

# OVERSEAS

THE JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE



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## ROSL ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE

The Royal Over-Seas League is dedicated to promoting international friendship in the commonwealth and beyond. A not-for-profit private members' organisation, we've been bringing like-minded people together since 1910.

Cover photography: Marieta Valentin

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The theme of this issue of *Overseas* is 'An International Flavour', and the timing couldn't be better as we look forward to a season of tempting dining events



As we come to the end of 2025, we look back on what has been another great year for the Royal Over-Seas League. Our Public Affairs series continued to spark conversation and debate, with speakers including former UK cabinet ministers, and the Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth and Prime Minister of Samoa. Most recently, the Chairman of *The Spectator*, Lord Moore of Etchingham, gave an entertaining semi-dramatisation of 'the fall of Mrs Thatcher', in this centenary of her birth. Convening such conversations reaffirms our role as a forum for ideas and global perspectives. The highlight of our arts programme, the Annual Music Competition, saw oboist Ewan Millar take the Gold Medal in July; we are already accepting applications for the 2026 prize, and look forward once again to celebrating talented young musicians from around the world early next year. Members also indulged in a delicious series of food and drink events, including our hugely successful evening with Michel Escoffier, when we celebrated the culinary legacy of his great-grandfather, 'King of Chefs' Auguste Escoffier.

It has been wonderful to see so many members enjoying our stylish 1910 Dining Room since it reopened in September, with its classic French menu including boeuf bourguignon and confit onion soup, and some particularly courageous members trying the delicious Burgundy snails starter! The theme of this issue of *Overseas* is 'An International Flavour', and the timing couldn't be better as we look forward to a season of tempting dining events, including Chinese New Year and Burns Night. Our classical guitar series, steak nights and Friday jazz nights will also be making a welcome return to the Dining Room.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and very Happy New Year.

**Dr Annette Prandzioch DL**  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL



# From the EDITOR

The festive period is upon us, and London is alive with celebration and sparkle, as pubs and restaurants overflow with Christmas parties, lights festoon the busy streets, and shops bustle with customers hunting for the perfect gift. This will be my first festive season at ROSL, and what a special time it is, with a delicious food offering, and a magical programme of arts and dining events running into the new year.

It seems only fitting, then, that this issue is a tribute to all things gastronomic: a celebration of flavours from across the globe. As Hanukkah, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Burns Night and many other celebrations approach, food remains at the heart of these festivities – a powerful way to bring people together and share in the joy of tradition. And who better to reflect on the pleasure of food than ROSL's very own Executive Chef Julien Maisonneuve? He sat down with me to discuss his favourite ingredients, and the inspiration behind his dishes. Julien's enthusiasm for the local suppliers and producers he works with led me to embark on an exploration of some of the world's most vibrant food markets for our lead article. Perhaps it will awaken your inner food explorer, and encourage you to seek out the flavours and stories hidden in your own local markets, wherever you are in the world.

In this issue, we also delve into the food and traditions of two of our favourite celebrations here at Over-Seas House: Chinese New Year and Burns Night. With delicious menus lined up for these events at ROSL, I uncover the important role that food plays in the cultural heritage and time-honoured customs of both occasions.

So, whether you're gathering with loved ones or discovering new tastes on your own, we invite you to savour the stories, traditions and flavours that make this festive season truly memorable. Wishing all our members a very happy new year.

**Laura Winter**  
editor@rosl.org.uk

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'All food markets offer  
an enriching experience  
that goes beyond the  
blandly transactional act  
of shopping, but Borough  
offers even more than most'



# FEAST FOR THE SENSES

In a world increasingly dominated by global supermarket chains and fast food giants, food markets are more than just a place for locals to grab a bite to eat, or for tourists to take a social-media-worthy snap – they're living, breathing centres of culture, history and community. They are vibrant social spaces, local economic centres, and often the best places to go if you truly want to understand the culture and people of the local area



**F**rom smoky street grills in Santiago to spicy aromas of paprika and saffron in Barcelona, we take a look at the vibrant sensory hubs that are among the most unforgettable food markets in the world.

## LA BOQUERIA

Barcelona, Spain

Tucked just off the iconic Las Ramblas, Mercat de Sant Josep de la Boqueria, better known simply as La Boqueria, is Barcelona's beating culinary heart. With its iron and glass art nouveau structure, the market dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, though its current incarnation has been in operation since 1840.

Inside, it's alive with colour and aroma. Vendors offer plump olives and saffron-infused paella, cured jamón ibérico, and seafood pulled fresh from the Mediterranean. Locals and tourists jostle shoulder to shoulder for cones of fried calamari, or fresh and seasonal fruit smoothies. This is a sensory experience not to be missed.



## TSUKIJI OUTER MARKET

Tokyo, Japan

While the original Tsukiji inner wholesale fish market moved to Toyosu in 2018, the Tsukiji Outer Market remains Tokyo's best spot for seafood-savvy travellers. The stalls and restaurants lining the narrow alleys are a deep dive into Japanese food culture – sushi, sashimi, tamagoyaki (sweet omelettes), grilled eel, and street

snacks like mochi or takoyaki.

A paradise for food-lovers, Tsukiji also offers top-notch essential ingredients way beyond what you would pick up at the supermarket. Even the wasabi is often freshly grated from the root, offering a floral heat worlds away from the green paste common elsewhere.

## BOROUGH MARKET

London, UK

London's oldest food market, Borough Market, has been feeding the capital since at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Located just south of the Thames, next to London Bridge, this bustling hub is a mix of traditional British fare and international flavours reflecting the city's diverse palate. Today, it remains a beloved destination

for both locals and tourists, with its halls and passageways offering a rich shopping experience steeped in history. Borough Market is not just a place to eat, but a celebration of culture, community and the rich tapestry of global culinary traditions.

See pages 30–31 for our interview with Borough Market's Chair, Shane Holland





**READING TERMINAL MARKET**  
Philadelphia, US

Dating back to 1893, Reading Terminal Market is a bustling indoor market located beneath an old railroad shed in downtown Philadelphia. It's a melting pot of cultures and cuisines, reflecting the city's rich immigrant history and culinary innovation.

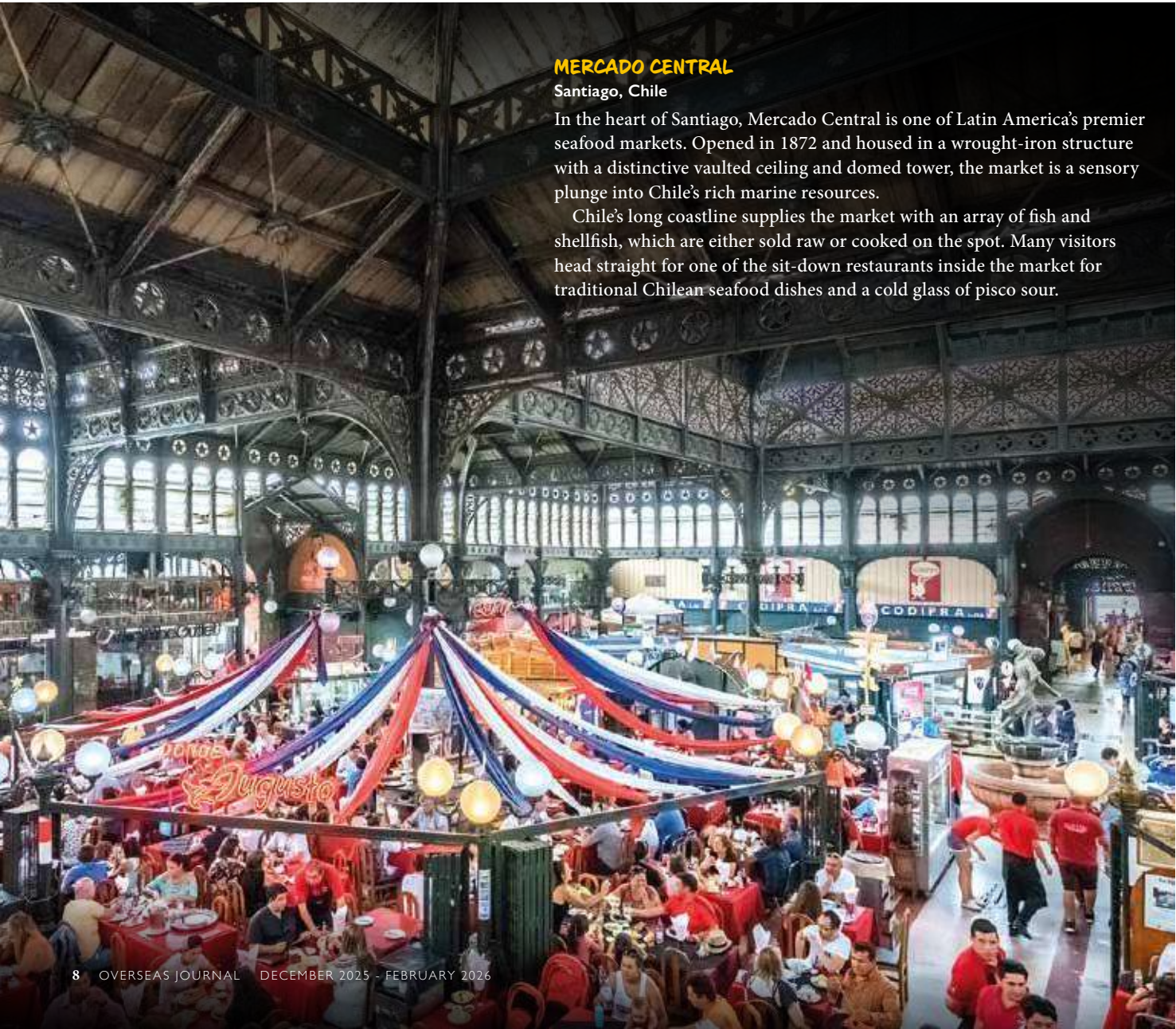
Inside are hundreds of vendors serving Pennsylvania Dutch specialties, fresh seafood, soul food, artisan baked goods and everything in between. The market is especially famous for its Amish stalls, where traditional homemade pies, scrapple and farm-fresh eggs keep locals, and visitors, coming back for more.



**MERCADO CENTRAL**  
Santiago, Chile

In the heart of Santiago, Mercado Central is one of Latin America's premier seafood markets. Opened in 1872 and housed in a wrought-iron structure with a distinctive vaulted ceiling and domed tower, the market is a sensory plunge into Chile's rich marine resources.

Chile's long coastline supplies the market with an array of fish and shellfish, which are either sold raw or cooked on the spot. Many visitors head straight for one of the sit-down restaurants inside the market for traditional Chilean seafood dishes and a cold glass of pisco sour.



**QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET**  
Melbourne, Australia

Sprawled over several hectares in the heart of Melbourne, the Queen Victoria Market (or 'Vic Market' to locals) is Australia's largest open-air market and a true cultural landmark. Operating since 1878, it's an all-in-one destination where fresh seafood, artisan cheeses, gourmet street food and exotic spices collide with the friendly, laid-back vibe of the city.

The market buzzes with energy five days a week, attracting locals, chefs and tourists hunting for seasonal fruit, quality meat and international flavours. Selling homemade pasta, freshly shucked oysters, Australian bush spices, Middle Eastern falafel, and a plethora of other ingredients and flavours from around the world, it's a multicultural feast that represents Melbourne's diverse culinary identity. 🍷





## TIPS FOR VISITING FOOD MARKETS



### GO HUNGRY

The best way to experience a market is by sampling small dishes across multiple stalls



### BRING CASH

Many markets still operate on cash-only systems



### GET THERE EARLY

For the best ingredients and freshest meals, mornings are prime time



### ASK QUESTIONS

Vendors are often proud of their offerings and love to explain



### BE RESPECTFUL

Observe local customs, and avoid handling produce or food without permission



### JEAN-TALON MARKET

Montreal, Canada

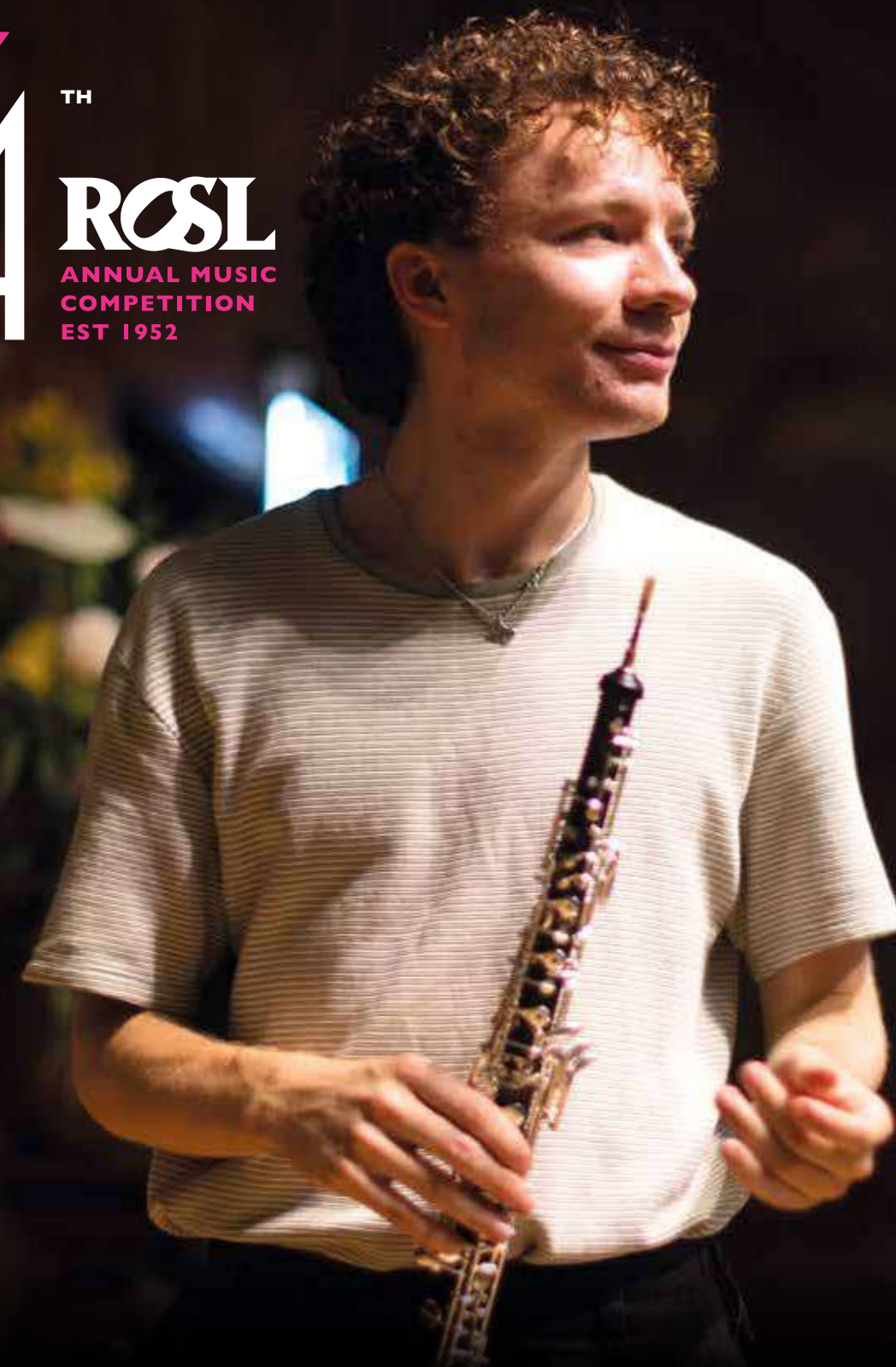
Nestled in Montreal's charming Little Italy neighbourhood, Jean-Talon Market is one of North America's largest open-air markets, and a cherished local institution since 1933. Open year-round (even through snowy winters), the market has a familial, village atmosphere that celebrates Quebec's agricultural bounty and multicultural culinary heritage.

In summer, the stalls overflow with just-picked berries, heirloom tomatoes and fresh herbs from local farms. In colder months, the market transforms into a cozy hub for charcuterie, cheeses and warm comfort foods. You'll find maple syrup and wild mushrooms, Middle Eastern spices and artisan breads, gourmet sausages and fresh fish – a taste of Montreal itself, through the lenses of its diverse communities.

### EXPLORE WITH ROSL

Don't forget, ROSL members can enjoy access to reciprocal clubs in over 100 locations around the globe, including many of the cities featured here. Visit [rosl.org.uk/reciprocal-clubs](https://rosl.org.uk/reciprocal-clubs) for more information

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# FRESH FOOD FRESH SEASON

As the air turns crisp and the days grow shorter, the winter season brings with it a deep craving for warmth, comfort and heartiness – and food becomes the centre of that experience. Our stylish 1910 Dining Room offers members more than just a meal, it promises an experience shaped by heritage, innovation and exceptional culinary talent. At the helm of this refined offering is Executive Chef Julien Maisonneuve, whose international expertise and thoughtful approach to seasonal produce make this season's menu a dining experience not to be missed.

Editor Laura Winter sat down with Chef Julien to talk about the philosophy behind the menu, and to discover what inspired his new dishes

## Why is seasonality so important to you when creating a menu?

Seasonality is the backbone of our culinary approach. When ingredients are in season, they're not only at their peak flavour and texture, but they're also more nutrient-dense. Embracing seasonal ingredients allows us to showcase the best that nature has to offer, while supporting local farmers and minimising our environmental impact. It keeps our menu exciting and ever-evolving, ensuring that guests can enjoy something new and connected to the time of year with every visit.

## Can you describe a dish from the 1910 Dining Room menu that seems minimal on the plate, but is actually a lot more complex than it appears?

Our mushroom kebab is a great example of this. While it might look like a simple skewer of grilled mushrooms, there's a lot more depth behind it. We

marinate a mix of mushrooms in a flavourful blend of fresh herbs, miso paste and smoked paprika – this gives them a rich, smoky complexity. The mushrooms are carefully chosen for their texture and their ability to soak up the marinade, ensuring each bite is packed with umami. Grilled to perfection, the kebabs develop a beautiful char that brings out their natural flavours. What looks simple is, in fact, a harmonious balance of flavours, textures and techniques that creates something much more intricate than it seems.

## Can you tell us about one local supplier whose ingredients have inspired a specific dish on your menu?

One of our standout suppliers is Aubrey Allen, known for their exceptional selection of high-quality meats and poultry. Their dedication to sustainable sourcing shines through in every cut. A perfect example is our slow-cooked beef bourguignon,

**Embracing seasonal ingredients allows us to showcase the best that nature has to offer, while supporting local farmers and minimising our environmental impact**



where we use Aubrey Allen's carefully sourced beef, slow-cooked to develop deep, rich flavours and a tender texture. The care they take in sourcing the beef allows us to elevate the dish, focusing on quality ingredients while supporting local, responsible farming practices.

## You have included a delicious plant-based section of the menu for the 1910 Dining Room – what inspired you to create these dishes?

The addition of a plant-based section was born out of a desire to challenge

ourselves creatively and meet the growing demand for more sustainable, inclusive dining options. We didn't want these dishes to be an afterthought – they had to be as exciting and satisfying as any other dish on the menu. I'm always fascinated by the depth and variety that can be achieved with plant-based ingredients – whether through fermenting, pickling, smoking or roasting. This has given us the chance to collaborate even more closely with local growers, using seasonal produce in new and innovative ways that continually surprise and delight our guests.

## DINE AT ROSL

Enjoy Chef Julien's delicious menu by booking a table in the art deco splendour of the 1910 Dining Room at [www.rosl.org.uk/dining](http://www.rosl.org.uk/dining)



# FAMILY-FOUND FLAVOUR

From a chance discovery in the woods of Abruzzo to having their truffles feature on some of the most delicious menus in London, including in our own 1910 Dining Room, the story of Abruzzo Truffles is one rooted in family, tradition, and passion for nature. We spoke with founder Sara Caporale about the company's humble beginnings, the move to London, and what it takes to bring one of the world's most sought-after delicacies to the table

*Your family has worked with truffles since 1994 in the Sangro Valley. Could you share what first drew your family to truffle hunting and how the business started?*

In the late summer of 1993, my dad was walking with his dog, Kitty, in the little wood near our family home. He was looking for a little bonsai to take home. Suddenly he found a little elm and, as he pulled it out of the ground, he found a little white truffle attached to its roots. He has always been a nature lover, and we used to pick mushrooms together when I was young. He looked around the site and discovered some more truffles in the ground. After that day, he decided to get a truffle hunter licence and train his dogs. He then opened a family business in the beautiful hills of Abruzzo. I used to go

hunting truffles with him sometimes, and it's still something we love to do together.

*In 2013, you moved to London to supply an expanding market. What are the greatest benefits of being in London, and what have been the biggest challenges?*

When I moved to London with the dream of opening my own company, I faced many challenges. The first one, of course, was learning English properly. I worked in a salon for the first six months in Battersea and there I was very lucky to meet a lady whose husband owned a Michelin Star restaurant on the King's Road. I opened my company in 2013, and slowly I've approached more restaurants. My cousin joined me in 2016, and we started running the business together.

*Tell us a little about the different techniques you use for collecting the truffles back in Italy.*

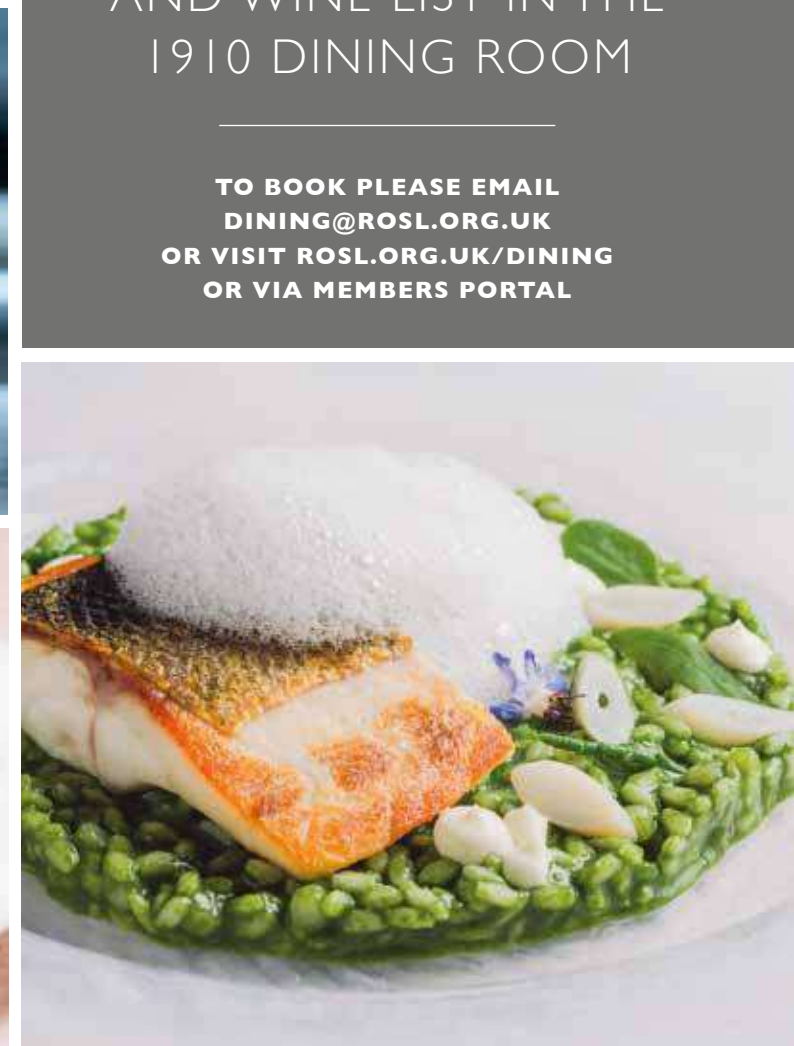
It's not so much about the technique, but more to do with the dog training. We train dogs from when they're little, starting when they are about two months old. We let them play with truffles and when they are a little older we hide truffles in the ground. Every time they find them, we feed them a treat. A very good breed of dog for hunting truffles is the lagotto romagnolo. Their sense of smell is very good, and they don't get distracted by passing animals.

*How do you like to enjoy truffles in everyday cooking?*

I will never get bored of truffles! My favourite dish is tagliatelle with butter and white truffle – simple, yet full of flavour!

## TASTE FOR YOURSELF

Abruzzo Truffles are suppliers to ROSL, and their products play a starring role in the warm cheese soufflé starter currently on the menu in the 1910 Dining Room. See our menus and book a table at [rosl.org.uk/dining](http://rosl.org.uk/dining)



# 1910

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# Pure liquid GOLD

Every spring in Eastern Canada, the eagerly anticipated maple harvesting season begins.

Maple syrup has long been part of Canada's cultural fabric. The country produces roughly 78% of the world's maple syrup, having just the right mix of cold spring nights and warm daytime temperatures to produce an abundance of the clear-coloured sap used to make it. Emma Finn, Trade Commissioner at the High Commission of Canada in the UK, explains why this celebrated natural product continues to captivate global taste buds and remains a source of national pride

## The history of maple

Legend has it that the story of maple started with a squirrel.

Many centuries ago, during a period of food scarcity, a Native American noticed a squirrel full of energy. He watched the animal drink 'water' from a maple tree and realised it was the source of the critter's vitality. From then on, maple water, or sap, started to be consumed as a fortifying drink.

Maple water was rediscovered by one of the first known Europeans to arrive on Canada's shores, Jacques Cartier, around 1536. Intrigued by a strange-looking tree, he decided to cut it down and, to his surprise, a large amount of sweet maple water squirted out from the wood. Over the years, different processes were developed to evaporate and boil the sap down to make the delicious, rich syrup we're so familiar with today.

## Expertise in production

Quality maple sugar production is a source of great pride for Canadians – a true connection to nature. As maple trees grow,

they accumulate starch, which converts into sugar during the spring thaw and mixes with the water absorbed through tree roots. Maple sap is about 97% water, plus minerals, organic acids and maple taste precursors. It takes 40 litres of sap to make one litre of syrup. Canada's maple syrup producers take great care to ensure the long-term survival of their maple sugar bushes, safeguarding the health and longevity of their trees. They collect only enough sap for one to 1.5 litres of syrup from each tree – or less than one-tenth of the tree's sugar. Collecting too much sap would rob trees of nourishment.

Historically, sap was collected in buckets and then poured into a large collection tank that was pulled by a team of horses or a tractor to the

evaporator house. In the early 1970s, the industry was reborn when scientists developed new sap harvesting and production methods. Today, producers use tubing systems, reverse osmosis and high-performance evaporators, all of which have made the industry significantly more efficient. In fact, Canada boasts some of the most innovative maple production systems in the world.



## INDULGE...

If this has got your mouth watering, why not indulge your sweet tooth by booking Afternoon Tea at Over-Seas House at [rosl.org.uk/dining](http://rosl.org.uk/dining) or by calling +44 (0)20 7408 0214

## What does maple syrup taste like?

Maple syrup has a sweet, distinctive flavour that is often compared to caramel, toffee and vanilla. Some people describe the sweetener as having floral, woody qualities, with this complex combination of smells and tastes giving it

## DID YOU KNOW?



Maple syrup can be used as a sugar substitute in most recipes

An unopened can of maple syrup keeps for many years



The province of Québec produces the majority of Canada's maple syrup, accounting for over 90% of production, with smaller amounts produced in the provinces of New Brunswick, Ontario and Nova Scotia



Maple spread doesn't contain any butter or dairy products



## DID YOU KNOW?

You can find Canadian maple syrup at all major grocery retailers in the UK as well as online



Some producers market syrup by the specific year it was harvested, similar to wine vintages, because subtle flavour differences happen year to year depending on climate

unique gastronomic qualities. In truth, it's hard to express the exact flavour of maple syrup. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada notes no fewer than 91 different flavours present in maple products, ranging from the nutty tones of bitter almond and hazelnut to the subtly spiced cinnamon and cloves. In fact, the flavour of pure maple syrup changes throughout the tapping season – it becomes stronger later in the season and can also vary depending on the weather.

This rich tapestry of flavours is unique to pure maple syrup, which is derived entirely from the sap of maple trees without the need for any additives, unlike heavily processed 'maple-flavoured' blends which are watered down with other ingredients.

#### Why are there different grades of maple syrup?

Maple syrup is graded to help consumers find the right product for their cooking and baking. Through the years, the industry has implemented several different grading systems to underline the changes in colour and flavour that occur during the harvest. The grading system that is used today was first introduced in 2016, replacing the letter-based system of classification with groupings based on colour. There are four colour grades in total, with the lighter ones possessing a delicate taste and the darker grades associated with a stronger flavour. These differences are all to do with the weather. The harvest starts in early spring, when cold conditions restrict microbial activity within the sap. As temperatures increase, so too does the number of bacteria within sap, changing

the colour and taste of the resulting syrup. The increase in bacteria is directly linked to a reduction in sugar content and a darkening of the sap. This is why maple syrup harvested at the start of the season is lighter and more subtle in flavour, while the product from the end of the harvest is darker and has a more pronounced taste.

#### What are the different grades of maple syrup?

The four grades of maple syrup are golden, amber, dark and very dark. Produced during the first half of the tapping season, the golden and amber grades are lighter in colour and have a more delicate taste, while the darker grades collected at the end of the harvest are stronger in flavour.

#### World-class products to meet customer specifications

Enjoyed around the world, Canadian maple syrup products range from traditional maple syrup to maple sugar, maple butter, maple candy, and a full range of products containing maple syrup, such as cereals, yoghurts and more. The maple syrup industry continues to innovate with value-added offerings by introducing fruit-flavoured maple syrups, maple syrup and liqueur blends, maple water, and organic products. Compared with most common sweeteners, pure maple syrup

stands out for its superior nutritional content. Just four tablespoons (60 ml) provide over 100% of the recommended daily intake of manganese (supporting bone health, metabolism and antioxidant function), 37% of riboflavin (helping the

body produce energy and supporting cellular function), 18% of zinc (supporting immune function, healing and cell growth), and a variety of other essential nutrients.

#### Great Maple Syrup Heist

Maple syrup is so highly prized in Canada that it has been compared to liquid gold – a reputation that was dramatically reinforced by one of the country's most notorious thefts. Over the course of several months in 2011 and 2012, a team of thieves stole approximately 2,700 tonnes of maple syrup from a strategic maple syrup reserve maintained in Quebec. The theft has been popularly dubbed as the Great Maple Syrup Heist. At the time of the heist, the stolen maple syrup was valued at nearly \$18 million. The heist may be one of the largest thefts in Canadian history.

### Chef Julien's

#### MAPLE VINAIGRETTE

##### INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar or red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

##### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine maple syrup, Dijon mustard, minced garlic, apple cider vinegar, olive oil, salt and black pepper in a small bowl or in a mason jar.
2. Give it a whisk (or a vigorous shake). Taste for seasoning and add in more if necessary.



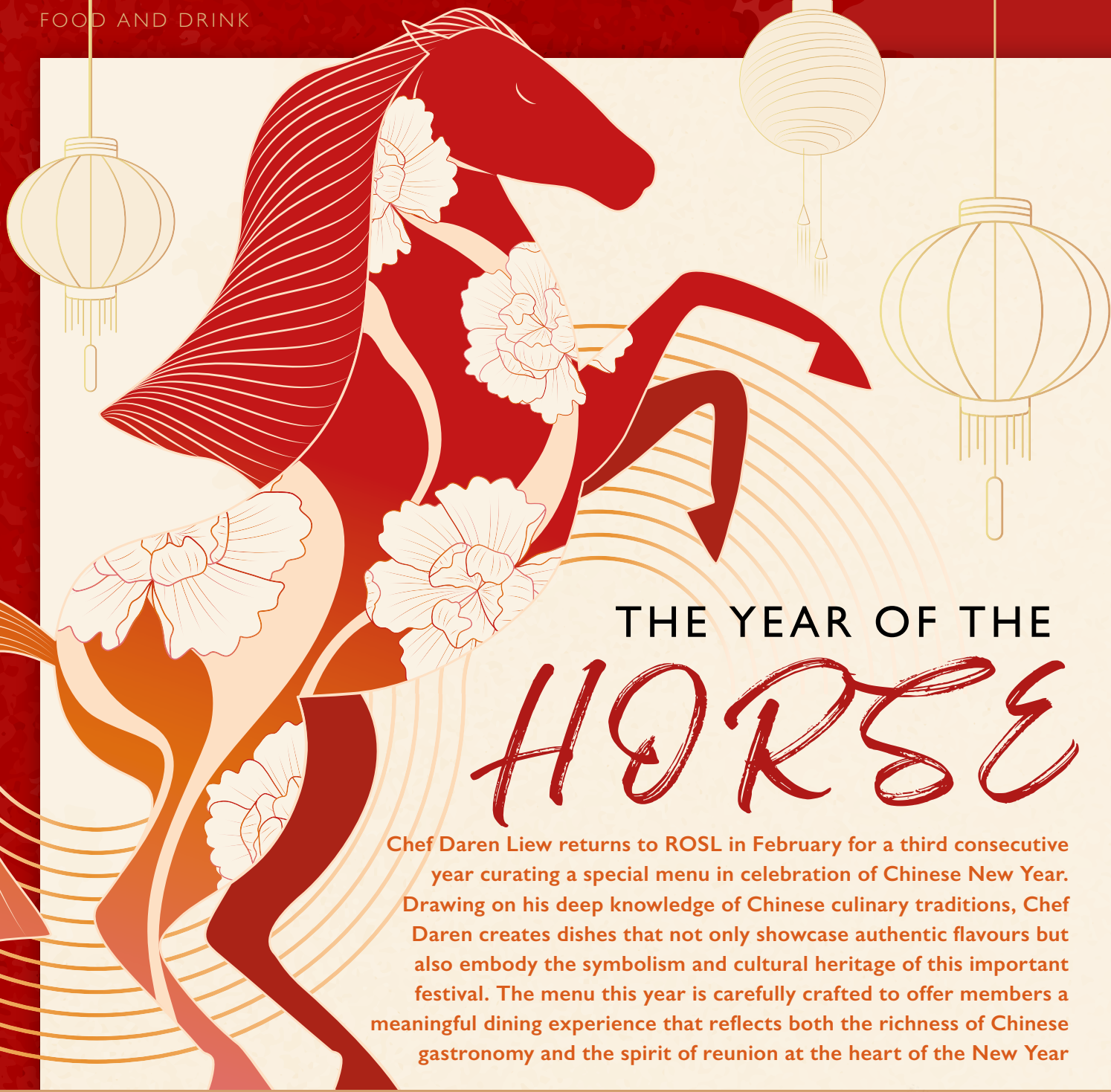
## Afternoon Tea AT ROSL

Elegant surroundings? Check. Pots of piping hot Birchall's tea? Of course. Stacks of expertly created savouries, pastries and scones? Obviously! We think ROSL provides one of the best afternoon teas in London, a cornucopia of delectable treats to be enjoyed in the stately surrounds of our Grade I-Listed Clubhouse. With an optional glass of Prosecco or Champagne, this is a delicious celebration of a venerable institution (much like ROSL itself).

Visit [rosl.org.uk/dining](http://rosl.org.uk/dining) for more information and to book







# THE YEAR OF THE HORSE

Chef Daren Liew returns to ROSL in February for a third consecutive year curating a special menu in celebration of Chinese New Year. Drawing on his deep knowledge of Chinese culinary traditions, Chef Daren creates dishes that not only showcase authentic flavours but also embody the symbolism and cultural heritage of this important festival. The menu this year is carefully crafted to offer members a meaningful dining experience that reflects both the richness of Chinese gastronomy and the spirit of reunion at the heart of the New Year

What role does food play in the overall celebration of Chinese New Year, beyond just the meal itself?

Food is the centrepiece of Chinese New Year, but it's much more than a meal. It's about reunion, tradition and passing on blessings. The New Year's Eve dinner is considered the most important gathering of the year – a time when families, and in our case communities, come together to share not only dishes, but also hopes for health, happiness and prosperity. Each recipe tells a story, so dining becomes both a celebration and a way of honouring heritage.

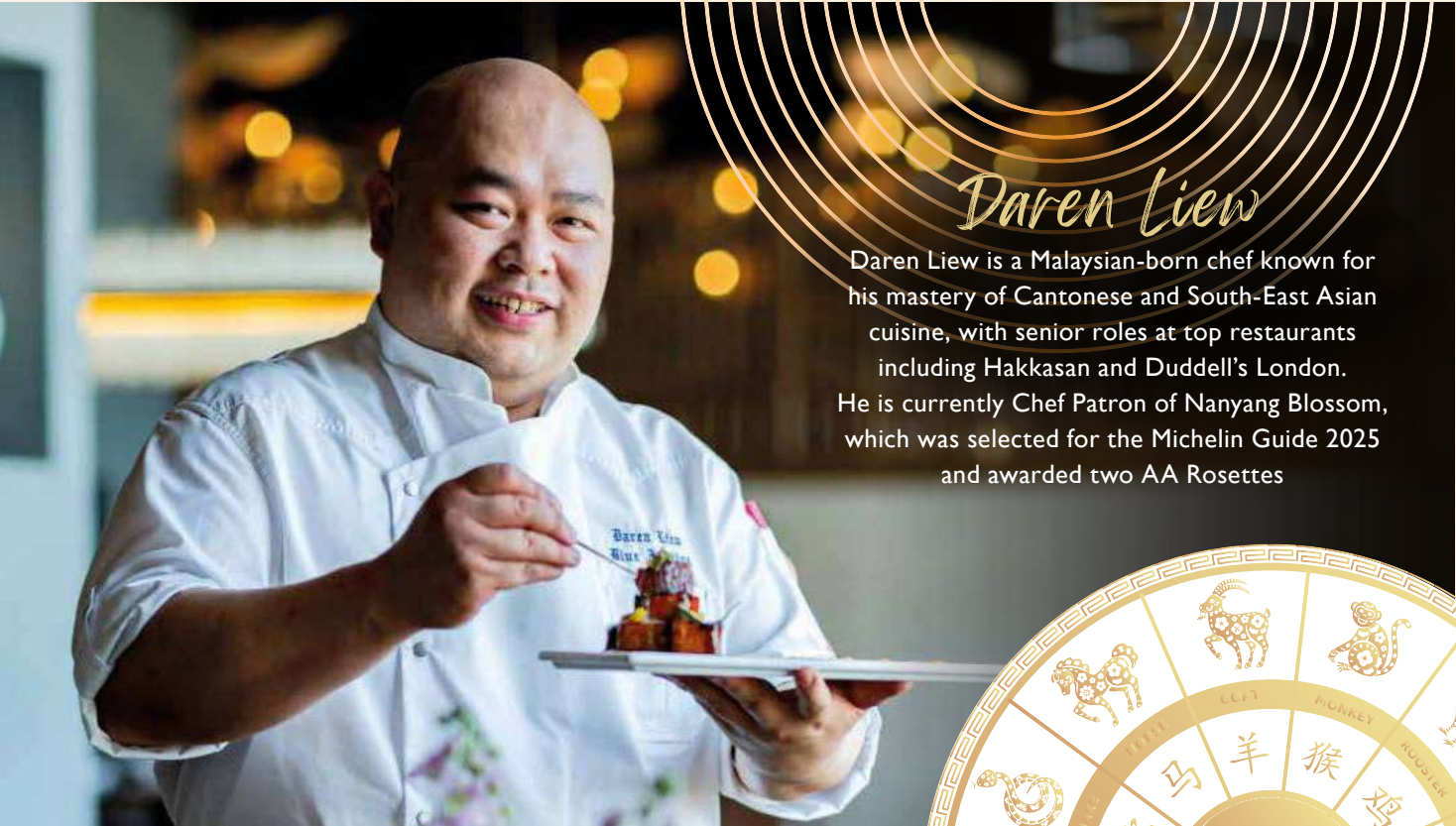
Many ingredients used during Chinese New Year have symbolic meanings – can you share a few examples and their significance?

Yes, symbolism is key to the menu:

**Dumplings (饺子, jiǎozi):** shaped like ancient gold ingots, they symbolise wealth and fortune.

**Spring rolls (春卷, chūnjuǎn):** their golden, crisp appearance resembles bars of gold, making them a symbol of prosperity.

**Longevity noodles (长寿面, chángshòu miàn):** their unbroken length represents a wish for long life and good health.



## Daren Liew

Daren Liew is a Malaysian-born chef known for his mastery of Cantonese and South-East Asian cuisine, with senior roles at top restaurants including Hakkasan and Duddell's London. He is currently Chef Patron of Nanyang Blossom, which was selected for the Michelin Guide 2025 and awarded two AA Rosettes



**Mandarins and oranges:** their golden colour suggests wealth, and their name sounds like 'luck'.

**Are there any specific customs around how food should be served or eaten during the New Year?**

Absolutely. Presentation and ritual matter as much as flavour. Whole dishes or symbolic shapes are often emphasised to represent

unity and good fortune. Dumplings, for example, are traditionally enjoyed at midnight to mark the transition from old year to new. Longevity noodles should be served uncut, as breaking them would symbolise shortening one's life. Even the act of sharing dishes from the centre of the table reinforces the spirit of togetherness.

## Menu

**TO BEGIN**  
Jade seafood dumplings  
Honey and pepper Hampshire pork puff

**THE REUNIONS**  
Wu Xi-style seabass, mushroom, oy vinegar reduction  
Sichuan 'Kung Pao' chicken with cashew nuts, ginger and chillies  
Sautéed broccoli, assorted mushrooms with goji berries and baby corn (v)  
Olive and mushroom rice with pine nuts and edamame

**SWEET MEMORIES**  
Chilled red bean Azuki soup with coconut ice cream and sesame dumpling

What are your personal favourite Chinese New Year dishes to cook, and do they hold any special memories for you?

Dumplings are a personal favourite – not just to eat, but to make together. There's something very special about everyone gathering in the kitchen, folding dumplings while sharing stories and laughter. It's a tradition that connects generations, and I enjoy recreating that spirit here in London with our members. I also love preparing longevity noodles, which carry the hopeful message of health and long life – a dish that is as celebratory as it is meaningful.

Daren Liew's Lunar New Year menu is available at ROSL from 9 February to 3 March in the 1910 Dining Room. Book your table now to avoid disappointment at [rosl.org.uk/events](https://rosl.org.uk/events)

## The horse's tale

The ancient legend of the Jade Emperor's race tells of 12 animals competing to determine their place in the zodiac. The horse, swift and strong, was confident in winning. However, during the race, it was startled by the hidden snake, causing it to rear back in fear and lose valuable time. As a result, the horse came in seventh place. Despite this, the horse is admired in Chinese culture for its energy, independence and perseverance. People born in the Year of the Horse are believed to be intelligent, hardworking and full of vitality.





# The Mountbatten Room

## A PLACE OF RESPITE

Now that the chill of winter has arrived in London, with its shorter days and colder evenings, there's something especially comforting about being warm and cozy indoors. And with the run up to Christmas often feeling like a merry-go-round of shopping, planning and socialising, it is important to carve out some time to unwind and refocus

Situated in the Vernon House section of the clubhouse, which was first purchased as ROSL's headquarters in 1921, the Mountbatten Room overlooks the front entrance of the Grade I-listed building. A relaxing space where members can find a quiet corner to work or a cozy chair in which to read the newspaper, the room's natural light and comfortable furnishings make it the perfect space for a moment's respite. Vernon House itself was originally built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, then rebuilt in 1835 and again in 1905 following a fire. During this latter restoration, the interior was gutted and refurbished in the opulent Edwardian style that was fashionable at the time. The panelled walls, architectural features and original artwork remain to this day, and the Edwardian style

is retained through the traditional hand-made furniture and colour palette. This elegant lounge was renamed the Mountbatten Room in 1942, in honour of Louis, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Mountbatten of Burma, upon his appointment as the Royal Over-Seas League's Grand President. Invited to take up the position by his second cousin King George VI, Lord Mountbatten was initially unsure about accepting the role. At the time, he was deeply immersed in the demanding duties of Viceroy of India, steering the subcontinent through one of the most complex transitions in its history. Yet, recognising the value of strengthening ties between ROSL, the royal family and the wider Commonwealth, he agreed – a decision that would shape the future of ROSL for nearly three decades.

Lord Mountbatten's presidency was a transformative era of growth and modernisation for ROSL. During his tenure, spanning 37 years, he infused the organisation

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Mountbatten Room was used during the filming of the Sky TV series *This England*, starring Sir Kenneth Branagh. During filming, the Mountbatten panels were painted terracotta orange to replicate the Terracotta Drawing Room in 10 Downing Street. These were then repainted to their current green once filming had finished.



with prestige, clear direction and strong governance. His leadership saw the adoption of a Supplemental Royal Charter, reinforcing ROSL's role as a progressive institution within the Commonwealth, and he was instrumental in expanding ROSL's presence across member nations, particularly in the post-war decades as new independent states joined the Commonwealth. Mountbatten also initiated a number of influential programmes, including the establishment of the Mountbatten Medal and the Commonwealth Conference platforms

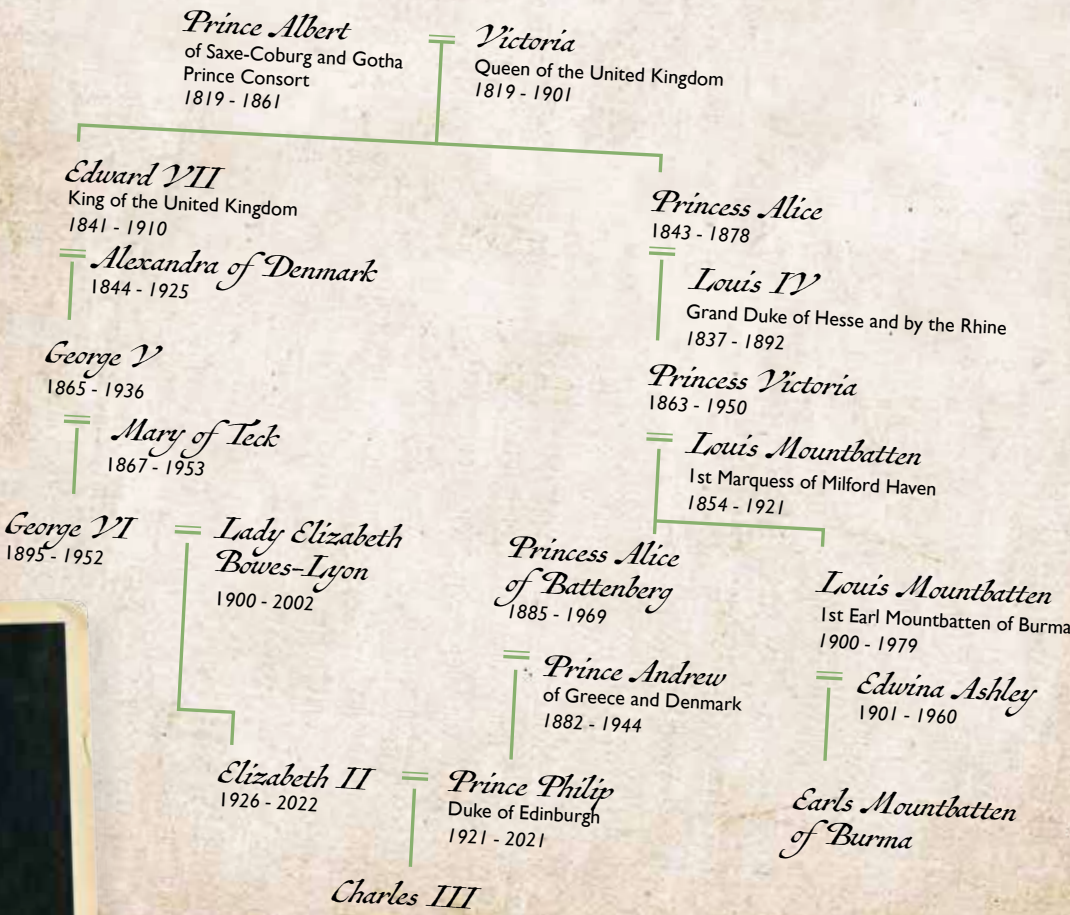
that brought members and experts together for cultural and professional exchange. His leadership also drew increasing royal engagement. In 1961, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother officially opened the Commonwealth Conference, followed by Princess Margaret presiding over the event in 1966. These occasions underscored ROSL's growing national and international stature. Tragically, Lord Mountbatten's life was cut short on 27 August 1979, when a bomb planted by the IRA exploded aboard his fishing boat off the coast of Mullaghmore, County Sligo. The attack also claimed the lives of his 14-year-old grandson Nicholas Knatchbull, a local boy named Paul Maxwell, and the Dowager Lady Brabourne, after whom ROSL's Brabourne Room is named. The assassination sent shockwaves through

the UK and remains one of the most high-profile tragedies of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. For ROSL, Mountbatten's legacy endures as one of exceptional leadership, diplomatic vision, and a steadfast belief in the power of the Commonwealth to bring people together. His time as President remains one of the most formative chapters in ROSL's history – characterised by stability, ambition, and a deep commitment to connecting the Commonwealth through culture, collaboration and mutual respect.

Booking is not required for the use of the Mountbatten Room. Members are reminded that business meetings are not permitted, so please contact our events team if a private space is required. Telephone +44 (0)20 7408 0214

## MOUNTBATTEN'S ROYAL LINKS

Lord Mountbatten was a great-grandson of Queen Victoria, making him a second cousin to King George VI and a maternal uncle to Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. As such, he was also a great-uncle and close mentor to King Charles III.



Courtesy of debrettancestry.co.uk



# ROSL PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD 2025

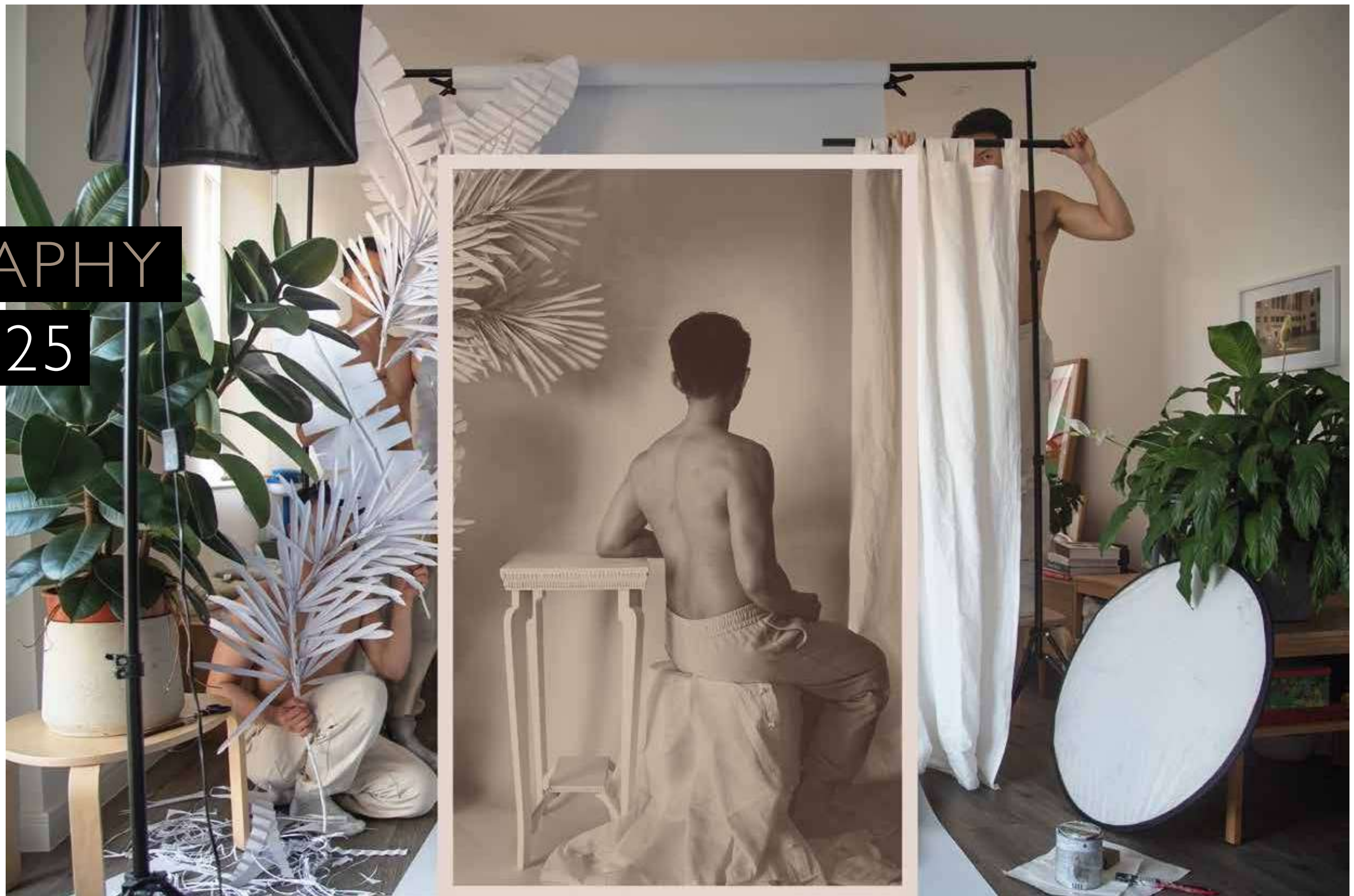
Established in 2019, the ROSL Photography Award is a biennial contemporary photography competition, free to enter via digital submission. Now in its fourth edition, the competition has continued to build on its reputation and tripled the number of entries since the first iteration.

Here Arts Curator Louis Chapple documents the judging process, and reveals the winner of the 2025 prize

This year was my first time working on the award, and I was truly blown away by the quality, diversity and integrity of so many of the hundreds of applications we received from 44 countries. My first task was to set applicants a theme, which this year was 'Beyond the Figure', asking applicants to consider expanded approaches to capturing the essence and diversity of humanity, and new ways of celebrating the depiction of the figure through the lens. Applicants could interpret and respond to the theme how they wished.

Once the application deadline passed at the beginning of September, the exciting – if not slightly daunting – process of reviewing every application began. Thankfully I was not alone – two esteemed judges joined me on the selection panel, Jess Baxter and Nishant Shukla, both instrumental for providing their expertise and insight into the world of photography. Jess Baxter is Assistant Curator of International Art at Tate Modern, where she has co-curated the exhibitions Leigh Bowery (2025) and A World in Common: Contemporary African Photography (2023), as well as monographic displays of Deana Lawson, Joel Meyerowitz and Francesca Woodman.

Her curatorial research focuses on ideas of trans-temporality, spirituality and gender-play through photography. Nishant Shukla is a London-based artist whose practice spans photography, film-making and sound art, and the founder of Lake, a creative studio and gallery dedicated to developing and showcasing audio-spatial practices. Shukla co-founded BIND (2015–2020), a platform that reimagined the photobook as an art object. His debut book, *Seeking Moksha* (2017), explores the search for transcendence through



## FIRST PRIZE WINNER: SEAN CHAM, *STUDIO (PALM)*

Sean Cham (b 1994) is a Singaporean-born artist and historian whose work spans photography, performance and installation. With a PhD in history of art from Birkbeck, University of London in collaboration with the National Gallery, he has exhibited internationally, exploring through his work the construction and distortion of historical narratives.

photography, notes, found objects and sound that memorialise his recurring travels to the Himalayas over six years.

After much deliberation over very strong applications, we found our shortlist of 20 photographs, and within them our three prize winners.

I'm very excited to announce that the First Prize winner is Singaporean artist Sean Cham, who will be awarded £2,000 for his outstanding image *Studio (Palm)* from the series *Eastern Promise*, a body of work that examines how





colonial photography has shaped the perception and understanding of the Chinese diaspora in South-East Asia.

Sean said of winning the first prize, 'I am honoured and grateful that the judging panel has selected my work *Studio (Palm)* as the winning image of the ROSL Photography Award 2025. I am looking forward to exhibiting my work at ROSL alongside all the shortlisted artists. *Studio (Palm)* is based on photographs taken by Western photographers in colonial Malaya. In looking at these historic images, I realised that specific props, costumes, poses and backdrops were used to contextualise and exoticise the South-East Asian setting. Thus, to make these stereotypes and artificial constructions more apparent, I created my own props and costumes to extend the "colonial image" beyond its frame. Through self-portraiture, I recreated these images within the domestic setting of my home.'

The Runner-up prize of £1,000 is awarded to Thero Makepe from Botswana, for his photograph *Phomolo Sello*, a family tableau that explores themes of remembrance, death and rebirth. British-Pakistani photographer Shizza Majeed is awarded £500 as the winner of the Madiha Aijaz Prize for a Young Photographer of Promise. Her winning photograph *A Familiar Taste* is from the series *Babaji's Britain* that focuses on her grandfather and how his identity

#### RUNNER-UP: THERO MAKEPE, PHOMOLO SELLO

Thero Makepe (b 1996) is a Botswanan photographer and visual artist working between Gaborone, Cape Town and Johannesburg. He graduated with distinction in fine arts (majoring in photography) from the University of Cape Town in 2019. Makepe's work is influenced by his life and upbringing in Botswana and South Africa, and often incorporates archival materials such as family photos and newspaper articles.

now reflects a delicate balance between cultural preservation and adaptation.

I hope you will join me in congratulating our prize winners and shortlisted photographers.

*The ROSL Photography Award exhibition, featuring all 20 photographs, is currently on display at Over-Seas House, running until February 2026. For more information visit [rosl.org.uk/events](https://rosl.org.uk/events)*

#### YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER OF PROMISE: SHIZZA MAJEED, A FAMILIAR TASTE

Shizza Majeed is a British Pakistani photographer based in London. She graduated from Kingston School of Art in 2025 with a first class honours degree in photography. Her work centres on identity, heritage and belonging.





# THE ROSL SHORTLIST

Adedolapo Boluwatife Abimbola (Nigeria),  
*Inv.To Inv. I*



Dennis Onyango (Kenya), *Traces Of Her*



Kaw Zay Yar Lin (Japan), *Fishing Together*



Javier Arcenillas (Spain),  
*Blinding Light*



Partha Kar (India),  
*People & Sea*



Janusz Jurek (Poland),  
*A Lady with a Dog*



Emilia Martin (Poland),  
*Babooshka, 2025*



Md shamim Ul islam (Bangladesh),  
*Trapped by the Rising Waters Life Inside a Flooded Home in Chittagong*



Megan Eagles (UK),  
*JedZed and Harper*



Debdatta Chakraborty (India),  
*Entangled*



Muhammad Amdad Hossain (Bangladesh), *Islands of Hope*



Sudip Maiti (India),  
*Reclaim the Night*



Carlos Idun-Tawiah (Ghana), *Day One*



Raphaël Neal (UK), *Dr Mohammed Mustafa*



Mohammad Rakibul Hasan (Bangladesh),  
*The Climate Talk*



Ebube Odunze (Nigeria),  
*Lost*



Mithail Afrige Chowdhury (Bangladesh), *The Freedom Bell I*



## LOCAL LIFE

# BOROUGH MARKET

Borough Market, one of London's largest and most historic food markets, boasts a rich heritage spanning over 1,000 years. More than just a place to buy fresh, high-quality produce, it serves as a vital cornerstone of the local community – bringing people together, supporting independent traders and celebrating the city's diverse culinary culture.

Here Editor Laura Winter speaks to Borough Market Chair Shane Holland to learn more about the market's incredible history, and how it continues to benefit the local community

*How do you honour the market's 1,000-year-old history while also ensuring it remains relevant in modern London?*

To us, they're the same thing: remaining relevant is how we honour our past. Throughout Borough Market's long history, its defining characteristic has been an ability to adapt and survive. Only two things have stayed constant, both of which are now enshrined in our official charitable purpose: this is a food market, and it exists in Southwark for the benefit of the community. Exactly what shape that takes has shifted as our city and food system have evolved. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we served the community by supplying wholesale fruit and veg to the greengrocers of south London. Today, in a very different

landscape, the benefit comes from our traders offering a more sustainable, ethical, people-centred alternative to supermarkets and online shopping. Our responsibility as trustees is to hand the market on to the next generation, and that means never standing still. This place might be old, but it will never be a museum.

*Borough Market has long been a vibrant part of the local area. How would you describe its relationship with the local community, and how are you working to strengthen that connection for future generations?*

Everything we do is predicated on the need to be a positive presence in our community. Our charitable partnerships have a strong community focus: for example, our School Food Matters programme provides food education and inspiration to local children, and our Plan Zeroes partnership redistributes surplus food to nearby charities. Our day-to-day activities also provide an important benefit: by supporting a diverse array of produce traders, we ensure that our food and drink offering meets the needs of regular grocery shoppers who live or work in the area, as well as visitors from further afield.

We recognise, though, that we have more



to do to make the market representative of and accessible to Southwark's highly diverse community, and that is central to our current strategy. There are other challenges:

Borough Market draws millions of visitors every year, and that kind of footfall is bound to have an impact on local businesses and residents. Our responsibility is to understand how our work affects others, for better or worse, and do our best to mitigate any problems. That's why it's so important that we build and maintain strong links with local stakeholders and listen carefully to what they tell us. That's something I think we're very good at. ◻

Remaining relevant is how we honour our past



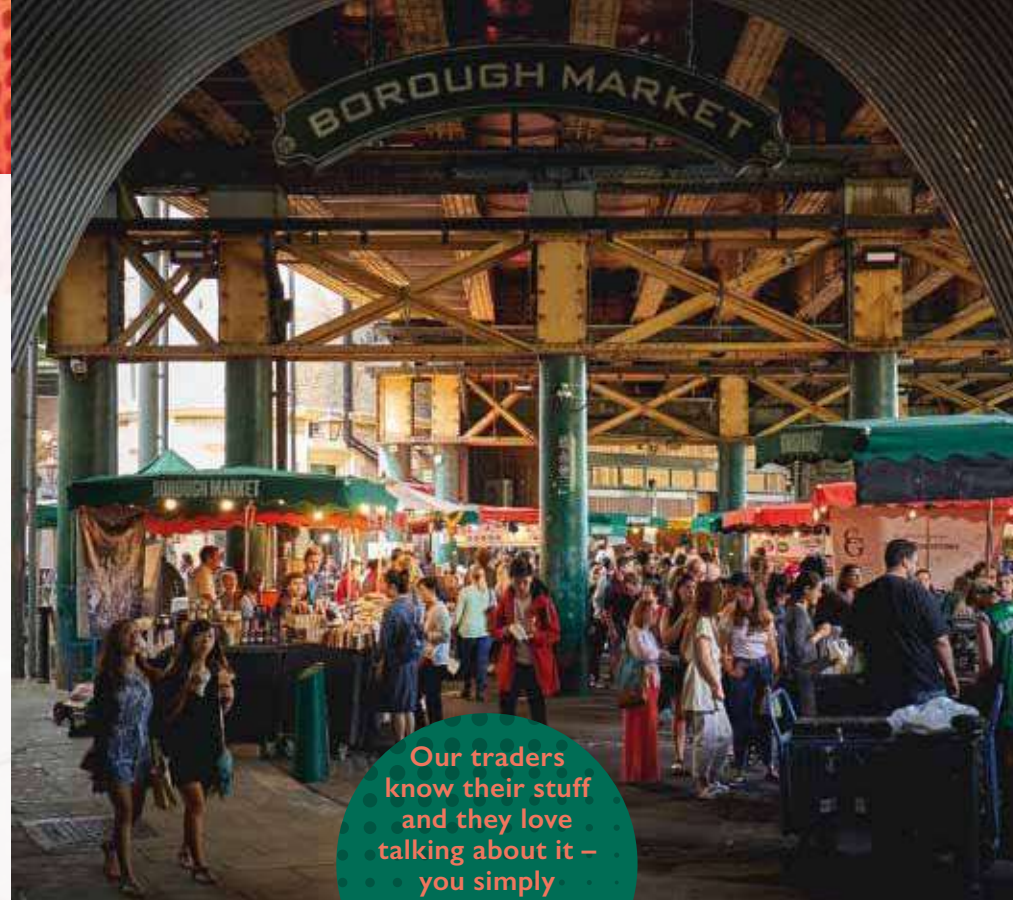




*What role does the market play in shaping not just how London eats, but also how it thinks about food as a resource?*

A couple of years ago, the Borough Market trust published its very first Food Policy, which sets out the fundamental principles that underpin the food sold at our stalls, stands and restaurants. One of the main things that creating the policy has done is to make us consider in some depth how we think about food as a resource. There has always been a sense that Borough Market food is different from the food you'll find elsewhere, but as we implement the policy over the next few years, we're going to be able to define those differences far more coherently. We have a lot to say about the importance of sustainable production, short supply chains, animal welfare, fair pay, quality control, uniqueness and diversity. Because of our history, name recognition, footfall and digital following, we have a platform to talk about those issues – within the market, online and across the media – and it's vital that we use that platform well. Thankfully, we have precisely the right people to do the talking.

Our traders are some of the most amazing advocates for a more responsible use of the planet's environmental and human resources, while also taking great joy in expressing the simple pleasures that good



**Our traders know their stuff and they love talking about it – you simply couldn't do their job if you didn't like people**

food brings. If anyone can make a difference to how Londoners think about food as a resource, it's them.

*With everything going digital, what role do physical, sensory marketplaces play in 2025 and beyond?*

It comes back to that concentration of trader expertise. You can't ask questions in an online shop. You can't seek recipe suggestions or cooking tips. No one online will tell you with such passion the stories of the people who made the product, the place they made it or the production methods that make it special. You won't even get a cheery hello and a few warm words about how good or terrible the weather has been. You get all that at a market. Our traders know their stuff and they love talking about it – you simply couldn't do their job if you didn't like people.

As well as all that knowledge, you'll also be bombarded by sounds, smells and colours, all of which shift from month to month as the seasons change. The historic structures here do bring some logistical challenges – nobody designing a modern market

would think to copy our layout! – but they also accentuate the sensory pleasures of wandering through.

All food markets offer an enriching experience that goes beyond the blandly transactional act of shopping, but Borough offers even more than most.

*What's one thing most people don't know about Borough Market, but should?*

That it's run by a charity. It really is a unique place. It's not owned by a local authority or a private landlord. Under the terms of the Act of Parliament that established its status in 1756, it can't be sold, it can't be moved, it can't be anything other than a food market, and it is obligated to provide a community benefit. Borough Market is sited on what must be one of Europe's most valuable patches of land, but it will never be replaced by luxury flats or corporate offices or a museum dedicated to its past. That really is a rare and wonderful thing and a fact that everyone who cares about London should be happy about.

## EXPLORE FROM ROSL

*Our rooms make the perfect place to relax after a day exploring London's local life. Meeting friends? Remember that members have four guest passes issued per year, meaning you can book a separate bedroom for friends and family to enjoy a stay at Over-Seas House. Visit [rosl.org.uk/clubhouse](https://rosl.org.uk/clubhouse) to book your stay*



As summer slowly gave way to autumn, Over-Seas House became the backdrop for a memorable weekend of culture and creativity. From Jane Austen's sharp social satire to a multisensory journey through baroque music, and light-hearted operetta to the deeply human story of Clara Schumann, this year's Summer Place Festival brought together artistry and atmosphere in equal measure, and our audiences loved every moment. Arts Manager Cerys Beesley reflects on three days of open-air theatre, captivating opera and spectacular music

The festival opened with a flourish as Illyria bought theatre back to the ROSL Garden, with their much-acclaimed adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Despite a crisp early-autumn chill in the air, the atmosphere was warm and expectant as guests gathered under the evening sky. The performance was a triumph of wit and romance. Familiar lines ('It is a truth universally acknowledged...') rang out across the garden as Mrs Bennet schemed, Lizzy sparred, and Mr Darcy smouldered. Illyria's trademark blend of elegance, humour and brisk pacing breathed fresh life into Austen's classic. It was a fitting curtain-raiser, light-hearted yet layered, with an impressive bout of multi-roling from the superb cast of five, and an unmistakable celebration of Austen's enduring appeal on the occasion of her 250<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Saturday offered a sumptuous double bill, blending sensory delight with musical excellence. The afternoon began with Apollo's Cabinet, our 2024 Mixed Ensemble Winners, who led audiences on a

wine-filled musical adventure, an imaginative pairing of baroque music and wine that explored how the two have intertwined for centuries. Guests sipped, listened and learned as stories of composers and their favourite vintages unfolded alongside richly played works from the era. It was part concert, part tasting, part historical journey and wholly captivating.

The day concluded with Opera Prelude's enchanting *Evening at the Operetta*. Three brilliant young opera singers, joined by ROSL prizewinner Francesca Lauri at the piano, filled the night with soaring arias, sparkling duets and comedic trios. The repertoire from Mozart and Strauss II to Lehar and the irresistible humour of Gilbert and Sullivan showcased the effervescent charm of operetta at its finest.

The final day brought a change of tone: intimate, moving, and profoundly human. The festival's closing event, *I, Clara*, was an affecting portrait of Clara Schumann, created and performed by pianist Lucy Parham and narrated by the incomparable Patricia Hodge OBE. Through Clara's own words and music, audiences were invited into the life of a remarkable woman: not only the devoted wife of Robert Schumann, but a pioneering artist who gave over 1,500 concerts and shaped the very format of the modern piano recital. Hodge's narration was elegant and empathetic, Parham's playing luminous, and together they created an evening that was both history lesson and heartfelt tribute. It was a spellbinding close to the festival: thoughtful, inspiring and beautifully executed.

Over three days, the Summer Place Festival captured the very essence of ROSL's cultural mission: to celebrate art in all its forms, to offer audiences new perspectives and to create shared experiences that linger long after the final applause. Whether laughing under the stars with Austen, tasting music through wine, humming along to operetta classics, or reflecting on Clara Schumann's legacy, our audiences left enriched, entertained and inspired.

It was, by every measure, a festival to remember and a celebration of the power of performance to bring people together.



Patricia Hodge OBE and Lucy Parham



# A TASTE OF BURNS NIGHT

Every year on 25 January, Scots and enthusiasts around the world come together to celebrate Burns Night – an evening dedicated to the life and legacy of Robert Burns, Scotland’s national poet. While Burns Night honours the bard’s literary genius, it is equally a celebration of Scotland’s culinary heritage. The supper table, laden with traditional Scottish dishes and accompanied by whisky, becomes a stage where Scottish history and identity play out. In anticipation of ROSL’s Burns Night Supper on 22 January, we explore how the spirit of Burns lives on though this poetic and gastronomic feast

The first Burns Night was held in 1801, five years after the poet’s death, when a group of nine friends gathered in his family home, Burns Cottage in Alloway, to commemorate and celebrate Robert Burns and his work. It was an intimate affair, with food and drink enjoyed alongside recitals of his poems and performances of his songs. Over time, Burns Night evolved into a national event, and is now celebrated across the globe with an estimated 9.5 million people taking part in a Burns Night supper every year.

A Burns Night celebration can be a formal affair, closely following time-honoured traditions, or simply a relaxed gathering of friends enjoying a themed

evening in the depths of winter.

**Burns Night is much more than a tribute to one man’s literary brilliance – it is a celebration of Scotland itself**

While strict adherence to the traditional order of events (set out opposite) isn’t necessary, a few key elements are considered essential: serving haggis, whisky, and neeps and tatties; the traditional toasts; and, of course, recitations of Robert Burns’s poetry and performances of his songs. Music was deeply important to Robert Burns, both personally and artistically. James Fairbairn, former President of the Burns Club of London, explains, ‘[Burns] was a musician, he played the fiddle, and he had a great ear for music...he set his words to existing tunes, and went to enormous trouble to try to fit the

rhythm of the words to the notes of the tune.’ Burns was also an accomplished dancer, and as dancing was a skill that was enjoyed both at lively rural gatherings and in the elegant assembly rooms of Edinburgh, it helped him navigate the contrasting worlds he found himself moving between as his fame grew. And so all these elements – poetry, music and dancing – form the heart of a Burns Night celebration, reinforcing how these shared cultural traditions continue to embody Burns’s spirit and lasting legacy.

Of course, no Burns Night would be complete without a traditional Scottish supper. The menu is steeped in tradition, reflecting not only Scotland’s

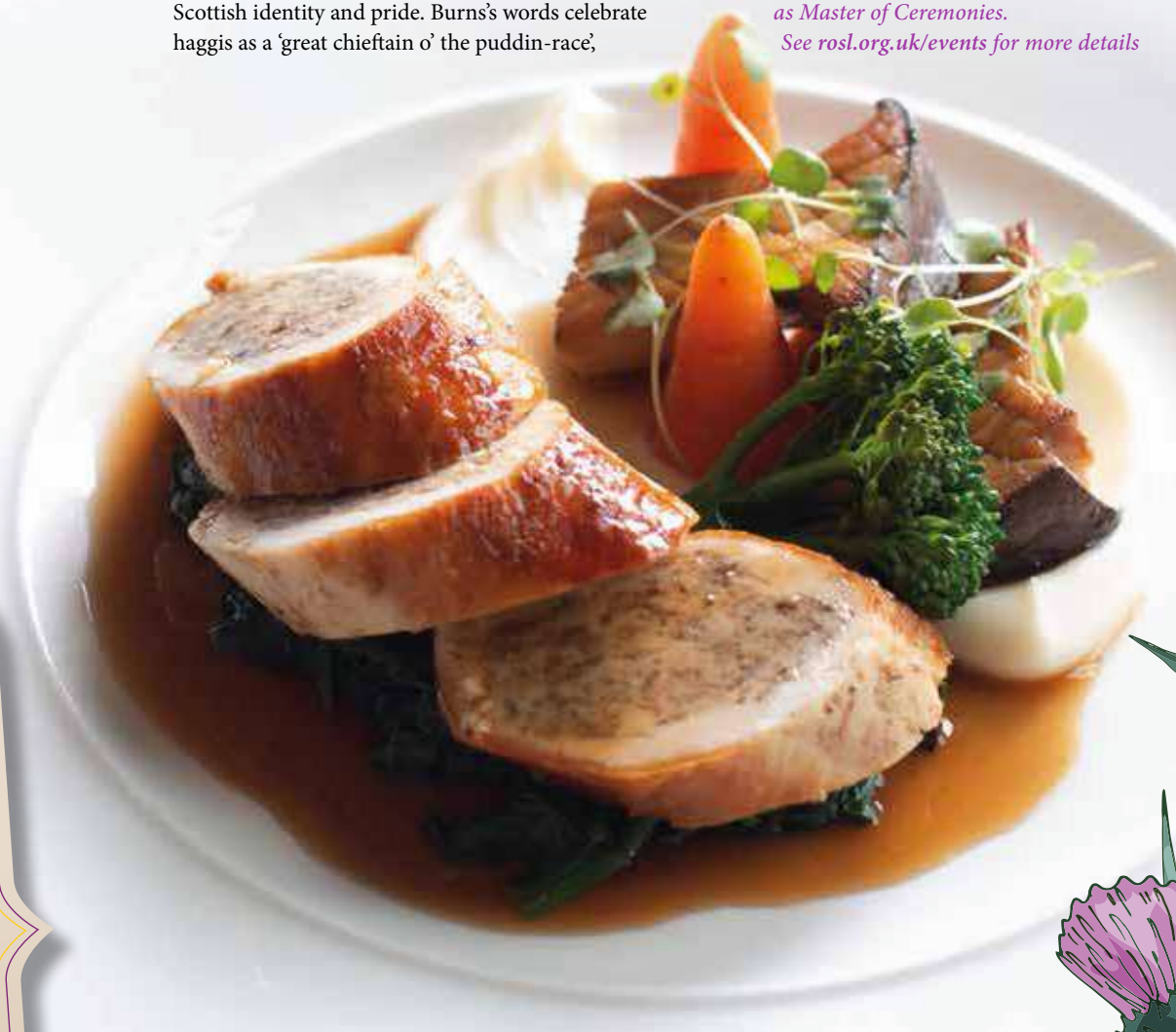
agricultural past, but also the farming background of the poet himself. Burns’s poetry was deeply rooted in the agricultural life he was born into; James Fairbairn explains, ‘his farming background was a great influence on him, and he had a great affinity with nature. I think he composed an awful lot in his head as he was behind the plough or working in the fields. So much of his poetry reflects the natural environment.’ Burns’s work often celebrated the dignity of the rural poor, emphasising simplicity, hard work and shared humanity. And the humble, hearty foods of the Burns Night menu reflect the communal spirit of that rural life.

The star of the Burns Night table is undoubtedly haggis. This savoury pudding, made from sheep’s offal, oats and spices, was originally peasant food – practical, nutritious and born of necessity. Today, it is Scotland’s national dish and the centrepiece of the Burns supper. During the supper, the haggis is ceremoniously ‘piped in’ to the room, accompanied by Burns’s famous poem *Address to a Haggis*, which transforms the dish into a symbol of Scottish identity and pride. Burns’s words celebrate haggis as a ‘great chieftain o’ the puddin-race’,

elevating humble ingredients to heroic status. In many modern Burns suppers, haggis is now served as a starter rather than the main course – a welcome adjustment for less adventurous diners who may prefer a smaller helping of this bold national delicacy.

Burns Night is much more than a tribute to one man’s literary brilliance – it is a celebration of Scotland itself. Through poetry, song, dance and food, the evening brings to life the values and traditions that Robert Burns held dear: a love of language, music, nature, community and national pride. Whether observed in a grand hall or around a kitchen table, the Burns Night supper offers a moment to reflect not only on the poet’s enduring legacy, but also on what it means to be Scottish. In honouring Burns, we also honour a shared cultural identity that continues to unite Scots and admirers around the world, year after year.

*ROSL’s Burns Night supper will take place on Thursday 22 January, with James Fairbairn as Master of Ceremonies. See [rosl.org.uk/events](https://rosl.org.uk/events) for more details*



## ROSL’S BURNS NIGHT MENU

Cullen Skink soup

~  
Haggis, neeps and tatties  
with peppercorn sauce and a wee dram

~  
Chicken Balmoral  
Roasted carrots, pointed cabbage, thyme jus

~  
Cranachan, toasted oats, raspberry,  
caramel whisky sauce

~  
Coffee wi’ deep fried Mars bars

## THE SELKIRK GRACE

Some hae meat  
and canna eat,  
And some wad eat  
that want it,  
But we hae meat  
and we can eat,  
Sae let the Lord  
be Thankit!

## TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS OF A BURNS NIGHT SUPPER

**The Selkirk Grace**  
offered by the host

**Parade of the haggis**  
accompanied by a  
Highland piper

**Address to a Haggis**  
a rendition of Burns’s poem

**The toast**  
simply, ‘the haggis’

**Immortal Memory**  
a speech reflecting on  
Burns’s life and poetry

**Toast to the Lassies**  
a light-hearted toast  
to the ladies

**Reply from the Lassies**  
a playful response  
from the ladies



# NOURISH

TO

# FLOURISH

After the indulgences of the festive season – endless mince pies, late nights and perhaps one glass of mulled wine too many – many of us find ourselves craving a reset. But while the temptation might be to jump headfirst into a quick detox or the latest wellness fad, Dr Lafina Diamandis encourages a more grounded, holistic approach to health – one that goes beyond just the diet and digs deeper into how we live, move, sleep and connect.

Former Overseas Editor Rosie Allen spoke to Dr Diamandis, an NHS GP and expert in lifestyle medicine, about what it really means to care for your whole self – mind, body and beyond

*How do you define a 'holistic' approach to health and what are the benefits of this as opposed to a more atomistic approach?*

A holistic approach to health is one that looks at the whole person, not just their symptoms but their physical, emotional, social and even spiritual wellbeing. Rather than treating illness in isolation, I ask: 'What are the root causes? What is someone's mind or body telling me about how they are living, eating, moving, sleeping, or coping emotionally?' This contrasts with traditional or 'atomistic' medicine, which can focus too much on symptoms or single organ systems rather than how everything is connected. This style of medicine has its place, for example in treating acute medical problems such as a urine infection or tonsillitis, but the benefit of holistic approaches to health (such as lifestyle medicine) is that they are often preventative and restorative, helping people not only to treat acute conditions but also to make lifestyle shifts that can support long-term health and longevity.

*What are the 'pillars' of health that you talk about being part of this holistic approach?*

In lifestyle medicine, we often refer to six key pillars of health: nutrition (prioritising whole, mostly plant-based foods); movement (taking regular, enjoyable physical activity); sleep (getting restorative, good-quality sleep); stress management (including mindfulness, breathing techniques and mental health support); avoidance of risky substances (such as tobacco, excess alcohol, and other toxins such as pollution, microplastics

etc); and social connection (which is often overlooked, but essential to our emotional and even physical health). These elements are all interlinked. For example, poor sleep can disrupt hormones that affect appetite, mood and immunity. So when we support each pillar, we often see ripple effects across many aspects of health.

**Staying socially connected is also vital, because loneliness is a health risk we don't talk about enough**

*A recent report has shown that life expectancy has stagnated in Europe and in particular in England over the last decade. As a GP, do you have any views on why this might be? Is there a risk that in the world of social media-prescribed wellness, many people aren't hitting the mark on the 'basics' (exercise, five-a-day, sleep, hygiene etc)?*

These findings don't surprise me. Our current healthcare system is still largely reactive rather than preventative. Years of underfunding, growing health inequalities and limited investment in public health have left us vulnerable to rising rates of chronic illness, and our fast-paced, tech-saturated lives have made it harder to prioritise movement, sleep, nutrient-dense food and the nurturing of our relationships. Many people feel overwhelmed, stretched thin, and understandably reach for the quick fixes constantly promised online.

The commercialisation of wellness has capitalised on our fears and vulnerabilities, offering products and routines that promise to heal but often lack scientific evidence. The good news is that the key to long-term



**DR LAFINA DIAMANDIS**

GP and doctor of lifestyle medicine, and founder of the DEIA Health Clinic. She blends conventional and holistic care to optimise health and prioritise wellbeing.



## SIX KEY PILLARS OF HEALTH



**NUTRITION**  
prioritising whole,  
mostly plant-based  
foods



**MOVEMENT**  
taking regular,  
enjoyable physical  
activity



**SLEEP**  
getting restorative,  
good-quality  
sleep



**SOCIAL  
CONNECTION**  
essential to our  
emotional and even  
physical health



**STRESS  
MANAGEMENT**  
including mindfulness,  
breathing techniques and  
mental health support



**AVOIDANCE OF  
RISKY SUBSTANCES**  
such as tobacco,  
excess alcohol and  
other toxins

health and longevity is much simpler than we're led to believe. Small, consistent habits such as eating whole foods, moving your body regularly, prioritising rest, managing stress and nurturing relationships have a profound impact. It's not always easy, but it's absolutely possible.

*There has been a boom in the popularity of supplements in recent years. Are there any that you think are worth investing in?*

In general, I always recommend food first – because nutrients in whole foods work in synergy with fibre, antioxidants and countless other compounds we still don't fully understand. But for certain people, supplements can absolutely be helpful. For example, vitamin D, especially in the winter months or for those with darker skin in northern latitudes; B12 for anyone on a plant-based or vegan diet; omega-3 (EPA and DHA) if you don't eat oily fish regularly; and magnesium or ashwagandha, for stress support or sleep – though the evidence is still emerging.

That said, the key is personalisation. What your body needs might be entirely different to someone else's. I often see people taking a whole shelf of supplements without really knowing whether they need them and sometimes, it's unnecessary at best or counterproductive at worst (particularly as many supplements can cause side effects and interact with medications). This is where simple testing

and health screening can be really helpful. By looking at aspects of health such as your nutritional status, gut health and overall lifestyle, we can create a targeted plan that supports your wellbeing without guessing. It's about using the right tools, in the right way, for your unique body and making sure every supplement has a purpose – as well as evidence behind it.

If you're unsure what your body truly needs, it's worth having a conversation in clinic. We can test, assess and tailor your approach so you're not wasting money – or missing something important.

*We're now more aware that there are some bad-faith actors in the wellness space online. How would you recommend that people can identify genuine experts and practitioners?*

A good starting point is to look for credentials – registered health professionals are usually accountable to a regulatory body – for doctors that is the General Medical Council (GMC), who have a register open to the public where you can look up any doctor. Beyond checking qualifications, ask yourself: 'Does this person make big claims? Does this person offer nuance? Are they selling me something, or educating me? Are their claims supported by science, or fear and hype?' This latter point can be difficult to assess if you don't know how to review scientific studies, however you can always ask your doctor for advice. Genuine experts

will acknowledge complexity. They won't promise quick fixes, and they'll empower you, rather than make you feel like you need constant 'biohacks' and products to be well.

*Women's health in particular has come under the spotlight in recent years – what do you think has changed, and are there any specific lifestyle factors women should be aware of as they go through the ageing process?*

There's been a real shift in awareness, especially around the perimenopause and menopause, but also for conditions such as endometriosis and PCOS. Women's health has been chronically under-researched, under-funded and under-served, and while we still have a long way to go, we're finally starting to close that gap. What's encouraging is that we're finally moving away from the outdated idea that women are simply 'small men'. There's growing recognition that women have different health needs – not just when it comes to hormones, but in how conditions like cardiovascular disease, autoimmune disorders and dementia present and progress differently in women, which will hopefully translate to better health outcomes in time.

Lifestyle factors that really matter as women age include strength training to protect bone and muscle mass, a fibre-rich diet for hormonal balance and gut health, stress management (since chronic stress and cortisol can really impact hormonal pathways) and prioritising sleep. Staying socially connected is also vital, because loneliness is a health risk we don't talk about enough, especially in midlife which can be a very challenging time for many reasons.

## NEWS & EVENTS

The latest from our Clubhouse; branches; art, music and announcements

### Pettman Scholars 2025

The 2025 ROSL Pettman Scholars, Sarah Lee and Tal Amoores, embarked on a transformative musical journey in London, marking another successful year of this international scholarship

The annual ROSL Pettman NZ Scholarships, generously supported by Maureen Pettman, are a vital part of our arts programme and our commitment to fostering emerging talent across the Commonwealth. In July, our 2025 Scholars, Sarah Lee and Tal Amoores, concluded a fantastic scholarship and stay in London, using Over-Seas House as their base for a whirlwind of musical and cultural immersion.

This is the third year of our association with the At World's Edge Music Festival, a Chamber Music Festival based in Queenstown, New Zealand. Benjamin Baker, violinist and ROSL alumnus, is one of the Artistic Directors of the festival and helps to select the young musicians for the scholarship.

The primary focus of the scholarship is to assist future study and career opportunities. Sarah is a violinist currently in the third year of her bachelor of music degree at the University of

Auckland, and Tal is a violist currently studying for his bachelor of music degree at the New Zealand School of Music – Te Kōkī. Sarah and Tal performed in a few well-received recitals, including a concert in the Princess Alexandra Hall where they teamed up with cellist and 2023 ROSL Pettman Scholar Jack Moyer (who is now in his second year at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, studying with Louise Hopkins), and violinist

Jordan Brooks, our 2024 AMC Strings Section Winner and ROSL representative as a festival artist at the At World's Edge Festival in 2025. The duo also gave recitals at St James's Piccadilly and the Yorke Trust in Norfolk with pianist and ROSL alumnus Hamish Brown. Crucially, they spent significant time playing to UK professors, gaining invaluable professional feedback, and making vital connections that



will hopefully shape their future studies and careers. They also seized the chance to soak up London's vibrant concert life, attending performances across the city including the Royal Opera

House, Wigmore Hall, Barbican Hall and the Royal Albert Hall.

Beyond the concert halls, our Scholars enjoyed the unique cultural opportunities offered in London. A major highlight was exploring the variety of luthier shops London has to offer, gaining access to master instrument-makers and technicians, which is a resource that is now rare in New Zealand.

They thoroughly enjoyed their time in London and noted the famously warm hospitality at Over-Seas House, particularly the highly rated ROSL breakfasts!

Tal attended the British Isles Music Festival before returning to New Zealand to resume his studies in Wellington. Sarah continued her musical journey into Europe, participating in further courses and playing to teachers in Italy and Germany. She is now back in Auckland, using this international experience to prepare for auditions at UK conservatoires, aiming to build on the foundations laid during her time with us. We are proud to have played a part in the next stage of their promising careers.

**They spent significant time playing to UK professors, gaining invaluable professional feedback and making vital connections**



Historic Valetta, home to the Casino Maltese

### New reciprocal clubs

We are pleased to announce new reciprocal agreements with the Nassau Club in Princeton, NJ, the Cape Town Club in South Africa, Casino Maltese in Malta, and Club Sällskapet in Stockholm. They join a list of over 100 reciprocal clubs around the globe that ROSL members can access and enjoy when travelling overseas for business or leisure.

Visit [rosl.org.uk/reciprocal-clubs](https://rosl.org.uk/reciprocal-clubs) for a full list of clubs and details of how to request a letter of recommendation



# Composition Award 2025

In July, our Princess Alexandra Hall was filled with some extraordinary talent for the Composition Award workshop day, an event that aimed to celebrate emerging voices in contemporary music. Following a brilliant session with the London Sinfonietta, the esteemed panel announced that the 2025 Composition Award would go to Ed Driver, chosen from an impressive shortlist including Kuba Williams, Seyoung Oh, Hanurij Lee and Clara Olivares.

The workshop itself was the final and crucial component of the award. The five shortlisted composers were invited to write a 20-minute sketch specifically for the workshop, and they each in turn worked with the London Sinfonietta conductor Jonathan Berman and the ensemble's musicians to bring their scores to life. Each work was written for the *Fires of London* style ensemble, pioneered



Members of the London Sinfonietta were joined by (front row from left to right): Raymond Yiu, composer and judge; Seyoung Oh, finalist; Hanurij Lee, finalist; Jonathan Berman, conductor; Ed Driver, finalist and 2025 Composition winner; Kuba Williams, finalist; and Dani Howard, composer and judge

by composer Maxwell Davies. The combination for the workshop was made up of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano and percussion, all consisting of principal players of the London Sinfonietta. Although it was a competition, the workshop was also an invaluable opportunity for the composers to hear their intricate works realised by one of the world's leading contemporary ensembles, offering a rare chance to refine their pieces with expert feedback.

The final selection was an exceptionally challenging one for the panel of adjudicators, celebrated composers Dani Howard and Raymond Yiu. They praised the high technical

standards and the bold artistic risks taken by all the finalists, underscoring the vibrant future of new classical music. Ultimately, it was decided that London-based composer Ed Driver would become the third recipient of this award, earning a further £3,000 to expand his sketch into a full commission that will be premiered by London Sinfonietta. This vital support provides the necessary resources and unparalleled exposure to launch an emerging composer on to the international stage, continuing ROSL's proud tradition of supporting the arts. We eagerly await the premiere of his commissioned work next year.



## Public Affairs Series: Dame Karen Pierce DCMG

In September we were thrilled to be joined by Dame Karen Pierce DCMG as part of our Public Affairs Series of talks, lectures and debates. Dame Karen, a former Ambassador to the US, talked to ROSL Director-General Annette Prandzioch about her time in the States and her current role as Envoy to the Western Balkans.

To see who will be speaking at our next Public Affairs event, visit [rosl.org.uk/events](https://rosl.org.uk/events)

# A busy time for ROSL in Western Australia

Anthony Howes OAM KCSJ, Chairman of ROSL's Western Australia branch, reports on an eventful season

As winter drew to a close in the southern hemisphere, the ROSL programme became more active. August saw the ROSL WA awards for excellence in singers acknowledged in a concert at the Music Department of the University of Western Australia. The three major prizes, presented by WA Chairman Anthony Howes OAM KCSJ, went to baritone Adam Lynch, with sopranos Eve Scarlett Trower and Amy-Rose Keppler in second and third place respectively.

In keeping with ROSL WA's policy of joining with like-minded associations in supporting the growth of music and community projects, the schedule of activities for members included the Spring Concert of the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra on 21 September in the Taryn Fiebig

Concert Hall, conducted by Sarah Duhig with music by Dukas, Bruch and solo violinist Ellie Malonzo. Next, in the Richard Gill Auditorium of the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts on 24 October, was a night of celebration and achievement, as WAAPA's top music students received a series of performance prizes, when the winners of the Royal Over-Seas League WA Prizes for classical, jazz and contemporary music were presented to students. At the time of writing, we are looking forward to joining with other loyal societies to stage The King's Birthday Gala Dinner on 22 November, in the distinguished



ABOVE: WA awards for excellence in singers: Adjudicator Dr Tonya Lemoh and President of the Royal Schools Music Club Tommy Seah, with the finalists and Chairman of ROSL WA Anthony Howes. LEFT: Playwright Jenny Davis OAM

presence of His Excellency the Governor of WA, the Honourable Chris Dawson AC APM. The music to be played at the dinner includes pieces known to be enjoyed by His Majesty The King. On 16 December, ROSL WA joins with St George's Cathedral, the Sovereign Order of St John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller, and Theatre 180, in presenting a specially commissioned play with

music by playwright Jenny Davis OAM, *Christmas Magic*, in the Cathedral. The production sees professional artists, and all involved, give their services so that ticket sales are received in their entirety by the homeless and needy of the city at Christmas. The production is to be recorded, and can be heard on Capital Radio Perth during Christmas itself.

# D-G Dr Annette Prandzioch's visit to EHL Lausanne

Michael McKay, from ROSL's Swiss branch, reports on their Annual Dinner, attended by Director-General Annette Prandzioch

Bringing the latest news from Over-Seas House and London, Director-General Annette Prandzioch, making her first ROSL visit to Switzerland, was welcomed recently by Royal Over-Seas League members. We were all very pleased to see her here!

The setting was the famous École hôtelière in Lausanne, which has recently been enlarged and renamed EHL Hospitality Business School: the world's first, founded in 1893, and a fitting location. Like the UK and Switzerland, the EHL and ROSL are both authentic and unique; associations between our two great

institutions date back to Robert Newell, a former Director-General of ROSL and EHL Visiting Lecturer, the initiator of the Annual Dinner in 1992.

We learned of the great improvements to the facilities and décor of Over-Seas House, and the content of an impressively varied and high-quality programme of events. Moreover, Annette shared with us some insights into plans and aspirations to improve the programme of not only music and art, but also public and international affairs. These are all topics of interest to ROSL's varied membership.



Co-hosts Michael McKay and Dr Alan Chalmers led a toast to The King and Switzerland's Federal Council – the collective head of state and government made up of seven councillors, often referred to as *Die Sieben Weisen* or *Les sept sages*.



News & Events

HIGHLIGHTS

Christmas Day Lunch

25 DECEMBER

Celebrations begin at midday with a sparkling drinks reception in the historic Princess Alexandra Hall. Enjoy a classic festive menu crafted by Executive Chef Julien Maisonneuve and served in the Hall of India and Pakistan, and paired with a wine selection chosen to complement each dish.

Guests staying overnight between 24 and 26 December will also receive mince pies and mulled wine on Christmas Eve, and have the chance to book a place on our walking tour of the local area on Boxing Day.

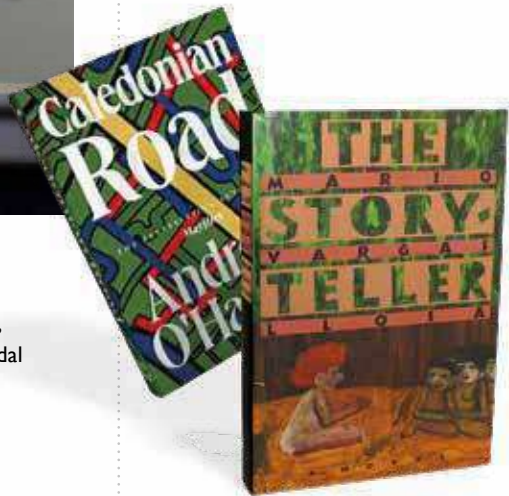
Visit [rosl.org.uk/christmas-lunch](http://rosl.org.uk/christmas-lunch) for full details



74<sup>th</sup> ROSL Annual Music Competition

ROSL's Annual Music Competition returns, the jewel in the crown of our year-long arts programme. With an increasingly international reach, talented young musicians apply each year to compete for over £75,000 in prize money. The Section Finals begin with the Woodwind and Brass Final on 10 February, continuing throughout February and March, and culminating in the prestigious Gold Medal Final at Wigmore Hall on 15 May.

Full dates are available in the Arts and Events Calendar below or online at [rosl.org.uk/events](http://rosl.org.uk/events)



News & views

HIGHLIGHTS

Member-led Activities

**BOOK GROUP**

The Book Group meets in person at the Club, as well as on Zoom for overseas members, on **Wednesdays**, once a month, to discuss primarily novels. The discussion starts at **5pm** but we meet beforehand for a drink and a chat in the Bar and afterwards for dinner (optional) at 6.30pm. We will be meeting on 10 December to discuss *The Storyteller* by Mario Vargas Llosa, and on 21 January 2026 to discuss *Caledonian Road* by Andrew O'Hagan.

**BRIDGE CLUB**

The Bridge Club meets every **Monday 2pm–4pm** (except on Bank Holidays) to play ACOL Bridge. New members are welcome. Lunch at 12.30pm is optional.

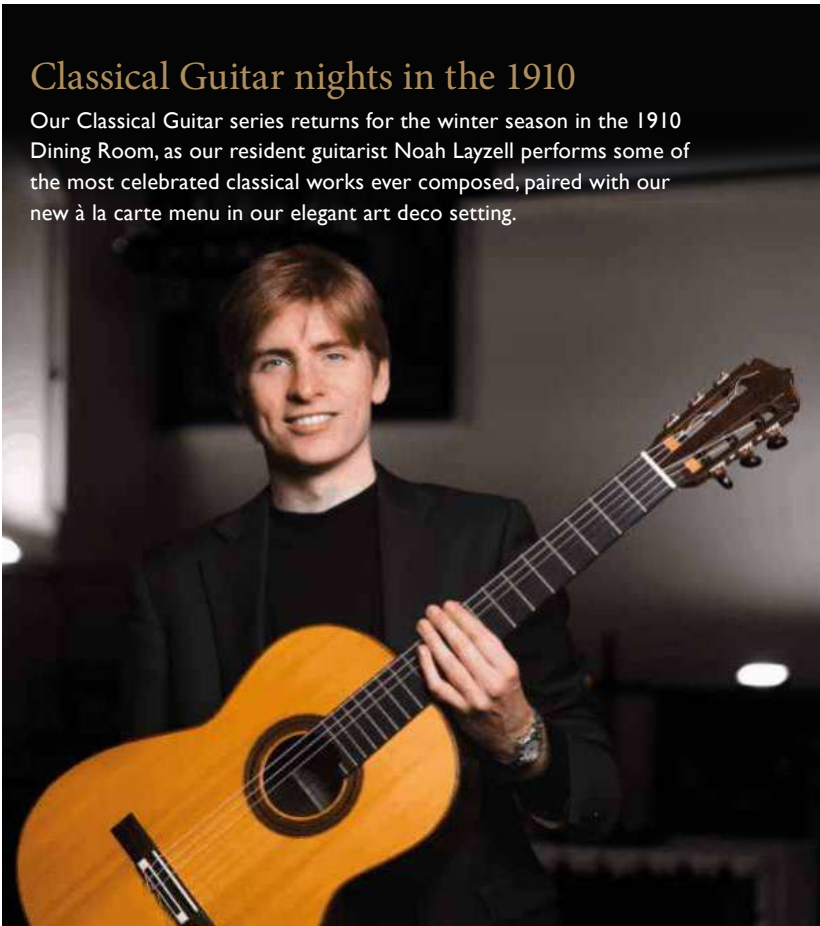
**BACKGAMMON CLUB**

Meets on **Wednesdays 2pm–4pm** and for lunch (optional) at 12.30pm. New members are welcome.

To join any of the Member-led activities, please contact the Membership Team at [membership@rosl.org.uk](mailto:membership@rosl.org.uk)

Classical Guitar nights in the 1910

Our Classical Guitar series returns for the winter season in the 1910 Dining Room, as our resident guitarist Noah Layzell performs some of the most celebrated classical works ever composed, paired with our new à la carte menu in our elegant art deco setting.



New Year's Eve 2025: disco, dinner and dance

31 DECEMBER

Taking place on from 9pm to 12.30am, our New Year's Eve celebrations this year will be disco-inspired! Members can enjoy a four-course dinner, followed by dancing to classic disco hits from the 70s and 80s from DJ Kev. The evening will end with a countdown to midnight, accompanied by a glass of champagne and a live screening of London's iconic firework display.



Dates for your diary

<b>CHRISTMAS JAZZ WITH SAM JEWISON</b> Monday 8 December	<b>A RETURN TO JAZZ'S GOLDEN ERA WITH THE CONTINENTS TRIO</b> Saturday 17 January	<b>AMC KEYBOARD FINAL</b> Tuesday 24 February
<b>ROSL CHRISTMAS CONCERT WITH TEMPLE CHURCH</b> Tuesday 16 December	<b>BURNS NIGHT SUPPER</b> Thursday 22 January See pages 34–35 for more details	<b>BEETHOVEN AND SMETANA WITH TRIO BALTHAZAR</b> Thursday 26 February
<b>CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH</b> Thursday 25 December	<b>AN EVENING OF SPANISH MUSIC: MÚSICA EN COMPOSTELA COMES TO LONDON</b> Wednesday 4 February	<b>AMC STRINGS FINAL</b> Tuesday 3 March
<b>NEW YEAR'S EVE 2025: DISCO, DINNER AND DANCE</b> Wednesday 31 December	<b>AMC WOODWIND AND BRASS FINAL</b> Tuesday 10 February	<b>AMC STRINGS ENSEMBLES FINAL</b> Tuesday 10 March
<b>CLASSICAL GUITAR NIGHTS IN THE 1910</b> Fridays 9 and 23 January, and 13 and 20 February	<b>AMC SINGERS FINAL</b> Tuesday 17 February	<b>AMC MIXED ENSEMBLES FINAL</b> Tuesday 17 March
<b>SIZZLING STEAK NIGHTS IN THE 1910</b> Saturdays 10, 24 and 31 January and 21 February	<b>CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION</b> Monday 9 February–Tuesday 3 March	<b>AMC OVERSEAS FINAL</b> Tuesday 24 March
		<b>PIANO RECITAL WITH MARTIN JAMES BARTLETT</b> Friday 24 April

Go online to get full details and book your next event at [www.rosl.org.uk/events](http://www.rosl.org.uk/events)





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