Founder and Chief Executive, Terry Ryall.

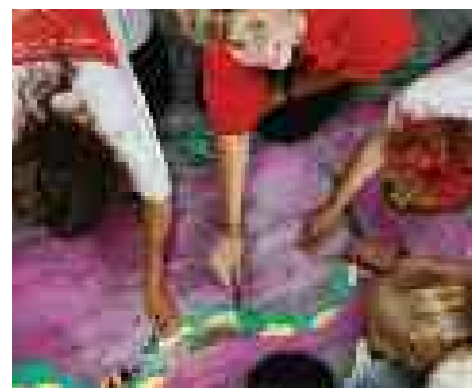
Building confidence

"Grab Your Mike is fun, exciting and not too serious, so it is more appealing to young people than, for example, public speaking, but the results are the same: building confidence and strong communication skills", says Rui. As project leader, he had others looking to him for inspiration, which forced him to step up to the mark. In helping them, he was helping himself. "Volunteering has opened up so many options for me." He is now a motivational speaker and volunteers, part-time, as a youth leader.

v_{cashpoint} has been one of v's most successful programmes, but as the charity

I have learnt how to work effectively within a team and how to manage responsibility

INSPIRATIONAL: Volunteers with v_{inspired} demonstrate their creativity





COMMUNITY SPIRIT: Young people help to clean up their local area on a CSV 'Make a Difference' day

developing country to see the charity's work in action. Dwain Lucktung, now 24, went to the Congo with CA and it changed his life. "I wanted to be a music and sports journalist and signed up for nine months of work experience to help me get into publishing." He became passionate about social injustice and went on to be editor at Ctrl.Alt.Shift, the CA youth project with a mission to engage a new generation of social activists in the UK. "It was groundbreaking and unique. We took great leaps", says Dwain of the project, which ran from 2008 until June 2011. 18,000 people signed up to the website and 11,000 to the newsletter. The new CA youth brand will be launched later this year.

An active role

Dwain now works for the charity Livity, a youth marketing agency in South London that provides training to young people through the co-creation of social campaigns and content. As well as providing experience, training and skills, projects such as this can give young people a direction. "13-18 year-olds have a systematic approach to life. They go to school, to college, to uni. But then what? 18-25 year-olds often need inspiration and a 'next step', which is where volunteering can be invaluable", he says. "It doesn't have to be getting your hands dirty, building a school in a third-world country – although that's great too – but it can be in your own community."

There are now so many ways for young people to get involved. Launched in 2001, www.do-it.org.uk (part of the charity YouthNet) is a national database of volunteering opportunities in the UK. It does not charge users, but makes a small charge to organisations registering their opportunities. One of v's greatest assets is vinspired.com, a website and iPhone app that enables charities and voluntary organisations to promote opportunities to young people for free. More than 600 organisations are currently using the site.

Given the economic climate and the Government push for greater community engagement, there has never been more of an incentive for young people to volunteer. And, as charities wise up to the potential of social networking sites, the internet and phone technology in general, it has never been easier.

Samantha Whitaker was Deputy Editor of Overseas for more than three years. She is now Sub-Editor at Sunday Publishing.

faces considerable cuts in funding, it is having to redirect its focus. "To date, we have delivered over one million volunteering opportunities for young people", says Terry. "We have delivered all, and more, of what the Government asked us to do in its five-year plan. We're really proud of that."

Having seen the positive impact of volunteering and social action on employability, v plans to extend its work to schools. "We'll be looking to see how we might assist young people during this time of high youth unemployment", explains Terry.

Working together

Encouraging people to interact with others and play a more active role in the community is a major part of Prime Minister David Cameron's Big Society agenda, which aims to help people work together to improve their own lives. A key project is the National Citizen Service (NCS), which is being piloted this summer. Around 10,000 16-year-olds will spend two weeks away from home taking part in team-building activities. On their return, they will help to devise and plan a local community project and, over the following few weeks, spend at least 30 hours working on the project. The idea is to bring together teenagers from a range of backgrounds and

inspire a new generation of engaged and active citizens.

This is not a new idea. For more than 50 years, CSV has been providing opportunities for people to take an active part in the life of their communities through volunteering, training and community action. CSV was the first to offer full-time volunteering opportunities to young people in the UK. For 4-12 months, volunteers work up to 40 hours a week and receive an allowance, accommodation and food. Placements can vary from helping pupils with special needs to going clubbing with a student with physical disabilities.

Chloe, 21, is a full-time volunteer at a homeless shelter in London as a part of a university placement. "I have learnt how to work effectively within a team of volunteers and how to manage responsibility, especially with cash," she says. Chloe helps to run an employment workshop, giving advice on writing CVs and preparing for interviews. The experience has opened her eyes to a world that she wasn't previously aware of, and has changed her outlook and direction. When she graduates, she plans to set up her own charity.

Christian Aid is also keen to give volunteers a fresh perspective. Its Volunteer Youth Internship programme offers full-time placements that include a two-week trip to a

FOCUS

Where people like to share

Last year, Sri Lanka came second for 'giving time' in a survey of 153 countries. **Feizal Samath** finds a culture of sharing that crosses religious and ethnic boundaries



Across Sri Lanka's rural landscape, whenever someone dies, the village springs into action, providing the family with meals for many days, putting up flags and other posters to announce the death, as is the tradition, and staying up at night to greet people coming to pay their respects. Time, money and food are donated by everyone in the village. These funeral societies, as they are called, belong to a society in which people help one another. It is no surprise, then, that Sri Lanka figures highly on the 2010 World Index on Giving, coming second in the category of 'people giving time'.

"We should have won first place", laughs Mallika Samaranayake, a veteran social worker and teacher, who runs an organisation that promotes participatory development. She believes that the spirit of volunteerism is ingrained in the society and culture of Sri Lanka, more than in any other part of the world. "This spirit of giving comes from your upbringing, your family values. It happens across all classes, whether rich or poor and irrespective of race or creed", she explains, speaking from her modest office in a suburb of Colombo, the country's largest city.

Importantly, this spirit seems to cut across religious boundaries. In one moving incident during the Boxing Day tsunami in 2004, a

pregnant Muslim woman sought refuge in a village Buddhist temple. In a hall crowded with victims, a monk quickly created a makeshift room to give her privacy and then scoured the village for a midwife. Now Muslims in the mixed community volunteer their services to the temple. Buddhists make up nearly 77% of the Sri Lankan population, followed by Muslims, Hindus and Christians.

Formal giving

"There is no religion in volunteerism. Everyone helps everyone", contends Dr Vinya Ariyaratne, a medical doctor who runs the country's largest grassroots volunteer group with his father, who founded it in 1958. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement reaches some 15,000 villages across Sri Lanka, with a youth volunteer force of 100,000 and 3,000 pre-school teachers. It has encouraged early childhood development through its schools since the 1970s, before even the government and Unicef got involved.

Dr Ariyaratne believes there is a cultural element to volunteerism: "This is peculiar to Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya has exploited the notion of giving by formalising it, bringing together people for organised help." He is speaking from the spartan Sarvodaya headquarters at Moratuwa, south of Colombo, as a stream of

local and foreign volunteers move around in the compound,

Helping and giving time, in Buddhist teachings, is a meritorious deed known as *dana* or 'sharing'. Volunteering in Sri Lanka can be traced back to early human settlements in the 6th century BC, according to a UN-financed study on volunteering in Sri Lanka, conducted to coincide with the International Year of Volunteering (IYV) in 2001.

Prepared by Samaranayake's Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development (IPID), the study describes how King Vijaya, ruler of the Sri Lankan people, pioneered the 'task of laying the foundations of an organized society, while at the same time passing on their skills to new generations to follow. Transfer of knowledge and skills has remained to this day an important aspect of volunteerism, both individual and organized.'

Volunteering has become increasingly organised in terms of sharing time, skills, and human and physical resources. The report continues: 'Even today, some village communities and coastal fishing communities follow the age-old tradition of "*kayiya*" [labour sharing] during the various stages of rice cultivation, *chena* or slash and burn dry land cultivation, house construction and roof repair (thatch roofs), building temples and the drawing



ashore of huge fishing nets (*madel paduva*).

While, at the village level, much of the volunteering comes through community participation, in urban areas many people offer help as individuals or by joining groups. City children link up with a range of school clubs and societies, including the boy scouts and girl guides, to offer their services.

Close communities

At Habitat for Humanity, the local branch of an international NGO that provides affordable housing for the poor, people give money and time. "There are hundreds of volunteers, who, in addition to giving money, get on to roofs and help build houses for the poor", says Tony Seneviratne, the organisation's National Director.

He believes volunteering is an integral part of Sri Lankan society because some 80% of the population live in rural areas, where they rely on each other, creating close-knit communities. This raises an interesting point. According to Seneviratne, the tradition could change, given the pace of development since the end of the civil war in 2009. "Volunteerism widely happens in rural communities. Once you become industrialised and rich and live in cities people will pay their taxes and expect the Government to do everything. Polarisation of societies then takes place", he says. This is

Village communities follow the age-old tradition of 'kayiya' (labour sharing)

SHARING THE LOAD: Volunteers with the large grassroots volunteer group Sarvodaya



TEAM WORK: Villagers participate in *shramadana* ('shared labour') with the Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development

partly reflected in the 'giving time' category of the World Giving Index. Turkmenistan led the list, followed by Sri Lanka. The only developed country to figure in the top 10 in this category was New Zealand.

Volunteering comes naturally to youngsters such as 26-year-old Thiagi Piyadasa, a Colombo-based researcher at a local research agency. She has given her time to work on many projects, particularly during the post-war period, and says it is her passion in life. "We have been doing a lot of things, like helping schools, kids with difficulties in schools, holding parties at orphanages, etc." However, finding the time for such work is becoming more difficult now, and she is concerned that adults sometimes expect too much from young people.

Lifelong service

For Miramohideen Ahmed Sanoor, 26, volunteering has provided a pastime for his entire adult life. Having learnt about volunteering at a youth programme in Colombo, he returned to the mostly Muslim farming town of Kalmunai. He began posting job vacancies in local newspapers, libraries and places of religious worship, as part of a youth employment project. "I go through the newspapers every week and prepare a list of vacancies and post it in these places. Some of my unemployed friends also found jobs through this process and now help in this and other volunteer projects", he says.

Saturday is a busy day for M R Ravindran, a veteran volunteer and International Director of the Rotary, an international organisation through which members volunteer their time, skills and energy to improve the lives of underprivileged people. Every week, volunteers from the organisation meet in his cosy garden in Colombo to discuss the projects they are working on.

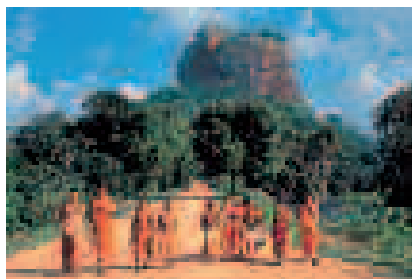
Passionate about helping, Ravindran explains that service to man and God is central to his Hindu religion. "If an individual's doing-good, taken as an asset, is higher than his liabilities (not doing good), then he or she reaches the ultimate goal – that of merging with God." He believes that religion – Sri Lanka was ranked the third most religious country in the world in 2008 – is the reason so many Sri Lankans donate time and money.

Feizal Samath is Business Editor at Colombo's Sunday Times and co-founder of the non-profit Country Music Foundation (CMF), which raises money for vulnerable children.

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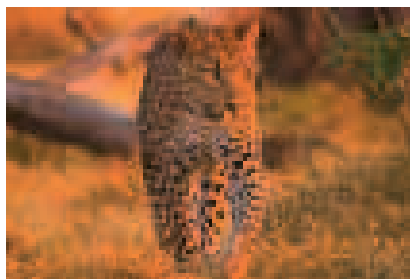
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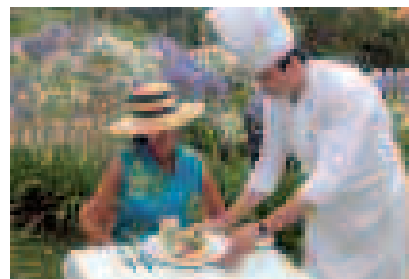
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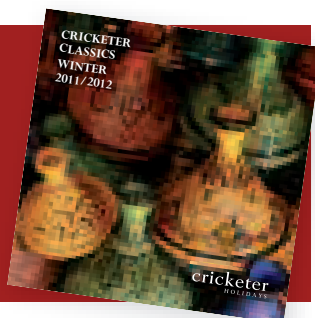
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Rewarding experience

Matching your skills to volunteer projects makes you better able to help others and increases your career opportunities at the same time, says **Miranda Moore**

Most people think of volunteering as an altruistic activity – ‘time out’ from their professional life – but at VSO it is seen as ‘a career choice’.

Salim Francis had six years’ experience working with non-profit organisations before he took up a volunteer role with the charity’s East African branch, VSO Jitolee. Although he had worked with refugees in his native Kenya and neighbouring countries, he is convinced that volunteering improved his careers profile. “I gained additional work experience, required and highly valued in further and future professional assignments and studies”, he explains.

VSO Jitolee recruits skilled volunteers from Kenya and Uganda, following the same strict recruitment criteria as the organisation’s offices in Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands and the Philippines, and at its headquarters in the UK. These include relevant professional qualifications and a minimum of two years’ work experience.

Challenging times

Francis has a degree in Anthropology from Nairobi University and experience in relief work for refugees, empowerment programmes and software solutions for small enterprises. He was able to develop his professional skills in another context, and has since worked with Ghana’s Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs.

Russell McKeown had worked as an engineer in the UK for 25 years before he went to Nigeria on a two-year VSO placement at the Lady Mechanic Initiative, which aims to challenge gender stereotypes and empower vulnerable women. As well as training in mechanics, he is “chief letter writer, I fundraise, I meet with government officials, I offer general support on running the business”, said McKeown, who has a degree in business. “The key thing people say is that it really stretches you”, explains Rachel Trayner of VSO International. “You might be an ambitious go-getter but there’s nothing like going

to a developing country and having to make resources from nothing. There is a confidence which comes with it.”

Voluntourism

Volunteering within your field also ensures there is no careers gap on your CV. “People can even step up a role”, adds Trayner. “VSO has changed an awful lot since we began over 52 years ago. Before, it was about sending 18-year-olds on placements overseas. It was very well-meaning but we wouldn’t now consider that to be development work.”

VSO now refers to unskilled volunteering of this nature, slightly pejoratively, as ‘voluntourism’. The term strikes a chord: at the age of 21, I was placed at a hospital in Kpando, eastern Ghana. My assignments included implementing free healthcare and a feasibility study on closing the children’s ward. What qualifications did I have to aid me in these tasks? A degree in English and Philosophy, and holiday work at a Threshers wine shop. I had gone to Ghana with good intentions, but in eight months I achieved very little.

I had heard similar stories. Although there are many positive ones to counter the negative, for those who have professional skills, putting them to use in a voluntary setting is most likely to be productive. 95% of returning VSO volunteers feel they have made a difference.

“When international efforts fail, it is because they have not linked up closely enough with the local needs. The challenge is finding a project

VSO now refers to unskilled volunteering as ‘voluntourism’. The term strikes a chord



where your skills and interests match”, explains Amy Potthast of Idealist, a US-based international network of volunteer opportunities. Trayner agrees: “We now arrange placements based on what the need is, what the demand is, what the problem is. It is vitally important that the right person goes to the right job.” VSO currently needs primary teachers, education managers, fundraisers and maternal health specialists.

The recruitment criteria for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) are even stricter. The international medical aid organisation uses skilled professionals, mainly from medical backgrounds but not exclusively so, and gives preference to medics who have done a three-month course in tropical medicine. Hussein Sheikh Qassim is volunteering with MSF Canada in Marere, southern Somalia. He is in no doubt that MSF’s presence in the country has saved thousands of lives. When two-year-old Yusuf



CHANGING LIVES: (Clockwise from top left) Canadian doctor Raghu Venugopal works with MSF in the Central African Republic; MSF Canada volunteers and hospital staff in Sudan; a teacher with VSO in Africa; and a Turkish volunteer in the Democratic Republic of Congo

was brought into the hospital “you had to listen to his heartbeat through a stethoscope to tell he was still alive. His parents had given up on him.” Qassim was part of the team that treated the toddler, spending two hours resuscitating him and a week feeding him through a tube until he was strong enough to feed himself.

The over-stretched local doctors depend on MSF volunteers. “There are not any other clinics – not even mobile clinics – anywhere near here”, Qassim explained. “Even on our quiet days we are seeing twice as many people as we did on busy days before the drought.”

Set up in 1971 by a group of French doctors and journalists, MSF now has offices in 23 countries and projects in more than 60. Its core work is providing rapid response medical aid in

emerging crises. Following the 2004 tsunami its volunteers were in Sri Lanka and India within two days, and it was the first international aid agency in Burma after Cyclone Nargis hit in 2008. Every year, 3,000 doctors, logisticians, nurses, water-and-sanitation experts and other professionals work on MSF missions. They first complete a ten-day preparation course and are then put on a register, thereby consenting to be sent to the field at short notice.

Under pressure

Civil engineer Paul Jawor has volunteered with MSF in seven countries, including Pakistan and Zambia, and it has pushed him to the limits of his abilities. On one occasion, he desperately tried to persuade officials on the Indian border

to allow a dying woman to be air-lifted to hospital. His interpreter sweated as he spoke to the Head of the Intelligence Bureau, while Jawor laid the woman on the helipad in an attempt to show the humanitarian nature of his mission and later appealed to the soldiers on the ground, asking how they would feel if it was their wife or mother. Finally, the helicopter was allowed to leave with the woman on board.

Clearly, skills-based placements can save and better people’s lives. For volunteers, they enable them to develop not just their professional skills but also their logistical and communications skills, understanding of other cultures, and ability to work under immense pressure. As Potthast says: “It’s really win-win, win-win-win.”



SUPPORT: Langalanga scholars arrive at Naivasha Girls' School, Kenya; and (below) Magte Doeses, bursary recipient at Da Palm, Namibia

A sound Fondation

A donation from Fondation Espace Afrique is making all the difference to ROSL-Namibia project beneficiaries, says **Margaret Adrian-Vallance**, and support is now being extended to Botswana and Kenya

ROSL would like to record its great appreciation of the substantial donation from Fondation Espace Afrique that arrived in June. The funding will help individual young people in the ROSL-Namibia project continue their education and enable ROSL welfare projects to be extended in a small way to Botswana. Sir Anthony Figgis, ROSL Chairman said: "In addition to being very grateful, we feel honoured by the interest that Fondation Espace Afrique has taken in the ROSL-Namibia project over the last two years."

According to ROSL Central Council member Clive Carpenter, who introduced ROSL to the Fondation in 2009: "There is a natural empathy between the ROSL-Namibia project and the Fondation, the latter having been engaged in humanitarian activities in Africa for over 15 years. The Fondation has used its resources to achieve a positive impact, not only in the sphere of education but also health, entrepreneurship, agriculture and many other areas of activity throughout Africa. The Fondation's excellent conference centre near Benin's capital, Cotonou, has also established, within its grounds, a herbal medicine garden, in a desire to further develop African traditional medicine."

Among those benefiting from Fondation's generosity are ten students at Windhoek College of Education, now part of the

University of Namibia, which has higher tuition and hostel fees. All ten are from remote areas – from Mokaleng in the far east to Kunene in the far north – and all hope to return to their homelands when they qualify. Other beneficiaries include ROSL bursary recipients at the remote Katora Primary and Da Palm Senior Secondary School in the west of the country, Hippo Primary in the east, Swakopmund Secondary on the coast and a pre-primary school in Tsumeb.

In Botswana, ROSL member Sarah Ward, who knows schools in Molepolole,

Kumukwane and Thamaga, has outlined needs in the area, ranging from food for school meals to resource materials. Thanks to the recent donation from Fondation Espace, it will now be possible to give support in these areas, and ROSL is very grateful to Mrs Ward for her thorough research and recommendations.

In addition, ROSL has undertaken to provide an educational bursary for a young student in Kenya over the next five years, through the Langalanga Scholarship Fund. This is a small but effective charity offering secondary scholarships to bright but needy children in the Rift Valley around Gilgil. "The area is very poor", says trustee Anne Smyth. "Most people are subsistence farmers. Many scholars are orphans or abandoned children. Selected scholars go to one of four good state boarding schools." Although ROSL does not usually donate funds to other charities, an exception was made on this occasion due to the similarity between the ROSL-Namibia project and Langalanga, which undertakes good monitoring procedures.

Without the additional support of ROSL members, none of this work would be possible and it was interesting to hear, at a recent reception on the Isle of Man, how much ROSL members appreciate that a small part of their annual subscriptions goes towards helping musicians, artists, school children and students around the Commonwealth.



There is a natural empathy between the ROSL-Namibia project and the Fondation



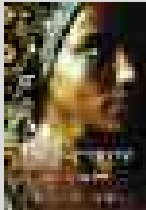
CAINE PRIZE: (l-r) Shortlisted writers NoViolet Bulawayo, David Medalie, Beatrice Lamwaka, Tim Keegan and Lauri Kubuitsile at the pre-awards reception at Exeter College, Oxford University

The write stuff

Top prizes for Commonwealth writing awarded

On Friday 8 July, ROSL ARTS hosted a preview event for the 12th Caine Prize for African Writing. In memory of Sir Michael Caine, the prize is open to African writers for a work published in English. Its focus on the short story reflects the contemporary development of the African storytelling tradition. The five shortlisted writers, Beatrice Lamwaka (Uganda), NoViolet Bulawayo (Zimbabwe), Tim Keegan (South Africa) Lauri Kubuitsile (Botswana) and David Medalie (South Africa), each read extracts from their short stories before meeting ROSL members over wine and canapés.

As guests of ROSL, the writers spent a week at Over-Seas House, London, before the final ceremony at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, where NoViolet Bulawayo was announced the winner of the £10,000 prize for her short story, *Hitting Budapest*. As part of her award she will take up a month's residence at Georgetown University, Washington DC, as a Caine Prize/Georgetown University Writer-in-Residence.



On 21 May the winners of the 2011 Commonwealth Writers' Prize were announced at a ceremony at the Sydney Theatre, Australia. The £10,000 prize for Best Book was awarded to Sierra Leone author Aminatta Forna for *The Memory of Love*, a powerful portrayal of human resilience. The £5,000 award for the Best First Book was awarded to New Zealand writer Craig Cliff for his collection of short stories, *A Man Melting*.

Share your story

Help the Commonwealth celebrate HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee by submitting your story from the last 60 years to the Jubilee Time Capsule. To find out more visit www.jubileetimecapsule.org, call the Royal Commonwealth Society on +44 (0)20 7766 9227 or email jubilee@thercs.org.uk



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Royal wedding

ROSL members gathered at Over-Seas House to celebrate the marriage of Prince William

PARTY ATMOSPHERE

Members staying at Over-Seas House gather for a special pre-Royal Wedding reception in the Mountbatten Room



▲ **JOYFUL NOTES** Previous ROSL Annual Music Competition prizewinners, the Rose Trio, welcome guests to Over-Seas House on the big day



▲ **SEEN ON SCREEN**

As the ceremony begins, members take their seats to watch the BBC coverage on the big screen

celebrations

and Kate Middleton, now TRH The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge



▲ **TO THE HAPPY COUPLE**

ROSL Director-General, Robert Newell, proposes a toast to the royal couple in the Hall of India and Pakistan

From Basel to Hong Kong: how members celebrated around the world

In Basel, more than 400 guests attended a joint event for ROSL and British Residence Association (BRA) members in the Grosser Festsaal of the Mustermesse. A giant screen broadcast live coverage from London, and there was a comprehensive programme that included light opera from the Umbrella Singers, the Basel Tattoo Highland Dancers and pipers from the Ancient Clanship of the Pipes and Drums of Basel. ROSL member Alan Chalmers, who is also a BRA Council Member, helped to organise the event.

ROSL members in New Zealand celebrated the Royal Wedding in style. A morning tea was held in Southland, with women in day dress and hats and men in lounge suits. Tea was poured from elegant silver servers and fine bone china replaced the usual cups. There was also a special cake with a small Union Jack on each slice. In Manawatu, the branch had a special afternoon tea at which the women wore hats or fascinators.

In conjunction with other Commonwealth societies, ROSL members in Hong Kong celebrated the Royal Wedding with a garden party-style reception in the garden lounge of the Hong Kong Club. More than 300 people attended the evening reception, with the live coverage shown on big screens, and canapés, sandwiches and scones served with traditional Devonshire clotted cream. Branch Patron Andrew Seaton, the British Consul-General, proposed a toast and everyone sang the National Anthem.



► **EVENT SOUVENIRS**

Each guest at Over-Seas House received a ROSL event programme and badge



News and views

The latest from the London clubhouse



▲ Central Council lunch

The May Central Council Lunch was attended by: (l-r) Robert Newell (ROSL Director-General), guest of honour and speaker HE Mr Nalin Surie (High Commissioner for India), Poonam Surie, Lady Figgis and Sir Anthony Figgis (ROSL Chairman)



▲ New faces

Deputy Editor of *Overseas*, Samantha Whitaker (left), left ROSL in July after nearly four years, to lend her talents to publishing. Although she will be missed, ROSL warmly welcomes two new members of staff: Claire Simon (right), who replaces Samantha, and Andrew Bowen, who joined ROSL in April as Shop Manager



▲ Alan Chalmers

Members will be sorry to read that Alan Chalmers, Manager of Over-Seas House, Edinburgh, left ROSL in July. Farewell parties were held in Edinburgh and Alan was a guest at the July Central Council lunch, when tributes were paid and thanks conveyed to him for the service he has provided ROSL over the last 21 years. Alan has managed our Edinburgh operation efficiently and successfully, and we wish him every happiness for the future

▼ Royal Victorian Order

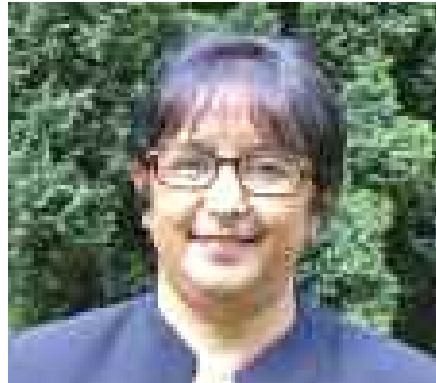
In April, members of the Royal Victorian Order Association of Canada stayed at Over-Seas House to attend the Royal Victorian Order Service at St George's Chapel, Windsor, and a reception afterwards hosted by HM The Queen in Windsor Castle. The President of the Association, Michael Jackson CVO, made all the arrangements with ROSL. Pictured, before they left Over-Seas House for Windsor, are: (l-r) Kevin MacLeod CVO, Canadian Secretary to The Queen; Ross Sue See MVO, Director of Protocol of Queensland, Australia; Sheila-Marie Cook CVO, former Secretary to the Governor General of Canada; Robert Watt LVO, former Chief Herald of Canada; Betty Anne Spinks LVO, Chief of Protocol of Alberta; and Christopher McCreery MVO, Private Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia





◀ Prince Michael

Tony Hanmer, ROSL Deputy Catering Director, meets HRH Prince Michael of Kent at the Society of Genealogists centenary dinner at Over-Seas House, London in May



▲ Fatima Vanicek

Members will want to join us in wishing Fatima Vanicek, Assistant to the Director-General and Membership Secretary, much happiness in her retirement. She joined ROSL in June 1979 and married her late husband, Jan, who also worked there, in 1984. She hopes her many ROSL friends will visit her at her home in Scotland

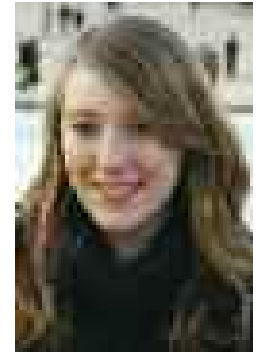
▼ Isle of Man reception

At a reception for present and potential ROSL members, held at the Erin Arts Centre on the Isle of Man, were: (l-r) Director-General Robert Newell, Director of PR & Development Margaret Adrian-Vallance, Lieutenant Governor HE Mr Adam Wood, Shanaz Newell and the Chairman and Founder of the Erin Arts Centre, John Bethell



▼ Pia Korhonen

Pia Korhonen, receptionist at Over-Seas House, left in April after five years. Her charming personality will be missed by us all. Pictured are (l-r) Ida Bryld, Pia Korhonen, Pavlina Shantova and Michael McCall



The £10-a-day charity challenge

ROSL younger member Catherine Lux, from Guildford, spent nine months living on just £10 a week to raise money for four charities (Home-Start Guildford, Lupus UK, Hughes Syndrome Foundation and Tommy's). "The idea came about when my Aunty, Nakita, died very suddenly, at 36, from Hughes Syndrome and Lupus in 2010. She had been like a big sister to me, and I felt that I needed to do something to raise money in her memory", she explains.

"It was challenging not being able to buy good-quality food and clothing – I bought mainly Sainsbury's Basics range, and frozen fruit and vegetables", says Catherine, who lives with her parents. "I completed the challenge at the end of June and raised more than £2,000, including a generous donation from Stephen Fry. It is rewarding to know that I can help these charities, but I would like to raise more."

To find out more or to sponsor Catherine, see www.10poundpom.blogspot.com.



▲ All change at ROSL ARTS

Director-General Robert Newell and Director of ROSL ARTS Roderick Lakin (back) with the ROSL ARTS team – (l-r) Anna Maciuk, Ella Roberts, and Polly Hynd – at a farewell party for Ella, who left in April to work for the Handel House Museum. Both Anna (ROSL ARTS Administrator) and Polly (Centenary and International Events Coordinator) leave in September, to embark on courses of study. A new team for ROSL ARTS will be announced in the next issue



Musical high note

After four breathtaking performances from the Finalists, the judges select the winners

In February and March this year, more than 300 young musicians from across the Commonwealth travelled to London to audition before a distinguished panel of adjudicators in the 59th ROSL Annual Music Competition. The competition has an international reputation for promoting successful musical careers, and the corridors of Over-Seas House were lined with nervous soloists and ensembles hoping to follow in the footsteps of Jacqueline du Pré, Piers Lane and Jonathan Lemalu. Those who were successful in the preliminary audition rounds performed public recitals in the Wind, Singers, Strings, Keyboard, Ensembles A (strings/piano), Ensembles B (wind/mixed) and Overseas section finals, held in Princess Alexandra Hall.

After 120 hours of auditions, 25 eminent adjudicators, seven concerts and countless cups of coffee, four outstanding solo finalists were selected to compete in the Final Concert

and Award Ceremony, which was held at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on London's South Bank, on Tuesday 17 May, in the presence of 700 audience members. The evening began with a rousing rendition of the National Anthem by Ensemble winners the Cries of London, an eight-part vocal group. During the first half of the concert each of the four finalists performed a 20-minute recital programme, which they had selected to showcase their particular musical strengths.

After 120 hours of auditions, four outstanding solo finalists were selected

Oboist Suzanne Thorn, 24, opened the competition Final with a confident performance of *Showcase* by Madeleine Dring, which she followed by Bach and Saint-Saens sonatas. Suzanne is well known to ROSL audiences as she won the ROSL Sussex Prize for a Player of Promise when she was just 15 and has performed for ROSL as a member of the 2009 Ensemble B winners, the St James's Quintet, and also with the 2010 winners, the Rose Trio.

Mezzo soprano Kitty Whately followed with a programme of Mahler, Schumann, Maxim Bendall and Rossini. Her gutsy performance and tone demonstrated how worthy she was of the prestigious Kathleen Ferrier Award, which she had received the previous week.

Scottish guitarist Sean Shibe, 19, was next to perform, with Giulo Regondi's *Fête Villageoise* and Alberto Ginastera's *Sonata*. Undaunted by the challenging task of filling a large concert hall with the delicate tones of the guitar, Sean



er of the 59th ROSL Annual Music Competition. Anna Maciuk reports

held the audience in rapt attention, as they wanted to appreciate every subtle nuance of his performance. Pianist Ashley Fripp concluded the first half with a performance of Haydn, Brahms and the lesser known Moritz Moszkowski, with an incredible attention to technical and musical details.

After the interval, the adjudicators retired to the green room to decide who would receive the £10,000 First Prize and Gold Medal. The audience meanwhile was treated to the opening movement of Ravel's *String Quartet* by Ensemble A winners the Cavaleri Quartet and a performance by the Cries of London, featuring *Speak, Parrot*, written by poet John Skelton and set to music by ensemble member Peter Foggitt.

ROSL Chairman, Sir Anthony Figgis, introduced the 2011 prize-giver Dr Ursula Jones OBE, Co-Founder of the English Chamber Orchestra, board member of the Lucerne Festival and widow of the eminent trumpeter

Philip Jones. First to be presented with awards were prizewinners from Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom for outstanding performances in the Section Finals. The Accompanist Award was presented to Australian Michael Ierace, who is the first pianist to win both the Accompanist and the Solo Keyboard (2009) awards.

Finally, the Chairman of the jury, Gavin Henderson CBE, announced that Sean Shibe had won the First Prize; the second classical

guitarist in the competition's history to win First Prize, and the first Gold Medallist from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama.

A jubilant Sean said: "I am delighted to have won such a major award. It has worldwide prestige and I am very much looking forward to the months ahead, performing on tour for ROSL. There are many people I would like to thank, but my teacher, Allan Neave, comes to the top of that list."

John Wallace CBE, Principal of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, said: "Sean plays with such human understanding. Listening to him is life enhancing – young artists like him carry the future of Scotland with ease. To say that the RSAMD is proud of him is an understatement." This enthusiasm was echoed in the press with Michael Tumelty of Glasgow's *Herald* writing: 'Sean Shibe... Remember the name. One day he will be famous; I do not exaggerate.'

With the delicate tones of the guitar, Sean held the audience in rapt attention

ROSL WORLD

The latest from the global branches

Australia

Members in New South Wales joined the Australia-Britain Society at a lunch with music to celebrate The Queen's Birthday in June.

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

Queensland: Sharon Morgan, sllmorgan@hotmail.com

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

Tasmania: Robert Dick, gradick1@gmail.com

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

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

Canada

In May, in British Columbia, members met the author of *Londinium Poeta*, Stuart Newton, who gave a short presentation. The Nova Scotia Branch President, Elizabeth Stern, hosted an afternoon tea party in June, the first social function for this new Canadian Chapter.

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

British Columbia: Pamela Ducommun, +1 604 925 3719

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

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

Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Branch announced that Stella Lam has been appointed President of the branch in succession to Paul Surtees.

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

New Zealand

In July, a champagne brunch was held at the Kingsgate Hotel, Auckland. Chris Hagon, a volunteer with the Historic Places Trust in New Zealand, gave a talk to branch members entitled 'A Stately Experience'.

As well as marking the Royal Wedding in April (see pages 18-19), the Southland Branch held a talk in June by Brian Townley, who spoke on hotel management. The Christchurch Branch at last found a place to continue their monthly meetings after another damaging earthquake and aftershocks in June. The Holly Lea retirement complex has beautiful rooms and has kindly allowed the branch to use one of its lounges each month. In July, a mid-winter lunch was held for members.

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

Switzerland

ROSL Director-General Robert Newell was a guest at the British Swiss Chamber of Commerce (BSCC) lunch in May, held in conjunction with the Switzerland Branch in Geneva. The speaker at the lunch, attended by branch Chairman Jo Brown and branch members, was HE Mr Kamalesh Sharma, the Commonwealth Secretary-General. ROSL member Michael McKay, Chairman of the BSCC, hosted the event.

Switzerland: Jo Brown, +334 5040 6631

Thailand

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

UK

In Cheltenham, Nigel Broome gave a talk on Edinburgh's 'Most Famous Street' in April and, after a short AGM in May, George Johnston showed a DVD on wildlife. In June, the summer lunch was held at the Renaissance Restaurant at Gloucestershire College.

In Edinburgh, members enjoyed two arts lunches, one with Kirsteen McCue, who gave some interesting insights into Scottish music, and the other with Anna Magnusson, who addressed a large audience on the subject of storytelling in broadcast and print. At the Scottish Members' Dinner, Alex May, Research Editor of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, spoke on ROSL founder Sir Evelyn Wrench. ROSL ARTS presented their final Gala Opera evening, with performances by students of the Glasgow Conservatoire. The Edinburgh and Glasgow Branches held their AGMs in May: Director-General Robert Newell addressed the Edinburgh event and Scotland Development Officer James Wilkie spoke in Glasgow.

The Exeter Branch AGM saw the resignation of Chairman, Ewan MacLeod. He had been a very active Chairman and the branch was fortunate to have his services for so long. Brian Hawkes, who served as Branch Secretary for many years, took over as Chairman. In June, the branch held a coffee morning at Topsham Museum and raised funds for the ROSL-Namibia Project.

At the AGM in April, the Taunton Branch welcomed new

Members' offer: Auckland

The Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, a ROSL reciprocal club, invites members to make use of its facilities if they are in Auckland for the Rugby World Cup, 9-23 October. The clubhouse is situated on Waitemata Harbour, close to the town centre. There will be large viewing screens to watch the games, and a number of hospitality and viewing packages. For more information, contact admin@rnzys.org.nz or see www.rnzys.org.nz

Literary festival

The third Budleigh Salterton Literary Festival, founded by Exeter Branch member Susan Ward, will run on 16-18 September. Fellow ROSL member Hilary Mantel will be speaking about her work-in-progress *The Mirror and the Light*, the sequel to the Man-Booker prize-winning *Wolf Hall*. A strong line-up of authors includes Sir Roy Strong, Carol Ann Duffy (Poet Laureate), Gillian Clarke (National Poet of Wales), Sue MacGregor and Robin Hanbury-Tenison OBE.



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SPRING EVENTS: (clockwise from top) Taunton Branch members on the Exeter Ship Canal; pictured (l-r) at a lunch in Geneva are Director-General Robert Newell, the Trinidad and Tobago representative to the UN, Simone Young, HE Kamalsh Sharma and BSCC Chairman Michael McKay; British Columbia Branch members with poet Stuart Newton in May; and Alex May, Research Editor of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (centre), with the Edinburgh Branch committee at the Scottish Members' Dinner

Chairman Norman Brade, as Nigel Stuart-Thorn stepped down. In May, members took a trip on the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal and River Tone on a new, environmentally-friendly electric boat. In June, a group of members visited Powderham on the River Exe for a tour of the castle and lunch, followed by a visit to Exeter Quay and a cruise on the ship canal.

In May, 11 members from ROSL West (**Bath, Exeter, Taunton and Torbay**) visited Over-Seas House, Edinburgh and enjoyed a short organised cruise on the Firth of Forth. In June, the **West Sussex** Branch held a lunch to celebrate The Queen's birthday, followed by a raffle to raise funds for the

Sussex Prize in the ROSL Annual Music Competition. They welcomed several members of the London Group to the lunch.

Bath, Exeter, Taunton, Torbay:

Sally Roberts, 01823 661148, rosl.west@googlemail.com

Bournemouth: Gordon Irving, 01258 480887, westoverirving@aol.com

Cheltenham: Kathleen Northage, 01242 515540

Edinburgh: Bill Chalmers, 0131 5572754

Glasgow: Bill Agnew, 07551 313722

West Cornwall: Ian Wood, 01736 333460

West Sussex: Marilyn Archbold, 01444 458853

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ROBERT NEWELL'S LONDON

How long have you lived in London?

The only place I have ever lived in the UK is London. I returned from living overseas [in Iran and Kenya] in 1979. My family and I have lived in South London ever since.

Some say London begins north of the river. What do you think?

London starts once you cross the river! There are lots of fabulous open green spaces (Wandsworth Common, Richmond Park, Battersea Park, Greenwich Park), a much more relaxed atmosphere – it feels like you're leaving the rat race of Central London behind – good shopping in Northcote Road and excellent restaurants, including a new Persian restaurant, five minutes from my doorstep.

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

Jump on the bus, numbers 19 or 22, for a lovely ride from Chelsea, through Knightsbridge, along Piccadilly, right the way through London, past all the sights. And walk as much as you can, especially through London's fabulous parks. The best, in my opinion, is St James's Park, where you can stand on the bridge and enjoy superb views of Buckingham Palace in one direction and Horse Guards in the other. Getting a little lost can often mean discovering hidden gems that you otherwise wouldn't have

seen. Exploring the rare book shops around Charing Cross Road is great fun.

Where is the best place to eat?

J Sheekey has rather exceptional, fantastic seafood. Having a daughter who works for a restaurant company means I get to eat out quite a lot. When in other restaurants I am constantly reminded of how good the food in the ROSL restaurant is. The fine clarets, from good vintages, are the best priced in London and the food is really delicious. Oh, and I must not forget Pizza Express and Côte, which I think are the best restaurant chains in the UK.

How do you relax in London?

I go to my house and relax looking after my garden, playing tennis with my daughter and nephew in Battersea Park, and being with my granddaughters when they visit from Munich.

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

Make cycling easier and less dangerous by creating more practical and safe cycle routes.

What do you love – and hate – most about London?

I love the culture and vibrancy, and hate the fact that so few Londoners are getting to see the Olympics (that we are paying for).

Interview by Samantha Whitaker.



RELAXING SPOT: Battersea Park's sub-tropical garden, overlooking the lake

LONDON What's on...



© LI HUIMIN / LIU CHEN-HSIANG

The Royal Opera: 'La sonnambula'

Royal Opera House

2-18 November

Orphan girl Amina's betrothal to farmer Elvino is threatened by her uncontrollable sleepwalking. Bellini's 1831 score in the *bel canto* tradition.

Tickets: £6-£135. Contact: 020 7304 4000 or www.roh.org.uk

Gerhard Richter: 'Panorama'

Tate Modern

6 October 2011-8 January 2012

Coinciding with the artist's 80th birthday, this chronological retrospective groups together significant moments of Richter's career, including abstractions, subtle landscapes, colour charts, works on paper, mirrors and glass constructions.

Tickets: £12-£14. Contact: 020 7887 8888 or www.tate.org.uk

Out of Asia season

Sadler's Wells

Various, 6 September-16 November

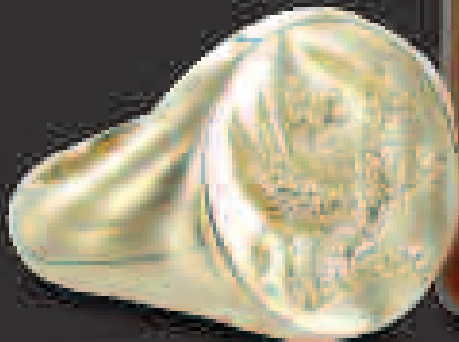
This exciting series of work brings together artists from China (Beijing Dance Theater, TAO Dance Theatre), Vietnam (Ea Sola), Bangladesh (Akram Khan's *DESH*), Japan (Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's *TeZuka*) and Taiwan (Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan).

Tickets: Various. Contact: 0844 412 4300 or www.sadlerswells.com

Signets & Cyphers

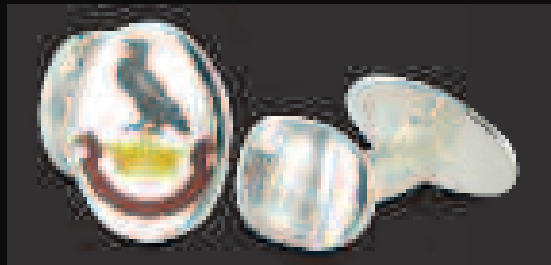
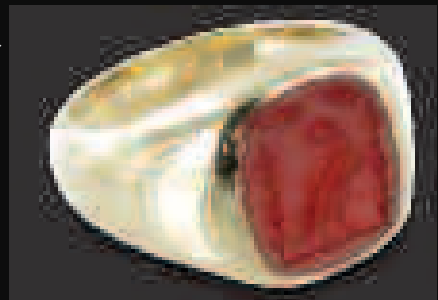
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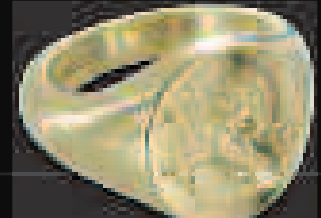
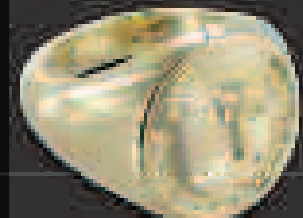
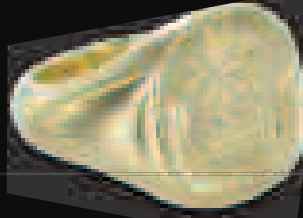
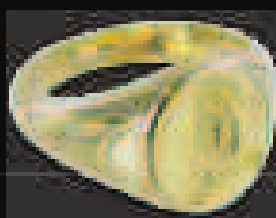
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Blind taste

Samantha Whitaker reviews pitch black restaurant Dans le Noir?

If 80% of the information your brain receives is through your eyes, what happens when you eat *dans le noir*? This is the question posed to those who dine in a revolutionary restaurant on a leafy square in Clerkenwell. A restaurant where, as the name suggests, there is no light.

The question mark in the name is important: the experience raises questions about sight and its predominance in our relationship with the world. "When sight is removed we are forced to rediscover through taste, scent, touch and sound, which can be a revelation", explains General Manager Dominique Raclin.

Diners are completely dependent on the 11 permanent waiters or 'guides', who are all visually impaired. This is their world. They escort you to your seat, explain how to eat in the dark and how to pour water (by putting your finger in the glass), and offer reassurance if you are anxious. You call them by name if you need the toilet (which, thankfully, are lit), and they will guide you out of the room.

Into the darkness

Dans le Noir? was founded in Paris, in 2004, by Edouard de Broglie and Etienne Boisorond. The London restaurant opened in 2006 and has more than 1,500 guests a month. It is the largest restaurant of its kind in the world. The dining room, which seats 60, is full most nights.

Before entering, you are asked to choose from four menus: red (meat), blue (fish), green (vegetarian) and white (surprise), although special dietary requirements can be catered for. Only after the experience does your guide reveal what you have eaten (with photos). To date, only one woman has been 100% correct.

We placed all sources of light (watches, phones, camera etc) and valuables in lockers, and met our guide, Ghow, who has been blind since birth. I placed my right hand on Ghow's shoulder, and with my 'date', Allie, clutching mine we were led, single-file, into the dark.

Inside, the darkness is thick and intense. With my palm against my nose I couldn't see



SENSORY EXPERIENCE: Diners are led into the restaurant by a blind waiter or 'guide'

my hand, and Allie and I felt around, locating cutlery, glasses and plates, and each other. We did not stop talking. Research shows that in pitch darkness we are naturally anxious not to be forgotten. "I'm here!" people will often say, and, because you cannot read facial reactions, "Can you hear me? Do you understand?" There was also a lot of laughter, predominantly of the nervous kind. Infrared CCTV cameras watch each table, but they are only used if the guides suspect there is a problem.

We were quickly served our starters and became absorbed with the task of eating. Cutlery is useless, so we explored the plate with our fingers. It's not finger food, but we soon got used to it, industriously nibbling

from slabs of unidentified meat, pinching mouthfuls of salad and scooping mash potato with two fingers.

Fine dining

We began to relax and to enjoy the guilty licence to eavesdrop on our neighbours. Many people chat spontaneously to other diners, free from preconceptions based on looks. Class, colour and creed are left at the swishing curtains: in the dark everyone is the same. Even Wills and Kate have dined in the dark anonymously. There is the opportunity, later, to continue discussions in the lit bar to see if your imagination has painted an accurate picture.

I was astounded to learn that I had eaten (from the white menu) tuna and swordfish sashimi, followed by bison, springbok and crocodile meat. Allie (red menu) had enjoyed smoked pigeon and calves' liver. Would I go again? Perhaps not. But it is an experience that I think everyone should try.

Two courses £40; three courses £45. 30-31 Clerkenwell Green. Nearest Tube: Farringdon/Chancery Lane. www.danslenoir.com; 020 7253 1100 or booking@danslenoir.com.

I was astounded to learn that I had eaten bison, springbok and crocodile meat

ROSL ARTS

Director of ROSL ARTS, **Roderick Lakin**, previews the autumn events

MUSIC EVENTS

Princess Alexandra Hall,
Over-Seas House
Sundays @ 3

Concerts last an hour and are followed by cream tea and an opportunity to meet the performers:

**Gillian Keith soprano, with
Simon Lepper piano**

Sunday 18 September
Since winning the ROSL Annual Music Competition Singers award in 1998 and the Kathleen Ferrier prize the following year, the Canadian soprano Gillian Keith has established herself on the international opera stage. This welcome return visit to Over-Seas House with her duo partner and fellow ROSL prizewinner, Simon Lepper, celebrates the release of her most recent CD – a selection of songs by Richard Strauss.

**Commonwealth Resounds:
CHOGM 2011**

Sunday 25 September
Under the direction of Alison Cox, the CHOGM Resounds team of young musicians and composers from the Purcell School and Chetham's School preview some of the imaginative new work they will be presenting in and around Perth, Western Australia, as part of the cultural festival surrounding the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in October.

Mateusz Borowiak piano

Sunday 16 October
Outstanding Polish pianist Mateusz Borowiak returns to ROSL for the first time since

winning the Keyboard award in the 2006 ROSL Annual Music Competition at the age of just 17.

Cellophony

Sunday 20 November
Eight cellos, led by ROSL Music Competition gold medallist John Myerscough, present a highly calorific feast of music, including a transcription of the Prelude to Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* and music by Bach, Schubert, Villa Lobos and Wienawski.

Tickets for Sundays @ 3: £12; ROSL members £11; Friends of ROSL ARTS £10. Includes post-concert tea and scones with jam and cream.

Christchurch Earthquake Appeal Concert

Wednesday 7 December, 7pm
ROSL prize-winning New Zealand musicians, including Hadleigh Adams (baritone) and John-Paul Muir (piano), present a programme of jazz and popular classics.

Tickets: £25. Includes pre-concert glass of sparking New Zealand wine and post-concert New Zealand wines and canapés. Proceeds go to a selected rebuilding project of the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal.



BOOK EVENTS

Princess Alexandra Hall
David Loyn

Tuesday 20 September, 7pm
The International Development correspondent for the BBC talks about his experiences as a frontline TV reporter, covering the fall of the Berlin Wall, the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Asian tsunami and the Haiti earthquake. Members will have the opportunity to meet David Loyn over a glass of wine afterwards, and to buy a signed copy of his books, *Frontline* and *Butcher and Bolt*.

Tickets: £7; £6 ROSL members and concessions; £5 Friends of ROSL ARTS. Tickets include a glass of wine.

STRING HARMONY: Led by ROSL prizewinner John Myerscough, Cellophony will play in September as part of the Sundays @ 3 series

MUSICAL APPEAL: ROSL prizewinning musicians will perform a Christchurch aid concert in December. The city's cathedral is pictured, left, heavily damaged





**Anne Sebba:
'That Woman: The Life
of Wallis Simpson,
Duchess of Windsor'**

Tuesday 17 October, 7pm

This will be the first serious yet sympathetic book by a female biographer to explain how an American divorcee became a hate figure for allegedly ensnaring a British King and removing him from his throne. 'That woman' was not only one of the most talked about women of her generation; in death, she has become one of the most written about and reviled. However, she has also become a symbol of female empowerment and a style icon.



**Ashley Jackson:
'Churchill'**

Tuesday 29 November, 7pm

Winston Churchill attracted far more criticism when he was alive than he has since his death. He was, according to Evelyn Waugh, 'always in the wrong, surrounded by crooks, terrible father, a radio personality'. Whatever one's view of the 'greatest Briton', Winston Churchill remains unreduced. He remains enormous fun as well.

Ashley Jackson seeks to describe the contours of Churchill's remarkable life and political career, while giving a sense of the man behind the dark eyes and bulldog features. From Cabinet outcast to the greatest war leader ever, this is an eternally fascinating story.

Tickets: £7; £6 ROSL members and concessions; £5 Friends of ROSL ARTS. Includes a post-talk glass of wine.

VISUAL ARTS

**gallery@oxo, London
Annual Scholars
Exhibition 2011**

Wednesday 6 - Sunday 23

October, 10am-6pm daily

ROSL ARTS returns to gallery@oxo at the landmark OXO Tower, situated close to Tate Modern on London's Southbank.

The exhibition brings together fascinating new work, in a variety of media, by Jaime Lee Loy (Trinidad and Tobago), Zoe Macdonell (Australia) and Shake Makelele (Kenya), who all enjoyed a month-long residency last year, as ROSL Visual Arts Scholars at the Patrick Allan Fraser Foundation at Hospitalfield in Arbroath, Scotland. Glass-work by Hanne Enemark and Sarah Wiberley will also be shown. *Admission free. gallery@oxo, Oxo Tower Wharf, Bargehouse Street, Southbank, London SE1 9PH, www.coinstreet.org/whatson/exhibitionsandevents.*

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

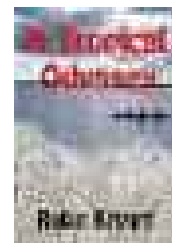
Books

Recent works by ROSL members

'A Tropical Odyssey'

Robin Bryant

ISBN: 978-0956651884, Pearl Press Ltd, 2010, £12.99



An evocative and meaningful memoir, which describes Bryant's adventures throughout a diverse and

remarkable career as plantation manager and consultant on tree crop agronomy. Events, places and people from his travels worldwide are described in charming and vibrant detail.

**'The Ancient Oracles:
Making the Gods
Speak'**

Richard Stoneman

ISBN: 978-0300140422

Yale University Press, 2011, £25



For more than a thousand years, Greeks from all walks of life sought advice directly from the gods, via

various kinds of oracles, including healers, advisors and prophets. This wide-ranging and fascinating historical tapestry traces the history of Greek oracles, highlighting the theoretical, psychological and anthropological aspects of oracular consultation and offering fresh insights into pagan religious practice.

Reviews by Aisha Tayub.

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Healthcare Awards 2011 WINNER

Younger Members

September-December 2011

SEPTEMBER

Mock the week

Thursday 15 September

Comedy night at the Royal Automobile Club, with a tapas-style dinner.*

Jazz at the Reform Club

Friday 30 September

Enjoy an evening of jazz in the hallowed halls of the Reform Club on Pall Mall.*

OCTOBER

Trafalgar dinner

Friday 21 October

The Army and Navy Club welcome Inter-Club members to commemorate Nelson's victory at the battle of Trafalgar.*

ROSL halloween film fest

Monday 31 October,
6.30pm, £25

ROSL invites Younger Members to pull up a chair, enjoy a glass of wine, and truly indulge in the halloween festivities with a cinematic spooking. There will be reception drinks from 6.30pm and curtain up at 7pm. The halloween film will be decided by a game of chance, played on the evening.



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

© ISTOCKPHOTO

NOVEMBER

Yo ho ho and a bottle of...

Thursday 3 November,
6.30pm, £25

...Rum! Join fellow ROSL Younger Members and sample the delights of premium rum. Members and their guests will enjoy a welcome cocktail, nibbles and a tutored tasting by rum expert Andrew Hawes.

Clubland has talent!

Friday 11 November

Hosted by the Savage Club.*

Ceilidh

Friday 25 November

Back by popular demand, the Caledonian Club invites all Inter-Clubbers to put on their dancing shoes for a night of food, drink and traditional Gaelic dancing.*

DECEMBER

The annual Inter-Club Christmas ball

Wednesday 21 December

One of the highlights of the Inter-Club calendar, hosted this year by the Lansdowne Club.*

* *Inter-Club event, see www.inter-club.co.uk*

Sherry, music and jelly beans

Inter-Club members enjoy a jam-packed spring/summer events calendar

Inter-Club members have been spoilt for choice with the variety and quality of events on offer. Highlights included a full military dinner at the Army & Navy Club (complete with post horn gallop!); a tutored sherry tasting with Robert Giorgione, former Head Sommelier at the Oxo Tower, hosted by the City University Club; and a gourmet dinner with opera at the Savile Club.

Members were dazzled by a private viewing of the royal treasures at Buckingham Palace and stuffed to the gills with British delicacies at the Farmers Club. The sun refused to shine for the garden party at the Travellers Club, but the rain could not dampen the spirits of the Inter-Clubbers, who sheltered beneath the century-old trees for at least one drink, before beating a hasty retreat to the library.

The annual Inter-Club quiz at the Carlton Club proved a great success. Questions covered everything from James Bond and Mr Men to guessing the flavour of various jelly beans. Competition was close and a number of clubs took the lead during the course of the evening. However, none could match the encyclopaedic knowledge of the Savage Club, who exited triumphant.

Members' events

September – December 2011

SEPTEMBER

An evening with Michael Newman

Friday 9 September, 6pm,
£32, G

Michael Newman, a former expert on the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow*, has agreed to return to Over-Seas House to value small objects (no more than three) brought by members and their guests. Includes a glass of champagne on arrival, a quiz with prizes and a hot fork buffet with wine.

OCTOBER

Russian imperial banquet

Thursday 6 October, 7pm,
£65, G

Sumptuous black-tie banquet, with special guest Philip Birkenstein, Chairman of the St Petersburg Collection. Includes a reception drink, three-course dinner with wine, talk on the 400-year history of Fabergé, and private viewing of masterpieces created by Theo Fabergé, grandson of Carl Fabergé.

Wine tasting with Martin Everett MW

Monday 17 October, 6pm,
£30, G

Enjoy a tutored tasting of fine

clarets from the cellar at Over-Seas House, London. Participants will be able to book a three-course meal in the Restaurant for just £20.

Trip to Highgrove Gardens

Tuesday 18 October, 9am,
£50, B

A day-trip to the private gardens of TRH The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall. Includes return travel to Highgrove by coach, morning refreshments, a private garden tour led by one of TRH's official garden guides, and lunch in the Highgrove House tea room.

NOVEMBER

Aristocrats & artists: Holland Park & Leighton House

Thursday 3 November, 2pm,
£15, G

A walking tour through Holland Park's beautiful gardens, the remains of a Jacobean mansion, and the magnificent houses of Luke Fildes and William Holman Hunt, concluding with a tour of the home of the leading Victorian artist Lord Leighton (1830-1896). View the opulent Arab Hall with Leighton's priceless collection of more than a thousand Islamic tiles.

White Lodge Museum

Tuesday 8 November, midday,
£25, R

An afternoon trip to the Grade 1 listed White Lodge museum in Richmond Park. Learn about the daily life of students at The Royal Ballet School, the history and development of classical ballet, and the fascinating story of White Lodge itself. Material from the Royal Ballet School Collections are on display, including Margot Fonteyn's ballet shoes and the school reports of famous alumni. A light lunch will be served first at Over-Seas House. Includes travel.

FCO Association/ ROSL lunch

Thursday 10 November,
12.30pm, £50, G

Lord Howell, Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) Spokesman in the House of Lords, will speak on 'Why we are putting the 'C' back in the FCO: Commonwealth Mark II'. The three-course lunch with wine will enable members to get an up-to-the-minute briefing, post-CHOGM, about the Government's position on current Commonwealth issues.

Chairman's lunch

Tuesday 15 November,
midday, £55, G

Drinks will be served before a three-course lunch at Over-Seas House, London, hosted by ROSL Chairman, Sir Anthony Figgis. The guest of honour, Lord Wright of Richmond GCMG, a former Head of HM Diplomatic Service, will speak on the future of the House of Lords.



PRIVATE VIEW: Highgrove House and Gardens; and (right) the Pink Orchid Egg from the St Petersburg Collection

Behind-the-scenes at the Royal Academy

Monday 21 November, 11am,
£27, G

A rare opportunity to explore one of the oldest, richest and least-known repositories of British art in England. ROSL members and their guests are invited to discover hidden corners of Burlington House, view the Academy's diverse archives and browse in the oldest fine arts library in Britain.

DECEMBER

Festival of Christmas carols and readings

Sunday 4 December, 3.30pm,
£20, G

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

Application form opposite

These codes identify ticket availability:

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

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



Chairman's Christmas lunch

Thursday 15 December, 12.30pm, £45, G

ROSL Chairman, Sir Anthony Figgis, invites ROSL members to bid farewell to Robert Newell (*pictured*), ROSL Director-General for the last 20 years and General Manager for the previous 12. Drinks will be served before a three-course festive lunch at Over-Seas House, London.



Members' events Application form

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

Membership No	EVENT	DATE	PRICE	NO.
Name	An evening with Michael Newman	Fri 9 Sept	£32 £
.....	Russian imperial banquet	Thu 6 Oct	£65 £
Name of guest(s) and trip they are attending:	Wine tasting	Mon 17 Oct	£30 £
.....	Aristocrats & artists	Thu 3 Nov	£15 £
.....	White Lodge Museum	Tue 8 Nov	£25 £
.....	FCOA/ROSL lunch	Thu 10 Nov	£50 £
.....	Chairman's lunch	Tue 15 Nov	£55 £
.....	Behind-the-scenes at the RA	Mon 21 Nov	£27 £
.....	Festival of Christmas carols & readings	Sun 4 Dec	£20 £
.....	Chairman's Christmas lunch	Thu 15 Dec	£45 £

Address to which tickets should be sent:

.....

Tel no

BALLOTTED EVENTS

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

Maximum TWO tickets per member.

Highgrove Gardens Tue 18 Oct

Apply before: Tick to apply:

Fri 23 Sept

Payment – Please send a SEPARATE CHEQUE for each event.

Cheques (sterling) payable to ROSL. For CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS telephone 020 7016 6906.

Food and drink

Mediterranean seafood festival 3-15 October

Choose from a range of carefully selected Mediterranean dishes from across the region, in our fully air-conditioned Restaurant.

Christmas Day lunch 25 December

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

New Year's Eve dinner 31 December, 9pm

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



DELICIOUS SEAFOOD: Try dishes from across the Mediterranean

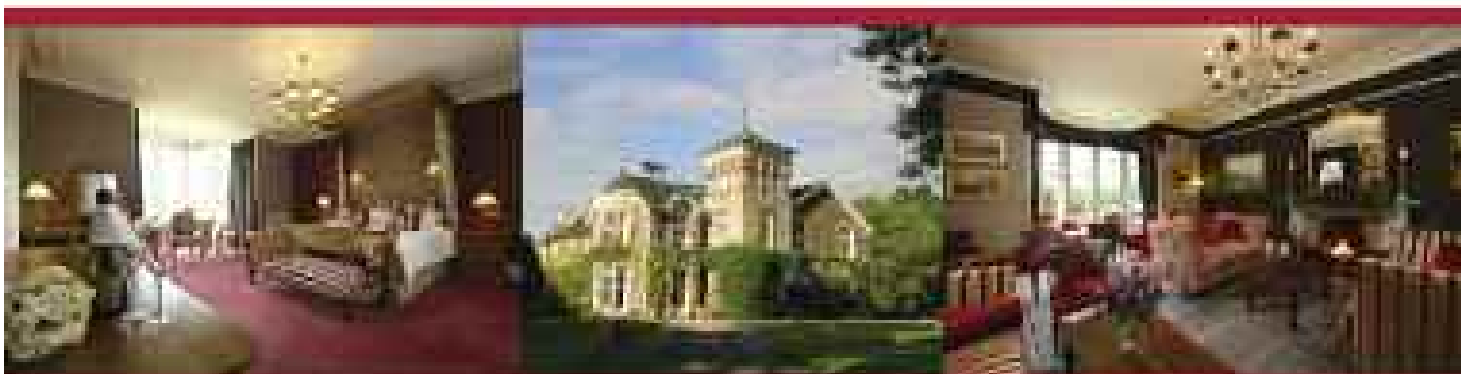
Private events

Over-Seas House has seven attractive, private rooms, which can accommodate both small meetings and larger receptions. A range of events, from birthday dinners and wedding receptions to family parties, can be organised easily, with a full range of menus and drinks packages available. Our team of experienced event coordinators will be on hand to answer any queries.

Three-course fine dining starts at £33.95+vat; private room hire from £150+vat.

For reservations, call 020 7491 3644 or email Alastair@convexleisure.co.uk.

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Loch Ness Road, Inverness, IV3 5JH

EDINBURGH

What's on...

September - December 2011

SEPTEMBER**Bridge Club lunch****Friday 2 September, 12.30pm**One-course lunch. *Tickets: £12.***Music @100 Princes Street****Wednesday 21 September, 6.30pm**

Singaporean pianist Abigail Sin plays Debussy and Chopin.

*Tickets: £12; ROSL members £10;**Friends of ROSL ARTS £8.***OCTOBER****Coffee morning****Saturday 1 October, 10.30am**

Talk on 'The Killing of the Red Fox (RL Stevenson)' by Ian Nimmo.

Arts lunch**Wednesday 5 October, midday**

Two-course lunch with coffee and glass of wine. Music by pupils of St Mary's Music School, Edinburgh.

*Tickets: £18; ROSL members £17.***Chairman's reception****Wednesday 26 October, 6.30pm**

For new ROSL members.

NOVEMBER**Arts lunch****Wednesday 2 November, midday****RISING PIANO STAR:** Abigail Sin plays Chopin and DebussyTwo-course lunch with coffee and glass of wine. Talk on 'Edinburgh's Makar' by Ron Butlin. *Tickets: £18; ROSL members £17.***Coffee morning****Saturday 5 November, 10.30am**

Talk on 'The Portrait Gallery' by Senior Curator David Taylor.

Music @100 Princes Street**Wednesday 16 November, 6.30pm**

Canadian pianist Carlisle Anderson Frank plays Beethoven and Chopin.

*Tickets: £12; ROSL members £10;**Friends of ROSL ARTS £8.***St Andrew's Day dinner****Friday 25 November, 7pm**Three-course dinner and wine, with Donald Smith, Director of Scottish Storytelling Centre. *Tickets: £32.***DECEMBER****Christmas lunch****Friday 2 December, 12.30pm**

For Bridge Club members only.

*Tickets: £17. Includes sherry.***Coffee morning****Saturday 3 December, 10.30am**

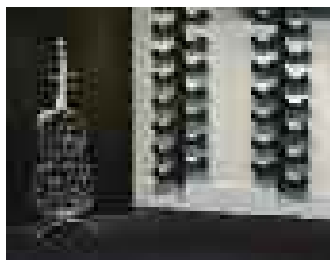
Talk on 'The Coronation of 1953' by Norman Bonney.

RL Stevenson arts lunch**Wednesday 7 December, midday**

Two-course lunch with talk on 'The Theatrical RLS' by John Cairney.

*Tickets: £20; ROSL members £18.***September-November at Over-Seas House, Edinburgh**

Enjoy a mid-week promotional offer on King and Superior rooms. Pay £199 or £219 per couple for bed and breakfast, with crêpe Suzette flambéed at the table, plus dinner on one night of your stay. Guests can also take Afternoon Tea of tea/coffee, freshly made scone with jam and vanilla cream, assorted

**DESIGN DETAILS:** The refurbished restaurant

sandwiches and the cake of the day, in the Observation Bar for the reduced price of £8.99pp. Offer runs 15 September-30 November, Sunday-Thursday.

Over-Seas House is now under new management, with refurbished rooms, bar and restaurant (see page 24). The menu has been updated to

include traditional Scottish classics with a twist.

Members' discounts

ROSL has arranged special promotions to help members enjoy their time in Edinburgh, with a 10% discount on open-top tour buses and the Royal Yacht Britannia.

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Painting by Shirley Parker
Resident, The British Home



RIGHT TRACK:
St Pancras
International station

Discussion Group & London Group

DISCUSSION GROUP

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

The demise of the water buffalo

10 October

Former British Ambassador to Thailand, David Fall, will speak on 'perspectives of change in Thailand and Indo-China since the 1970s' at this joint Anglo-Thai Society event.

The challenge of reputational repair for the banking industry

14 November

With Simon Lewis, Chief Executive of the Association of Financial Markets in Europe.

The future of the House of Lords

12 December

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

LONDON GROUP

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

Contact Pamela Voice (Chairman), pawallingtonvoice@yahoo.co.uk.

Meetings

NEW TIME: 6-7pm. On the third Thursday of every month at Over-Seas House, London.

Volunteer poppy sellers needed

31 October-11 November, Over-Seas House, London
Please leave your name and contact number for Helen Osborne, c/o Porters' Desk, Over-Seas House, or call 020 8503 5693.

The history and work of SSAFA Forces Help

15 September

Illustrated talk by Derek Howard-Budd, Head of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association, on its support of servicemen and women.

ROSL-Namibia Education project

20 October

Presentation by London Group Hon Treasurer Clive Carpenter on the progress and future of the project, which has been facilitating the education of marginalised children in Namibia since 1995.

'Gas masks should be slung over the shoulder'

17 November

Audio-visual presentation on Blitz evacuees by oral historian Hamish MacGillivray, including first-hand accounts of life as a child evacuee and rare archive materials.

London Group Christmas lunch

6 December, 12.30pm

Wine and soft drinks reception, followed by a three-course lunch

served in Princess Alexandra Hall. There will be a free prize draw and musical entertainment from ROSL ARTS.

Tickets: LG members £40; guests £45. To apply, call Alexandra Pavry on 020 7016 6906 or email apavry@rosl.org.uk, by 25 November.

Outside visits

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

St Pancras International Station

21 September, 11am

Explore the history of the station building, named the 'Eighth Wonder of the World' when it was completed in the 1860s, learn about the engineers and architects, and find out what challenges the regeneration programme faced.

Tickets: LG members £10; guests £12

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TREATING PROSTATE CANCER **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

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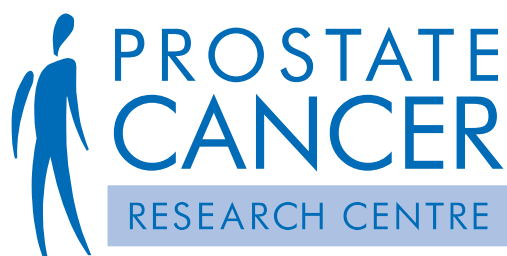
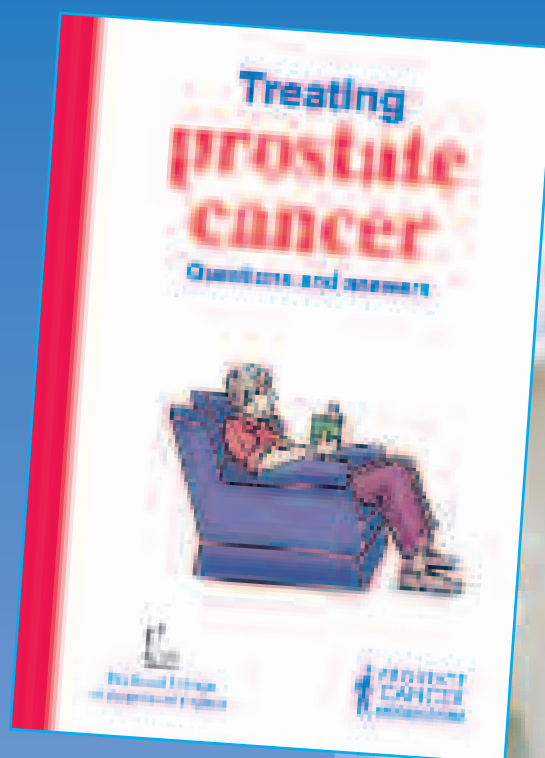
This booklet has two aims:

- to help you become better informed about prostate cancer and its treatment.
- to guide you in the decisions you will make about your care with your doctor.

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If you can help us by raising funds for our research or to make a donation please contact us at the address below.

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FLORENCE

Villa San Michele ***** Deluxe

Owned by the Orient-Express Group, the Villa San Michele sits on the hillside overlooking Florence's magnificent skyline. The 15th Century former monastery has a famous façade attributed to Michelangelo and a beautiful loggia terrace. The service is sublime and there are just 46 bedrooms located either in the main building or in the terraced gardens with its beautiful summer swimming pool.

Uffizi Gallery tickets included.

4 nights for the price of 3 - Price from £1,398 per person (until 8 Sep) or £1,448 per person (9 Sep – 1 Oct), saving £395. In August Kirker clients receive a complimentary lunch at The Loggia Restaurant (excluding drinks)

SEVILLE

Casa No 7 (a boutique, luxury, private hotel)

A previous winner of Tatler's 'Little Gem Hotel of the Year' award, The Casa – built in 1847 – is a delightful townhouse hotel with just six beautifully appointed bedrooms, well-equipped bathrooms and fine soft furnishings (no televisions). Located in the heart of the old part of the city, a few minutes' walk from the Cathedral, this is a real Spanish home, with antiques and works of art to make guests feel relaxed and comfortable. Cooked breakfast included. Highly recommended.

4 nights for the price of 3 all year (for stays excluding Friday or Saturday nights) - price from £624 per person, saving £96.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE

Le Pignonnet **** Superior

A classical Provençal city, with elegant 17th and 18th Century architecture, Aix has broad avenues, tempting cafés and wonderful markets. It was the home and inspiration of Paul Cézanne and is the perfect base to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the Luberon. A delightful family-owned hotel, Le Pignonnet is an 18th century country house surrounded by tranquil gardens yet is just 800 metres from the centre of the city. Summer swimming pool, excellent restaurant with terrace and a champagne bar.

4 nights for the price of 3 in August & September - price from £728 per person, saving £114.



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THE GARDENS OF MADEIRA

AN 11 NIGHT HOLIDAY WITH TOUR LECTURER KEITH MILLER

Madeira's sub-tropical climate ensures that there is always plenty to interest garden-lovers at any time of the year; indeed, visits in the winter months are even more rewarding, providing as they do flashes of lush foliage and vibrant colours that carpet the island's volcanic landscape. There will be a panoramic sightseeing tour of Funchal where we will visit the city's famous botanical garden. Other visits include Monte Park, the landscaped garden at Quinta de Palmeira, the world-famous Blandy Garden at Quinta do Palheiro and two gardens sure to impress lovers of orchids: the Quinta das Cruzes Museum and the Quinta da Boa Vista.

Price from £1,186 per person including three dinners and two lunches.

Departs 13 November 2011 & 19 February 2012



OPERA IN FLORENCE

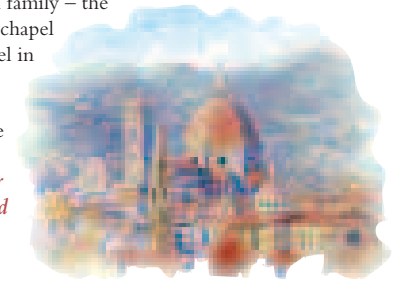
A FOUR NIGHT HOLIDAY WITH DR THOMAS TUOHY

Our autumn holiday includes visits to the city's most important artistic treasures and two operas at the Teatro Comunale - Il barbiere di Siviglia, Rossini's sparkling and witty comic opera; and La Bohème by Puccini, the world's favourite opera. Visits to the Uffizi Gallery, the Brancacci Chapel, the Bargello and the Duomo are all included. We will also spend a morning focusing on places associated with the Medici family – the church of San Lorenzo, the burial chapel in the New Sacristy and the chapel in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi.

There will also be time for independent exploration and some Christmas shopping.

Price from £1,259 per person for 4 nights including two operas and two dinners.

Departs 26 November 2011



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