

THE CAVALRY AND GUARDS CLUB

127 Newsletter

January 2010

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

As Members who visited the Club will have noticed, last autumn was one of the busiest for the Club for some years. The usage of the Coffee Room at lunch time increased to such an extent that on one occasion, Members who had not booked had to be turned away. In addition, in November, there were 200 more covers for dinner than in the previous November. Despite our worries, functions held up, well supported by the various regimental dinners (bagpipes and all)! Finally, the occupancy of our bedrooms averaged 80%.

As a result of the number of Members who have rejoined the Club and the new intakes of Sandhurst graduates, the number of Members, for the first time for many years, is likely to be broadly the same at the end of the year as at the beginning.

As I hope Members will have noticed, during the autumn the main stair carpet has been replaced and a magnificent new chandelier has been installed in the Waterloo Room. Behind the scenes, we have replaced some of the kitchen equipment as part of an on-going programme.

In the first few months of 2010, following consultation with the Advisory Council, we are planning a reorganization of the ground floor rooms at the back of the Club overlooking the Terrace. We will be refurbishing the bar in Geoffrey's Bar and also restoring the glass lantern in the roof of the bar which was broken many years ago and never replaced. Doors will

be installed between the Ante Room to Geoffrey's bar and the TV room- as originally existed. These new doors will match those between the TV room and the old Smoking room. Following this refurbishment, it is intended that the Ante Room to Geoffrey's Bar will become "Gentlemen Only" and the present Television Room, with its access to the Terrace, will become the Ladies Ante Room where Members can entertain their lady guests.

On 17th December to mark the "end of term", 90 Members sat down to the now traditional Members' Christmas Lunch. At this most enjoyable occasion, where the only cost to Members was that of the wine they drank, we toasted the health of the Club staff who, I am sure you will agree, have looked after us so well in 2009. If you have not yet shown your appreciation of the staff, I would remind you that the General Goldsmid Staff Christmas Fund remains open until 31st January.

2010 marks the 200th Anniversary of the Guards Club in 1810 and we are planning to celebrate this anniversary with a special function later in the year, details of which will be announced in a future Newsletter.

I hope that all Members had a very Merry Christmas and send my good wishes for 2010 when I hope even more Members than this year will use and enjoy their Club.

David Rosier
Chairman

2009 - A REVIEW OF THE YEAR

January

For the Club staff the beginning of the year was dominated by the refurbishment of the Third Floor. As the Club opened on January 5th, the builders moved in and the first hectic days were occupied with furniture removals and general packing up. In order to retain the essence of the 'old' Club feel - quite a number of furniture items were sent away for restoration and the lovely Edwardian baths were restored during the refurbishment programme to their original 'glory'.

February

In this month, the Club was once again fortunate in being able to 'showcase' a lecture by a Club Member when Kit Constable Maxwell, late Scots Guards delivered his very interesting talk on the desert expedition he led across the Libyan Sand Sea to re-run the Long Range Desert Group's 1940 raid. The route took them across uncharted desert territory in Egypt to reach

'Big Cairn' and then across Libya to Murzuq.

Such talks are always well received by Club Members and in 2010 the Club has once again invited Angus Hay to speak (see the Events diary for further details).

March

In a difficult economic climate, the Committee continually reviews revenue expectations for the Club and having made the decision, some years ago, to ensure that Events (luncheons, dinners etc) were only hosted by Members, as it did not wish to open up the Club to third parties. However, the Chairman decided to invite some of London's leading Party Planners to a Dinner in March to showcase the Club as a venue for top Weddings and parties and this successful partnership has already ensured that the Club continues to benefit from its position as a 'venue of choice in Club land'.

Back at Sandown Park again, 126 Members and guests attended an excellent



2009 - A REVIEW OF THE YEAR

days racing with the Grand Military Cup as the highlight of the afternoon.

As a change this year the organisers offered the Club the use of the Gold Cup Suite on the top floor of the Grandstand, and this excellent venue was much appreciated by all – allowing viewing of both the Paddock and the racecourse from the comfort (and importantly warmth!) of the suite. With the confirmation of the same suite for this year, we trust an even greater number of Members will put this very prestigious social occasion in their diaries for 2010.

March also saw the first of the two annual Club Speaker Dinners when

Major General Barney White-Spunner provided an illuminating and insightful talk on current military matters. Later in the year, the historian and author, Andrew Roberts also spoke to a capacity audience on his recent book 'The Storm of War' with a range of amusing anecdotes.

April

Early in April the Ladies Committee organised a very successful outing to the London Eye followed by a dinner at the House of Commons hosted by Nicholas Soames. Drinks and canapés were provided on the coach to the 'Eye' and a jolly evening was had by all.

Later in the month the Ladies Committee also arranged the Annual Ladies Luncheon and at this well attended event (the only one in the year exclusively for Lady Members and their Lady guests) those present were entertained to an after-luncheon speech by the Secretary – keen to promote the Club's book!

As many Members will know a visit to the gardens at Highgrove is a horticultural highlight and the waiting list for such visits stretches over two years. Consequently the Clubs visit this month was hugely over-subscribed and even the poor weather on the day did not detract from the enjoyment of the beauty of the surroundings for those lucky enough to attend. Another visit will be planned in the hopefully not too distant future.

May

Having given the builders the tightest possible schedule for the works on the Third Floor, it was with some relief that we were able to have all the rooms back in action by 4pm on the Friday of the Club's busiest weekend of the year – Cavalry Memorial.

This year the salute for the parade was taken by the Club's President, HRH The Duke of Kent, who then joined the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards for their post-parade luncheon in the Coffee room.

His Royal Highness was also in the Club later in the month for the annual Chairman's Dinner at which the Chairman thanks the Trustees, Committee and Advisory Council for their hard work and support during the year. It is also an opportunity for the Chairman to entertain to dinner the Club's Honorary Members, and it was notable that all the four (non-Royal) Field Marshals attended this dinner.

June

For many Members the highlight of the year was the publication of the Club's Centenary Book – and this excellent volume has been very well received by all those who have purchased a copy. The Chairman welcomed several hundred Members to the launch, together with past members of the Club's staff and representatives of the publishers TMI, and the Vice Chairman (who had been responsible for the co-ordination of the project) thanked all those Members that had been involved in this exciting undertaking.

Royal Ascot was again a very successful event for the Club this year and the Royal Enclosure garden, which provides the venue for the Club's Marquee becomes more popular year on year. Members who may have not visited since the extensive changes to the course and grandstands in 2006 might now like to see these very excellent changes for themselves in 2010.

July

Once again on the anniversary of the smoking ban (1st July), the Club took advantage of the covered Terrace and held a Cigar and Port Dinner in this elegant venue and this well-supported event will most certainly be a feature of the Club's calendar in years to come.

Sadly July also brought news of the death of Club Member Lt. Colonel

Rupert Thorneloe, Welsh Guards and many Members of the Club attended his very moving funeral service in the Guards Chapel just as they had done earlier in May when the conflict claimed another Welsh Guards Officer- Lt.

Mark Evison. Both Members are now remembered in the Book of Remembrance.

On a happier note, the 'Summer on the Terrace' event provided (on possibly the only dry evening of the summer!!) a delightful venue for a summer party – and over one hundred and fifty Members enjoyed an evening of music by Cole Porter and George Gershwin, whilst partaking of a delicious buffet supper provide the Head Chef, Paul Farmer and his team.

August

Conscious that the refurbishment programme to the Third floor had made the 4th Floor look slightly 'dated', the Committee agreed to further upgrade works to this floor in the summer programme this year – and these works will continue into 2010.

Also during this quieter time in the Club's calendar, the Secretary continued his talks for those interested in the history and artefacts of the Club and this month welcomed those from 'Discovering London' (previous groups have included the Victorian Society and Friends of the Imperial War Museum).

September

The 'Grouse Dinner' was held again in September and the Chairman welcomed over eighty Members and guests to this 'gastronomic' highlight of the Club's calendar.

Such is the growing interest by Members in food and fine wine that further dinners have been added to the programme in 2010.

October

During this month, the Ladies Committee held the interestingly named 'Genuine Bling' event – and whilst enjoying a sumptuous afternoon tea listened in rapt attention as Helen Plumb explained some of the hazards and consequences of jewellery buying

Works to maintain the building continued in some small way throughout the year, but a much needed and long-awaited refurbishment to the Club's lift took place this month. Mindful of the fact that the Club has only the one lift, the Committee is looking at possibilities of restoring to use the second lift by Geoffrey's Bar.

November

Traditionally the busiest month for the Club with a plethora of Regimental Dinners, this year we welcomed a good number of serving Members to the Club - many recently returned from duties in Afghanistan and elsewhere overseas- together with HRH The Duke of Edinburgh (as Colonel-in-Chief, Queen's Own Hussars) and HRH The Princess Alexandra who, once again, graciously attended the reception prior to the Royal Yeomanry Dinner.

December

HRH The Princess Alexandra was back in the Club a few days later for the Annual Club Charity Luncheon, which this year was held in aid of The Royal Star and Garter Homes of which HRH is President.

This biennial luncheon raises funds for important army charities and once again the Ladies Committee worked hard to make sure the event was a success.

On the day the winners of the raffle were-
Angela Davies – case of 6 bottles of Club Champagne
Michael Pratt – Fortnum and Mason's Hamper
Rosie Rodwell – Dinner for 2 in the Club

The month also saw the annual – and popular- 'Sons and Daughters' Dinner, and as the Chairman mentions earlier this was followed in the last week before Christmas by the Members' Christmas Lunch.

A busy year and we trust that 2010 will be equally as fruitful.

David J Cowdery
Secretary

SERVING OFFICERS – FOR THOSE ON ACTIVE SERVICE

For those Members of the Club on active service who might have missed this in an earlier Newsletter, the Committee wanted to re-emphasise this important concession -

“the Committee have agreed that Officers serving on operations overseas, for a period of 6 months** or more, should have a further ‘discount’ to their subscription and that this should take the form of a ‘subscription credit’ to be used in the Club in the year following.(** or pro-rated accordingly for shorter terms)

As with all other membership initiatives, the responsibility will be on the individual Member to notify the Club of the relevant period and for this to be validated by their Commanding Officer (a form will be available from the Membership Secretary for this purpose). The scheme takes effect immediately and the ‘credits’ will be allocated in the following year.

GENERAL GOLDSMID FUND

On behalf of all the Club Staff may we thank Members for their generous contributions to the Staff (General Goldsmid) Fund.

This year the Fund once again matched the generous amount it has received in recent years and these very welcome payments are made to the staff with their salaries in January.

(Contributions can still be received – to be included with payments for this year- from Members until 31st January – and the ‘Fund’ in fact stays ‘open’ for contributions throughout the year)

PAINTINGS

Having had such a success with the donation of books to the Club’s Library, and with the appointment of the eminent art conservationist Jonathon Miles, the Committee is now focusing on the paintings in the Club and considering how this collection might be expanded, with more contemporary additions highlighting military events and campaigns of the last fifty years.

Members who would like to suggest possible artists or works that might be included are asked to contact the Secretary’s Office.

WEBSITE AND BEDROOM BOOKINGS

Under the guidance of Committee Member, Major Peter Scrope, the Club’s website continues to expand and develop, and additions during the past year allow Members the ability to reserve accommodations in the Club, to review membership and personal accounts – and to make settlement of the same - and to highlight companies and services that might be of interest to other Members.

These sections are in the ‘Members’ area of the website and can be accessed using a personal password (available from the Secretary’s office). Additions to the lists of recommended companies and services are again very welcome – and can be made to the Secretary.

LADY MEMBERS

Sadly one of the few decreases in membership numbers in recent years has been in the category of ‘Lady Members’ and this is particularly dispiriting as the Ladies Committee provides such an impetus to the social and cultural life of the Club.

As those Members who have read the Book will know, ladies have been associated with both Clubs (most particularly the old Guards Club) for many years and, indeed, at the time of the amalgamation of the two Clubs in 1976 there was a significant intake of Lady Members, numbering several hundred.

These numbers have always largely been drawn from family members of serving and retired Officers – wives, daughters and widows, but the Club also warmly welcomes independent ladies who seek a suitably refined refuge in central London.

It is important to the Club that Lady Members feel welcome in ‘127’ and that they are encouraged to use the Club with or without their husbands. The Committee trusts that this will lead to the restoration of the numbers of Lady Members to those levels we enjoyed in previous years.

RECIPROCAL CLUBS

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, the Committee is always interested in expanding the number of Clubs with which we reciprocate – and adding those that can provide our well-travelled Members with a ‘haven’ in foreign climes. To date the Committee is pleased to announce two additions to this list -

The Madras Club, India

The Union, University and Schools Club in Sydney, Australia

Further details on both of these Clubs and letters of introduction to all the Reciprocal Clubs – can be provided by the Secretary’s Office.



THE PRINCES' CUP - UAE

The Club is always delighted to support initiatives from Club Members and wishes to thank Captain Edward Olver LG (Adjutant of The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment) for his work in putting together the inaugural 'Cavalry versus Guards Camel Polo Match' which will take place in The United Arab Emirates in February. This exhibition game will form part of the British Polo Day Middle East on February 19th 2010 at The Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club. The British Polo Day was established last year and sees teams from Eton, Harrow, Oxford and Cambridge compete for the Princes' cup. This is fast becoming one of the region's most prestigious sporting and social events of the year and more information can be found on the website www.princescup.co.uk Members who are in the region on that date should feel free to join with friends and family to take advantage of the special 'alumni' discounted rate.

'LOVE NEVER DIES'

Many Members will be aware that one of the longest-running shows in London is 'The Phantom of the Opera' which has been playing to capacity audiences for over twenty years. It is with some excitement, therefore, that the London theatre world eagerly awaits Andrew Lloyd Webber's sequel to this musical extravaganza – and the Club has been fortunate in securing a limited number of tickets for a preview of this new show – 'Love Never Dies' on Wednesday 24th February. Places can be reserved (as for all events) with Frances – Membership Secretary.

CLUB EVENTS 2010

January

13th Bridge afternoon

February

3rd Bridge afternoon
24th Theatre Visit – 'Love Never Dies'
25th Lecture – Angus Hay
The 51st (Highland) Division and
St. Valery - En Caux, France 1940

March

3rd Bridge afternoon
11th Michael Mates – Cabaret and Supper
12th Grand Military Meeting – Sandown

April

2nd to 5th Easter weekend
14th Bridge afternoon
tbc Tutored Wine tasting
22nd Annual Lady Members' Luncheon

May

5th Bridge afternoon
9th Cavalry Memorial Sunday
19th/20th Theatre Visit

June

2nd AGM (at 12noon)
12th Trooping the Colour Luncheon
15th to 19th Royal Ascot – Club Tent
tbc Theatre visit – Open Air Theatre,
Regent's Park

July

1st Cigar & Port Dinner
8th Sandhurst Polo Day – Club Tent
tbc Summer on the Terrace -An
Evening of Noel Coward

September

16th Grouse Dinner
tbc Rob Caskie Talk – Rorke's Drift

October

7th Helen Plumb – 'Pearls' – Talk and Tea
tbc Fine Wine Dinner and Wine Lottery
tbc Theatre visit

November

tbc Book Fair – and Authors Lunch
23rd/24th Visit to Bruges – Christmas Market

December

9th Sons & Daughters Dinner
16th Members Christmas Lunch
23rd Christmas Closing

Date TBC Club Cocktail Party – to celebrate
200 years since the foundation of the Guards
Club (1810)