

THE CAVALRY AND GUARDS CLUB

127 Newsletter

June 2010



CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The second quarter of the year has been particularly busy for the Club in terms of bedroom usage, number of functions and usage of the Dining rooms with the result that we are well ahead of the budget set last autumn. This means that we will be able to continue with the planned refurbishment programme this summer when we will be upgrading the basement bedrooms by installing 'comfort cooling' and also refurbishing the basement bathrooms and lavatories.

Since I last wrote, to much critical acclaim, the restoration of Geoffrey's Bar has been completed by the installation of the glass lantern which was broken, and not replaced, many years ago. I am sure Members will agree that this has added a completely new dimension to Geoffrey's Bar.

In addition the Field Marshals' Room has received a 'lick of paint' and will shortly be

furnished with some new leather armchairs befitting a Gentleman's Club.

On the Committee front, Major William Peto and Colonel Simon Brooks-Ward retired from the Committee at the recent AGM. Over the past ten years Willy has been closely involved with the various refurbishment projects in the Club and I would specifically like to thank him for everything that he has done to make the Club a more enjoyable place for Members to visit. I would also like to thank Simon for his contribution to the Committee's deliberations over the past three years. Finally, we were delighted to welcome Matthew Webb to the Club's staff in early June as the new Operations Manager. He will be working closely with the Secretary and is happy to be known informally as 'Club Steward'.

David Rosier
Chairman

CHAIRMAN'S AGM ADDRESS – 2ND JUNE 2010

- Before giving my report for 2009, I thought it appropriate to remind ourselves that very sadly two of our Members were killed in action while serving in Afghanistan last year, Mark Evison and his Commanding Officer in the Welsh Guards, Rupert Thorneloe. Both their names have been inscribed in the Book of Remembrance and were inspected by their families when I lunched with them in the Club.

- **Finances - 2009** proved to be a better year than anticipated given the difficult economic environment and, in the event, the Club's operations produced a surplus of £180,000 compared to £133,000 the previous year and a budget of £152,000. This was after spending £115,000 on maintenance and improvements. This surplus ahead of budget allowed us to pay a bonus to Club staff, in addition to the payments they received from the General Goldsmid Staff Christmas Fund to which many of you here contributed so generously. As Members will be aware, we also spent £1 million from the funds realised from the sale of the Annex to completely

refurbish the 3rd Floor bedrooms. This has proved to be a great success and, as a result of the very high occupancy levels, the return on investment has been higher than expected.

- I am pleased that as the Club is trading profitably, we have been able to continue our policy of paying £2,500 per month into the Contingency Fund which is invested by Rathbones and which stood at the end of April at £360,000. In addition to this sum, we have invested an additional £200,000 with Rathbones from the funds remaining from the sale of the Annex in a Reserve Fund. These funds, together with the cash at present on deposit of c. £700,000 give us a cushion, which should allow us to continue with the 5 year rolling capital expenditure programme, which has been agreed by the Committee. In this regard, I would remind you that the Coffee Room has not been redecorated for 13 years and that the 4th floor bedrooms do not now compare favourably with those on the 3rd floor. In addition, the carpet in the Waterloo Room just has to go!

- **Membership** - I am often asked about how the membership of the Club is holding up with the reduced size of the Army. I am pleased to report that, as of today, we have 2,483 paying Members compared to 2,487 this time last year. The number of resignations at the end of 2009 was the lowest for many years and I am delighted we are getting a steady flow of rejoining members. We are also lucky to have the regular inflow of c. 100 new Members each year as they pass out from Sandhurst.

- **Refurbishment** - Since the end of 2009, we have almost completed the reorganisation of the ground floor rooms and, importantly, refurbished Geoffrey's Bar. The lantern, which has been replaced after a hiatus of at least 60 years, has received much acclaim. Only the move of the television to the Writing Room remains to be done. I will report more fully on this in next year's Report.

- During the summer, we intend to refurbish the bathrooms and lavatories in the basement and to install air-conditioning in the basement bedrooms.

- **Governance** - I am sure Members will be interested to know that, during the year, we established a Finance Sub-Committee in addition to the House Sub-Committee and Food Sub-Committee. Patrick Vigors, who is a chartered accountant, and who was our temporary Secretary for several months before David Cowdery joined us some 5 years ago, joined the Committee during the year and also sits on the Finance Sub-Committee.

- During the year, under the leadership of Martyn Pocock we have also tightened up the rules for admitting new and rejoining members to the Club.

- **Staff** - The Club staff are an integral part of the Club and I am therefore delighted that our record for staff retention over the past few years has been excellent. This does not just happen and I believe is as a result of the Club's ability to pay the staff properly, the Members' generosity in contributing to the General Goldsmid Fund and the Secretary's continued emphasis on development and training of the staff. I would like to thank all the Club staff for everything they do for us on a day-to-day basis.

- **Committee** - The Committee have continued to work hard for the Club behind the scenes and I would like to thank them for all the time and energy they have given. In addition to Patrick Vigors, we welcomed James Compston on to the Committee during the year. Simon Brooks-Ward, Ewen Cameron, Sandra Nelson, Willie Peto, Martyn Pocock, Peter Scrope and Christian Yates have all contributed hugely to the success of the Club during the year. Simon Brooks Ward will be retiring from the Committee at the AGM, as will Willy Peto after almost 10 years continuous service.

- As always I would like to thank the Vice-Chairman for his steadfast support and his ability, with a quiet whisper in my ear, to steer me in the right direction on the occasions when my compass is not working.

- It is invidious to single out any Committee Member from the galaxy of talent, but, on his retirement from the Committee, I would specifically like to thank Willy Peto for all he has done for the Club over the years. Not only is Willy enormous fun to have on any committee but he has also been hugely influential in the various refurbishment projects that we have carried out in recent years. Willy has exquisite taste and a real feel for how a gentleman's club should look. Willy, thank you for everything you have done for the Club, it has been a delight to work with you.

- My thanks are also due to the Vice-President Tom Hall and the Club trustees; John Rodwell, Ian Frazer, Jonny Hall and Colin Methven, whose advice and wise counsel have kept me on the straight and narrow.

- Finally I would like to thank our Secretary, David Cowdery, for his continuing enthusiasm and commitment in his management of the Club. We are very lucky to have him.

- But above all I would like to thank the Members of the Club who continue to use and support the Club on a regular and consistent basis.

- I shall be standing down as Chairman at the AGM this time next year and with your continuing support am much looking forward to enjoying my final year of office.

David Rosier
Chairman

NEW COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Following the recent AGM the Chairman is very pleased to announce the following appointments –

To join the Committee (under Rule 20a) –

Mr Edward SC Cottrell (Coldstream Guards)

To join the Advisory Council –

Mr Christopher Hartley (Grenadier Guards)

Mr Mark Somers (Scots DG)

CHARITY BRIDGE AFTERNOON

A Charity Bridge Afternoon will be held to 'launch' the new season of bridge on Wednesday 6th October at 2.00pm. This event will be held in aid of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea and tickets are available at £20 per person for Members - and £30 for guests - which includes a 'lavish' Afternoon Tea.

The Club hopes to welcome Bridge players from other London Clubs for this event and all details are available from the Membership Secretary – Frances Watt.

CLUB STEWARD



Following the departure of Mark Beasley -Banqueting Manager- earlier in the year (to open his own diving school in Portugal), the Committee decided that the role should be expanded to take in various other responsibilities within the Club operation and that the 'blueprint' for this role should be the original one of 'Club Steward', although a more 21st Century friendly job title of 'Operations Manager' would be given to the successful applicant.

Although the Club has not had a Steward for some years, many Members will recall that this senior position effectively ran the day-to-day operation of the Club and provided a visible and

front-of-house presence for the Members.

Having extensively interviewed for the post, the Club is very pleased to be able to welcome Matthew Webb to this role, and we trust he will have a long and enjoyable career with us.

Prior to joining the team here at '127', Matthew was Hospitality Manager with the Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust and was responsible for overseeing the whole hospitality operation at the two sites, Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital. At times this could involve organising a number of large events for Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner, which included those held in a marquee for up to 1000 people!

Matthew's interests and hobbies include playing squash, swimming and cycling and entertaining - as well as having a keen interest in wine!

Other Members of Staff who have joined the Club over the last few months include -

Sam Hewitt – Night Porter
 Jose Aveiro – Barman
 Alvaro Daza – Chef de Partie, Kitchen
 Orlando Coelho – Kitchen Porter
 Fernanda Fernandes – Waitress
 Laurita Heuer – Waitress
 Cristiane Neves Pereira - Waitress

GOLF

The Club assembled eight members to play their annual informal golf foursomes followed by lunch at Swinley Forest Golf Club on Friday 30th April. A successful day was had by all. The fixture is very popular and we hope that more members will represent the Club and play in future matches. There is another fixture at Brancaster at the end

of September followed by the Bath Cup at Woking in October, where all the London Clubs play for the Bath Trophy in two foursome teams of pairs. If you would like to be kept informed, please ask the Secretary to add your name to the list of golfers who are members of the Club.

Nick Chamberlin



DEBENTURES

Following the sale of the Annexe in 2007, Members will recall that the Committee agreed to the early repayment of the Subscription debentures which would originally have been redeemable in 2012.

Most of these have now been redeemed, but as 2012 looms, it is an appropriate moment to remind those Members who might have tucked the documents away for safe-keeping, that their redemption is still valid and application for payment should be made to the Club Secretary at the earliest opportunity. (Members might also like to mention this to family or friends of past members of the Club, who might well not be aware of this process).

At the same time, Members are reminded that Capital Debentures and the attached Preferred Shares may be put up for sale, and the Club Secretary is again happy to assist in this matter.

BRUGES

**Depart: Tuesday 23rd November –
 Return: Thursday 25th November**

Departing from St Pancras International a relaxing three-hour journey, on Eurostar, brings Members to the cosmopolitan and bourgeois city of Bruges. Known as 'the Venice of the North', Bruges' historic centre is a UNESCO world heritage site and is one of the best-preserved pre-motorised cities in Europe. Staying at a centrally located hotel, Members will have two days to soak up the sights, sounds and atmosphere of this charming Flanders capital.

Once over the encircling canal and inside the city walls, Bruges closes in around with street after street of charming historic houses and a canal always nearby. Members can also visit some quieter areas of the city and imagine what life in the late middle ages must have been like.

With a host of attractions from galleries, museums, churches, markets and the ubiquitous chocolate shops there will be something to appeal to all tastes and a visit at this festive time of year should provide excellent shopping opportunities.

For further information and to register your interest in this trip please call Miss Frances Watt on 02076590906 or email frances.watt@cavgds.co.uk

Price to be advised (approximately £300.00 per person, inclusive)

HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY MOUNTED REGIMENT PORTRAIT

On Saturday 12th June, following the Queen's Birthday Parade, Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal (Colonel, The Blues) and General The Lord Guthrie (Colonel, The Life Guards), pulled a cord at each end of a 'blue - red - blue' curtain to unveil this newly-commissioned, spectacular painting by the artist, Louise Pragnell, which now hangs in the Mess at Knightsbridge Barracks.

The painting commissioned some two years ago to mark the 350th anniversary of the Household Cavalry regiment, took 18 months to complete and measures 3 metres x 1 metre - which are the same dimensions as those of the original Household Cavalry portrait - painted in 1857. So it is now both possible and interesting to make a direct contrast between the two paintings and observe

the changing face of the regiment and those elements that remained unchanged.

Depicted in the painting are twenty-five Officers (and six dogs) of the Knightsbridge Officer's Mess at the Hyde Park Barracks who together have over 200 combined years of service to this country. One of the officers is portrayed in combat uniform, in recognition of the 36 operational tours completed by those officers in the portrait. Four Officers were, in fact, in Afghanistan while the portrait was being painted and have only recently returned, although all twenty five of the officers - and the six dogs - sat altogether at the same time for the artist in one two hour session which took place in June 2008!

During these two hours, Louise, having positioned them in their places took over 1000 photographs which she took back

to the studio to assist in the composition of the painting. Because there was so much detail to include in the painting, not only in the portraits themselves, but also in the detail of the uniforms, much of the work was completed with tiny brushes of only several millimetres in width, which in comparison to the scale of the painting, accounts for the length of time it took to complete.

Louise Pragnell, the artist, was born in 1981 and studied Fine Art at Edinburgh University (graduating with a Distinction in Painting). From 2005 to 2006 she has worked in a small portrait atelier in Florence and in October 2008 had her first solo-exhibition in the Art Space Gallery on Maddox Street in Mayfair. Louise now works from her studio in Fulham and specializes in individual portraits.



CLUB EVENTS 2010

JULY

- 1st Cigar & Port Dinner
- 8th Sandhurst Polo Day – Club Tent
- 20th Summer on the Terrace -
An Evening of Noel Coward

September

- 16th Grouse Dinner
- 28th Rob Caskie Talk – Rorke's Drift

October

- 6th Charity Bridge Afternoon
- 7th Helen Plumb – 'Pearls' – Talk and Tea
- tbc Theatre visit
- 28th Fine Wine Dinner and Wine Lottery

November

- 1st Bridge Afternoon
- 3rd Reception to celebrate 200 years since
the foundation of the Guards Club (1810)
- 11th Talk on 'Canaletto'
by Nigel Goodman & luncheon
- 23rd/24th Visit to Bruges – Christmas Market
- 30th Book Fair – and Authors Lunch

December

- 1st Bridge Afternoon
- 9th Sons & Daughters Dinner
- 16th Members Christmas Lunch
- 23rd Christmas Closing