

OVERSEAS

THE JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA
45 years of service



ROSL
ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE



It has been a great personal pleasure to meet Princess Alexandra on a number of occasions over the years, and her warmth, insight and commitment have always left a lasting impression

This edition of *Overseas* carries a very special significance for the Royal Over-Seas League. It is a heartfelt tribute to Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra as she steps down from her role as our Vice-Patron, following an extraordinary 45 years of devoted service. On behalf of all members and staff, I extend my deepest gratitude for her unwavering support and encouragement; it has been a great personal pleasure to meet Princess Alexandra on a number of occasions over the years, and her warmth, insight and commitment have always left a lasting impression.

While we say thank you and celebrate an exceptional legacy, we are delighted to welcome Vice-Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence as our new Vice-Patron. I am very pleased that this issue includes a profile on Sir Timothy, and we look forward to welcoming him to Over-Seas House in the future.

Music, as ever, remains at the heart of ROSL. The Annual Music Competition finals are already under way in our Princess Alexandra Hall, whose rich history is explored in this issue. I warmly encourage members to book tickets for the Gold Medal Final at Wigmore Hall on 15 May – a highlight of our musical calendar and a wonderful celebration of emerging talent.

This spring also brings Commonwealth Day, an occasion I am very much looking forward to marking at the special service at Westminster Abbey in London. ROSL was honoured before Christmas to welcome the Hon Shirley Botchwey, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, for our Annual Lecture, and I am sure members will enjoy reading her inspiring address, which is printed in full in this issue.

Dr Annette Prandzioch DL
DIRECTOR-GENERAL



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.

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ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE

Incorporated by Royal Charter
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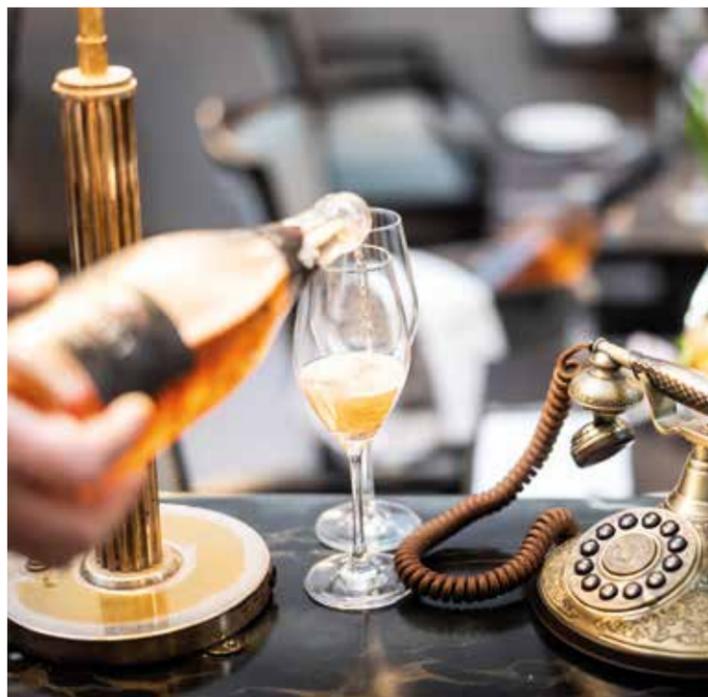
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Afternoon Tea AT ROSL

ROSL's Spring Afternoon Tea is a celebration of the season, served in the refined comfort of our Grade I-Listed Clubhouse. Expect delicate cucumber sandwiches, artfully crafted tiramisu petit gâteaux, delectable rhubarb and white chocolate entremets, and classic plain and fruit scones with clotted cream and jam. Paired with pots of piping hot Birchall teas or a glass of prosecco, this is afternoon tea at its most polished: elegant, indulgent and unmistakably ROSL.

Visit rosl.org.uk/dining for more information and to book



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'Not only was it an honour to win the competition, it was also a really important moment for us to feel that a well-respected organisation such as ROSL believed in our potential for success'



From the EDITOR

Signs of spring are beginning to appear in London, with daffodils showing their golden heads, and the sun bringing with it a hint of warmth in place of the iciness of winter. Spring has always been a season of renewal – longer days, fresh growth and the sense that something new is beginning. It is a fitting moment, therefore, for us to mark a significant transition in ROSL's own story.

After many years of dedicated service, Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra is stepping down from her role as Vice-Patron. Her association with ROSL has been a source of great pride, and in this issue of *Overseas* we express our gratitude for the commitment, warmth and support she has shown us over the years. Our lead article is a tribute to both her enduring relationship with the Royal Over-Seas League, and the contribution she has made and values she has championed through a lifetime of public service.

We also turn our attention this season to our Annual Music Competition, long supported by Princess Alexandra. The section finals are already under way in our Princess Alexandra Hall, and on pages 18–20 our Artistic Director Geoff Parkin delves into the history of this remarkable performance space. We also asked past AMC winners how taking part in the competition affected their careers, and they reflect on how that moment shaped their journeys. Listening to their stories, it is impossible not to wonder which of this year's finalists we will be applauding on the world's great stages in the years ahead.

Laura Winter
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Thank you, YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS

As HRH Princess Alexandra steps down from her role of Vice-Patron of the Royal Over-Seas League after 45 years of service, we reflect on the remarkable breadth and depth of her contribution, and her enduring impact on ROSL's artistic, cultural and international mission

Working royals occupy a curious space in public life: ever-present yet often understated, familiar yet slightly distant. Their work sits somewhere between duty and tradition; a steady rhythm of engagements, ceremonies, and quiet support for the institutions that anchor national life. They connect past to present, offering a sense of continuity in a world that rarely stands still. Among the many figures who make up the current Royal Family, Princess Alexandra has worked quietly, steadfastly, and without the glare of constant public attention. Known for her elegance, warmth and humility, she has built a legacy grounded not in spectacle but in sustained service. As cousin to the late Queen Elizabeth II and first cousin once removed to King Charles III, she has occupied a

unique position – close to the heart of the monarchy while rarely seeking the limelight.

Born at Belgrave Square on Christmas Day 1936 to Prince George, Duke of Kent, and Princess Marina of Greece and Denmark, Princess Alexandra's heritage connected her not only to the British Royal Family but also to European royalty, giving her upbringing an international dimension from the very start. Her early life was marked by loss, when her father died in a wartime flying accident when she was just five years old, and perhaps the responsibility and resilience that would later define her public role were shaped, in part, in those early years. She was educated at Heathfield School in Ascot, then spent time in

She has occupied a unique position – close to the heart of the monarchy while rarely seeking the limelight

Paris studying French and music, which undoubtedly helped cultivate a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

Post-war Britain was a period of rebuilding and redefining the monarchy's role, and Princess Alexandra grew up at a time when royal service meant not only ceremonial duty, but also boosting national morale and bolstering community support. Early Commonwealth tours in the 1950s, as she first stepped into public life, introduced her to the realities of post-war reconstruction and the importance of international goodwill, and would have undoubtedly helped cultivate the empathy, tact and global perspective that would define her future work. ♦



A LIFE IN SERVICE

1936

Born Princess Alexandra of Kent, in London on Christmas Day

1947

Attends Heathfield School, Ascot

1957

Trained as a nurse at Great Ormond Street Hospital

1959

Undertakes her first solo overseas royal tour – visits Australia for Queensland Centenary

1968

Marries the Hon Angus Ogilvy at Westminster Abbey

1964

Supports ROSL's Annual Music Competition for the first time

1980

Appointed Vice-Patron of the Royal Over-Seas League

2008

Made a Lady Companion of the Order of the Garter (KG)

2006

ROSL's refurbished St Andrew's Hall renamed Princess Alexandra Hall in her honour

2010

Attends ROSL centenary celebrations at St James's Palace with HM Queen Elizabeth II

2012

Hosts musical event in support of ROSL's Annual Music Competition

2025

Steps down as ROSL Vice-Patron, marking over 45 years of support



Young Princess Alexandra signs the visitors' book in 1958



Meeting Rowena Calvert of the Cavaleri Quartet in 2012



With Sir David Brewer at the AMC in 2016



In conversation with pianist Tyler Hay



Princess Alexandra is greeted by the Hon Alexander Downer and Dr Annette Prandzioch during her most recent visit to Over-Seas House, in 2021



Talking to Roderick and Margaret Lakin at the 1996 AMC Final



Princess Alexandra Hall unveiling



Taking time to meet the kitchen team in 2007



With Gavin Henderson and Roderick Lakin at the 2014 AMC Final



Sharing a moment with pianist Piers Lane in 2021

During these years, she represented the Queen at Independence Ceremonies across the Commonwealth, and in 1960 formally opened Nigeria's first parliament. She has since made 53 visits to Commonwealth countries, including to 19 countries in Africa, strengthening international ties and helping to maintain a human face for the monarchy in a rapidly changing world.

It was during Princess Alexandra's early years of public royal duty that her relationship with the Royal Over-Seas League began. In 1957, she became patron of ROSL's Twentieth Century Group, which comprised up to 3,000 young members who organised a wide range of activities in London and further afield. She quickly became a familiar and cherished figure to ROSL members and staff, with her passion for the arts and dedication to international dialogue aligning with ROSL's own mission of global collaboration and cultural exchange. The announcement of her appointment as Vice-Patron in 1980 was warmly welcomed, with then-Chairman Lord Grey of Naunton writing, 'Her Royal Highness has long taken a kindly interest

and concern in the League's endeavours, particularly its musical endeavours and the encouragement of young musicians.' Indeed, her support for the arts programme quickly became a cornerstone of her involvement with ROSL: recognising that the arts have the power to bridge cultures, her presence at concerts, exhibitions and competitions lent prestige to events and scholarships designed to launch international careers. In meeting performers, presenting awards, and enabling

concerts to take place at St James's Palace she played a personal role in inspiring talent and reinforcing the arts as a pathway to global connection. Furthermore, her dialogue with scholarship recipients and her willingness to engage with participants on an individual level made her patronage feel human, accessible and motivating.

Her dialogue with scholarship recipients and her willingness to engage with participants on an individual level made her patronage feel human, accessible and motivating

In 2006, Princess Alexandra's dedication to ROSL's arts programme was recognised when Over-Seas House's concert hall was renamed in her honour. The reopening was marked by a concert, and her attendance at the event was described by Roderick Lakin, Director of Arts at the time, as 'one of the most significant days in the history of the

Princess Alexandra
KEY ROYAL RELATIONSHIPS

QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Princess Alexandra is a first cousin of the late Queen Elizabeth II. The two shared a lifelong bond, shaped by growing up together within the close-knit circle of King George VI's family

KING CHARLES III

As his first cousin once removed, Princess Alexandra has supported His Majesty The King at official engagements

PRINCE GEORGE AND PRINCESS MARINA, DUKE AND DUCHESS OF KENT

Her parents were both influential figures in shaping her early understanding of public life and royal responsibility

KING GEORGE V AND QUEEN MARY

Princess Alexandra is the granddaughter of King George V and Queen Mary, placing her among the senior generation of royals who maintained the monarchy's continuity through the 20th century

Royal Over-Seas League.' The hall has since hosted countless young musicians, many of whom have gone on to international careers – a living testament to her support.

Princess Alexandra's consistent presence at ROSL's events and milestones over the decades has cemented her vice-patronage as a genuine, active commitment rather than a mere formality. During ROSL's centenary celebrations in 2010, she attended a gala reception at St James's Palace alongside her cousin Queen Elizabeth II, and Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. It was a joyful occasion, and those present recall the Princess's characteristic blend of elegance and informality – an ability to make even the most formal gathering feel personal.

Beyond the Royal Over-Seas League, Princess Alexandra has supported an exceptionally broad range of charitable causes, reflecting a deep commitment to human dignity, health, education and social inclusion. Over the years, she has been associated with more than a hundred organisations, many for decades, offering stability and raising

public awareness through her sustained advocacy. Her work in health and end-of-life care has been marked by private visits and personal gestures that demonstrated her belief in meaningful, practical service. She has also championed organisations supporting children, families, and people with disabilities, regularly attending events, and engaging warmly with volunteers and beneficiaries.

Across all her patronages, she is known for her attentiveness, her ability to listen, and her consistent presence, qualities that we have been so fortunate to experience first-hand at ROSL.

As Princess Alexandra now steps down from her role with ROSL, we offer our deepest gratitude for the warmth, wisdom and unwavering support she has given across so many years.

Her example reminds us that the enduring strength of any institution lies not only in its traditions, but in the quiet, committed individuals who uphold them. Princess Alexandra's legacy is one of grace and generosity, and it remains woven into the very fabric of the Royal Over-Seas League she has so faithfully served.

Princess Alexandra's consistent presence at ROSL's events and milestones over the decades has cemented her vice-patronage as a genuine, active commitment rather than a mere formality



Princess Alexandra's most recent visit to Over-Seas House, in 2021



Centenary celebrations in 2010



With AMC 2010 finalists Jadran Duncumb, Timothy End, Huw Morgan, Jonathan McGovern, James Sherlock and Jun Sasaki



Congratulating 1992 AMC prizewinners Sophia Rahman and Robert Plane



Presenting South African baritone Njabulo Madlala with his prize at the 2012 AMC



Princess Alexandra visits in 2007



In conversation with ROSL's Eleanor Rucker-Thompson in 2016



Pianist Jayson Gillham presents a posy to the Princess in 2012

Royal visits worldwide

Throughout her public life, Princess Alexandra has represented the Crown on official visits around the world



AUSTRALIA (1959)

Undertook an extensive official tour, including Queensland's centenary celebrations and engagements in Canberra, New South Wales and Victoria



NIGERIA (1960)

Represented the Queen at independence ceremonies and opened the first Parliament of independent Nigeria



FAR EAST (1961)

Visited Hong Kong, Japan and Thailand as part of a Far East tour, including engagement and official engagements



CANADA (1967)

Took part in official Canadian celebrations during the nation's centennial year



SAINT LUCIA (1979)

Represented the Queen at independence celebrations in this Caribbean Commonwealth nation



HONG KONG (1980)

Returned for an official visit and officiated at the opening of part of Hong Kong's Mass Transit Railway



TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS (1988)

Carried out an official royal visit, commemorated locally with specially issued stamps



BOTSWANA, SWAZILAND (NOW ESWATINI) AND SENEGAL (1995)

Took part in an official tour, accompanied by her husband, Sir Angus Ogilvy

THE PRINCESS AND ME

Our former Chairman the Hon Alexander Downer and former President the Rt Hon Lord Luce offer personal reflections on Princess Alexandra, recalling their meetings with her and reflecting on her impact on ROSL, during their tenures and beyond

A Personal Tribute

The Lord Luce KG GCVO PC DL

It was a great privilege to be President of the Royal Over-Seas League for 18 years (2001–2019). Throughout that time, Princess Alexandra was Vice-Patron, a role she held for 45 years.

I had the pleasure of getting to know her when, in my role as Governor of Gibraltar, she came out with her husband Sir Angus Ogilvy, on an official visit in the 1990s, to stay with me and my wife Rose. Soon after that I became Lord Chamberlain and saw how much she was supporting the Monarchy.

Princess Alexandra, strongly supported by her husband Angus, devoted herself to serving Queen Elizabeth II, her first cousin, throughout her reign.

I would describe her as one of the great unsung heroines of the Monarchy in all those post-war years. Never seeking the limelight, she just went steadily on, carrying out her duties all over the UK and abroad, especially in the Commonwealth. Indeed, she was a model of how a member of the Royal Family can support both the Monarch and the institution of the Monarchy. She would be the first to say that her brother the Duke of Kent, and the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were also giving strong support to the institution in the same way.

What is it about Princess Alexandra that makes her so special and much loved?

Alongside her great sense of duty, she possesses enormous charm accompanied by a lovely sense of humour.

On her visits to the League, she would suddenly break off from the official programme, popping into the kitchen, for example, to meet the Chef and catering staff. We all had to be prepared for a sudden diversion from the programme because she was interested in everything.

Occasionally, my wife Rose would play the role of Lady-in-Waiting for her visit. For example, each year she attended and gave awards to the winner of the League's Annual Music Competition. The South Bank is a complex area. Once on arrival she and my wife got



Lord Luce greets Princess Alexandra before the AMC Gold Medal final in 2014

lost in the range of rooms in the basement area. The Princess emerged later perfectly calm and dignified.

Whilst visiting Gibraltar during my Governorship, she took full advantage of the break in the programme to do something that interested her. There happened to be a nuclear submarine in the dockyard, which intrigued her. So we broke off from her respite in the Convent (Government House) and walked down to the harbour. On our return for tea, she seized the bread and toasted it on the fire.

Throughout my time as Lord Chamberlain, there she was travelling the country and giving pleasure to a large number of people.

Throughout much of her married life, her husband Angus suffered from a perennial back problem and pain. The Princess was always anxious to help him in any way she could.

The League, the Monarchy and the nation have greatly benefited from the service and support of this charming Princess.

The League, the Monarchy and the nation have greatly benefited from the service and support of this charming Princess

With Gratitude to Princess Alexandra The Hon Alexander Downer AC

I know the members of the Royal Over-Seas League will be sad that Princess Alexandra has relinquished her position as the Vice-Patron. She was a stalwart supporter of the League over many years. She didn't take for granted her position of Vice-Patron; instead, she used her charm and eloquence to support it as only she could.

A more charming and gracious woman I've never met. It was my privilege to host her and enjoy the evening with her

My first encounter with Princess Alexandra was when I was a teenager and my father was the Australian High Commissioner in London. I remember the excitement in my family that we were to meet a member of the Royal Family. But I also remember we all agreed later that she was 'great'!

Many years later, in my capacity of Chairman of ROSL, she came to Over-Seas House to support the

Annual Music Competition and have dinner with us. A more charming and gracious woman I've never met. It was my privilege to host her and enjoy the evening with her.

Over the years, Princess Alexandra frequently visited ROSL, and in particular supported the music programme. Without her support, it would never have been as successful as it has become.

So all of us should shout out a very big thank you to Princess Alexandra for her support through the years. It's hardly surprising the main conference hall at ROSL is named after her.



The Hon Alexander Downer with Princess Alexandra at a recital in 2021

INTRODUCING OUR NEW VICE-PATRON

VICE-ADMIRAL SIR TIMOTHY LAURENCE

A life anchored in service

Born on 1 March 1955, in Camberwell, south London, Sir Timothy Laurence was educated at New Beacon School and Sevenoaks School, and went on to read geography at University College, Durham, a subject that fostered an enduring interest in the relationships between place, people and global systems – themes that would recur throughout his professional life.

In 1973, after initial training at the Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth, he joined the Royal Navy, embarking upon a career that would span nearly four decades. He served in a wide range of operational and strategic roles, both at sea and within the Ministry of Defence, and, in 1983, he was mentioned in despatches for distinguished service in Northern Ireland. As his naval career progressed he rose through the ranks, holding senior roles in the Ministry of Defence and working closely with allies and partners overseas. His naval career was not merely military; it was diplomatic, administrative, and deeply international in outlook.

Sir Timothy Laurence retired from the Royal Navy in 2010 with the rank of Vice-Admiral, having held roles as Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff and Chief

Executive of Defence Estates, where he was responsible for the Ministry of Defence's extensive land and property portfolio in the UK and abroad. This latter role demanded a careful balance between operational requirements, environmental responsibility, and the stewardship of historic buildings and landscapes, experience that would later inform his work in heritage and cultural governance. Retirement from active naval duty marked not an end, but a transition into a new phase of contribution. Since then, he has built a wide-ranging portfolio of public, charitable and cultural leadership roles, bringing strategic insight and steady governance to institutions of national and international importance.

His commitment to heritage and culture has been particularly evident through his leadership of major cultural bodies. Knighted in 2011, Sir Timothy's career since retiring from the Royal Navy

has seen him serve as Chair of the English Heritage Trust, overseeing the care and presentation of more than 400 historic sites across England, and Chair of the Science Museum Group, supporting creativity, innovation and public engagement across the arts-science spectrum. Alongside this cultural leadership, Sir Timothy has demonstrated a strong commitment to international remembrance and Commonwealth cooperation through his work with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Serving as Vice-Chairman, he helped support the Commission's mission to commemorate those from across the Commonwealth who died in the two World Wars.

Alongside his professional life, Sir Timothy Laurence has, for decades, been a familiar but unobtrusive presence within the Royal Family. He met Princess Anne, the Princess Royal, while serving as an equerry to her mother Queen Elizabeth II, and they married in Crathie Kirk near Balmoral Castle in 1992. Their marriage has been marked by mutual support and a shared commitment to service. While never seeking prominence for himself, Sir Timothy has been a familiar and reassuring presence at public engagements in the UK and overseas, including across the Commonwealth, where his warmth, discretion and quiet humour are widely appreciated.

Sir Timothy Laurence's appointment as ROSL's new Vice-Patron is a natural continuation of this life of service. Like Princess Alexandra before him, Sir Timothy Laurence represents a style of leadership that is increasingly rare: modest, stable, culturally informed, and grounded in service rather than celebrity. As ROSL looks to the future, Sir Timothy Laurence brings with him a lifetime shaped by international engagement, thoughtful stewardship, and a respect for and understanding of culture, heritage and the bonds that connect nations. We are honoured that he has graciously accepted the position as our new Vice-Patron, and look forward to offering him a warm welcome to Over-Seas House in the future.

Sir Timothy Laurence brings with him a lifetime shaped by international engagement, thoughtful stewardship, and a respect for and understanding of culture, heritage and the bonds that connect nations



AT A GLANCE

Early life

Born in 1955 in south London, Sir Timothy Laurence was educated at Sevenoaks School before studying geography at Durham University

Royal Navy

He joined the Royal Navy in 1973, beginning a distinguished career that would span almost 40 years

Marriage

Married Princess Anne, the Princess Royal, at Crathie Kirk near Balmoral Castle in 1992

Retirement

Rising to the rank of Vice-Admiral, he retired in 2010 and was knighted in 2011

ROSL

Appointed ROSL's Vice-Patron in 2025, he continues a lifelong commitment to service, heritage and international cooperation



The POWER of PATRONAGE



As our Vice-Patron Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra steps down from her role, it is an apt moment to consider the enduring significance of royal patronage and the quiet but powerful influence it exerts across British life. Here, Eleanor Doughty, Peerage Consulting Editor for Debrett's and author of *Heirs and Graces*, reflects on a world in which tradition, service and personal commitment intersect, tracing the history and evolving nature of patronage from its earliest origins to the present day

Opening the door to the world of royal patronage sees light cast on to many areas of British life – from the Dogs Trust to the National Playing Fields Association (now Fields in Trust). The first recorded royal patronage was George II's involvement with the Society of Antiquaries, which received its Royal Charter in 1751, 44 years after it was founded. It retains its royal link today with its patron, the Duke of Gloucester.

A number of organisations have enjoyed a sustained history of royal association, with patronages passing down through the family. George IV was the first monarch to become patron of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution in 1824, a role that each of his successors has embraced. Now as then, patronage can take many forms – from the having of a name at the top of a letterhead to the foundation of an organisation, as Prince Harry enjoyed when in 2014 he developed the Invictus Games. Today, King Charles,

Queen Camilla and other members of the Royal Family have close links to more than 1,000 charities, military organisations, and professional and public service bodies in both the United Kingdom and across the Commonwealth. As the Royal Family's own website describes, royal patronage 'highlights the vital work of these organisations and allows their many achievements and valuable contributions to society to be more widely recognised and promoted'. At the time of Elizabeth II's death, she was patron of 492 organisations, and Charles III, as Prince of Wales, was associated with 441 organisations, 367 of which were retained by the King or passed to other members of the Royal Family following a review of all royal patronages.

Royal patronage can take, and has long taken, a variety of forms. The British Museum

has enjoyed support from the Royal Family since its foundation in 1753; the British Museum Act 1832 enabled the monarch, then William IV, to appoint an additional trustee for the museum, therefore ensuring a significant ongoing role in its governance. Meanwhile, the Yacht Club in Cowes, on the Isle of Wight, had 'Royal' added to its name in 1820 when George IV bestowed a royal warrant on the club; four years later it became The Royal Yacht Squadron. Back on dry land, the history of royal church patronage dates back to the Norman period. At the Reformation, Henry VIII assumed the patronage – in this context, the ability to appoint the clergyman – of approximately 1,500 church livings. While the constant rearrangement of parishes within the Church of England precludes any conclusive figures being available, the number of those

that remain within the Royal Family's purview is considerable.

Other patronages have been slightly more sparkly – and more personal. The Royal Family's link to Fabergé, goldsmith to the Russian Imperial Court, began

as early as the 1880s when Tsarina Marie Feodorovna introduced her sister Queen Alexandra, wife of Edward VII, to the St Petersburg firm. Today, the Fabergé portion of the Royal Collection is one of the most important in the world, with almost 600

When Princess Anne was emerging in public life... Prince Philip told her, you know you will be asked to do a lot of things – always choose things where you feel you can make a contribution, when you're involved and interested



Royal National Lifeboat Institution



The British Museum



Dogs Trust



Invictus Games

individual pieces, including three Imperial Easter eggs – one of which is the 1914 Mosaic Egg, fitted with tiny jewels and bought by George V in 1933, probably for his wife Queen Mary's birthday.

From an individual organisation's perspective, says veteran Royal Biographer Hugo Vickers, it's important to make the patron's experience diverting – and hopefully, good fun. 'When I was running the Jubilee Walkway Trust [from 2002 to 2012] my patron was the Duke of Gloucester. He would come out and do lots of things for me and we tried to make it as interesting as possible for him.' After all, that way everyone wins. When Princess Anne was emerging in public life, adds Vickers, Prince Philip told her, 'you know you will be asked to do a lot of things – always choose things where you feel you can make a contribution, when you're involved and interested, because otherwise it doesn't really work.'

It isn't just members of the Royal Family that retain patronages – and often with it, a role in their locale. While writing my book I discovered scores of peers involved in organisations from the Oxford Old English Game Fowl Club to the Chiltern Society. The late Gerald Grosvenor, 6th Duke of Westminster, had in the region of 150 patronages when he died in 2016. Not every cause made it to the roster – quite reasonably. Once, he remembered, he was 'asked to be president of the Wrexham tropical fish society, and I didn't know an awful lot about tropical fish, so I thought I'd give that

a miss'. Among those peers keenly involved with local causes are Frederick Curzon, 7th Earl Howe, who is proud to preside over his local half-marathon in Buckinghamshire, starting the race and then giving out prizes at the end; Max Wyndham, 2nd Baron Egremont, president of a number of organisations including Petworth town band; and Francis Fitzherbert, 15th Baron Stafford, who has had, over the last 40 years, involvement with over 60 organisations. Lord Stafford has, variously, judged gardens for the disabled, sold sheep at auctions and once milked a cow in front of a crowd at a county show.

Today, the slimmed-down core of the working Royal Family is stretched between its charitable obligations, but there is plenty of royal patronage left to go round. The Princess of Wales is now patron of the All England Club, Wimbledon, following the Duke of Kent's retirement from the role after 52 years; Princess Eugenie is patron of spinal injury charity Horatio's Garden; and the Prince of Wales remains, after 21 years in the role, patron of homelessness charity Centrepoint, following in his mother Diana, Princess of Wales's footsteps. Even now, aged 90, the Duke of Kent retains an interest in the Scouts, sharing its presidency with the Princess of Wales. For the organisations that enjoy their support, it's as much a boon now as ever before. 'If you have a royal patron, it attracts money and other people to get involved,' says Vickers. 'It absolutely makes a difference having a royal patron.'

PATRONAGE BY NUMBERS

First recorded royal patronage: **George II, 1751**

Patronages today span charities, culture, military and public service

At the time of her death, **Queen Elizabeth II** was patron of **492 organisations**

HM King Charles III is currently patron of around **669 organisations**, including ROSL

Over **1,000 organisations** have a member of the **Royal Family** as their patron or president

Around **600** of these relate to the **Armed Services**



PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HALL

A LIVING MUSICAL HEART

Tucked within Over-Seas House in St James's, the Princess Alexandra Hall has lived many lives. Here, Artistic Director Geoff Parkin explores the history of how this remarkable room grew into the centre of ROSL's artistic life

Known for most of the 20th century as St Andrew's Hall, Princess Alexandra Hall began not as a concert hall in today's sense, but as part of a bold interwar vision for the Royal Over-Seas League and its founder, Sir Evelyn Wrench. Its story reflects shifting ideas of empire, culture, public service and, ultimately, the central role of music at ROSL.

The hall formed part of the ambitious Empire Centre, the last major phase in the development of Over-Seas House. This new wing, later known as the Westminster Wing, opened in April 1937 with great ceremony. The occasion was marked by the first All-Empire Radio-Telephone Ceremony, an extraordinary technological and symbolic event for its time. At 4pm on 14 April 1937, a London audience gathered in the St Andrew's Lecture Hall of the Empire Centre and, by radio-telephone, were addressed by the Viceroy of India in Delhi; the Governor-General

of Canada in Ottawa; and representatives in Australia from Melbourne, New Zealand from Wellington, and South Africa from Pretoria. Presiding over the opening was Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester, who formally inaugurated ROSL's new premises.

Writing shortly afterwards, Sir Evelyn Wrench described the moment as one in which science and international fellowship met in the heart of London. The St Andrew's Lecture Hall was named in recognition of the Scottish membership of ROSL, who had raised £3,000 of the £40,000 required for the Empire Centre within just three years. Other rooms in Over-Seas House were similarly supported: the Hall of India funded by the Government of India and Indian princes, and the former Empire Newspaper Room by the Ulster branch.

From the outset, the building embodied both the reach of the British Empire and ROSL's desire to foster mutual understanding across the Commonwealth.

In his opening address, Wrench articulated the philosophical purpose of the hall with striking clarity. 'In the realm of ideas,' he declared, 'the Over-Seas League is seeking to do what radio-telephony is achieving in the material field.' The hall would, he hoped, serve as a place of service, citizenship and shared aspiration, beginning its life with a conference on the care of those suffering from tuberculosis.

Within a decade, the hall's purpose had begun to evolve. In 1947, ROSL's Music Circle established a recital series at Over-Seas House under the banner of the Festival of Commonwealth Youth. By the early 1950s,

[The opening] was marked by the first All-Empire Radio-Telephone Ceremony, an extraordinary technological and symbolic event for its time



this developed into what became the ROSL Annual Music Competition, offering outstanding young musicians from across the UK and the Commonwealth a prestigious London platform. Many of these recitals, held in St Andrew's Hall and the Hall of India, were broadcast live on the BBC World Service, giving emerging performers an international voice. In 1952, the festival

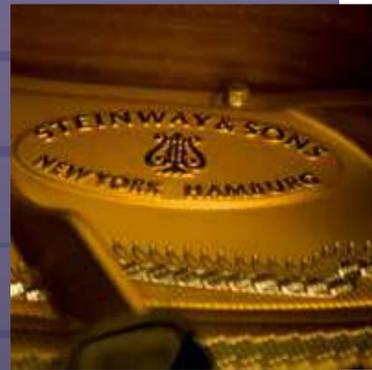
became competitive, with a first prize of £10 – modest in monetary terms, but the foundation of one of ROSL's most enduring artistic legacies.

Yet St Andrew's Hall had not been designed as a concert space. Its narrow stage limited performances to solo piano, voice or small instrumental forces, and during the 1950s and 60s the acoustics were further

Above: Apollo's Cabinet perform at the AMC Mixed Ensembles section final 2024
Left: A dance in the then St Andrew's Hall, 1945

compromised by heavy carpeting, soft furnishings and intrusive chandeliers. A corridor with a balcony added along the length of the room extended over the entrance, obscuring the symmetry and elegance of the original 1930s design. By the late 20th century, the space that had nurtured generations of young musicians was badly in need of renewal.

In 1999, the ROSL Arts sponsorship committee identified the improvement of St Andrew's Hall for musical performance as a future major project. A detailed brief was developed calling for a flexible, acoustically responsive chamber music space that could also accommodate conferences, dinners and receptions. After a competitive process, the commission was awarded to Avery Associates Architects, whose award-winning redevelopment of RADA had already established their reputation for sensitive adaptation of performance spaces. Their proposals sought to create a room that was performer-focused, adaptable and technically modern, while evoking the sleek art deco spirit of the original 1930s interior. Because Rutland House, Vernon House and the Westminster Wing are all Grade I-listed, ◉



the designs were scrutinised by English Heritage and refined to comply with conservation requirements.

Construction began in July 2005 and was carefully phased so that the hall could remain in use. By the end of September it was back in operation, with the final elements, including the new curved stage, advanced lighting and upgraded foyer, completed between October 2005 and January 2006. The transformation was dramatic; visually elegant, acoustically alive, and finally fit for the demanding musical life it had come to sustain.

Funding the project echoed the hall's original creation. An appeal launched in 2002 to mark the 50th anniversary of the ROSL Annual Music Competition set a target of £300,000, one hundred times the Scottish members' 1937 contribution. The target was met within three years through donations large and small from members of ROSL, mirroring the collective effort that had created the original St Andrew's Hall.

The refurbished hall opened with an official concert on 25 January 2006, attended by Princess Alexandra. Appropriately, the celebratory programme featured Saint-Saëns' beloved *Carnival of the Animals*, performed by alumni of the ROSL Annual Music Competition, a powerful symbolic link between the hall's architectural rebirth and its long-standing commitment to nurturing

ROSL's two Steinway pianos form a vital part of Princess Alexandra Hall's musical identity

young talent. The hall was renamed the Princess Alexandra Hall in her honour, marking a new chapter in its history.

Today, nearly two decades on, the Princess Alexandra Hall stands as one of central London's most refined small concert venues: intimate yet resonant, flexible yet distinctive. Its programme continues to reflect the values laid down in 1937; internationalism, opportunity and shared cultural exchange, now expressed above all through music.

Princess Alexandra Hall remains, as Sir Evelyn Wrench once imagined, a place where ideas and music cross borders with ease

As the Princess Alexandra Hall approaches its 20th anniversary, that inaugural reopening programme comes full circle. In September 2026,

Saint-Saëns's *Carnival of the Animals* will again ring out in the space, marking not only a celebration of the hall's transformation, but also a tribute to the generations of young musicians for whom it has been a first professional home. From imperial meeting place to international broadcast studio, from student recital room to world-class chamber-music venue, the Princess Alexandra Hall remains, as Sir Evelyn Wrench once imagined, a place where ideas and music cross borders with ease.

THE PIANOS AT ROSL

The Princess Alexandra Hall is home to two outstanding Steinway grand pianos, each with its own history and character, and together forming a vital part of the Hall's musical identity.

The first is a Steinway Model B, purchased in 1984; it was our main piano for 24 years and is wonderful to play. It has supported countless performances by emerging and established artists alike, and remains a much-loved piano among performers. You will often see it in action when we programme repertoire for two pianos – despite it not matching our newer piano, the two still work wonderfully together for duos!

Complementing it is our magnificent Steinway Model D concert grand, purchased in 2008 thanks to the generous donations of ROSL members. This instrument was carefully selected at Steinway Hall in London by an expert panel comprising ROSL prizewinning pianists Vanessa Latarche, Simon Lepper and Frank Wibaut. Chosen for its power, clarity and colour, the Model D continues to underpin major concerts in the Hall, reflecting ROSL's commitment to excellence and to supporting musicians at the highest level.



LET THE LEAGUE BE YOUR LEGACY

Continue to support your home away from home by bequeathing a gift to the ROSL Foundation in your will. Your generosity will give talented young musicians and artists from the UK and across the world support in their careers, and it will safeguard the future of your beautiful Grade I listed clubhouse.

To discuss email the DG Office at bneale@rosl.org.uk or call +44 (0)20 7408 0214

BEYOND THE GOLD

As ROSL's Annual Music Competition returns for its 74th year, concert pianist and former AMC Gold Medal winner Tessa Uys reflects on how winning the prize in 1972 helped shape her career

I had just finished my matric examinations at Westerford School in Cape Town when my childhood quietly came to an end. A few weeks later in December 1966, my mother and I boarded the mail ship *Windsor Castle* bound for Southampton. I remember the slow pull away from the quay, Table Mountain slowly vanishing in the distance, and the sense that something familiar was slipping out of reach as the ship turned toward the open sea...

We arrived in England on a cold grey Boxing Day in 1966. After weeks of sun and salt air, the winter light felt flat and colourless. From Southampton, we travelled by train to Waterloo. It was there, in London, that I would begin a new life, taking up my Royal Schools Associated Board Music Scholarship in January 1967, and stepping into a world that was both thrilling and entirely unknown.

The four years I spent at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM), studying with the great British teacher Gordon Green, proved to be profoundly transformative. Within those walls, I encountered music at its most demanding

The support I received from the Royal Over-Seas League proved life-changing and far-reaching

and inspiring, and the experiences I gathered there – on stage, in lessons and at master classes – became touchstones that would support me throughout my life.

Following my studies at the RAM, I was awarded an Italian Government Scholarship, which enabled me to spend several months at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena, studying with Guido Agosti. But it was on my return to London after Italy that Yonty Solomon – a

former competition winner, friend, and mentor – introduced me to Maria Curcio. It was early in 1972, and a moment that would quietly alter the course of my life. Maria Curcio became my teacher for the following three years.

The Royal Over-Seas League Annual Music Competition was established in 1952, becoming the cornerstone of ROSL's arts programme, though the larger Royal Over-Seas League organisation itself was founded much earlier. I remember my first walk to Over-Seas House to play the first round of the competition. I was acutely aware of every step, every thought, every doubt. The spring air seemed to sharpen my nerves as I turned

into Park Place and approached the beautiful and elegant old building.

In 1972, the first rounds of the competition were held in the then St Andrew's Hall, a space heavy with thick carpeting and windows draped with curtains that seemed to absorb both sound and nerves. The early rounds were presided over by the Music Director of the Royal Over-Seas League, Audrey Strange, lending the proceedings an air of solemn authority.

Once I reached the final round, my lessons with Maria Curcio intensified dramatically. In the weeks leading up to the final at Wigmore Hall, I saw her every day, apart from the weekends. Those days were marked by urgency, focus and almost monastic devotion to the work. ▶



Lord Eccles, Paymaster-General (U.K. Minister with Responsibility for the Arts) and Lady Eccles with the Chairman of the Festival Audition Board, Joan Davies, the eminent pianist, and the three First Prize Winners: Marius May, United Kingdom; Tessa Uys, Overseas; Pamela Torrance, Ensemble. The League's Chairman, Lord Elworthy, is in the background.

ABOUT TESSA UYS

- Gave her first public piano performance at age 7; concerto debut at 13 with the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra
- Entered the Royal Academy of Music in 1967
- Won the MacFarren Medal in her final year at the Academy
- Awarded ROSL's AMC Gold Medal in 1972
- Established an international concert career, performing at major UK venues including Wigmore Hall and the Southbank Centre
- Elected Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM) in 1994
- Frequent BBC Radio broadcaster with an extensive recording catalogue
- Formed a long-standing piano duo with Ben Schoeman in 2010, touring and recording major repertoire including Beethoven's symphonies





Bryony Gibson-Cornish, Marmen Quartet, viola

Bryony Gibson-Cornish, viola, won the AMC Strings and Keyboard Ensembles Section final 2018 as part of the Marmen Quartet

We have had a wonderfully fruitful relationship with the Royal Over-Seas League, which began when we won the Strings and Keyboard Ensembles Section of the Annual Music Competition back in 2018. The prize from the competition came at a crucial moment for us, right when we needed the financial backing to continue to prioritise our development as a quartet, so it went towards coaching and other costs associated with furthering our careers. Not only was it an honour to win the competition, it was also a really important moment for us to feel that a well-respected

organisation such as ROSL believed in our potential for success. Since the competition, we have taken part in many ROSL concerts, both in London and at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh. We are also incredibly lucky to sometimes rehearse in the Princess Alexandra Hall when it is free, which is such a beautiful space and much nicer than any of our living rooms! We hope to continue this relationship with ROSL throughout the rest of our careers and feel very grateful that the ROSL Annual Music Competition exists to empower musicians and support them when they need it most.



Maria shared her home with two beloved pets: a dachshund named Ira, and a cat called Raffa, both constant presences during my lessons. Sadly, Ira was unwell at the time and lay quietly in a basket beside the Steinway, beneath an infra-red lamp. His frailty added an unspoken poignancy to the room.

Between periods of intense concentration on Mozart's *Sonata K330* and Liszt's *12th Hungarian Rhapsody*, the lessons took on an almost surreal quality. Maria herself was also unwell and confined to bed on the first floor of her cottage in Orme Square. Yet her teaching never faltered. A telephone in her bedroom was connected to another placed on the piano. At the end of a phrase, the phone would ring, and her voice would come through – intimate, exacting and unwavering: 'Darling, please massage Ira's stomach!'

Or just as gently, but with absolute precision:

'Darling, you're not using your right-hand thumb properly...'

Even from another room, and through a telephone line – Maria noticed everything.

During the ten days spent immersed in these two works, I gradually felt ready for The Great Day. It was 31 May 1972. My father had flown especially from Cape Town to be there, a gesture that lent the occasion a gravity I felt deeply.

Wigmore Hall was packed to capacity. Competitors had come from Britain and across the Commonwealth, and we all shared the small green room backstage (long before the Hall's refurbishment decades later). The air was thick with anticipation, nerves and unspoken camaraderie...

For my performance that evening, I wore a dress inspired by a *Carry-On* film I had seen in the late 1960's, *Carry on Screaming!* The wonderfully flamboyant Fenella Fielding had appeared in a full-length red velvet gown, and I shamelessly borrowed the idea. The red velvet dress became my armour on stage.

To win the competition was beyond anything I had dared imagine

To win the competition was beyond anything I had dared imagine. Princess Alexandra presented the prizes and, in that moment, even through the daze, I knew that my life had shifted irrevocably.

The support I received from the Royal Over-Seas League proved life-changing and far-reaching. It opened doors to concert engagements, my first broadcast for the BBC Third Programme and Radio Hilversum in Holland. As the decades passed, my

connection with ROSL never faded. It has been a privilege to return over the years as an adjudicator and performer, and most recently to be introduced to a brilliant fellow South African-born pianist, Ben Schoeman, winner of the competition in 2009.

In 2010, Roderick Lakin invited Ben and me to give a two-piano recital in the Princess Alexandra Hall, which opened in 2006. From there, our collaboration deepened into a recording project for SOMM Records: the nine Beethoven symphonies, transcribed for piano four hands, comprising six volumes – a journey as demanding as it was rewarding.

Today, I remain profoundly grateful for the continued support of the Royal Over-Seas League and, in particular, for the dedication and enthusiasm of the current Artistic Director, Geoff Parkin. The Royal Over-Seas League has nurtured, supported, and sustained thousands of musicians, artists, writers and performers worldwide. Its contribution has enriched countless lives, including my own.

Thank you, ROSL.

This year's AMC section finals take place in our Princess Alexandra Hall throughout February and March, with the final being held at Wigmore Hall on 15 May. See page 42 for more information, and book your tickets at rosl.org.uk/events

Amy Dickson, saxophone

In 2004, Amy Dickson became the first saxophone player to win the AMC Gold Medal

My connection with the Royal Over-Seas League came at a decisive moment, just as I was finishing my studies at the Royal College of Music and beginning to imagine a life as a soloist. The League's support was transformative, particularly through the touring opportunities it offered. Under the guidance of Roderick Lakin, Director of ROSL Arts at the time, I was taken to New Zealand, Malta, Australia and extensively around the UK, experiences that were fundamental in shaping both my confidence and my artistic identity. Those early tours provided not only invaluable performance experience, but also a sense of international perspective and professional momentum that has stayed with me throughout my career. The League's belief in young musicians at such a formative stage remains one of the most important foundations of my life in music.



74TH
ROSL
ANNUAL MUSIC
COMPETITION
EST 1952



THE ROSL 74TH ANNUAL MUSIC COMPETITION 2026

SUPPORTING YOUNG MUSICAL TALENT
FROM AROUND THE GLOBE SINCE 1952

Visit rosl.org.uk/events for more details



Heritage at the Heart

A NEW WELCOME



RESTORE AND PRESERVE ROSL'S UNIQUE HERITAGE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

As ROSL continues its journey in restoring our Grade I-listed clubhouse, Over-Seas House, we invite our members to support us to complete the final piece of the architectural jigsaw.

Vernon House dates back to 1835, and constitutes a significant part of the architecture. Our plan is to restore the entrance hall within Vernon House to its former glory. The arrival experience members and their guests receive is at the very heart of ROSL; a first impression is often the last impression.

We are a London-based institution with a global reputation and outreach; the entrance is a gateway to a world of culture, heritage, public affairs, arts and dining.

To deliver this project, we need to raise £300,000. We are asking for the generous support from our

membership to reach this ambitious target. This would equate to £40 per member, an amount that we hope may be realistic for many, but any size donation will make a difference.

Should you be able to support this final significant development to the Royal Over-Seas League clubhouse, we will have an entrance hall that will preserve ROSL's architecture and heritage, creating a welcome that is fit for a king!

To make a donation, please scan the QR code, or contact the Director-General Dr Annette Prandzioch: b.neale@rosl.org.uk or visit the ROSL website <https://rosl.org.uk/product/wc-donation-heritage-at-the-heart-a-new-rosl-welcome/>



Thank you for your anticipated support

Director General | Dr Annette Prandzioch

FROM VINE TO VINTAGE

Nyetimber has been at the forefront of English sparkling wine since 1988, pioneering a style to rival the world's finest champagnes. With vineyards across the south east, they have earned international acclaim – and a place on ROSL's wine list. Ahead of our summer tasting, we spoke with Senior Winemaker Brad Greatrix about his route into winemaking, the challenges of producing in England, and what makes Nyetimber a leader in the global wine world

What first drew you to winemaking, and how did your journey ultimately bring you to Nyetimber?

It was a gradual progression into winemaking, along with my wife Cherie Spriggs (who is Head Winemaker at Nyetimber). We started as biochemistry students with an interest in wine, and when that interest blossomed, we went on to master's degrees at a Wine Research Centre in Vancouver, Canada. After that, we moved to Australia and completed a post-graduate diploma in oenology at the University of Adelaide. We then worked at various vineyards around the world to learn and taste with some of the very best winemakers in Australia, New Zealand, the United States and France.

We first saw Nyetimber mentioned in Jancis Robinson's 5th edition of the *World Atlas of Wine* – albeit on the final page before the index! – and when Cherie's father offered her a souvenir from a trip to England, she asked him for a bottle of Nyetimber having recalled seeing the label.

The potential of the wine left enough of an impression that years later when I asked Cherie on a walk what her dream job would

be, she mentioned Nyetimber. We got in touch and Eric Heerema, owner and CEO of Nyetimber, happened to be looking for two winemakers at the time. We moved over in 2007 and the rest is history!

English sparkling wine has grown enormously in reputation. Are there unique challenges to crafting sparkling wine in England?

Whilst the English climate is well suited to producing sparkling wine, one of the major challenges is the variation in climate that can occur throughout the year, such as spring frosts and generally unpredictable English weather.

Consistency of quality is important to us, and in 2007 we started building up a collection of reserve wines in order to be able to create a high-quality, multi-vintage style. This allows us to offer quality and style consistency even in years of challenging conditions.

When it comes to our vintage dated wines (Blanc de Blancs, Tillington Single Vineyard and our prestige cuvée range, 1086 by Nyetimber) we only make these when the

quality of that vintage warrants it. This discerning approach has resulted in these wines becoming highly respected on a global scale. A standout achievement for Nyetimber was when our Blanc de Blancs 2016 Magnum won Champion Sparkling Wine at the International Wine Challenge this year, becoming the first ever wine from outside of Champagne to win in over 30 years.

How has the specific English terroir of Nyetimber's vineyard sites shaped the character and style of your wines?

We currently have around 430 hectares under vine, which is split into 11 vineyards: six in West Sussex, two in Hampshire

and three in Kent. We take meticulous care when it comes to selecting our vineyards, as each one must feature the exact elements that we believe are necessary for producing exceptional wines: being south facing,

sheltered from coastal weather, and consisting of chalk or greensand soils.

The reason these soils are so renowned in the world of sparkling wine is because they are mineral-rich and free-draining soils, therefore allowing the vines to thrive. They are particularly well adapted to pinot noir, pinot meunier and chardonnay – the three grape varieties that we grow across our vineyards.

Nyetimber's reputation was built on greensand – the main soil type in our West Sussex vineyards. Free-draining and perfectly suited to our vines, greensand lends a generous, rounded fruit character to our sparkling wines. Chalky soil is considered the classic foundation of sparkling wine. ☪

Our prestige cuvées are now competing with, and beating, some of the most iconic sparkling wines in the world



NYETIMBER AT ROSL

Book your place at our Nyetimber sparkling wine and canapés tasting on 17 July at rosl.org.uk/events

We are also delighted to offer Nyetimber Classic Cuvée by the glass and Nyetimber rosé by the bottle in the Duke of York Bar and on our wine list across the Club.

To book your table, visit rosl.org.uk/dining

HISTORY
in the Making

1086

The peaceful valley of Nitimbrea makes its first appearance in recorded history, as the estate is named in the Domesday Book

1888

The first vines are planted, in the lee of the South Downs

1992

The estate produces its first vintage

1996

Nyetimber's Blanc de Blancs 1992 is released and wins best sparkling wine at a top international tasting

2010s

Nyetimber gains international acclaim, winning major blind tastings and awards, helping put English sparkling wine on the global map

2018

Nyetimber Head Winemaker Cherie Spriggs wins Sparkling Winemaker of the Year at the International Wine Challenge, becoming the first winner from outside of France and the first female winner of the award

A beautiful limestone soil, it is particularly well suited for producing grapes with refreshing acidity. Our wines made from chalky soil have a pure, delicate floral note and elegant minerality.

How do you see the English sparkling wine industry evolving over the next decade?

It's very hard to predict what the next 10 years will bring, but at Nyetimber we believe the future is bright! More and more people are selecting English sparkling wine as their sparkling wine of choice, and as we continue to focus on educating consumers about the quality that our wines offer, we'll see increasing numbers of advocates to our brand and the category as a whole.

Of course, there is still a big job to be done to win over hearts and minds – particularly internationally – but if we remain laser-focused on quality in our vineyards and at our winery, then that sets strong foundations to continue driving awareness. We also place great importance on building brand awareness via marketing, sponsorships and partnerships, such as Team GB in 2024, and England Rugby and British Cycling who came on board in 2025. We have also got a strong presence in the British summer calendar, activating at events such as Henley Royal Regatta and the Queen's Tennis Championships. The more of this sort of activity we do, the more we will reach people with our wines; and once they've had a sip, they often want to come back for more!

We are also seeing an evolution in the perceptions of top English sparkling wines, with more and more people buying them as

collector's items. This is very exciting and is something that we expect to continue over the next decade.

This is particularly true when it comes to English prestige cuvées. These top-end wines are garnering more recognition and awards, which in turn leads to people seeing their investment value. As an example, 1086 by Nyetimber 2010 was awarded the top scoring global sparkling wine at the London Wine Fair's Battle of the Bubbles earlier this year, beating prestige cuvées such as Dom Perignon and Krug.

When you're not tasting or making wine, what wines do you personally enjoy exploring?

Winemakers end up as winemakers, in no small part, because first of all we all love wine. So we're always open to chances to try new wines, or revisit classics. It's great to be able to enjoy something so much and learn at the same time.

We believe the south of England is the most exciting place in the world to be making traditional-method sparkling wines

I believe it's important to taste widely to keep an open mind and sharp palate, so we are always open to trying something new or different. However, repeat purchases do tend to cluster around France, Italy and Australia.

What do you hope Royal Over-Seas League members will experience or take away from the Nyetimber tasting on 17 July?

We believe that the south of England is the most exciting place in the world to be making traditional method sparkling wines. It would be wonderful if the members leave with even a glimmer of that excitement after their visit and tasting.



British Pie Week

4 TO 7 MARCH 2026
in the 1910 Dining Room

4 TO 8 MARCH 2026
in the Duke of York bar

CURRIED SCALLOP PIE £28

Pearled spelt, pea and Parmesan broth

BARBECUED PULLED PORK £24.5

White cabbage pickle and garlic sweet potato mash

STEAMED MUTTON PUDDING £26

Crushed minted potatoes and black pepper swede purée

BEEF SHIN AND OYSTER PIE £26

Parsley mash, baby rainbow carrots and real ale gravy

INDULGENT LOBSTER AND COD PIE £34.5

Crunchy English mustard potato topping and buttered spinach

CRAB AND RED PEPPER PASTIE £28.5

Baby leaf and warm potato salad

APPLE AND SULTANA PIE £11

With Keen's Cheddar (v)

We use a wide range of ingredients in our kitchen, some of which may contain allergens. If you have a specific allergy or dietary requirements, please let us know. Our prices are inclusive of the current VAT rate. Please note, a discretionary 12.5% service charge has been added to your bill. 100% of this charge goes to the team members.

COMMONWEALTH DAY A GLOBAL CELEBRATION

Every March, Commonwealth Day offers a moment for reflection, celebration and renewal among the 56 nations that form the modern Commonwealth. Though observance varies by country, the day serves a unifying purpose: recognising the shared values of democracy, development and cultural exchange that underpin this global family



Commonwealth Day, as it is now known, evolved during the 20th century from 'Empire Day', first marked in 1902. Renamed in 1958, Commonwealth Day is held on the second Monday in March, and reaffirms a shared commitment to collaboration and community – an ethos deeply familiar to ROSL members.

In the UK, Commonwealth Day is most visibly marked by the annual multi-faith service at Westminster Abbey, traditionally attended by senior members of the Royal Family, who are joined by a 2000-strong congregation of High Commissioners and Ambassadors, faith leaders, honoured guests, and school children from across the United Kingdom. The service reflects the diversity of the association: Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and other faith leaders share prayers; a procession of flags from all 56 member states are carried through Westminster Abbey by young representatives from each country; and the congregation is treated to traditional music and dance performances

from across the Commonwealth, making this one of the most vibrant services conducted at the Abbey.

The King's message for the day – continuing the long-standing practice established during the reign of the late Queen Elizabeth II – is shared across the Commonwealth. These reflections often highlight collective aspirations, such as expanding educational opportunities, promoting environmental stewardship, and strengthening ties across continents.

But what makes Commonwealth Day particularly distinctive is the vast range of ways in which it is interpreted and celebrated across different member nations.

In Canada, the Royal Union flag is customarily flown alongside the flag of Canada outside federal buildings. Cities often illuminate landmarks in blue and gold, while schools and civic groups organise cultural programmes focusing on multiculturalism and cooperation.

In Australia and New Zealand, community organisations use the occasion to spotlight the contributions of diaspora communities from across the Commonwealth, with cultural performances taking place across the two nations.

In the Caribbean, the day includes public discussions, school competitions, street parades, and artistic performances celebrating identity and regional heritage.

Throughout the Commonwealth countries of Africa, Commonwealth Day

provides an opportunity to engage with themes that hold particular resonance: development partnerships, peacebuilding and support for young entrepreneurs. School events may include tree-planting, sports matches and inter-school debates.

Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Malaysia and Singapore emphasise educational and cultural engagement. Schools hold essay competitions and parades; military bands perform; and cultural organisations present traditional

music and dance drawn from multiple communities.

As Commonwealth nations across the world mark this annual moment of unity, ROSL will be represented as an accredited

What makes Commonwealth Day particularly distinctive is the vast range of ways in which it is interpreted and celebrated across different member nations

Commonwealth organisation at the Service of Celebration in London. Our Director-General Dr Annette Prandzioch will also lay a wreath at the Memorial Gates prior to the service, in honour of the servicemen and women from the Commonwealth who served alongside the Allied Forces during the First and Second World Wars. For ROSL, Commonwealth Day is a poignant reminder of its founding purpose – to champion global artistic collaboration, international friendship and cultural diplomacy.

Join us for a special Commonwealth-themed menu at the Clubhouse during Commonwealth week
rosl.org.uk/clubhouse/dining



COMMONWEALTH MENU

9-14 March 2026

in the 1910 Dining Room

TWO COURSE £42.5 | THREE COURSE £48.5

STARTERS

CARIBBEAN & PACIFIC

SPICED PUMPKIN AND COCONUT SOUP

A warming blend of pumpkin and coconut, delicately spiced, reflecting the vibrant tastes of the Caribbean and Pacific regions. (plant-based)

UNITED KINGDOM

SALMON AND SMOKED HADDOCK FISHCAKE

Traditional British fishcake made with salmon and smoked haddock, offering a comforting and familiar start to the meal.

INDIA

INDIAN-STYLE CHAAT SALAD

A refreshing salad inspired by the street food of India, combining tangy, spicy and crunchy elements for a lively appetiser. (plant-based)

MAINS

JAMAICA

JERK CHICKEN WITH RICE AND PEAS

Classic Jamaican jerk chicken, marinated in a blend of aromatic spices and served alongside rice and peas, encapsulating the essence of Caribbean cuisine.

INDIA & UNITED KINGDOM

LAMB ROGAN JOSH

A rich and aromatic lamb curry, showcasing the culinary connection between India and the United Kingdom, with tender meat in a spiced sauce.

AUSTRALIA

GRILLED BARRAMUNDI WITH LEMON MYRTLE BUTTER

Australian barramundi fillet, expertly grilled and finished with lemon myrtle butter, offering delicate flavours and a nod to native ingredients.

DESSERTS

UNITED KINGDOM

STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING

A beloved British dessert, featuring a moist sponge cake sweetened with dates and drizzled with warm toffee sauce. (v)

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

MANGO AND PASSIONFRUIT PAVLOVA

A crisp meringue base with a soft centre, topped with whipped cream, fresh mango and passionfruit, celebrating the sweet fruits of Australia and New Zealand. (v)

SOUTH ASIA

CARDAMOM RICE PUDDING WITH PISTACHIO

Creamy rice pudding, subtly flavoured with cardamom and finished with a sprinkle of pistachios, drawing inspiration from South Asian desserts. (v)



We use a wide range of ingredients in our kitchen, some of which may contain allergens. If you have a specific allergy or dietary requirements, please let us know. Our prices are inclusive of the current VAT rate. Please note, a discretionary 12.5% service charge has been added to your bill. 100% of this charge goes to the team members.

THE ROSL ANNUAL LECTURE 2025

THE HON SHIRLEY BOTCHWEY

In November, we had the honour of welcoming the Hon Shirley Botchwey, Commonwealth Secretary-General, to present the Annual Lecture at Over-Seas House. The members in attendance were treated to a passionate address on the Commonwealth's evolving role and the importance of connection, cooperation and resilience in a rapidly changing world. For the benefit of all our members, we are delighted to present her full speech in this issue of *Overseas*

It is a privilege to be with you in this remarkable place – a place built not on power or profit, but on fellowship. For more than a century, the Royal Over-Seas League has been a quiet but constant thread in the Commonwealth story – a home for art, diplomacy, conversation and human connection. In rooms like this the Commonwealth has not been negotiated or theorised, but lived – through friendships that crossed oceans, through music and debate, through a belief that even in turbulent times, shared space and shared humanity matter.

Long before we spoke of 'soft power' or 'people-to-people cooperation', ROSL exemplified both. And as we meet today – in a world more fractured, more anxious and more uncertain than at any time in my memory – your mission feels not historic, but urgent.

Because today, the world is in one of those rare hinge moments when history does not move in gradual increments, but in jolts. We

are living through a convergence of crises. Wars in several regions are reshaping alliances and redrawing assumptions. The global economy is unsettled by spiralling debt, rising protectionism, and trade is no longer seen as a shared endeavour, but as a weapon.

Climate disasters are no longer emergency predictions – they are lived experiences, measured not in abstract degrees but in lives lost, harvests failed, nations drowned. Trust – that invisible architecture which sustains institutions, markets and diplomacy – is eroding. Misinformation corrodes public confidence. Multilateralism is under attack and questioned. And everywhere I go, from village halls to ministerial offices, there is an unspoken undercurrent: 'the world no longer makes sense, and no one is in control.'

This is not just a turbulent time. It has compounded the global challenges that have stalled growth and undermined social mobility as well as social protection in both industrialised and developing countries. ♦

For more than a century, the Royal Over-Seas League has been a quiet but constant thread in the Commonwealth story – a home for art, diplomacy, conversation and human connection

Last September, world leaders agreed to a Pact for the Future to address the challenges of a world that no longer responded to the expectations of the majority of people or the growing impacts of climate change.

And so the question we must ask – here, together – is not just what will happen to us? But what will we make happen?

When I became Secretary-General, I was under no illusion about the scale of the challenge. The Commonwealth remained rich in goodwill, but facing questions of purpose. Some asked whether it was still relevant. Others wondered whether a voluntary association, bound not by treaty but by trust, could matter in an age of transactional power.

And yet I am more convinced today than on my very first day, that the Commonwealth has something rare and essential to offer our world. It is not a military alliance. It is not an economic bloc. It is something quieter. More human. It is a family of 56 nations – from the largest

economies to the smallest islands – representing one-third of humanity. It is a space where a minister from Malta, Malaysia or Mozambique can sit as an equal with counterparts from India, Canada or the United Kingdom. It is a home to 2.7 billion people – most of them young. It is law and language shared, yes – but it is also memory and moral purpose shared. And in a world

It is our youth who will inherit the Commonwealth. It is women who are the backbone of resilience in households and economies. And if they are not at the heart of our action, then our work is incomplete

where power is so often defined by the capacity to dominate, the Commonwealth draws its power from its capacity to convene, to listen, to act together. In a world where too many are choosing sides, the Commonwealth chooses solutions. And it has a history of exceptional successes, including ending apartheid in South Africa.

That is essential in today's times.

But business as usual is not enough. If the Commonwealth is to matter, it must deliver.

If it is to endure, it must evolve.

That was the promise I made to Heads of Government, and to our Member States when I took office: that we would reform not for the sake of modernisation, but so we could transform Commonwealth countries and deliver the democratic dividend; that we would build a strategy not in London, but with Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, the Pacific, Europe and the Mediterranean together.



The Commonwealth Secretariat works at the heart of the Commonwealth to support cooperation, shared values, and practical action among its member countries



That is why our new Strategic Plan – which will guide us to 2030 – was not written for Member States, but with them. Over months, we consulted, debated, revised. And together, we agreed on a simple but powerful premise: in a world of disruption, the Commonwealth is needed more than ever – but we can only meet that need if we stay relevant, resilient, and results-focused.

The plan rests on four pillars:

Democratic resilience – because around the world we see democratic systems under strain. Trust is low. Institutions are vulnerable. Our mission is not just to defend democracy in name, but to make it real in people's lives. Understanding democratic fragility and using early warning mechanisms to improve governance responses and to facilitate accountability.

Economic resilience – because trade and investment must be tools of shared prosperity, not of exclusion. Trade within the Commonwealth is, on average, 21% cheaper because of our shared systems of trust, law and language. That is the Commonwealth Advantage – and my aim is to turn it from an interesting statistic into tangible jobs, targeted investments for high impact, and transformation. It also includes coalescing on a Commonwealth agenda for debt and financing that factors in vulnerability, including climate impacts, instead of GDP, which has not been sustainable.

HON SHIRLEY BOTCHWEY
 Born 8 February 1963 in Accra, Ghana

She is a qualified barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of Ghana

Before entering frontline politics, she ran a successful marketing and communications firm, and worked as a consultant in the tourism sector

She spent 16 years (2005–2021) as a Member of Parliament, representing first the constituency of Weija and then Anyaa-Sowutuom

She served as Ghana's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration from January 2017 to January 2024

As Foreign Minister, she helped lead Ghana during its recent term on the United Nations Security Council (ending 2023)

On 1 April 2025, she assumed office as the seventh Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations, becoming the first African woman to hold that post

Climate and environmental resilience – because no Commonwealth value matters if your homeland is underwater or on fire. Small states – our moral compass – are on the frontline of a crisis they did not cause. They cannot face it alone. I am championing a renewable energy revolution to facilitate our transition to net zero and expand Commonwealth production and business.

The resilience of our people – the 2.7 billion people of the Commonwealth, especially women, especially young people. It is our youth who will inherit the Commonwealth. It is women who are the backbone of resilience in households and economies. And if they are not at the heart of our action, then our work is incomplete. At the heart of the youth agenda is expanding distance education for 10 million youth to acquire digital and entrepreneurial skills as well as to gain access to a fund for startups.

This is not a Secretariat plan. It is everyone's plan. Our Commonwealth plan. But a plan only matters if it is implemented. So what does this look like in practice?

to make it bigger, but to make it sharper, faster, more focused.

It means better financial discipline, better delivery and a culture of accountability.

It means repositioning the Commonwealth on trade – not as a commentator, but as a catalyst. At the Trade and Investment Summit in London shortly after I took office, I made clear that we are putting trade at the heart of our mission: breaking down barriers; reducing risk for investors; ensuring small states, landlocked countries, youth, and women-owned businesses can compete and thrive.

It means climate leadership – not as victims pleading for justice, but as innovators designing solutions. From advocating for a universal definition of vulnerability, to pushing for accessible climate finance, to supporting small states transitioning to renewable energy – we must lead the conversation, not follow it.

It means defending democracy as public trust earned through service.

It means strengthening election observation, supporting digital governance, sharing judicial expertise.

It means equipping our young people with skills: digital literacy, entrepreneurship



Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda
Hon Gaston Browne

hard work of purposeful unity. Because in a world where so much feels fragile, the Commonwealth, at its best, is a reminder of what endures: the instinct to listen rather than shout; to build rather than break; to serve rather than rule. And that brings me back to this room. Because long before the Commonwealth had charters and secretariats, it had places like ROSL – where human beings from different places could meet, talk, create, disagree, and still call each other friends. That spirit – of civility, of curiosity, of common purpose – is the foundation on which everything else must stand.

So as we look to CHOGM 2026, and beyond it, I carry with me the quiet conviction that the Commonwealth will do more than survive history – we can shape it. Not with armies or empires. But with something far more powerful: with shared values, common purpose, and joint action. And an extraordinary potential, held in the ingenuity and imagination of a third of the world's population, which is more than equal to the challenges we face.

We cannot choose the turbulence of our times, but we can choose the purpose with which we face it. And if this era is defined by division, then let the Commonwealth be defined by purpose. Purpose in defending democracy. Purpose in building prosperity. Purpose in protecting our planet. Purpose in serving our people.

Together – with humility and ambition – we can make this Commonwealth indispensable. A legacy, and a living force for good. That is a future worth working for.

and education that travels across borders.

And it means something else: it means restoring faith in multilateralism – by proving it can work.

All of this takes us to the road ahead. To CHOGM 2026 in Antigua and Barbuda. Every Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting reflects its moment in history. The next one will be a turning point. In Antigua, our leaders will not gather merely to issue declarations – they will come to decide: what kind of Commonwealth do we want to be? And what kind of world

History will not judge us by the scale of the challenges we faced, but by the choices we made in response

do we want to help shape? Our hosts have chosen a theme: 'Accelerating Partnerships and Investment for a Prosperous Commonwealth'. It is exactly the right theme – because partnership is our method, and resilience is our mission. My ambition is simple: that CHOGM 2026 must be a summit of delivery. That we leave St John's with more than words – with decisions that citizens can feel in their daily lives.

That means reforming the CHOGM process itself – making meetings more interactive, sharper, more focused. Ensuring ministerial meetings produce outcomes that are based on data and evidence and geared to implementation, not filed away. Turning goodwill into tangible cooperation.

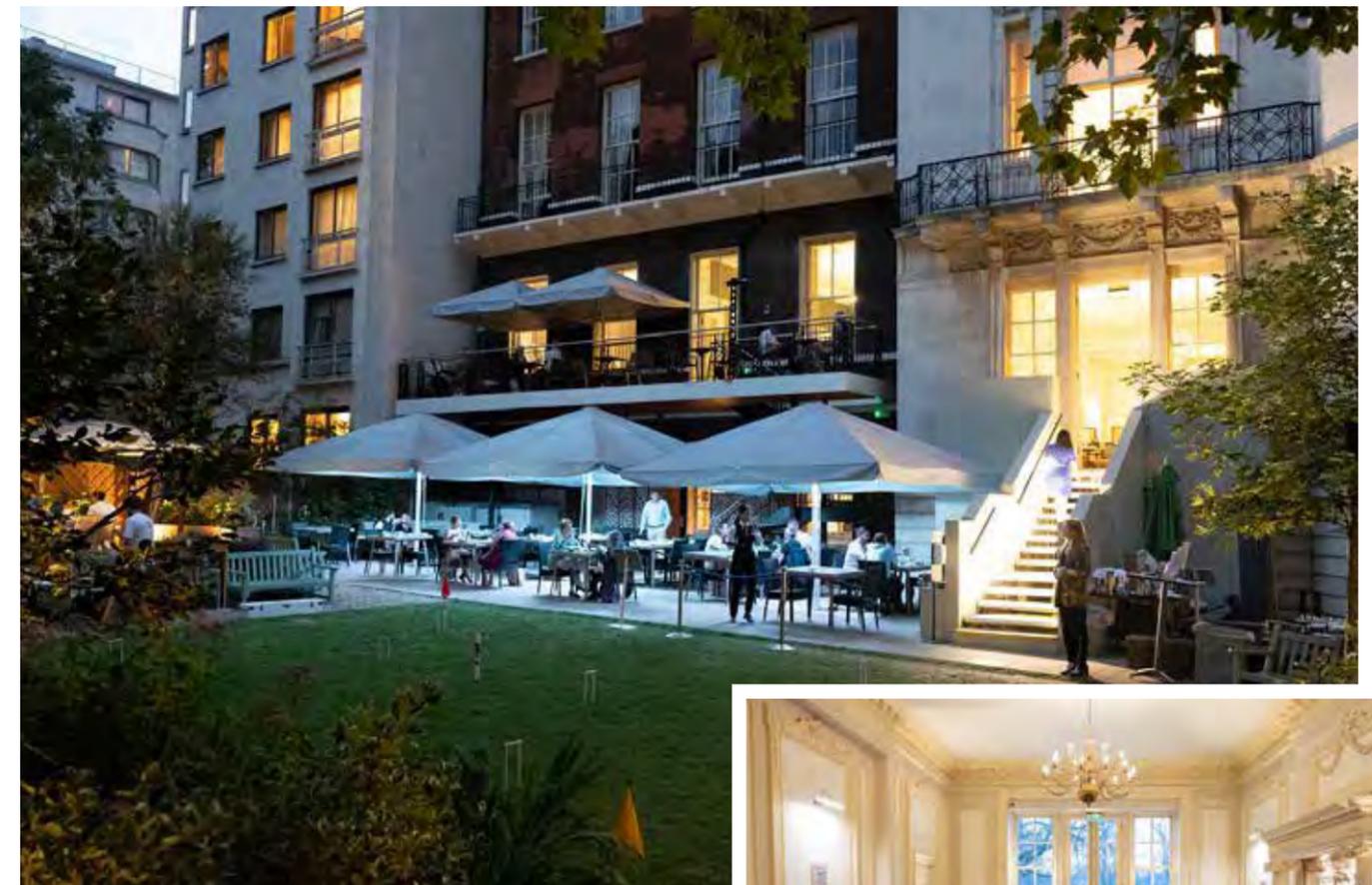
The Commonwealth has always worked best not when it is defensive, but when it is bold. Bold in fighting apartheid. Bold in championing small states. Bold in giving voice to the vulnerable. Today, we must be bold once more – to prove that cooperation can benefit both rich and poor, and guarantee resilience and shared prosperity; that trust can be rebuilt; that institutions can adapt.

History will not judge us by the scale of the challenges we faced, but by the choices we made in response. So, while always measured, I choose courage over caution. I choose reform. And together, we choose the



PUBLIC AFFAIRS SERIES

Our Public Affairs programme of talks, lectures and debate continues throughout the year. Visit rosl.org.uk/events for details of future speakers



Brabourne Room and Garden Reopening

A new season of dining begins at Over-Seas House

Our beautiful garden and terrace will reopen in early May, weather permitting, alongside our elegant Brabourne Room. Indulge in our seasonal menu of fresh, light dishes, salads and grills, along with stone-baked pizzas straight from the outdoor oven; enjoy the arrival of warmer days and lighter evenings with a chilled glass of wine, summer cocktail or refreshing gin and tonic; or treat yourself to a decadent afternoon tea in the timeless Brabourne Room, with views of the garden and Green Park.

You can also enjoy the smooth sound of jazz alongside your al fresco dining, as our Jazz in the Garden series returns to get you in the mood for the coming summer – keep an eye on our fortnightly email newsletter for more details.

In the meantime, our 1910 Dining Room will continue to serve a delicious menu of classic and modern favourites, as well as themed menus for Commonwealth Week (see p33) and British Pie Week.

For full details of menus and opening times, visit www.rosl.org.uk/dining



Burns Night Supper

Burns Night returned to Over-Seas House in January, with fine food, poetry and music once again at the heart of Scotland's most cherished celebration

This year's Burns Night Supper on 22 January was a wonderful celebration of Scotland's national poet, bringing together tradition, great food, poetry and music in the uniquely joyful way that only Burns Night can. Drawing on the rich heritage of previous suppers, the event was warmly familiar, while still feeling distinctly fresh and original for those gathered at the clubhouse.

As in previous years, the evening struck a careful balance between formality and conviviality, allowing both seasoned Burns Night attendees and first-time guests to feel equally at home. The sound of bagpipes, led by Fergus Fairbairn, signalled the start of the supper

in the most traditional way, and this was followed by a delicious Burns Night meal from our culinary team. The procession of the haggis was, as ever, the theatrical heart of the evening. Piped in with due gravitas, it was met with appreciative applause before the *Address to a Haggis* was delivered by actor and singer Reuben Beck. A toast was raised to the King after the meal, which concluded with a delicious serving of traditional cranachan.

Throughout the evening, Burns's life story, poetry and songs were woven into the programme. Musical interludes performed by the fiddler Heather Jeffery, who has appeared as



Piper Fergus Fairbairn



Master of Ceremonies James Fairbairn



Actor and singer Reuben Beck performed

soloist with the Worthing Philharmonic Orchestra, Lancing Orchestral Society, Imperial College String Ensemble and Worthing Youth Symphony Orchestra, added further texture.

The evening concluded, as tradition dictates, with *Auld Lang Syne*, to welcome in the new year. And as this year's Burns Night Supper came to an end, guests departed into the London night, warmed by good food and jovial company, and with the echoes of Burns's lyrical poetry in their ears.



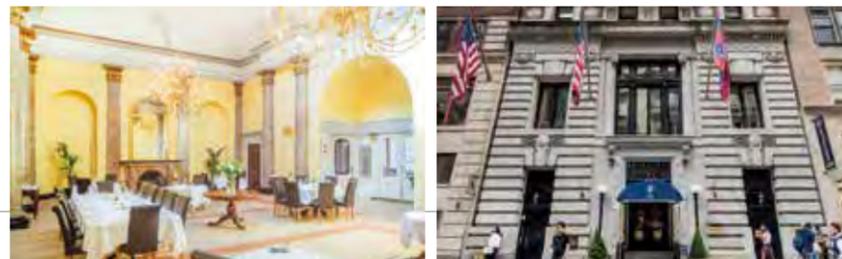
From left to right: Muthaiga Country Club, Nairobi; Clifton Club, Bristol; Penn Club, New York

Reciprocal clubs

Enjoy access to over 100 reciprocal clubs around the world

If your wanderlust is calling this year, remember that club members can unlock a world of possibilities with access to over 100 reciprocal clubs across the globe. From the UK, to Europe, the Americas, Asia and further afield, each club has its own history, identity and unique facilities, and offers the perfect haven to recharge while you embark on your next adventure.

Visit rosl.org.uk/reciprocal-clubs for a complete list of reciprocal clubs and details of how to request a letter of introduction.



ROSL WA News

News from the Western Australia Branch, from Chairman Anthony Howes OAM KSCJ

As 2025 drew to its close, Western Australia's branch of ROSL celebrated two different aspects of its work amongst our community.

A gala concert, given at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, witnessed the five major prizewinners of the ROSL WA Awards perform and receive their accolades. Our Baroque Prize went to Noah Furtado, Oliver Banks and Finlay Labuschagne; the Original Song Award recipient was Ashton Luke for her song *Mirror*; the Improvisation Prize to trumpeter Craig Pederson; and the Chamber Music Award went to the string quartet playing Brahms's *Piano Quartet #1*. Marcell Howell received the ROSL Orchestral Composition Award and the audience was able to see and hear the world premiere of *Shimmer*, performed by WAAPA's Symphony Orchestra and recorded on video prior to the gala concert.

A second focus on a WA honour occurred a few weeks later when the King's Birthday Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Western Australian Community, initiated by



ABOVE: Anthony Howes OAM KCSJ and the Hon John Cowdell AM with the ROSL WA Award winners. BELOW: HE the Hon Chris Dawson AC APM presents Luca Muir Anderson with the King's Birthday Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Western Australian Community

the Branch and supported by fellow Loyal Societies, was presented by our State Patron, the Governor of Western Australia, His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson AC APM. This award was first presented during the celebrations of Her late Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, recognising outstanding

contributions to the community that reflect the values embodied by the Sovereign and are now exemplified by His Majesty King Charles III. The nominee is selected by ROSL WA in collaboration with the Loyal Societies joint committee, and His Excellency the Governor is asked to agree and present the Award. On completion of this process, the 2025 Award was presented to Luca Muir Anderson. At the ceremony, ROSL WA Chairman described Luca as 'passionate about preserving and commemorating Australia's military history.



At the age of 18, he founded the 44th Australian Infantry Battalion Memorial Inc, and then led the initiative to establish a physical and virtual war memorial for the Battalion (a locally raised WA unit which suffered over 1,700 casualties in the Great War). His other historical projects have included creating historical websites (such as wacolonialmilitary.com when 16) and

A gala concert witnessed the five major prizewinners of the ROSL WA Awards perform and receive their accolades

publishing a book detailing acts of gallantry made by local soldiers in the half-forgotten Second Boer War 1899–1902. Luca currently serves in the Royal Australian Armoured Corps in the Australian Army Reserves, and is a volunteer in the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Surf Life Saving WA, Disaster Relief Australia and the RSL – WA. Luca is 20 years of age.

Through these awards, in the arts and beyond, ROSL WA is committed to highlighting the creativity and positive impact of young people.

Annual Music Competition 2026 FULL SCHEDULE

The ROSL Annual Music Competition is the flagship of our Arts programme, attracting talented young musicians from around the world to compete for over £75,000 in prizes across six sections, with solo winners progressing to a Gold Medal Final at Wigmore Hall. Beyond the competition, prizewinners are offered an artistic home at ROSL, benefiting from long-term mentorship, industry connections and paid performance opportunities, support many value even more than the initial awards.

This year's finals are already under way, and the remaining dates are as follows:

- 3 March – Strings Section Final
- 10 March – Strings and Keyboard Ensembles Section Final
- 17 March – Mixed Ensembles Section Final
- 24 March – Overseas Award
- 15 May – Gold Medal Final at Wigmore Hall

Visit rosl.org.uk/arts for tickets and updates



Frances Marshall



Piano Recital with Martin James Bartlett

24 APRIL

We're delighted to welcome acclaimed pianist Martin James Bartlett, who will perform at Over-Seas House for the first time. Bartlett rose to prominence in 2014 as winner of BBC Young Musician of the Year, making his BBC Proms debut the following season with Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. He has since performed with all five BBC orchestras and at major national events, including the National Service of Thanksgiving

for HM Queen Elizabeth II's 90th birthday, broadcast live from St Paul's Cathedral.

Generously supported by the MMSOL Fund, this concert will feature performances of works by Rameau, Granados and Liszt, as well as Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No 8 in C minor* and Bach's *Tocatta in C minor*.

Visit rosl.org.uk/events for the full programme and details of how to book

Global Expressions of Riesling: A Guided Wine Tasting

16 APRIL

A spring tasting devoted to Riesling's refined expressions beckons, as esteemed wine experts Dr Enno Lippold, owner and winemaker of Dr Lippold, and James Leach from ABS Wine Agencies guide you through a tasting journey, navigating their international pedigree through vineyards of remarkable provenance.

Dr Lippold, a revered grower in the Mosel Valley, is celebrated for his stewardship of the historic Ürziger Würzgarten vineyard. His wines, cultivated on the steep slopes above Ürzig, are acclaimed for their nuanced character and

remarkable ageing potential, embodying the very essence of Mosel Riesling.

Joining him is James Leach, whose career spans over thirty years across the UK and US wine industries. James's deep knowledge and passion for the grape shine through as he guides guests on a tasting that celebrates Riesling's diversity, from Old World elegance to New World vibrancy.

This is an opportunity to explore Riesling's global expressions through stories, expertise and some of the world's finest wines.

Visit rosl.org.uk/events to book



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

CHINESE NEW YEAR
CELEBRATION
Until 3 March

BRITISH PIE WEEK
4–8 March

COMMONWEALTH DAY
9 March

AMC STRING
AND KEYBOARD
ENSEMBLES
SECTION FINAL
10 March

AMC MIXED ENSEMBLES
SECTION FINAL
17 March

AMC OVERSEAS
AWARDS
24 March

GLOBAL EXPRESSIONS
OF RIESLING WINE
TASTING
16 April

PIANO RECITAL
WITH MARTIN JAMES
BARTLETT
24 April

GARDEN
REOPENING
Early May,
weather permitting

JAZZ NIGHTS
IN THE GARDEN
May–August

AMC GOLD MEDAL
FINAL
15 May

NYETIMBER SPARKLING
WINE AND CANAPÉS
TASTING
17 July

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

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 25 March to discuss *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde; 22 April, *The Sea, The Sea* by Iris Murdoch; 20 May, *The Home Maker* by Dorothy Canfield Fische; 17 June, *The Garden of Evening Mists* by Tan Twan Eng; and 22 July, *Marie Antoinette* by Stefan Zweig.



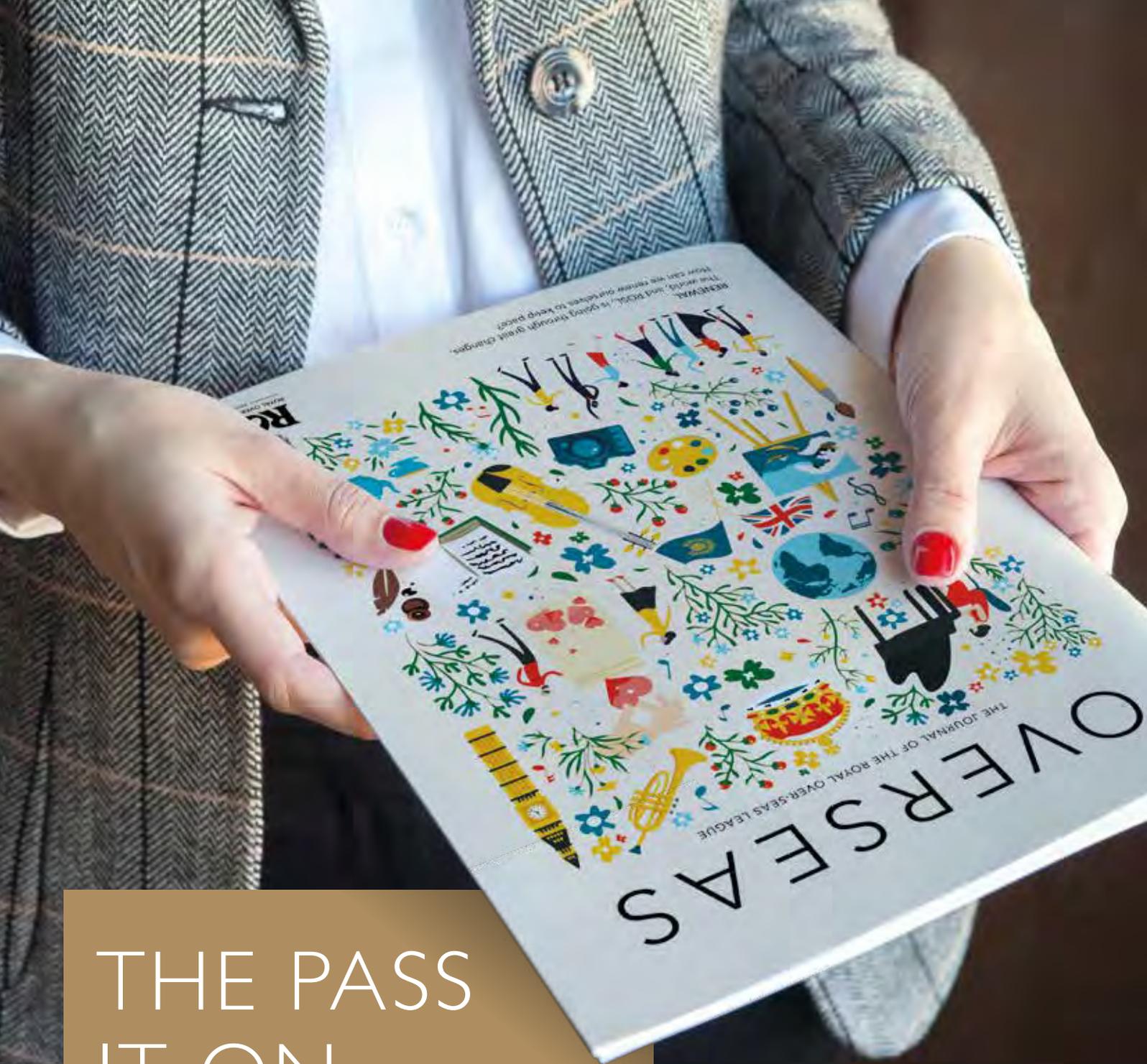
BACKGAMMON CLUB

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

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.



THE PASS IT ON PLEDGE

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

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



ROSL
ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE