

THE CAVALRY AND GUARDS CLUB

127 Newsletter

June 2009

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

In the last newsletter I mentioned the disruption caused by the 3rd Floor refurbishment project and am therefore delighted to report that the project was completed on time and on budget, opening for business on the Friday night of Cavalry Memorial Weekend. In just four months, the 3rd Floor of 127 Piccadilly has been transported from the Edwardian era to the 21st Century. All the bedrooms now have en-suite WC and shower facilities, as well as air conditioning, TV and WiFi. However, the refurbished Edwardian baths remain. Many members have expressed their delight with the new facilities and I hope that those who have not yet experienced the 3rd Floor will enjoy doing so in the near future. Our thanks for the management of this project should go to the Secretary, supported by the Refurbishment Sub Committee.

The other major event of the past quarter has been the launch of the Club History, 'Cavalry & Guards – A London Home'. This magnificent book marks the 100th birthday of 127 Piccadilly as the home of the Cavalry Club and the double centenary of the original Guards Club, which was founded in 1810. Many Members who have bought the book have told me how impressed they are with it and once they have seen it, I am certain every Member of the Club will want to buy a copy.

Although the AGM in June was well attended, it has been decided that next year's AGM will be held at lunch time in the hope that this will be a more convenient time for many of our Members who live outside London.

On the social front, the 2nd quarter has been

extremely busy. The Club was full to capacity on Cavalry Memorial Sunday when over 400 lunched with their various regiments. The Dining Room was again full for lunch after Trooping of the Colour.

In addition, during what was an extremely busy month of June, the Club again had a tent at Royal Ascot where, over the 5 days, over 400 Members and their guests had lunch or tea during the racing.

The Club has not been immune from the economic downturn although, against expectations, the income from functions held up during the first quarter. However, during the 2nd quarter function income is both behind budget and last year's level. I therefore hope very much that when Members are considering giving parties to celebrate special family occasions or organizing dinners or cocktail parties, they will always think of using the Club first before considering other venues. In recent years the Club has developed a well-deserved reputation for excellence and value for money in this area.

Over the summer months, not before time, we are intending to refurbish the bathrooms for the basement bedrooms and to re-carpet the bedrooms. The refurbishment of the 3rd Floor has inevitably highlighted deficiencies elsewhere!

The Club as usual remains open during August and I hope that Members, when not enjoying their holidays, will continue to use the Club as much as possible.

David Rosier
Chairman

CHAIRMAN'S AGM ADDRESS: 3 JUNE 2009

"2008 was not an easy year and against the background of a very difficult economic environment, I am pleased to report that the Club produced an operating surplus of £153,000. This was after spending £173,000 on maintenance and improvements and £87,000 on the Club's new computer system.

The success of the Club depends on three main revenue streams; bedrooms, functions and membership subscriptions,

and the control of costs (particularly in the Club's Dining Rooms). As regards the latter, our thanks are due to the Secretary and his senior management team for keeping a tight grip on those costs over which they have control.

Looking at the different revenue streams:

- **Bedrooms.** Bedroom income was down by just under 5% - which represents a good result taking into consideration the reduction in the number of bedrooms following the sale of

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the Annex in 2007. I am happy to say that, with the completion of the refurbishment of the 3rd floor – the number of bedrooms has been increased by 3, bringing the total replaced in the main building since the sale to 10.

- **Functions.** Function income was down by 7% reflecting fewer weddings and the general downturn of people giving parties. There is no doubt that the Club has a growing and well-deserved reputation for the excellence of its functions. The many letters I receive from Members are a testament to the hard work of our Banqueting Co-ordinator, Alix King, our chef Paul Farmer and Banqueting Manager Mark Beasley.

- **Subscription income.** Subscription income fell by 3%. The membership of the Club at 2,681 at 31st December 2008 was 47 Members less than at 31st December 2007 – due in large part to the final discontinuation of the APO paying subscriptions for serving Officers. However, the new age-related subscription scheme introduced at the beginning of 2008 has already proved successful – particularly amongst our 'retired country-based' Members.

- Having reviewed the membership situation, Martyn Pocock, who is responsible for membership matters on the Committee, has recommended that we concentrate on the retention of existing Members rather than on bringing in new members with little or no military connections. To this end, in 2008, we introduced a rule giving serving officers a rebate on their subscriptions when they are serving on operational tours overseas.

- **Refurbishment.** 2008 was another busy year with regard to refurbishment. Early in the year, the terrace was transformed by installing the new canopy and seating. I believe it is much admired by all who use it. The canopy allowed us to hold a cigar dinner on the terrace last July – and we intend to repeat this dinner again next month.

During the quieter summer months, the Gentlemen's ground floor loos were refurbished, not before time! The Balaclava Room was also transformed and returned to the library it was of old, additionally allowing Members who wish to use their laptops or mobile telephones the use of this room. Many Members have responded to our request for books and the Balaclava Room is now beginning to look like a real library.

Several small yet important refurbishment projects behind the green baize door were also completed and the replacement and renewal of Kitchen equipment keeps our kitchens up to date.

Since the end of 2008, the third floor refurbishment has been completed to some acclaim, on time and on budget. I will report more fully on this in my next Report.

We do not intend to carry out any further major refurbishment projects during the year, although as ever, there are numerous small projects on our wish list such as the basement bath and shower facilities, which we hope we will be able to complete this summer.

New Computer System. Under the guidance of one of our Committee Members, Peter Scrope, a new computer system

was installed throughout the Club. This has greatly improved the administrative systems of the Club and the management information available. To Members, the visible face of the new system is perhaps the new Club website with its interactive bedroom booking facilities.

Reciprocal Clubs

During the year, the Club established additional reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs - The University Club of Chicago and The University Club of San Francisco – and we are working hard to find a new Club with which to reciprocate in New York.

On the social front, 2008 was an extremely busy year; perhaps the highlight was the Waterloo Ball in June. In addition, the Speaker Dinners, the Grouse Dinner, the Fathers and Sons/Daughters Dinner, all attracted large turnouts. I would like to thank our Ladies Committee headed by Sandra Nelson for all they do to organise such a varied and successful programme of social events.

2008 was the second year of the Members "free" Christmas lunch. With so many Members wishing to attend, we overflowed from the Coffee Room into the Peninsular Room. This year, rather than do this, we intend to have 2 sittings in the Coffee Room – so book early to avoid disappointment!

I could not finish without thanking the Committee for their support and hard work during the year. Simon Brooks Ward, Ewan Cameron, Sandra Nelson, Willy Peto, Martyn Pocock Peter Scrope and Christian Yates have all contributed immensely. They all have busy working lives and yet have found time to make their expertise available to the Club. I would particularly like to thank John Rothwell who, after 15 years on the Committee dispensing sound legal advice and wise counsel, is retiring at today's AGM.

As always, my thanks are also due to the Vice President and Club Trustees whose advice and wise counsel is always available both to me and the Committee and who provide continuity in a constantly changing environment.

Most importantly, I would particularly like to thank the Vice Chairman who, in addition to his steadfast support, has chaired the Book Committee with such success, but more of that anon.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretary and all the staff of the Club who do so much to ensure its continuing success. The success of any club depends on the combination of the Secretary and senior management working to provide the highest standards of service for the Club's Members, and a membership that uses and supports the Club on a regular basis. I like to think that – touch wood – we are beginning to achieve this happy combination and can assure you that the Committee and the Secretary will continue to work hard to ensure that the Club delivers what its Members want.

David Rosier
Chairman

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Following the AGM, the Chairman is pleased to announce the following appointments to the Club's Committee under rule 20a –

Mr Patrick Vigors – who many Members will remember 'held the fort' during the interregnum of Secretaries in 2005 and provided for the Committee a comprehensive financial and operational brief which laid much of the foundation for the changes seen in the Club in recent years. His 'role' will be to replace Mr Ian Frazer who for many years has been the 'financial overseer'.

Mr James Compston – moves from the Advisory Council to the Committee and brings to his new role a broad depth of knowledge about the daily workings of the Club, being one of its most frequent users in recent years.

NEW HONORARY MEMBERS

Following discussions with the Committee and the Vice President, and with the approval of the President, HRH The Duke of Kent KG, the following have been offered Honorary membership of the Club –
HRH The Duke of York – Colonel-in-Chief 9/12th Lancers (since 2003)
HRH The Earl of Wessex – Colonel in Chief – Royal Wessex Yeomanry
The Lord (Sam) Vestey – Master of the Horse

GOLF

The 13th Annual Club vs. Royal West Norfolk Golf Club Day at Brancaster takes place this year on October 5th. Anyone wishing to play should please contact Club Member – Jeremy Greenwood (Sparrow Hall, Hindringham, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 0DP) or by email – greenwood.quiller@btopenworld.com or telephone 01328 878336 – who is organising the event – and will be able to assist with places to stay (if required).

IN MEMORIAM

The Chairman and Committee are saddened to report the death of Lt Mark Evison (Welsh Guards) who was killed on active service in Afghanistan in May.

His Funeral Service was held at the Guards Chapel and attended by representatives of the Club.

Following Club tradition, his name has been entered into the Book of Remembrance and members of his family have been invited to view the Book and take luncheon with the Chairman.

Sadly the Welsh Guards suffered a further loss in June with the death of Major Sean Birchall (Club Member 1999 to 2003) and, tragically for the Regiment and the Club the loss, at the beginning of July, of Commanding Officer - Lt. Colonel Rupert Thorneloe MBE - who had been a Member of the Club since 1992.

BOOK LAUNCH

After almost three years in preparation, the Book Committee led by the Vice Chairman – Colonel Christopher MacKenzie-Beevor - was delighted to present to Members the finished book on the Club at the publication launch which followed the AGM on June 3rd.

Over 200 Members and guests attended the event and the Vice Chairman in his speech made a particular note of former Club staff members who had been able to join the celebrations.

Thanking TMI (the book's publishers) for their work on the project, the Vice Chairman said that the book far surpassed

the original expectations of the Committee and provided a beautiful and informative record of the 'three' Clubs since the foundation of the original Guards Club in 1810.

Copies of the Book are now available from the Secretary's office at the special price to Members of £35 (published price is £39.50) – and it is hoped that Members will not only take the opportunity to purchase one for their own Library or coffee table – but will consider buying them as gifts for friends and family. (A perfect solution to the problem of finding Christmas presents!).

CHARITIES USING CLUB

As Members will recall, some of the Club events held throughout the year are done so to raise funds for various charities and, in particular, the Club is always keen to support those charities that provide assistance to the Armed Forces such as the ABF, Help for Heroes, Combat Stress, Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation etc.

Indeed the Club Charity Lunch this year (to be held on December 2nd) will raise funds for another such charity, the Star and Garter Homes. The Patron of that Charity HRH The Princess Alexandra (Club Honorary member) will be attending the event to assist the Club in raising the profile of this excellent cause.

However, what many Members may not know is that the

Club also provides a venue for those charities that seek to hold an event in central London – and for Club Members who are seeking sponsorship for their own particular fundraising cause.

In this way, in recent months the Club has provided meeting space for amongst others, Save the Children, Macmillan Cancer Research and the Poppy Day appeal.

The Secretary and his team work hard to ensure that such events are given maximum support and encouragement and are able to work with whatever small a budget to ensure the fundraising opportunity is maximised. Club Members wishing to discuss such an event should contact the Secretary directly.

PHOTOS FROM LONDON EYE

On a glorious Spring and unseasonably bright April evening, Club Members took the opportunity to visit the London Eye and attend a dinner at the Houses of Parliament, kindly hosted by the Hon. Nicholas Soames MP.



CLUB WEBSITE – WWW.CAVGDS.CO.UK

It has been suggested to the Committee that there should be included a 'links page' on the Club website where Companies offering services recommended by Members (which they believe would be of interest to other Members) could be listed.

This page will be positioned after the Member login, so will not be visible to casual visitors to the Club homepage. It will be made clear that the Club is not responsible for the content of listed sites, although we will, of course, check to ensure that the suggested link seems appropriate. We would also propose showing the name of the Member recommending the site.

Please let the Secretary know if you would like to propose a link for inclusion, which you feel could be helpful to other Members.

'GENUINE BLING'

Always on the lookout for a different style or type of event, the Ladies Committee have arranged for the internationally recognised gemmologist, Helen Plumb of Just Gems, to come to the Club on the afternoon of Thursday 8th October and speak on the subject of gemstones and fine jewellery.

The Club will provide a sumptuous Afternoon Tea and Helen will also take the opportunity to view and informally value any pieces of jewellery that those attending might like to bring along. So dig out the family tiaras or stomachers and bring them along to the Club.

Tickets for this event at £17.50 each for members (£20 for guests) are available from Frances Watt, Membership Secretary.

BRUGES VISIT

Following the success of last years visit to St Petersburg, the Ladies Committee are this year looking nearer to home and are considering a visit to Bruges - taking place at the time of the Christmas markets - at the end of November/early December.

A decision has yet to be made as to whether to go by Eurostar (changing in Lille) or alternatively taking a coach and it is suggested that a 2-day/night trip would probably be sufficient- and either midweek or weekend alternatives are being considered.

Members interested in taking part in this excursion are requested to contact Frances Watt, Membership Secretary – at the Club (0207 659 0906) at the earliest opportunity to register their interest

EVENTS

July

22nd 'Summer on the Terrace' - An Evening of Cole Porter and Gershwin

September

16th Grouse Dinner

October

7th Bridge Afternoon
8th Ladies Afternoon Tea & Talk 'Genuine Bling'
tbc Autumn Speaker Dinner
14th Theatre visit – 'Sister Act'

November

4th Bridge Afternoon
10th Theatre visit – 'Calendar Girls'

December

2nd Club Charity Luncheon in aid of Star & Garter Homes
2nd Bridge Afternoon
10th Sons & Daughters Dinner
17th Members' Christmas Lunch
23rd Christmas Closing (Club reopens Monday 4th January 2010)