

OVERSEAS

THE JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE



EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY
Where curiosity leads



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ROSL ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE

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

Cover: Courtesy of Børge Ousland

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WELCOME



Founded at a time when overseas travel itself represented adventure and discovery, ROSL has always sought to build friendship and understanding across borders

Exploration and discovery have always shaped our understanding of the world, whether through journeys to distant places, encounters with new cultures, or the pursuit of fresh ideas. It is therefore fitting that this issue of *Overseas* is dedicated to that enduring spirit of curiosity.

A particular highlight is our lead feature, an interview with renowned polar explorer Børge Ousland, whose extraordinary expeditions have taken him to some of the most remote regions on Earth. Earlier this spring, I had the pleasure of visiting Børge at Manshausen, his remarkable retreat in northern Norway. There, beneath the Arctic sky, I was fortunate enough to witness the Northern Lights – a breathtaking reminder of the sense of wonder that exploration can inspire.

The theme also resonates strongly with the history of the Royal Over-Seas League. Founded at a time when overseas travel itself represented adventure and discovery, ROSL has always sought to build friendship and understanding across borders. That spirit of openness and international connection remains at the heart of our mission today.

Here at the Clubhouse, we continue to celebrate our heritage while investing in the future. Work will soon begin on the restoration of our entrance hall, a significant project made possible through the generosity and support of our members. Find out more about these plans on page 10.

The arrival of autumn also sees the reopening of the 1910 Dining Room, and this issue includes an article exploring the history and traditions of the British roast dinner as we prepare to introduce daily roasts to the menu.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Overseas*, and I look forward to welcoming you to the Clubhouse soon.

Dr Annette Prandzioch DL
DIRECTOR-GENERAL

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‘Northumberland provides some of the route's finest moments, not least around Bamburgh, where the magnificent Bamburgh Castle stands dramatically above sweeping sands on one side and the village green on the other’

From the EDITOR

There is something magical about the idea of exploration – the promise of seeing something for the first time, and the excitement of venturing beyond the familiar. In an age when information is instantly accessible and even the most remote corners of the globe can be viewed from our phones, it might seem that there is little left to uncover. Yet the global excitement sparked by *Artemis II*'s journey around the far side of the moon earlier this year demonstrated that our curiosity about the unknown remains as strong as ever. At the same time, many of the most meaningful discoveries are far closer to home: a hidden path, an overlooked chapter of history, a piece of music encountered for the first time, or an artwork that changes our perspective.

This issue celebrates discovery in all its forms. We speak to polar explorer Borge Ousland about what it takes to journey across some of the world's most inhospitable landscapes, and follow Dr Kate Leeming's extraordinary quest to identify the true source of the Oxus River. Elsewhere, we explore how the new London Museum aims to help visitors discover the city's history in innovative new ways, while the recently opened King Charles III England Coast Path is a reminder that discovery is sometimes found in the landscapes waiting just beyond our doorstep.

What struck me most while reading these articles was that these journeys are defined as much by their objectives as by what is discovered along the way. The focus often shifts to the people encountered, the connections formed, the stories shared. It is a reminder that curiosity has the power not only to broaden our understanding of the world, but also to bring us closer together – and perhaps teach us something about ourselves in the process.

Wishing all our members a season of curiosity, discovery and connection, wherever you are in the world.

Laura Winter

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OVER THE EDGE

When Børge Ousland joined us at the Clubhouse earlier this year as part of ROSL's Public Affairs Series, he offered a rare glimpse into life at the extremes. One of the world's foremost polar explorers, Børge has spent decades navigating some of the planet's most unforgiving environments, where preparation, resilience and adaptability are essential. Reflecting on a lifetime of expeditions, he speaks to Editor Laura Winter about the mindset required to embrace uncertainty, and reveals what continues to draw him towards the ice ▶



BØRGE OUSLAND'S MOST SIGNIFICANT EXPEDITIONS

1990

NORTH POLE EXPEDITION

First unsupported ski trip to the North Pole, with Erling Kagge and Geir Randby

1994

SOLO, UNSUPPORTED NORTH POLE

First person to ski solo and unsupported to the North Pole

1995

SOLO, UNSUPPORTED SOUTH POLE

First to ski solo and unsupported to both poles

1996–97

SOLO, UNSUPPORTED ANTARCTICA CROSSING

First solo and unsupported crossing of Antarctica, using a skisail

2001

SOLO CROSSING OF THE FROZEN ARCTIC OCEAN

First person to have crossed both polar regions solo

2006

WINTER NORTH POLE EXPEDITION, WITH MIKE HORN

First unsupported winter journey to the North Pole

2010

SAILED THROUGH THE NORTHEAST AND NORTHWEST PASSAGES OF THE NORTH POLE

First circumnavigation of the North Pole in one season, with Thorleif Thorleifsson, Vincent Colliard and Stanislav Kostyashin

You've explored both the Arctic and the Antarctic – how do the landscapes and experiences of exploring them differ?

Antarctica is a continent of ice and rock where the winds and crevasses are the main objective hazards. The terrain is in some ways easier to travel across, but the mental challenge is greater simply because the scale is so vast. The landscape in Antarctica rarely changes from when I start in the morning to when I pitch my tent at night, and going solo it takes time to become at ease with that endless landscape with so few impulses from the outside.

The Arctic is almost the opposite: it's an ocean with a thin layer of ice on top, and at the North Pole you are literally skiing over 4,000 metres of water. The drifting ice is constantly moving, leads of open water appear, and wildlife, especially polar bears, adds another unpredictable element.

Both places share an uncompromising beauty and a humbling sense that nature is in control. That, for me, is the most powerful and satisfying aspect of travelling through polar landscapes.

Although the world is mapped and explored, it is still new to anyone seeing it for the first time

Do you find one of them more challenging or unpredictable than the other?

The Arctic – and the North Pole in particular – is the ultimate test. The drifting ice, the danger of ice-cold water, and the risk of wildlife encounters make it extremely dynamic and unpredictable. You live and sleep on a moving surface and must constantly adapt. Antarctica poses its own severe challenges, but the drifting ice of the Arctic Ocean makes it uniquely demanding.

How do you maintain motivation when there is no audience, no feedback and no certainty of success?

Motivation must come from a deep conviction: the belief that

the objective is worth the effort and that I can realistically achieve it. I spend a long time deciding and weighing the plan before I start; once I've committed, the goal serves as a lighthouse in the back of my head, even on bad days. I also think a lot about gratitude and use small daily practices – like photographing the



EXPLORATION

MANSHAUSEN Under the Arctic Skies

Alongside his expeditions, Børge Ousland has built something more permanent: Manshausen, a small island retreat on the coast of northern Norway that he developed from scratch into one of Norway's leading design hotels. Once a remote trading post, it has evolved into a base for those drawn to Arctic landscapes, architecture and outdoor life. ROSL's Director-General, Annette Prandzioch, visited in the spring, experiencing the dramatic coastal setting firsthand – and, memorably, seeing the northern lights dance overhead. The island offers a glimpse into the environment that has shaped so much of Børge's life and work.

surroundings – to stay present. Looking for images keeps me observant and reminds me that I'm privileged to be moving through such an extraordinary landscape. It's like an art exhibition, but you must force yourself to see it.

Is there a skill outside physical endurance that you think every explorer needs?

Preparation. That covers a lot: careful planning, logistics, and practical skills like navigation, safety and basic field repairs. You must be able to organise complex travels, secure funding, and still have energy to perform tasks like pitching a tent in a storm, managing calories and sleep, and making rational decisions under stress. Communication and public relations also matter: you need to fund an expedition and tell its story.

How do you balance long-term planning with the need to adapt constantly to unpredictable conditions?

I accept uncertainty as part of the job and train myself to be that small step ahead.

I learned that when I worked as a professional diver in the 80s, where accidents were frequent. That's all about being alert to your surroundings and understanding possible dangers before they suddenly happen. Most of the expedition is done in the planning phase: logistics, equipment and timing. But you cannot plan for everything; at some point you must commit to a start-date and be ready to solve the challenges that arise on the way. When things go wrong, which they always do, I try to focus on the one question that matters: what do I need to do about it? I treat problems as opportunities to learn – it's through challenges you develop resilience and competence.

What does exploration look like in a world where there are fewer blank spaces on the map?

Although the world is mapped and explored, it is still new to anyone seeing it for the first time. Technology has widened

the possibilities – deeper dives, more distant travels – but personal discovery and experiences remain real. You haven't seen it before you have seen it yourself.

After all your expeditions, what still draws you back to exploration?

I still want to learn about the wonders and powers of nature and how everything is

connected. Choosing the harder path forces you to adapt and to be humble. Nature is the ultimate arena for that, and the bonus, I believe, is that you become more balanced. Through testing my limits and understanding more about the forces that shape the planet, I feel a deeper connection to a larger system. Exploration keeps me curious

and grounded – reminding me that we are part of nature, not separate from it.

Pictures: Børge Ousland, Fergus Bell, Stein Retzlaff, Thomas Ulrich



Making an ENTRANCE

We are delighted to be working with Anne Rhind at StudioARIN on the reimagining of the entrance hall and Central Lounge areas of Over-Seas House, alongside a number of other key spaces within our historic Clubhouse

Our ambition has been to create an arrival experience that feels genuinely welcoming – a space where members and guests sense both the weight of history and the ease of considered hospitality. Every decision has been made with the staff and members in mind, ensuring that the practical rhythms of a working reception are seamlessly woven into the design.

With the Grade I-listed building as the backdrop, the interior has been shaped in dialogue with the architecture itself – honouring its grandeur, while introducing a warmth and refinement that feels entirely of the present moment.

The palette will draw from the building's own quiet authority: deep tobacco and ebony tones ground the scheme, while teal, warm stone and faded terracotta bring an organic softness. Richly patterned textiles – from botanical-inspired rugs to chevron weaves – will sit alongside burnished brass and ceramic lamps, creating an atmosphere that is at once welcoming and refined. The mood is one of layered intimacy: a space that rewards those who look closely, and lingers long after the visit.

We look forward to seeing these spaces come to life and are immensely grateful for the generous support of our members, whose donations have made this project possible.

To make a donation, please visit rosl.org.uk/wc-donation-heritage-at-the-heart-a-new-rosl-welcome



About the designer

Interior designer Anne Rhind founded StudioARIN in 2019, bringing together more than two decades of experience across hospitality, luxury residential and art-led interiors. Based in Brighton, she is known for creating spaces that are both beautiful and functional, balancing creativity with a strong sense of place. StudioARIN has led the design of a number of restaurants and hospitality venues in the UK and overseas, including several sites for the acclaimed vegetarian restaurant group Mildreds.



YOUR CLUBHOUSE

OUR BEDROOM REFURBISHMENT *Continues*



Following the soft refurbishment of six rooms earlier this year, the renovation of our executive double bedrooms in the Clubhouse's Park Wing continues, with five rooms on the fourth floor undergoing a full refurbishment. Filled with natural light and with views over Green Park, these rooms combine enduring elegance with modern sophistication.

Each room features a beautiful en-suite bathroom, with timeless tiling and antique brass fixtures, offering elegant comfort and understated luxury in the heart of London.

Finished in a refined palette of natural, elegant tones, these beautifully refurbished rooms offer a calm and stylish retreat.

In September, this exciting renovation project will conclude with the opening of the Club's very first suite. See the next issue of *Overseas* for full details.

Visit rosl.org.uk/accommodation to book your stay. Remember, four guest passes are issued per year, which means that members can book a separate bedroom for friends or family to enjoy a stay at Over-Seas House. Members are also welcome to bring up to six non-member guests to dine in the 1910 Dining Room.



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

EXPLORING *Central Asia's Lifeline*

For more than 30 years, Australian explorer and expedition cyclist Dr Kate Leeming has undertaken pioneering journeys through some of the world's most remote regions. She tells us about her latest expedition across Central Asia, following the great rivers of the Aral Sea Basin to uncover the true source of the Oxus River and solve a 3,000-year-old geographical mystery

When I show people the route map of my 9,001km Breaking the Cycle Central Asia expedition, they often look puzzled. 'How did you dream up this route?' they ask. 'What story are you trying to tell?' The answer lies in a collection of interests that have accompanied me for decades. Growing up on a wheat and sheep farm in Western Australia, I developed a keen interest in geography, land management, and the relationship between people and the environment. As a child, I remember studying a world map on our kitchen wall and being intrigued by the Aral Sea, then marked as the world's fourth-largest lake. At the same time, stories of the Silk Roads and its most famous travelling merchant, Marco Polo, fired my imagination.

For years I wanted to explore Central Asia, but struggled to find a theme that would unite my interests in exploration, history, geography and environmental issues. But then, a light bulb moment: just as I cycle to connect closely with the people and the land, the waters that flow along Central Asia's mighty glacier-fed rivers, the Syr Darya and Amu Darya, connect every aspect of life. This idea became the foundation of Breaking the Cycle Central Asia. Over five months, my aim was to explore the importance of water in the Aral Sea Basin, by following the Syr Darya (Jaxartes River) from its source in the Tien Shan, Kyrgyzstan, to the Aral Sea; from there, to trace the course of the Amu Darya (Oxus River); and as the finale, search for its unverified true source in the Wakhan Corridor, Afghanistan. In essence, it was to be a journey from source to sea to source.



The team: Rupert McCowan, Malang Darya, Kate Leeming and Adrian Dmoch in the Little Pamir



Last light on the Little Pamir near Lake Chaqmaqin. The Chelab stream (foreground) has a unique feature: it bifurcates as it reaches the Little Pamir watershed. The West branch flows into the Little Pamir River which becomes the Wakhan River, and East into Lake Chaqmaqin, then the Aksu/Murghab/Bartang system – to meet again downstream to form the great Oxus River



The Chelab Valley, about 2km from Aqtashtog



Kate, Rupert and Malang set off from Aqtaqtosh near the bifurcation of the Chelab



The Kyrgyz community at Aqtashtog allowed the team to camp before setting off up the Chelab stream

Water is the thread that binds Central Asia together. For thousands of years, the Syr Darya and Amu Darya sustained the great Silk Road cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. In a largely arid landscape, these rivers made settlement, agriculture and trade possible, helping to create one of the world's great crossroads of civilisation. For centuries, this hub of the Silk Roads was the economic capital of the world. Today, those same rivers continue to sustain millions of people across six countries. Yet they also tell a cautionary tale. Water availability is not keeping pace with the rising demand from increasing population pressure and agricultural needs. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Aral Sea region. The Aral Sea has become synonymous with environmental catastrophe. Soviet and post-Soviet regimes have diverted vast quantities of water from the Syr Darya, Amu Darya and their tributaries to irrigate cotton and rice fields in the desert. The consequences have been devastating. Water from the Amu Darya no longer even reaches the Aral. Since the late 1950s, the coast of Aral Sea South has retreated by more than 100km and less than 10% of the sea's original volume defies evaporation.

From passing vehicles I often received discreet waves, smiles and nods of encouragement that created a quiet sense of connection

The consequences have been profound. Fisheries collapsed, ecosystems disappeared and entire communities were left stranded far from the water that once sustained them. Toxic dust from the exposed seabed – laden with salt, pesticides and industrial pollutants – is carried airborne across continents. Scientists have detected traces of the pollutants as far away as Greenland and Antarctica. Cycling across the former seabed was one of the most confronting experiences of the expedition. The ground was speckled with billions of tiny cockle shells, reminders of a vanished sea. I saw dust devils funnel toxic sediments high into the atmosphere. Local people spoke wistfully of the days when fishing fleets filled the harbours of Aralsk and Moynaq. Many communities continue to experience serious health and economic challenges as a result of the disaster. Yet I was determined not to focus solely on loss. One of the most encouraging aspects of the journey was seeing examples of adaptation and restoration. In Kazakhstan, I was given permission to visit the Kokaral Dam, built by the Kazakh Government and the World Bank in 2005 to save the smaller Aral Sea North. ●



The West stream of the Chelab valley, just above the confluence with the East stream, powers through a 40 metre-wide bed of smoothed riverine stones. This indicates that at times there is a considerably greater flow than in August 2025



Rupert, Malang and Kate deciding which stream to follow at the confluence of the West and East streams that make the Chelab



From its dry river mouth at the southern shoreline of the former Aral Sea (now the Aralkum Desert), I followed the Amu Darya upstream through the autonomous state of Karakalpakstan, Khorezm, into secretive Turkmenistan, 1,000km along the Zerafshan-Karakum Corridor, back into Uzbekistan and through Tajikistan's Pamirs, following the great river and its tributaries towards its source.

Few rivers have played such an important role in human history. Civilisations have depended upon the Oxus for at least 9,000 years. It appears in Greek, Persian and Chinese records, and served as both a conduit and a barrier between empires. Alexander the Great crossed it during his campaigns, while in the 19th century it became a focal point of the 'Great Game' between Britain and Russia.

Crossing into Afghanistan was essential if I was to solve one of geography's enduring mysteries: the location of the true source of the Amu Darya, or Oxus River. The first challenge was logistical. Reaching the remote Wakhan Corridor required months of planning, permits and local support. Entering via the Shir Khan border – the only crossing from Tajikistan open to foreign travellers –

The dam raised water levels by 12 metres, reducing salinity and enabling fish populations to recover sufficiently to support a tightly controlled fishing industry.

Throughout the expedition, I met farmers, teachers, students, herders and community leaders. Their stories reinforced how closely water is linked to food security, livelihoods, public health and social stability.

Yet, perhaps my strongest memories are not of stunning landscapes or environmental challenges, but of people. Again and again I was welcomed into homes, offered tea and meals, and provided with places to sleep. These unplanned encounters provided insights into cultures and communities that no guidebook or internet search could ever reveal.

Kate and Malang at the true source

Quest for the Source of the Oxus

19th century

During the Great Game, Britain and Russia sought to define the Oxus source as the demarcation point between their empires in the region that was to become the Wakhan Corridor. Yet despite numerous expeditions, nobody could agree where the great river truly began

1838

Lt John Wood identified Lake Zorkul as the source of the Oxus

1893

Lord Curzon championed an ice cave at the head of the Wakhjir River as the river's true source. Others proposed the Little Pamir River or Lake Chaqmaqin

20th century

Curzon's Wakhjir ice cave is widely accepted as the source

2007

British explorer Bill Colegrave demonstrates that the Chelab Stream, on the Afghanistan–Tajikistan border, is the Oxus's true parent stream

2025

Dr Kate Leeming and team discover the true source of the Oxus, a glacial lake that they name Lake Malang after their guide



Lake Malang

Lake Malang covers approximately two hectares and lies 14km beyond the Chelab bifurcation. It is more than 2,500km from the dry mouth of the Amu Darya at the Aral Sea. Importantly, it also satisfies a key geographical requirement of a river source: permanence. Unlike a glacier or seasonal snowfield, Lake Malang is a stable geographical feature. Scientific modelling suggests the glacier feeding it may survive for only another 30 to 40 years, yet the lake itself is expected to remain long after the ice disappears. Held in situ by impermeable glacial moraine, it should continue as a stream-fed lake for thousands of years.



I was met by my host and guide, Azim, and prepared to cycle into a country very different from any in which I had previously ridden.

As a woman travelling by bicycle through a conservative Islamic region only four years after the end of two decades of war, I was uncertain how I would be received. Taliban officials occasionally questioned my clothing and movements, and one suggested that no bare skin should be visible on my legs – I wore three-quarter length cycling baggies and long sleeves, covering up even in the extreme heat. Yet, despite my apprehensions, the reception I received was overwhelmingly positive.

Wherever I stopped, crowds of curious men and boys gathered around my bicycle, fascinated by every detail of my journey. Drivers often followed for kilometres to ask questions or take photographs. Although the attention could sometimes feel intense, it was almost always friendly curiosity rather than hostility. Women were less visible in public life, but from passing vehicles I often received discreet waves, smiles and nods of encouragement that created a quiet sense of connection.

To maintain the line of my source-to-sea-to-source journey, I rode the 470km from the border through Kunduz and Faizabad to Ishkashim, gateway to the Wakhan Corridor. This narrow, 350km finger of north-eastern Afghanistan, created during the 19th century ‘Great Game’ as a buffer between the British and Russian empires, lies at the heart of the ‘Pamir Knot’, where the Hindu Kush, Pamir, Tien Shan and Karakoram mountain ranges converge.

The cycling itself was extraordinarily demanding. Rough tracks, steep climbs, loose rock, sand, flooded sections and washed-out roads made progress painfully slow. It took three days to cover the almost 200km to Sarhad-e-Broghil and another day and a half to reach the Little Pamir on a newly constructed mountain road.



One of 28 contributory streams flows into the West Chelab stream, about 5km from the source

After 149 days on the road, tracing the rivers of the Aral Sea Basin from the source of the Syr Darya in Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan, I finally arrived at Lake Chaqmaqin, one of the recognised sources of the Oxus. Surrounded by glacier-capped peaks marking the borders of Tajikistan, Pakistan and China, I stood at Lake Chaqmaqin’s shoreline, more than 4,000 metres above sea level. In celebration, I lifted my bicycle above my head. I felt on top of the world in a region commonly referred to as the Roof of the World – and was now within reach of solving a 3,000-year-old geographical mystery.

Discovering the true source of the Oxus

The team – British geographer Rupert McCowan, Afghan guide and mountaineer Malang Darya, Polish filmmaker Adrian Dmoch and I – set up camp at Aqtashtog, a remote Kyrgyz winter settlement just 4km from Lake Chaqmaqin, and adjacent to the point where the Chelab Stream bifurcates.

At first light, we set off into the unknown. Behind us stretched sweeping vistas of Lake Chaqmaqin, the Little Pamir and the jagged peaks of the Hindu Kush. Ahead stretched the beautiful Chelab Valley,

Glacier and mounds of glacial moraine, 2.5km from the source



a landscape of streams, grasslands and glacier-covered mountains.

After trekking 6.5km across trackless, stony terrain, we reached the confluence of the two principal tributaries that form the Chelab. Here we faced an important decision: which stream should we follow?

Before the expedition, I had studied satellite imagery and an old Soviet map, and measured both tributaries. They appeared similar in length and elevation, although the western branch was slightly longer. Standing at the confluence, however, the answer was obvious.

The West stream (as we called it) flowed through a broad bed of smoothed riverine stones about 40 metres wide, with numerous smaller channels flowing through the rocks. The landscape clearly showed evidence of substantial flow over a very long period. By contrast, the East stream spread into several much smaller channels, flowing across grass-covered ground, indicating significantly lower water volumes.

The evidence convinced us that the West tributary was the principal stream.

We followed it upstream and established camp beside the river. The setting was idyllic, but our attention was focused on what might lie beyond.

The next morning, we set off before dawn. From my research, I knew we had approximately 6.5km to cover before reaching the glacial headwaters, but in remote mountain terrain distances can be deceptive.

In all, we crossed 28 tributaries originating from glaciers and springs. Gradually the valley became narrower and the steep-walled, glacier-topped mountains, higher.

Approaching the glacier at the head of the Chelab, we reached a formidable barrier: a kilometre-long mound of glacial moraine. At its base, around 20 springs emerged through the porous rock, gradually combining to form the headwaters of the Chelab Stream. It took nearly an hour to scramble across unstable boulders and finally up the bank of the glacier lake.

I stood quietly, absorbing the moment. The scene – the lake, the glacier and the surrounding wall of mountains – was mesmerising

All of a sudden, we were there. Wow!

I stood quietly, absorbing the moment. The scene – the lake, the glacier and the surrounding wall of mountains – was mesmerising.

The glacial lake nestled beneath the towering Chelab Glacier at an altitude of 4,951 metres. Its murky green appearance was due to the existence of glacial flour, once-frozen dust particles that had become suspended in the lake’s freshly thawed waters. Small icebergs drifted silently across its surface. The stillness was punctuated only by the cracking of ice and the sound of meltwater cascading from the glacier.

It felt particularly fitting that we made the discovery during the United Nations’ International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation.

We concluded that the lake represented the ultimate source of the Chelab Stream and therefore the true source of the Oxus River. In honour of our guide and friend, we named it Lake Malang, recognising Malang Darya’s achievement as the first Afghani to climb Afghanistan’s highest mountain, Mount Noshaq.

The discovery brought together the central themes of my Breaking the Cycle Central Asia expedition. Standing beside Lake Malang, at the beginning of Central Asia’s greatest river, I was reminded that the future of these fragile headwaters – and the millions of people who depend upon them – rests not only with the communities who live here, but with all of us. Whether local actions create global consequences, as with the Aral Sea, or global actions create local impacts, as with the glaciers of the Pamirs, the lesson is the same.

We are all connected.



Kate at Lake Malang, the true source of the Oxus. The plaque was a memento, written in three languages, to mark the discovery

DR KATE LEEMING OAM

Dr Kate Leeming OAM is an Australian explorer and endurance cyclist who has so far cycled 106,000km on her expeditions – two and a half times the Earth’s circumference. In 2010, she became the first person in history to cycle an unbroken line from Africa’s most westerly to its most easterly points: from Pointe des Almadies, Senegal to Cape Hafun, Puntland, Somalia. She’s also an educator, presenter, author and documentary filmmaker. In 2016, Kate was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Education by the University of Western Australia and in 2023, a Medal of the Order of Australia. She is currently setting up the Breaking the Cycle Foundation to help alleviate poverty, support the environment, contribute towards equality, and provide leadership education.

www.breakingthecycle.education

CARVED IN TRADITION

With the arrival of autumn in London comes the reopening of the 1910 Dining Room, and a mouthwatering new menu from our culinary team. The new season also brings a fresh offering – a daily roast, carved at the table and served with a selection of traditional and seasonal side dishes. Here, Editor Laura Winter explores the history and traditions of this very British culinary staple

Few meals are as deeply woven into British culture as the traditional roast dinner. Served in homes, pubs and restaurants across the country, it brings families and friends together in a shared acknowledgement of Britain's traditions and social history. Defined by roasted meat, crisp potatoes, seasonal vegetables, rich gravy, and accompaniments such as Yorkshire pudding, the roast dinner has endured for centuries while remaining unmistakably British.

The roots of the British roast can be traced to medieval England, when large joints of meat were cooked over open flames. Roasting was one of the most practical methods of preparing food for large households, with meat suspended on spits above open hearths and turned slowly to cook evenly. In some kitchens, servants carried out this labour; in others, specially bred 'turnspit dogs' powered rotating mechanisms. At the time, meat consumption reflected social status. Wealthier households enjoyed beef, venison, pork and game in abundance, while poorer families relied more heavily on grains, bread and seasonal produce. Feasting

played an important social role, and roasted meats often formed the centrepiece of banquets and celebrations.

By the Tudor period, roasting had become firmly embedded in British cooking. Open hearths remained central to domestic life, and serving well-roasted meat was regarded as a mark of hospitality and prosperity.

Of all meats, beef came to occupy a special place in British culture. By the 18th century, Britain had gained a reputation for hearty roast beef dinners, so much so that beef became a symbol of national strength and abundance. As agriculture improved and meat became more accessible, roast dinners gradually spread beyond aristocratic households and into everyday domestic life.

So closely did roast beef become associated with British identity that it shaped perceptions beyond Britain's shores. In France, the English came to be known as *les rosbifs* – literally, 'the roast beefs' – a nickname born from centuries of Anglo-French rivalry. Though playful

and occasionally tinged with mockery, *les rosbifs* endures as a reminder of how deeply roast beef became woven into Britain's cultural image.

The tradition most familiar today, the Sunday roast, became firmly established during the 19th century. Industrialisation transformed working life, leaving little time for family meals during the week. Sunday, however, offered respite from labour and gave families the chance to gather around the table, and enjoy a substantial meal of slow-roasted meat served with vegetables, potatoes and gravy made from the meat's juices. The Sunday roast soon evolved into a weekly ritual that reinforced family bonds, offering an occasion for extended conversation and

shared traditions. Leftovers also played an important role. Cold meat might appear in sandwiches or pies the next day, while surplus vegetables could be transformed into bubble and squeak, reflecting Britain's longstanding culinary emphasis on thrift and practicality.

Britain had gained a reputation for hearty roast beef dinners, so much so that beef became a symbol of national strength and abundance

THE HISTORY OF THE YORKSHIRE PUDDING

ORIGINS (EARLY 1700S)

Simple batter (flour, eggs, milk) cooked beneath roasting meat to catch dripping fat

PURPOSE (18TH CENTURY)

Served as a filling first course to reduce the amount of expensive meat needed for the main dish

**IDENTITY
(LATE 1700S–1800S)**
Becomes associated with Yorkshire; the name 'Yorkshire pudding' replaces earlier 'dripping pudding'

SHIFT TO MAIN COURSE (19TH CENTURY)

Moves from starter to accompaniment, becoming a standard feature of roast beef dinners across Britain

TODAY
A core element of the British roast – crisp, airy and used to soak up gravy rather than reduce meat consumption



Despite changing lifestyles and increasingly global tastes, the British roast continues to hold an enduring place in British family life and culture. Vegetarian and vegan alternatives, including nut roasts and plant-based centrepieces, reflect changing diets, yet the structure and spirit of the meal endure.

Ultimately, the lasting appeal of the British roast lies not only in its flavours, but in what it represents. It is a meal shaped by history, ritual and shared experience – a tradition that gathers

people around the table and connects generations through familiar comforts. Few British families agree entirely on what makes the perfect roast, and friendly debate persists over which vegetables belong on the plate, or whether Yorkshire pudding should be reserved as an accompaniment only for beef. Yet perhaps the roast dinner endures precisely because the details are less important than the ritual itself. In a fast-moving world, what continues to matter is the tradition of

gathering together, sharing food, and setting aside time for conversation and company. Whatever appears on the plate, the Sunday roast remains one of Britain's most familiar reminders that meals are often at their most meaningful when shared.

Rediscover the British roast when the 1910 Dining Room reopens in September. Visit rosl.org.uk/dining or call +44 (0)20 7408 0214 to book your table

EXPLORING ENGLAND'S COAST

England's coastline has long offered some of the country's most varied landscapes, encompassing dramatic cliffs, wide estuaries, bustling harbours, quiet beaches and nature-rich marshland. Yet until recently, experiencing it in its entirety meant navigating a patchwork of disconnected trails. The King Charles III England Coast Path changes that, uniting England's coastal paths into a walking route that gives unprecedented access to the country's shores

Mounts Bay; ©Natural England

Hastings beach and pier; ©Explore Kent and East Sussex County Council

Dumpton Gap; ©Explore Kent

Officially launched by His Majesty The King in March at Seven Sisters in East Sussex, the King Charles III England Coast Path represents one of the most ambitious access projects undertaken in England for generations. Stretching for almost 2,700 miles, it is the world's longest managed coastal walking route, connecting existing national trails, enhancing infrastructure, and opening previously inaccessible stretches of shoreline to the public.

Its creation, however, has been years in the making. Work on the route formally began in 2010, when an initial section near Weymouth opened ahead of the London 2012 Olympics, giving visitors access to coastal viewpoints overlooking the Olympic sailing events. Delivery has proceeded section by section, a complex process involving negotiations with landowners, environmental protections, new signage and path construction, as well as careful management of sensitive habitats and erosion-prone landscapes. And while the majority of the route is now open, some stretches are still being developed, improving future access to many of England's coastal areas.

The scale of the path is matched by the diversity of landscapes it encompasses. Here, we explore some of the highlights along the route, revealing the habitats, vistas, history and local character that make the King Charles III England Coast Path such a compelling way to discover England.

Langdon Bay Cliffs; ©Explore Kent

THE SOUTH COAST

The southern section of the King Charles III England Coast Path is home to some of England's most familiar vistas: the white cliffs of Dover, Brighton Pier, Camber Sands, Portsmouth's Spinnaker Tower and the Needles on the Isle of Wight draw visitors from across the UK, and indeed the rest of the world. But beyond the postcard views, walkers can discover dramatic scenery and tranquil stretches in equal measure, punctuated by layers of history.

In Kent, Botany Bay and nearby Kingsgate Bay are framed by chalk stacks and sheltered sands, while Dumpton Gap provides a quieter stretch of shoreline beneath white cliffs. Following the walk to the south, the coastline between Ramsgate and Folkestone offers a huge range of maritime history, including medieval castles at Dover, Deal and Walmer, and the Napoleonic defences at Western Heights, as well as stunning views over the Channel.

Sussex's Seven Sisters remain one of England's defining coastal landscapes, making their sweeping chalk cliffs the perfect location for the official launch of the trail by His Majesty The King earlier this year. Rye Harbour offers salt marshes, birdlife and wide skies in place of steep escarpments, while at Hastings the trail winds up from the Old Town to the Country Park, with far-reaching views across the county's shoreline.

In Hampshire, the trail passes through bustling towns and cities with historic dockyards and harbours, while also taking in picturesque coastal villages such as Emsworth and Langstone, offering contrasting scenery layered with centuries of maritime history. And across the Solent, the Isle of Wight offers an easy extension to the journey, taking in peaceful beaches and stunning coastal views. 📍

Emsworth; ©Natural England, Strong Island Media



THE EAST OF ENGLAND

In the east of England, the King Charles III England Coast Path offers a more gentle kind of exploration through wildlife habitats, wide horizons and historic coastal towns. Birdwatchers can soak up the solitude of the more remote sections of the path, while history-lovers can discover the market towns and villages dotted along the way.

Around Boston near the Lincolnshire coast, the land stretches into salt marsh and the wide estuary of the Wash. Boston Marina provides a threshold into this setting, overlooked by the remarkable St Botolph's Church – better known as Boston Stump – whose towering 81-metre Gothic spire is visible for miles around. Boston's maritime story reaches far beyond the Wash: the town was the home of the Pilgrim Fathers, who would go on to help establish Boston, Massachusetts, carrying the name across the Atlantic.

Further south, the Suffolk coast offers a different character. Southwold, with its painted beach huts, pier and working lighthouse, remains one of the county's best-loved seaside towns, while nearby Pakefield Cliffs reveal an older story: an exposed coastline of geological significance where some of Britain's earliest evidence of human habitation has been uncovered.

THE NORTHERN COASTLINES

For walkers seeking to experience some of the most dramatic scenery and natural beauty England has to offer, the northern reaches of the King Charles III England Coast Path offer some of the country's most memorable coastal walks. Rugged cliffs and wide panoramas of open skies offer nature lovers a breathtaking connection with the great outdoors, while small fishing villages and the bright lights of some of the North's most vibrant cities give local explorers the chance to discover the history and culture of this diverse region.

Northumberland provides some of the route's finest moments, not least around Bamburgh, where the magnificent Bamburgh Castle stands dramatically above sweeping sands on one side and the village green on the other. Once the seat of the early kings of Northumbria, it is now one of the largest inhabited castles in the country. Open year-round, its rich history and striking location make it a rewarding stop for those exploring this stretch of coast.

Further south along the north-east coast, the path reveals lesser-known treasures. Near Whitely Bay, St Mary's Lighthouse sits on its own tidal island, a much-loved landmark reached by causeway and offering spectacular views for visitors willing to climb the 137 steps to the top. Meanwhile, the stretch between Filey Brigg and North Gare offers one of Yorkshire's most unexpectedly beautiful perspectives: the view down towards the village of Staithes, its red-roofed cottages and cobbled streets huddled around one of Yorkshire's most picturesque harbours.



Minack Theatre; ©Natural England



THE WEST COUNTRY

The West Country is famous for its beaches, and is one of the most popular stretches of coast in the UK. Alongside celebrated landmarks sit hidden corners that many visitors rarely encounter. For walkers seeking variety over relatively short distances, it is one of the most rewarding regions to explore.

In Cornwall, Helford estuary, which can be crossed via ferry, combines water and woodland to offer a quieter side to the county. The route around Gillan Creek gives walkers a wooded, more enclosed, landscape, while the coast path nearer Falmouth has been improved to offer greater accessibility. Further west, the stretch around Mount's Bay and Penzance combines long sea panoramas and stunning scenery, including regular views towards St Michael's Mount – a historic castle positioned atop a tidal island and accessible via a cobbled causeway at low tide. Beyond Penzance, the coastline becomes more rugged, with the route passing landmarks such as the breathtaking Minack Theatre, built directly into the granite cliffs overlooking the Atlantic.

Further north, the view over Porlock Bay from Hurlstone Point demonstrates another defining characteristic of the western coast: the point where the high moorland of Exmoor meets the sea. Walkers along this section of the path can enjoy revived ancient paths and scenic views, while taking in the varied landscape the Atlantic coast has to offer. Lighthouses such as Tater Du and historic coastal defences at St Anthony Head all add a historical layer to the walking experience, linking today's paths with centuries of seafaring life.



Parts of the East and South sections of the King Charles III England Coast Path can be reached from London by train in under 90 minutes. Make Over-Seas House the base for your explorations, and book a room at rosl.org.uk/accommodation.

Members visiting from outside the UK can also take advantage of our reciprocal arrangements with the Norfolk Club in Norwich, the Clifton Club in Bristol and the Athenaeum in Liverpool – all within easy reach of the King Charles III England Coast Path by car or public transport. Find out more about our reciprocal clubs at rosl.org.uk/reciprocal-clubs.

Further details about the King Charles III England Coast Path, including maps, difficulty levels and section closures, can be found at www.nationaltrail.co.uk

DISCOVERING LONDON *Anew*

The new London Museum site in Smithfield has been described as a 'once-in-a-generation opportunity to reconceive what a museum for London can be' – what can visitors expect to feel or experience differently from the moment they walk in?

The Museum is porous – it connects to the streets, both visually and by the entrances. In the autumn, we will be opening the first phase of the project, the magnificent General Market and West Poultry Avenue. And of course there is the Thameslink Train – if you're on your way to or from Luton you'll actually pass through the Museum and be able to see into our gallery. This will certainly be unique.

The new museum's permanent galleries are housed within the restored Victorian General Market at Smithfield – what makes Smithfield the perfect home for the museum, and what drew you to this historic building in particular?

Our new home in Smithfield is housed in a building built by Sir Horace Jones, the City of London Corporation's architect, who designed Tower Bridge and Leadenhall Market – both buildings with huge charisma. It's just the same with the General Market. There will be many entrances, and also deep basements, which are great for showing objects from the London Collection. It includes complex vaults, which create a

The new London Museum will open in Smithfield on 28 November, offering a fresh way to explore the city's past, present and future. We spoke to its Director, Sharon Ament, about what to expect

sort of underground labyrinth, wonderful for immersive exhibitions, and on the upper floor we have a huge public space in the Linbury Hall, which tells the story of 'London in Our Time' – London within living memory. Our walls are in effect shops, which will face on to the streets, so to my mind it has all the ingredients that draw people in and make them want to stay.

This relaunch has been years in the making. What has been the most exciting or ambitious element of bringing the new museum to life?
The imagination that hundreds of thousands of people have brought to this museum for London – this has been the most exciting

Clockwise from left: 'Past Time' ©Secchi Smith Atelier Brückner; 'Real Time' – National Heritage Street ©Secchi Smith, The AOC; Installation of the oculus to the dome, ©London Museum

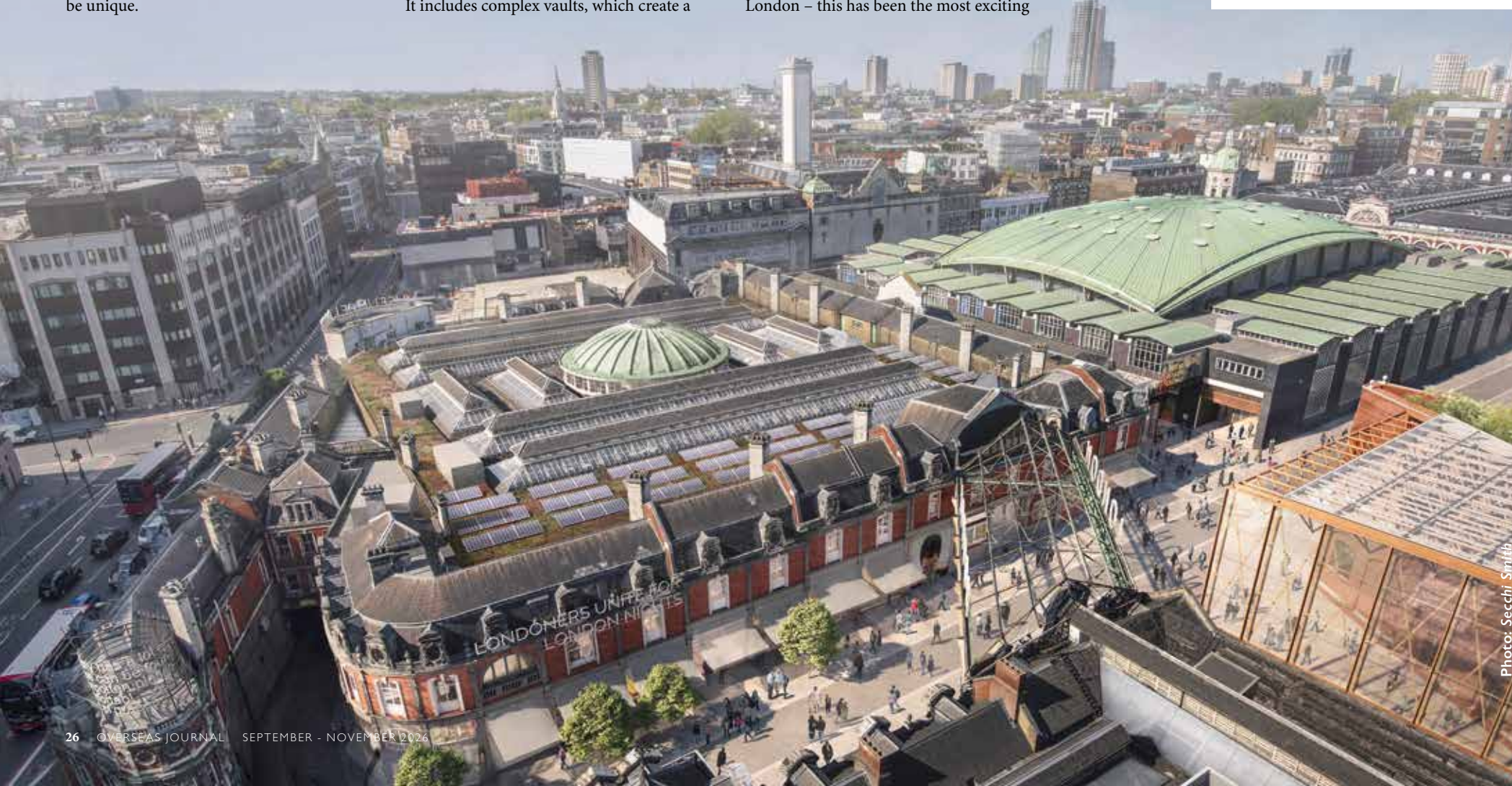
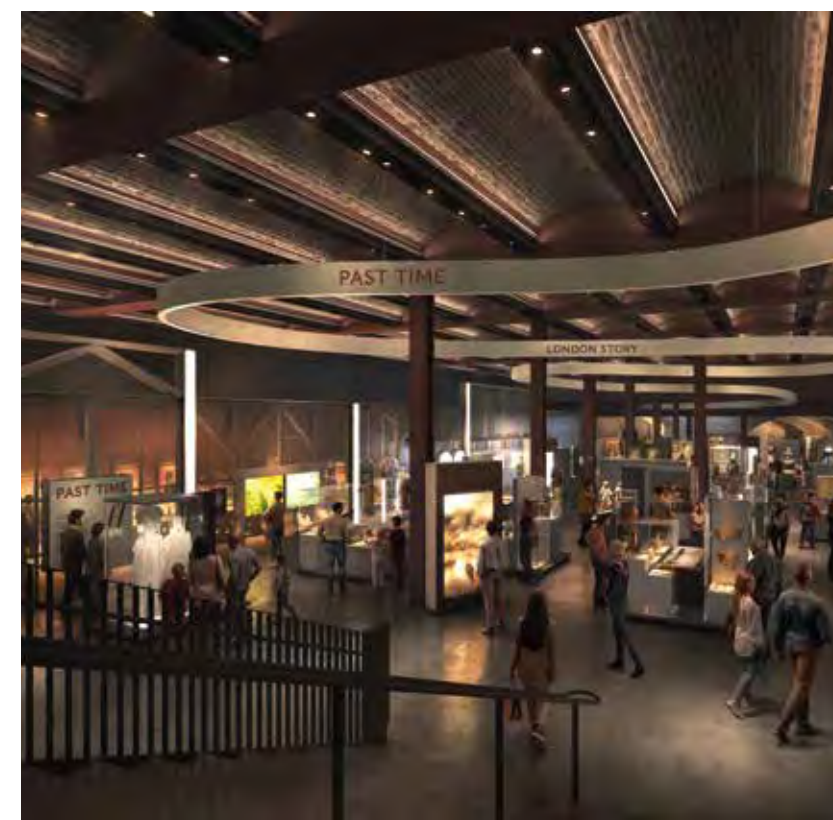


Photo: Secchi Smith

thing, throughout the project. It's not a project created by just one mind, it's involved many people – over 100,000 to date. That has been thrilling to see, with many new ideas pushing the boundaries of what it means to be a museum: from new ways of displaying objects and the concept of having longer opening times, to partnerships with guest editors and ideas for the food we serve. It's all adding up to something really rather different, at least from any other museum I know.

The new museum will open early and close late – how important was it to reflect the rhythms and energy of London as a global, 24-hour city?

London Museum is part of this global capital; that's really thrilling, and like London itself we need to be more '24 hour' and open to everyone. This question of being like London and living the same rhythm is, as you say, really important – by being in the same 'time zone' as London, we will be able



By stumbling across something unintended, I hope that you learn something new and think about London in a new way

to link into the night workers and the commuters, as well as the school children and the tourists. It feels as though this is our main job, to be London.

The London Museum has always told the story of the city and its people. How does the new museum bring together the many different stories that make up London today?

This is a process of deep curation, which my colleagues do very well. We have thought long and hard about the stories that we will tell and we've been

aided by an excellent academic panel comprising archaeologists, geographers and other social scientists, as well as historians of course. We have also included people whose own experiences give them a sort of individual expert knowledge. This mashup of different sorts of expertise has enabled us to deploy the London Collection to make stunning exhibits and to bring the very latest thinking to the stories that we are telling. ●

This issue of Overseas celebrates exploration and discovery – how does the new museum invite visitors to discover London in ways they might not expect?

We have a wide range of new intelligence and research that has informed our displays, which will bring new knowledge to the fore and introduce new ways of thinking about the people who have lived in proximity to the Thames, going back to far before the Romans. We invite visitors to explore our galleries, our objects and online collections, and we hope that people do it with curious minds. That's the best way to engage with any museum. If you come into the museum wanting to understand more about Roman Londinium, I hope that you pass through the City Machine and think about the infrastructure that makes London function. If you come into to see the ballerina Pavlova's famous dying swan dress, I hope you stop at the Buckingham Palace switchboard and imagine what it must have been like living in a royal household. By stumbling across something unintended, I hope that you learn something new and think about London in a new way.



Clockwise from left: planning image of the museum at night ©Asif Khan Studio Mir; 'Our Time' ©Secchi Smith Asif Khan; The dome of General Market has undergone a stunning facelift; the General Market's Phoenix Column; conservation work on a mosaic in the museum's collection (all ©London Museum); planning image of the train window ©Secchi Smith Atelier Brückner

In an age where so much information is instantly accessible, how can a physical museum still offer a genuine sense of discovery?

Easily – to my mind, there's nothing like seeing an object, getting a sense of it in real space. You may be with others and conversations may crop up, and the sense of discovery and learning can be shared and amplified and added to through these conversations. It's amazing just what we learn from others.

Physically being in the room rather than simply getting a sense of life through a screen is what it means to be human. To be with others in the real world and being in a museum surrounded by the stuff of the lives of millions of people makes you realise

that we are not isolated, we are part of something bigger in time and in space.

Finally, do you hope visitors leave with a desire to go back out into the city and explore it differently – and if so, how?

Absolutely, I want them to look at the environment around them, the buildings, what people wear, who we all are, and to feel compelled to go further and deeper in their understanding. We have our London Museum Docklands and our brilliant digital resources, and there are over 200 museums right across London. I am confident that there is something of interest for everyone and anyone – London is such a rich subject.

MAKE A DAY (OR EVENING) OF IT WITH ROSL

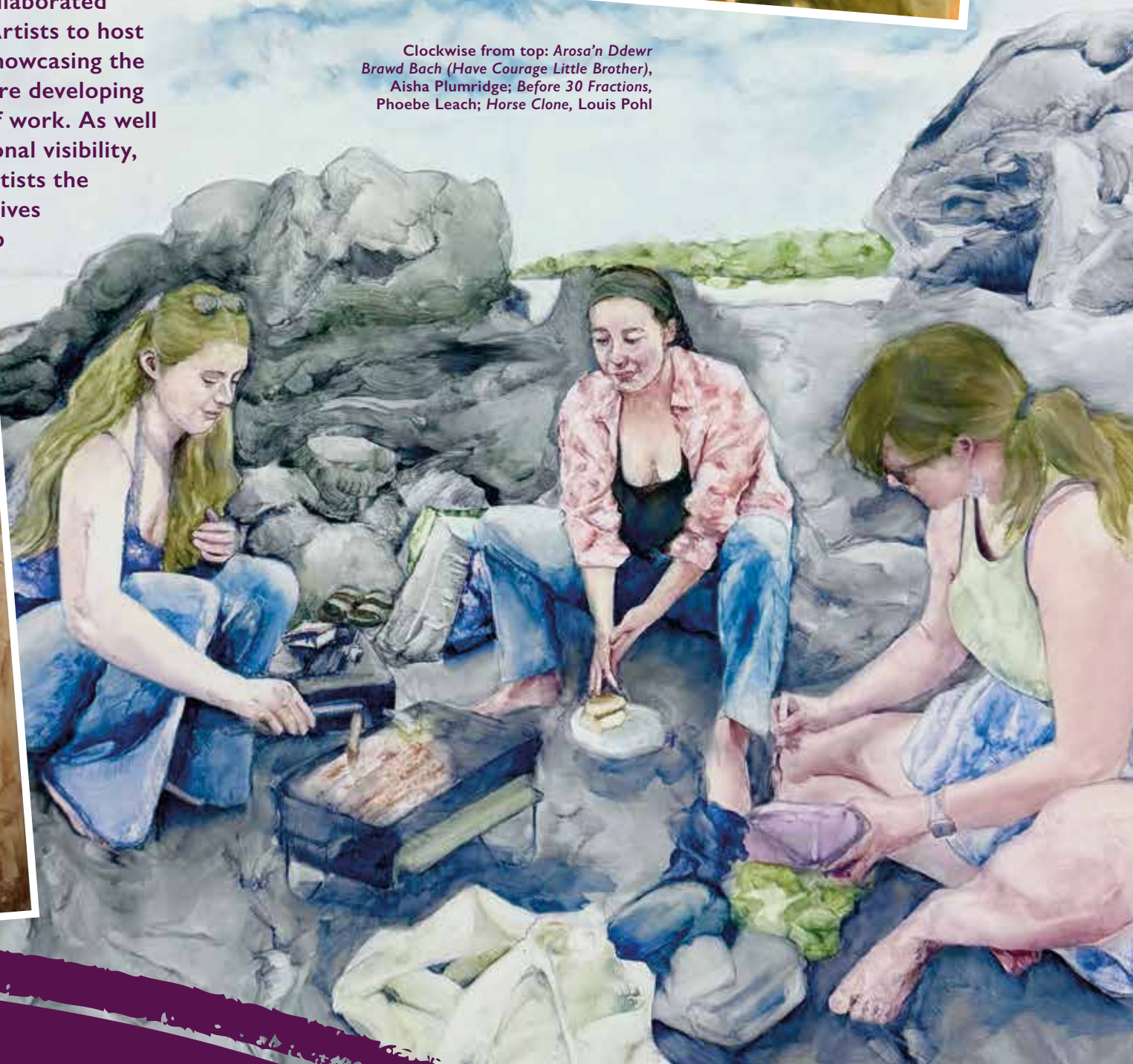
If you're planning a visit to the new London Museum, why not make the most of your time in the city with a stop at Over-Seas House? Just a short journey away, the Clubhouse offers a peaceful retreat for lunch, dinner or an overnight stay in elegant surroundings. This autumn, members can also enjoy the reopening of the 1910 Dining Room and its new daily roast – a perfect way to round off a day of discovery with a distinctly British tradition (see pages 20–21).

RBA RISING STARS

This summer, ROSL once again collaborated with the Royal Society of British Artists to host the RBA Rising Stars exhibition, showcasing the work of early-career artists who are developing ambitious and distinctive bodies of work. As well as offering them valuable professional visibility, inclusion in this exhibition gives artists the chance to take advantage of initiatives such as the RBA Rome Scholarship Programme. Here, we find out about the three finalists shortlisted for this four-week residency in Italy



Clockwise from top: Arosa'n Ddewr
Brawd Bach (Have Courage Little Brother),
Aisha Plumridge; *Before 30 Fractions*,
Phoebe Leach; *Horse Clone*, Louis Pohl



PHOEBE LEACH

Tell us a little about yourself and your background as an artist.

I am an Edinburgh-based painter and printmaker, having graduated with a BA (Hons) in painting from Edinburgh College of Art. Exhibiting across the UK, I have received the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Award (2025), the Paolozzi Travel Award (2023) and the Scottish Portrait Awards' Young Fine Artist Commendation (2022).

My work captures meaningful human connections by documenting individuals amidst action: engaging with tasks, environments and one another. I combine observational drawing, printmaking and painting with memory and emotion, creating pieces that reflect the complexity of human environments.

I am passionate about art's potential social impact: its ability to raise awareness and ignite conversations. I have collaborated with several UK sail training charities, and was the resident artist in the Department of Clinical Neurosciences at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh from 2024 to 2025. This work celebrates the surgical team whilst helping patients create a narrative to understand their experiences.

Tell us about *Before 30 Fractions*, which was included in the RBA Rising Stars exhibition at ROSL – what inspired the piece?

I painted *Before 30 Fractions* at the beginning of 2026 as I began to explore and process my experience of being diagnosed with a long-term health condition. The

portrait depicts me and two friends during a period when I was undergoing diagnosis and treatment. At that time, the significance of both ordinary and extraordinary moments subtly shifted. Daily life became punctuated by many hospital appointments, yet it was equally shaped by what unfolded in between: mundane activities, special occasions, and time spent with friends, such as a day at the beach in North Berwick.

By presenting a small glimpse of this period, I hope to expand understanding of what long-term illnesses can look like, who may live with them, and that moments aren't always as simple as they seem. By focusing on a seemingly ordinary moment, the painting acknowledges how experiences and emotions often exist beneath the surface of what is visible.

What does being part of the RBA Rising Stars exhibition mean to you?

Being part of the RBA Rising Stars exhibition means a great deal to me. This is the second year that I have had the privilege of exhibiting in the show, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity.

Two years after graduating, opportunities to exhibit my work and increase exposure are invaluable at this early stage of my career. Being shortlisted as a finalist for the RBA Rome Scholarship, alongside exhibiting my work, has been both affirming and motivating, strengthening my confidence in my practice and helping me maintain momentum as I continue to establish myself as an artist.

Instagram @art.phoebe

AISHA PLUMRIDGE

Tell us a little about yourself and your background as an artist.

I'm 24 years old, from Anglesey in North Wales. I now live and work in Edinburgh, where I graduated from Edinburgh College of Art in 2025. My narrative oil paintings combine a sense of the mystical with the everyday. Strange worlds filled with characters and stories, my works are enquiries into the universal aspects of human nature, from the absurd and grotesque, to the tender and intimate. Referencing both family members and strangers I meet, as well as the landscapes of North Wales, my work explores the subtle oddities and peculiarities of people, employing figures as symbolic representations of societal archetypes. Figures are often seen to be acting mischievously, dreaming, dancing, gossiping, as stories quietly unfold around them.

Tell us about *Arosa'n Ddewr Brawd Bach (Have Courage Little Brother)*, which was included in the RBA Rising Stars exhibition at ROSL – what inspired the piece?

Arosa'n Ddewr Brawd Bach (Have Courage Little Brother) is a personal visual anecdote of my brother and me, reflecting on the passage from childhood into adulthood through an act of play. It recalls my role as an older sister and the quiet emotional growth we attain as we face a world beyond that which was safe and familiar. Beyond the checkerboard playroom, an infinite ocean meets the horizon, emblematic of the infinite and boundless possibilities of the world. In the room is a mysterious box, sealed stubbornly, upon which lies a lifeless daffodil. The girl flicks it away as her brother, seated behind her, weeps. The act is both tender and

It is an honour to be part of the RBA Rising Stars exhibition, representing both a privilege and a moment of affirmation



resolute: the flower's removal marking a painful shedding of innocence and the acceptance of change. Across the room, a foreboding shadow dances with a lingering presence. Yet, throughout the scene remains this undercurrent of courage, a perseverance to move forward despite fear, carrying the gathered knowledge from childhood into an unknown future.

What does being part of the RBA Rising Stars exhibition mean to you?

It is an honour to be part of the RBA Rising Stars exhibition, representing both a privilege and a moment of affirmation. As an emerging

artist, the opportunity to exhibit alongside such talented peers within the context of the Royal Society of British Artists offers valuable exposure while recognising the commitment and development of my practice.

The exhibition has allowed me to share my work with a wider audience beyond Edinburgh and Wales, and marks my first exhibition in London. I am over the moon to have been shortlisted as a finalist, and deeply grateful for the support and encouragement this recognition provides as I continue to develop my practice and share my vision with the world.

Instagram @aisha.lily

LOUIS POHL

Tell us a little about yourself and your background as an artist.

I'm a British artist whose practice moves between drawing, painting and architectural thinking, and centres on the city as both subject and structure. My artworks are often wholly developed from imagination. I combine figurative scenes with fragmented urban environments, producing images that tend to feel intimate and often come from research and reflect a system or a situation in part of society. I normally use fine line ink drawing, often with a little charcoal, and sometimes chalk for the light tones. Drawing underpins my practice, but these form the basis for layered paintings where figures, symbols and spatial elements interact. I try to represent what's really happening in society and life today: internally and externally.

I was raised a Hare Krishna in East London. This early environment fostered a tendency to want to reflect systems of belief, behaviour and collective life. Today, rather than depicting specific places, I tend to work to construct mnemonic cityscapes: psychological and social landscapes shaped by memory, observation and inference.

Tell us about *Horse Clone*, which was included in the RBA Rising Stars exhibition at ROSL – what inspired the piece?

The *Horse Clone* painting looks fitting in the Royal Over-Seas League. But if you look a little closer, you will see a sci-fi narrative about the cloning of horses and the shifting nature of sport.

The artwork explores the ethics of biological reproduction through cloning, and was inspired by the increasing use of closed horses in polo.



Early in 2025, after a four-year-long legal battle, a Florida court sided with Adolfo Cambiaso, the multiple-champion polo player who had created a 'perfect horse' whom he cloned indefinitely, in a high-profile court battle with his former business partner Alan Meeker over the rights to genetic material and cloned horses. This created an important legal case study for the ownership of DNA of another living being. The artwork shows this series of events as a kind of commemorative drawing with gold-embazoned details. Next to it is a larger painting of the horses cloning into a multiplicity, and at the very top, Cambiaso is shown decapitating his arch-nemesis in a Caravaggio-like moment with his polo club as the sword. It's shocking, yet I almost wanted it to feel like an artifact that had always been on the walls of a members' club. That the sci-fi is unfolding: it's also now history.

What does being part of the RBA Rising Stars exhibition mean to you?

Awards bring recognition and help expose the work to a wider audience. They also set standards, by promoting artworks that are both pretty to see but also necessary for the world to discover. The RBA Rising Stars exhibition comes at a turning point in my artistic career. It helps me to build a little more momentum, hopefully grow an audience, and be discovered by many people for the first time. It also brings camaraderie. I met some artists through the shows, and being side by side made me think deeply about their work alongside my own. It's a chance to self-reflect on the process at the heart of art – the bigger goal – to achieve some self-mastery of the craft to keep one's own vision, uniqueness, spirit and vitality.

Instagram @lalit_madhav_

COMING TO THE CLUBHOUSE THIS AUTUMN

This autumn, the Clubhouse Central Lounge will present 'A Fragile World', a new exhibition by Christian Furr, the youngest artist ever to paint an official portrait of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This exciting exhibition will open in the autumn – more details will be shared on rosl.org.uk/arts and our social media channels nearer the opening



In September, former AMC Gold Medal-winning pianists Tessa Uys and Ben Schoeman will return to ROSL for a special concert celebrating the works of Mozart, to mark the 270th anniversary of the composer's birth. Ahead of this performance, ROSL's Director of Music, Grace Meadows, asked Tessa and Ben what there is still to discover about one of classical music's most familiar figures – not only for audiences returning to his music, but for performers who continue to find new challenges and surprises in works they know so well

As listeners, we think we know Mozart and his music, but how can we as listeners and/or performers listen out for what in his compositions made and makes him so exceptional?

Mozart created new compositional avenues within the rich palette of 18th-century techniques. It is his simple but fresh perspective that renders it hard to perform his music. As the legendary Alfred Brendel said, 'we must beware of repeated assertions about the simplicity of Mozart's music. For the contemporaries it was frequently too complicated. To concentrate only on what counts in Mozart is questionable, because everything counts.' There is, performance-wise, an enormous degree of exposure, in that every scale, ornament or articulation appears, as it were, under a magnifying glass. This makes both the performer and the music itself vulnerable to some extent and contributes to the distinctive experience when listening to it. One example from our programme can be heard in the extended scale passages a

third apart in Busoni's *Duetтино Concertante* (based on Mozart's *Piano Concerto in F major K 459*) that need to synchronise so completely on the two pianos, and when it is achieved with precision, the result is simply riveting.

To answer your question further, one could say Mozart was deeply subversive in his treatment of musical conventions. Rather than mindlessly obeying the strict rule of the classical era, he frequently bent, ignored or manipulated them to toy with the listeners' expectations.

How much discovery work was Mozart doing with his compositions, particularly with his piano pieces, as he embraced the new musical technology of the time with the piano?

The piano or clavier as an instrument evolved exponentially during Mozart's lifetime. A pianistic rival of Mozart was Muzio Clementi, who travelled to Vienna in 1781. At that point, the two composer-pianists performed in a sort of pianistic dual with each other, and this

accentuated the nature of the instrument and of their playing styles. However, Mozart retained a softer and more gentle approach whereas Clementi's was more robust. As performers, we are thus in a position to devise a historically informed approach to play Mozart's piano works and imbue them with the necessary chiaroscuro of colour and touch.

Given Mozart's globe-trotting childhood, how much do you think his travelling and discovering of new cultures and countries might have influenced his composing?

One of the significant places Mozart visited as a child was England, where he made friends with another gifted young musician, Thomas Linley. Mozart's visit to England was also a precursor to Haydn's later successes in London and Oxford, and indicates the magnanimous culture that was present in Britain at the time. In Italy, the young Mozart employed his linguistic skills by composing operas in Italian. In France he lost his mother, and that element of

Memories OF MOZART

BEN SCHOEMAN

'As a child, I heard Mozart's piano concertos at the International Competition in Pretoria in South Africa. It was always fascinating to hear the different stylistic approaches of pianists from all over the world. Nowadays, there are sadly not so many competitions that prescribe Mozart – although it was quite joyful to see that the Cliburn Competition in Texas still takes this seriously.'



tragedy and poignancy permeated some of the works of the period. So, it seems that biography and geography impacted him greatly. Not to mention his eventual shift to Vienna itself – a city where cultural diversity reigned supreme, with Italian, Austro-Hungarian and even Turkish stylistic counterparts. All these elements contributed to the rich inherent tapestry of characterisation in Mozart's operas which radiated to his instrumental music as well.

Which musical soundworlds was Mozart discovering in his early childhood and into his teenage years that helped him form the foundations of his technique and early style?

The little boy Mozart grew up in an extraordinary environment, where he gained cutting-edge knowledge about violin playing from his father Leopold (who was a member of the Archbishop in Salzburg's orchestra). However, at the tender age of three, Wolfgang showed much interest in the clavier and his father gave him strict instruction. He made such rapid progress that he soon outshone his older sister Nannerl. He was only four when he composed his first pieces for the clavier. Already, here, we find that he knew the conventions of the day but had an almost insatiable desire to discover and explore new possibilities on his own

instrument and on others. The church played a vast role in the Salzburg of Mozart's youth. Here, he composed many masses for the beautiful cathedral (where he also served as organist) and St Peter's Church. In addition to these masses, other important works were written, including the *Concerto for Two Pianos in E Flat, K 365*. In these spiritual compositions, we start to perceive a more introspective side of the composer alongside some very beautiful harmonies and melodic lines. Compare the piano sonatas to the gentle moments in any *Agnus Dei* and it becomes possible to discern these profound characteristics.

How do you think the sense of restlessness in Mozart's music helps to provide an insight into his personal experience or discover something of what his personal life experience might have been like?

Mozart was evidently a piano virtuoso, as he employs technically demanding passages in all his instrumental works. As pianists, we often feel just as exhausted after performing a Mozart concerto as we do when playing an overtly athletic Romantic or Modern work in this genre. Indeed, his 27 piano concertos embody such a significant portion of his personal experience as to rival the depth and scope of his operatic expression.

With his supposed fascination with chamber music, particularly string quintets, how do you think his discovery of new cultures through his extensive travelling influenced his writing in this area?

The *Quintet for Piano and Winds, K 452* was regarded by Mozart himself as his 'best work to date', and this statement leads us to understand how highly he valued the chamber music genre. It is also within these 'smaller' combinations that Mozart discovers wonderful colours and textures. The *Sonata for Two Pianos* (which we will play in the September concert) is filled with such timbral delicacies and fascinating sonic innovations that can only be achieved when more than one instrument comes together.

How do you think Mozart's ability to convey emotion helps us better understand and appreciate the human condition?

The ensemble at the end of *Le Nozze di Figaro* (also wonderfully portrayed in Milos Forman's film, *Amadeus*) to our mind almost sums up that level of unique spiritual transcendence in Mozart. When each voice enters and the harmonic whole becomes fleshed out increasingly, the heart almost stops and one ponders the meaning of life. There are very few composers who can have that effect on listeners. The purity of Mozart's writing encompasses all that is good here on earth.

What do you feel you discover when you play his music, even if it's repertoire you are familiar with?

Every performance, even if at home, changes vastly. This is the mystery of Mozart – the material is so transparent, but the meaning comes across so differently every time. The more we listen to music by later composers, such as Mahler, Stravinsky or Britten, we start to comprehend the many characteristics in Mozart's music more easily. We suddenly realise why the later composers could not help but to almost replicate the 18th-century master.

Mozart's 270th Anniversary: Two Pianos in Concert with Tessa Uys and Ben Schoeman takes place on 29 September in Princess Alexandra Hall. Tickets are available to book at rosl.org.uk/events

Memories OF MOZART

TESSA UYS

'I have vivid and fond memories of playing Mozart's *Triple Piano Concerto* with my parents and the Cape Town Municipal Orchestra in my youth. My mother was a concert pianist who studied with Leonid Kreutzer in Berlin. She was my teacher and taught me, right from the start, the music of Mozart. Playing Mozart is like a "truth drug" – every note, phrase, rest and dynamic instruction needs to be honoured. To this day, my mother's words still resonate profoundly.'



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.

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An evening with the US Ambassador

In May, we were honoured to welcome His Excellency Mr Warren A Stephens, the US Ambassador to the Court of St James's, accompanied by Mrs Stephens, as part of ROSL's distinguished Public Affairs Series of talks and debate. The evening brought together members and guests for a timely and engaging discussion on the enduring partnership between the United Kingdom and the United States

The visit was particularly well timed, coming shortly after the recent visit of Their Majesties The King and Queen to the United States, and as the US prepared to commemorate the semiquincentennial, marking 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Against this backdrop of reflection and celebration, Ambassador Stephens spoke about the strength and resilience of the modern UK-US alliance, rooted in shared history and focused firmly on the future.

Addressing an attentive audience at Overseas House, Ambassador Stephens reflected on the deep ties that have long united the two countries across diplomacy, defence, trade, culture, and shared democratic values. He emphasised that the special relationship between the UK and the US remains one of the closest partnerships in the world, characterised by long-standing friendship, trust, honesty and collaboration at every level.

Ambassador Stephens highlighted the recent, and highly successful, royal visit to the United States as a powerful reminder of the strength of the relationship between our two nations. He spoke warmly about the reception given to Their Majesties by the American public and the evident affection shown towards the royal family throughout the visit. He described the occasion as a strong reflection of the enduring cultural and personal connections that continue to unite people on both sides of the Atlantic.

Ambassador Stephens also discussed the significance of the semiquincentennial celebrations in the United States. The 250th anniversary of American independence, he noted, provides an opportunity not only to celebrate the nation's history and achievements, but also to acknowledge the remarkable evolution of the



relationship between Britain and the US over the past two and a half centuries. While shaped by a complex shared history, the modern partnership between the two nations stands today as one of the strongest and most influential alliances in the world.

The evening also featured an engaging question-and-answer session, during which Ambassador Stephens responded thoughtfully to a range of audience questions on the future of transatlantic cooperation, international affairs, and the cultural connections that continue to strengthen the UK-US relationship. The discussion reflected the spirit of open dialogue and informed debate that lies at the heart of ROSL's Public Affairs programme.

Annual Music Competition Final

The Gold Medal Final at Wigmore Hall in May brought together exceptional musicianship and remarkable artistry from this year's finalists and chamber ensembles

Marking the first occasion in the competition's history that all finalists were women, the final showcased four exceptional soloists: Sofia Patterson-Gutiérrez on flute, Binny-Supin Yang as soprano, Gabrielè Sutkutė on piano and Fanny Fheodoroff on violin. Before a distinguished panel and a highly engaged audience, the finalists presented programmes reflecting not only technical excellence but also distinctive artistic personalities. The evening also reflected ROSL's ongoing support of chamber ensembles: the Elmore Quartet, winners of the String Ensemble Award, performed Beethoven's *String Quartet No 12 in E-flat major, Op 127*, while the AERA Ensemble, winners of the Mixed Ensemble Award, brought contrasting colours to the evening with *Schumann's Märchenerzählungen, Op 132*, and Bartók's exhilarating *Contrasts, Sz 111*.



AMC Gold Medal winner
Sofia Patterson-Gutiérrez;
©Frances Marshall

Following the evening's performances, the Gold Medal was awarded to flautist Sofia Patterson-Gutiérrez, whose varied programme included pieces by Boulanger and Liebermann, as well as Ferneyhough's technically demanding *Cassandra's Dream Song*. Chair of the Panel of adjudicators, Tasmin Little CBE said, 'It was a huge pleasure to be Chair of the Judges for the 2026 Royal Overseas Gold Medal Competition at Wigmore Hall in May. It was

the perfect venue to enjoy the brilliant artistry of all four competitors and enable the jury to carry out the task of choosing one overall winner. The competition organisers selected highly professional judges with a wide range of experience, the whole event was well organised and presented, and the audience were hugely supportive of all the performers who gave us an evening of top-quality music-making.'



New reciprocal clubs

We are pleased to share that members now have access to two new reciprocal clubs: the Launceston Club in Tasmania, and the German Light Horse Club in Weeze. The Launceston Club combines traditional, old-world character and attentive service with the modern comforts of a contemporary members' club, while the German Light Horse Club is set within the historic grounds of Hertefeld Castle, providing a distinctive country club environment with strong ties to heritage and outdoor sporting traditions.

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

News & Events

HIGHLIGHTS

Bach, Brahms, Beach, Boulanger & Beyond: Four Voices

26 NOVEMBER

Chloë Hanslip and Danny Driver have established one of the most compelling violin-piano partnerships of their generation, combining exceptional musical rapport with imaginative programming. On 26 November, they present a concert that reflects their love of juxtaposing mainstream classical repertoire with neglected works. Exploring connections between Bach and Brahms, the programme will trace a rich musical lineage of counterpoint, lyricism and inventive craftsmanship across generations. Music by Amy Beach and Lili Boulanger complements the many lyrical aspects of the sonatas of these two major figures.



Simon Sebag Montefiore
©Marcus Leoni, Folhapress



David Schwimmer

ROSL's Public Affairs Series continues

Our Public Affairs Series of talks and lectures continues, with two exciting speakers lined up to address our members at Over-Seas House this autumn.

We are thrilled to be joined by historian and author Simon Sebag Montefiore for our prestigious Annual Lecture on 26 October, when he will discuss his new book, *The Cauldron: The Making of the Modern Middle East*. Best known for his titles on Russian history, including *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* and *Young Stalin*, as well as *Jerusalem: The Biography*, Mr Sebag Montefiore's combination of rigorous research and compelling storytelling has made him one of the most widely read and respected popular historians of his generation.

On 25 November, David Schwimmer, CEO of the London Stock Exchange Group, joins us at Over-Seas House for what promises to be a fascinating evening. A former Goldman Sachs executive with more than 20 years of experience in investment banking, Mr Schwimmer has helped transform LSEG since joining the Group in 2018, and is widely recognised for his expertise in financial technology and global market structure.

Booking for these events will open soon at rosl.org.uk/events

French Dinner with Chansons Françaises

2 OCTOBER

Join us for an unforgettable evening celebrating the flavours, wines and music of France. Enjoy an elegant menu featuring *saumon à la Parisienne*, *fricassée de poulet aux morilles*, and a classic *tarte Bourdaloue aux poires*, with each course expertly paired with fine French wines. The evening's entertainment features French singer Patrick Pradier, accompanied by pianist Angelo Verdi, performing beloved classics including *La Vie en Rose*, *La Mer*, *Sous le Ciel de Paris*, *C'est Si Bon*, and *Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien*. A Knight of the French National Order of Merit, Patrick is also Founder and President of *Sous les Ponts de Paris*, an association dedicated to preserving and promoting French chanson, making this a truly authentic celebration of France's rich culinary and musical heritage.



ROSL Christmas Concert with the Temple Church

15 DECEMBER

The Temple Church Singers are back for our highly anticipated Christmas concert in the beautifully adorned Princess Alexandra Hall on 15 December. This festive occasion promises a delightful programme of beloved Christmas classics and exquisite arrangements for chamber choir, complemented by a glass of festive fizz during the interval.



1910
DINING ROOM



BRITISH CLASSICS

Rediscover the best of British dining in the 1910 Dining Room with our new British Classics menu. The dishes featured below offer just a taste of the menu, including Luxury Cornish Fish Pie, Creedy Carver Chicken Supreme and our indulgent English Custard Tart, alongside daily specials and fish of the day, all served in the art deco splendour of our elegant dining room. The new season also brings traditional daily roasts to the Clubhouse, expertly carved at your table for a truly timeless dining experience – the perfect centrepiece for a memorable lunch or dinner.

STARTERS

KNOLE ESTATE VENISON TARTARE
Pickled blackberries, blue cheese mayonnaise and hazelnut crumb

LINCOLNSHIRE POACHER SOUFFLÉ
Parmesan cream, verjus-pickled golden raisins (v)

CHARRED DEVONSHIRE MACKEREL
Pickled apple gel, compressed kohlrabi, fennel pollen mayonnaise, puffed wild rice

MAINS

LUXURY CORNISH FISH PIE
Topped with truffle mash

TRUFFLE-STUFFED RABBIT SADDLE
Brioche croûte fried in beef dripping, pan-fried foie gras, prune and Armagnac purée, Sauternes jus

PRESSED BRAISED OXTAIL
Fermented artichoke, black garlic purée, sauce Périgieux, buttered cavolo nero

CREED CARVER CHICKEN SUPREME
Black pudding mousseline, truffled panisse, broad beans, morel cream

DESSERTS

ENGLISH CUSTARD TART
Brûléed with caramelised sugar and nutmeg (v)

STEM GINGER AND APPLE CAKE
Warm Bramley apple and stem ginger cake, Calvados toffee sauce and clotted cream (v)

BLACKBERRY MILLEFEUILLE
Caramelised puff pastry with rich vanilla pastry cream and fresh blackberries (v)

Reopening in September (date to be confirmed) –
visit rosl.org.uk/dining for the full menu and to book



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 discussing *The Crooked Cross* by Sally Carson on 23 September, *Paradise* by Abdulrazak Gurnah on 21 October, *Father Goriot* by Honore de Balzac on 18 November and *Memoirs of Hadrian* by Margaret Yourcenar on 16 December.

BACKGAMMON CLUB

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

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.

To join any of the Member-led activities, please contact the Membership Team at membership@rosl.org.uk



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

CHRISTIAN FURR
'A FRAGILE WORLD'
EXHIBITION
From September

A CELEBRATION OF THE
GREAT AMERICAN
SONGBOOK WITH
ACANTHA LANG
15 September

MOZART'S 270TH
ANNIVERSARY: TWO
PIANOS IN CONCERT,
WITH TESSA UYS AND
BEN SCHOEMAN
29 September

FRENCH DINNER WITH
CHANSONS FRANÇAISES
2 October

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA
WITH GRANGE PARK
21 October

ROSL ANNUAL LECTURE
WITH SIMON SEBAG
MONTEFIORE
26 October

TOUR OF ITALY
IN THE 1910
DINING ROOM
Throughout November



TRUFFLE DINNER
12 November

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SERIES:
CEO OF LONDON STOCK
EXCHANGE GROUP DAVID
SCHWIMMER
25 November

BACH, BRAHMS, BEACH,
BOULANDER AND
BEYOND: FOUR VOICES
26 November

ROSL CHRISTMAS
CONCERT WITH THE
TEMPLE CHURCH
15 December



CHRISTMAS AT ROSL
See opposite

BOXING DAY
WALKING TOUR
26 December

Keep up to date with all our upcoming events at www.rosl.org.uk/events



STEP INSIDE THIS CHRISTMAS

A warm welcome awaits where splendour and historical richness intertwine perfectly this festive season. Members are invited to celebrate in style choosing from one of our overnight stay packages or simply join us for our Christmas Day lunch.



CHRISTMAS LUNCH ONLY*

from £162,
(£47 per child under 12)

INCLUDES

- 25 DEC, 12.30PM
Festive drinks reception in the Princess Alexandra Hall
- 25 DEC, 1PM
Delicious Christmas lunch in the Hall of India & Pakistan, including half a bottle of wine per adult, coffee and a festive quiz with the chance to win a magnum of wine and complimentary breakfast on stays in January 2027
- 25 DEC, 3PM
King's speech

CHRISTMAS TWO NIGHT STAY

from £264
per room per night

INCLUDES

- 24 & 25 DEC
Two nights' accommodation, including breakfast
- 24 DEC
Mulled wine and mince pies outside of the Brabourne Room upon arrival
- 24 DEC, ALL DAY
Family board games in the Drawing Room
- 25 DEC, 12.30PM
Festive drinks reception in the Princess Alexandra Hall
- 25 DEC, 1PM
Delicious Christmas lunch in the Hall of India & Pakistan, including half a bottle of wine per adult, coffee and a festive quiz with the chance to win a magnum of wine and complimentary breakfast on stays in January 2027
- 25 DEC, 3PM
King's speech

CHRISTMAS THREE NIGHT STAY

from £237
per room per night

INCLUDES

- 24, 25 & 26 DEC
The full Christmas Two Night Stay Package, plus an additional night's accommodation on 26 December, including breakfast
- 26 DEC, 11AM-1PM
Walking tour of the local area with an expert guide, starting from the clubhouse

PRICE PER ROOM PER NIGHT FROM
(inclusive of Christmas lunch)

Two nights (24 and 25 December)
Three nights (24, 25 and 26 December)

PRICES ARE INCLUSIVE OF VAT

SINGLE ROOM

£264
£237

DOUBLE ROOM
(single occupancy)

£284
£257

For information on local church services, please ask at Reception.

PLEASE BOOK A TWO OR THREE NIGHT STAY, INCLUDING CHRISTMAS LUNCH, VIA RESERVATIONS@ROSL.ORG.UK

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19 April 2027

Central Anatolia with Ian Colvin
22 April 2027

China: Future Frontiers
12 June 2027

**Georgia & Armenia:
Crossroads of the Caucasus**
25 June 2027

China: A Silk Road Journey
6 September 2027

**Eastern Turkey:
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16 September 2027

**Pakistan & Uzbekistan:
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23 September 2027

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