

THE RAG

ARMY & NAVY CLUB



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Issue 67 - November 2024

Army & Navy Club Updates

Update from the Chairman



“In just 13 years, 2037, The Rag will reach its bi-centenary. I like to think that I may just be around for those celebrations, but far more importantly I want to

ensure that the Club is still thriving and vibrant! To achieve that we must ensure that our membership base continues to expand, attracting both military and non-military members while maintaining the traditions and standards we all enjoy at The Rag.

Having been a member for over 50 years I consider it a great privilege to have been invited to become Chairman for

the next 3 years. We are fortunate to be building on the firm foundations created by my predecessors Major Frank Froud and Major General Peter Grant Peterkin, both of whom stepped into the breach following the Bison episode and worked tirelessly to reestablish the fortunes of The Rag, including its highly successful merger with the Naval Club.

My challenge, and that of my Board colleagues over the next 3 years, is to attract and retain a constant stream of new members to fill the ranks of those who inevitably leave us as time passes. We need to be true to our roots and traditions, protect and preserve the standards we all so enjoy while also recognising that to be relevant in a changing world

we must offer facilities, events and a club atmosphere which is unobtainable elsewhere. Geographically and culturally, we are well placed to achieve this.

So please use and enjoy your Club. Bring your friends and colleagues and introduce them to the wonderful institution that is The Rag. Encourage them to aspire to membership and enjoy what we have to offer. There are exciting plans underway to further improve our facilities and events. We will then succeed in creating a flourishing future for the Club and ensure that, for the bi-centenary year, The Rag will be the envy of Clubland.”

Neil Johnson, Chairman

Update from the General Manager



“As we move into the final months of 2024, it is a great time to reflect on our progress and look ahead to the busy season to come. This year

has seen significant improvements throughout the Club, with all bedrooms receiving a soft repaint to refresh their feel and several back of house areas, including the Kitchen floor, being fully refurbished to enhance our operations. These updates ensure that the Club maintains its high standards and offers the best experience for all our members.

In addition to these improvements, we have welcomed several new team members who have made already a positive impact. Our team has undergone extensive training to ensure they are delivering the level of service you expect, and I am proud to say

they are in tip-top form and ready to meet the demands of the busy season ahead.

As we approach the festive period, I would like to gently remind you to book your lunches and dinners at the Coffee Room and Ribbon Bar in particular. We expect both outlets to be particularly busy this season and advance bookings will help us ensure that your dining experience is seamless and enjoyable.

The Member Events Programme remain as strong as ever, with a variety of offerings for the Autumn and Winter months. In November, we have the much-anticipated St. Emilion Dinner, where members can enjoy a carefully curated wine pairing with a delightful menu - always a highlight, along with Cigars on the Terrace. We will also continue our series of Fireside Chats and Wine Dinners and November will feature a special performance by the Stellar Theatre Company. And as we move into

December, we're excited to bring some festive cheer with the Choir on the Terrace and the Members' Christmas Lunch.

Looking ahead to next year, we have already started planning a number of projects, including renovations and further improvements across the Club. The aim is to ensure that the Club's facilities stay up to date while still preserving the traditional charm we all value. We will share more details soon, but rest assured, these projects are always designed with our members' comfort and experience in mind.

Whether you are attending one of our many events or simply stopping by to enjoy the refreshed facilities, your continued engagement helps make the Club a vibrant and welcoming place for all. I look forward to seeing you around the Club soon.”

Pedro Mendes, General Manager

Membership Updates

Updates from the Membership Chairman



The pace of life in the Membership Office continues to be as hectic as ever but we can look forward towards 2025 with increasing levels of optimism. However, the chal-

lenges remain, especially when there is such economic uncertainty due to both domestic and geopolitical factors. Rest assured that we are working tirelessly to maintain recruitment and retention through innovative measures resulting in very good figures all round. I would like to pay tribute to my

predecessor as Chairman of the Committee, Major General Michael Charlton-Weedy who steered the Committee through turbulent times. I am delighted as the new Chairman, to have his wise counsel and support on hand as a Club Trustee.

Subscriptions vs Costs 2024

It is essential that the Club must increase its subscriptions year on year, to keep pace with

inflation and when possible, reduce the deficit between subscriptions, payroll and all the other costs involved in running a business such as ours; none of which is inflation proof! Being very mindful of the feedback from members at renewals, this year's subscription increase is almost purely inflationary, with subscriptions increasing by only 5% which is as little as possible in these circumstances. Therefore, this year's subscriptions include little to no convergence towards subscrip-

tions meeting payroll and rates despite the drastically growing deficit between the three. In real terms, this means the 35-74 annual subscription will rise just £50, from £1060 to £1110, while the 75+ subscription will increase by just £45 to £955. We have only been able to keep subscription increases as low as this by increasing the joining fee by 38% - a move which protects existing members, whilst remaining extremely competitive. A joining fee of £900 is still well in the lower quartile.

Recruitment and Retention

The essential role of the Membership Committee is to instigate measures that encourage recruitment and retention. To that end, members should be aware that we do not charge a joining fee for any membership applicants who are under 29 years of age. It can be expected, as the Club gym will be operational in 2025 and the bedroom renovation programme gains pace, the joining fee will continue to rise until we are in line with

our peers. It is for this reason there has never been a better time to join The Rag, and for you, our greatest recruitment tool to recommend your colleagues, friends or family for membership. With the under 29 subscription so competitive at £420 (2025), you may also want to consider membership at The Rag as a gift to mark a recent milestone or to set them up in a prestigious London Club. Please be aware of the *Refer a Friend* offer (£150

for the first, £100 for the second, £50 for the third) and, in 2025, we will be rewarding the new member with £50 onto their Rag Card as a welcome. Finally, I would like to thank members for all their efforts and support during the last year. Take up of the *Refer a Friend* scheme has shown a 71% increase on 2023, which has been greatly appreciated. I am confident that we, as Rag members, can look forward to a successful 2025.

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ENQUIRIES

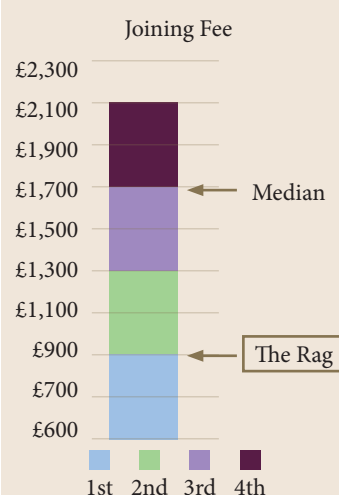
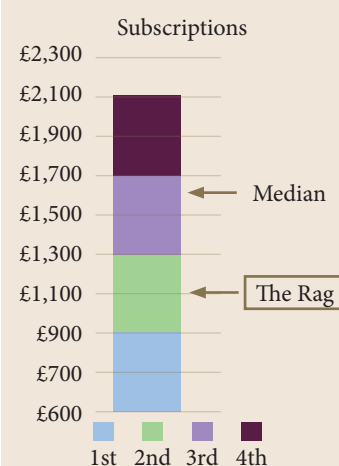
currently
in the pipeline

Average age of New Members

51

Bringing the Average Age
of Membership down to

66

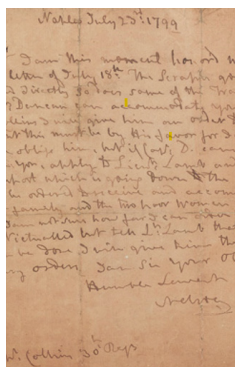


Conservation Work

Before the year ends, we have scheduled some final conservation work on our art and artefacts. First on our list is a Portrait of a Gentleman, believed to be John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, by a follower of Sir Godfrey Kneller. This portrait has been in the Club's collection since 1853, donated by Colonel G. T. Rowland, Late RA. Once the canvas has been cleaned and the frame restored, this portrait will no longer be tucked away in the corner of the Coffee Room, and will return to full display.



In 2025, we hope to finally restore and reframe our much-loved portrait of the Duke of Wellington – a long overdue project! The painting has been stored on the second-floor corridor for two decades, nestled behind the skirting boards. It serves as a reminder of the grand height of the 1837 Clubhouse ceilings, but too large for the 1960s Clubhouse. Despite hours of searching, the CEO and I have failed to find a new home for the Duke and so unless Members can find a space big enough, he will return to his original home once restored. A reassessment by a conservator revealed that the canvas has sustained damage due to exposure and its current position. The weakened stretcher has loosened the canvas, causing the paint to flake. Our plan to resecure and frame the piece will improve its stability and prevent further damage, while varnish removal will allow for proper cleaning and restoration!



Two letters by Nelson, donated in the early 1900s, will also be cleaned and reframed to conservation standards to ensure their vital preservation. One of these, addressed to Captain Collins, was written with Nelson's left hand, two years after his right hand was amputated in 1797.

The maintenance of hundreds of artworks is ongoing and reviewed annually. Reassessing the Club's collections ensures new acquisitions or damaged items are added to a prioritised list. Join us in preserving our heritage by donating to the [Conservation Fund](#) and supporting the restoration of this beloved painting. You can make a payment by logging into the Member's Area on the website, or by contacting our Collections Manager, Amy Plewis, E: conservation@therag.co.uk.

Postcards from The Rag

TO: ARMY AND NAVY
CLUB

ADDRESS: 36 PALL
MALL LONDON

from: DAVE
THOMAS

Whenever I visit Nairobi, I try to visit The Muthaiga Club, Nairobi, located just 10 - 15 minutes' drive from the bustling noisy City Centre district of Nairobi off Thika Road. For pure escapism from the noise and pollution, I feel fortunate to be able to enjoy one of the jewels in the crown of Kenya.

This Club really is a place to savour. Whether one enjoys sitting by the outdoor pool heated to 30 degrees all year round, using the gym or the Golf Course attached to the Club, or indeed enjoying the beautiful garden, the staff at Muthaiga are very professional, well-trained and happy to help.

My view of Muthaiga is that it's one of those must visit places and I cannot wait to go back. My thoughts wandered what it must have been like to be a member years ago in the days when most men carried guns and rifles.



Club Member Events

Upcoming Winter Events



STELLAR DINNER

16th November



**TRI CLUB
CAROLS**

4th December



**CHRISTMAS WINE
AND CANAPES**

10th December



**MEMBERS
CHRISTMAS LUNCH**

11th December



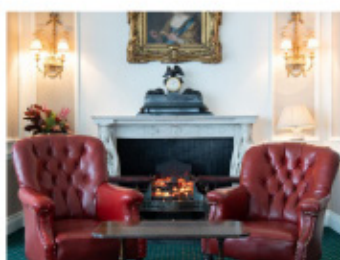
**CULINARY
MASTERCLASS**

14th December



BURNS SUPPER

24th January



**Fireside Chat with
Her Honour, Wendy
Joseph KC**

3rd February



**Lunch with
Baroness Brown of
Cambridge**

26th February

A&N Festive Offering



Celebrate this Christmas with a little help from The Rag! Explore our signature A&N Festive Mixed Case of Wine, Festive Tote Bags, and Rag Christmas Cards.

The Army & Navy Club Festive Mixed Case of Wine, prepared by our friends at Davy's for delivery only, offers a carefully curated range of classic favourites for the entire festive season. Orders are available in the A&N Wine Club section of the Club Shop. Additionally, for collection only, you can order a Festive Tote Bag which includes Club Wines, Christmas Pudding by Chef Hart, or A&N Chocolates.

Place your order at the Club Shop.

This year, we're excited to introduce a brand-new Christmas Card design: Paul the Barman! Alongside this, our other hand-designed Rag-themed Christmas Cards are available online or from Reception.

Retail Offerings



As Christmas fast approaches, we've been working hard to refresh and expand our exclusive discounts for Rag members with top retailers like DR Harris and Farlows.

We're also excited to announce the latest addition to our growing list: a generous 15% discount at Hawes and Curtis, available when you show your Rag Card.

Known for their exceptional shirts and tailoring, Hawes and Curtis offer a perfect blend of quality and style, making this a valuable new benefit for our members.

Discover all our exclusive member discounts by visiting the 'Local Retail Offers' page on our website. We're always looking to add more deals, so check back regularly for the latest member offers.

Hear from Longstanding Staff



EVELYN DIZON
Head Receptionist
Start Date: 05 July 2004

"When I joined the Club two decades ago, I was a young woman with dreams of making a difference in my life. I began my career as a maid, and through hard work, dedication, and a passion for excellence, I progressed through various roles, from Housekeeping Maid to Front Desk Receptionist, Shift Leader, and eventually, to my current position as Head Receptionist. Along the way, I gained valuable skills, built strong relationships, and received support from the Club's management and staff. As I look to the future, I am excited to continue growing in my career, committed to upholding the Club's high standards."



PADMORE ONWUZULIKE
Internal Auditor
Start Date: 20 March 1995

"I began working at the Club on 20th March 1995, during my studies, as the first male Chambermaid/Porter in what I initially thought would be a temporary role. However, the strong family-like relationship between members and staff led me to make this a permanent career. A year later, I transitioned to the Front Hall Porter/Security role, where I had a memorable encounter at a lunch hosted by General Sir Roger Wheeler. Tasked with looking after the military guests' ceremonial hats, my limited knowledge of military attire left the guests in tears of laughter as I tried to match hats to their owners."



LAURENCE DENTON
EA & HR Administrator
Start Date: 01 June 1998

"Joining 26 years ago from the Naval & Military Club, I began my RAG career in 1998 as Personal Assistant to the then-Club Secretary Commander Anthony Holt RN, eventually progressing to my current multi-faceted roles of Executive Assistant, Company Secretary, and Pensions & HR Administrator. During my career I have successfully collaborated with five Club Secretaries/CEOs and nine Chairmen. A notable personal achievement was editing the triannual RAG Magazine. I have also supported the Boards that worked on successful projects: The Phoenix redevelopment on the ground and 6th floors and the Ribbon Bar & Terrace construction – aka Project Ragamuffin. Thanks to the Club's strong foundations, the Board's financial prudence and vision, our loyal members and the hardworking and devoted employees, I am sure that The Rag has a promising and secure future."



LORETA RAKICKAITE
Housekeeping Supervisor
Start Date: 12 July 2004

"I have had the pleasure of working in the Housekeeping Department at The Rag for over 20 years. During this time, I have proudly served as Housekeeping Supervisor, a role I continue to enjoy and find fulfilling. I have been honoured with recognition for my efforts, including being named Employee of the Month on several occasions. Over the years, I have witnessed many positive changes, such as the addition of the Ribbon Bar and Terrace, and the refurbishment of the rooms and kitchen, enhancing the Club's welcoming atmosphere."

CHAIRMAN'S CHRISTMAS FUND

As you may know, the UK government has introduced a new law to ensure fair distribution of tips to all workers, including agency staff from 1 October 2024! This means that from now on, all tips received through invoicing or billing at tables or in the bars will be distributed amongst all staff on a monthly basis.

However, the Chairman's Christmas Fund will continue to be distributed in accordance with the Chairman's decree. I therefore appeal to all members to support our loyal permanent staff by making a generous donation to the Christmas Fund via any of the payment options below.

- Neil Johnson, Chairman



VIA THE WEBSITE

Login to the Club's website and click on 'Make Payment' from the options across the gold bar at the top of the screen. Under 'Make a Card Payment' select 'Staff Fund' from the drop down list. Enter the amount you wish to contribute and your card details and then click 'Confirm'.

AT RECEPTION

A contribution can also be made at the Reception Desk by cheque, cash or by debit or credit card.

VIA BANK TRANSFER

If you wish to make a contribution by bank transfer, please find the Club's bank account details below. Please quote reference "Staff Fund".

Sort Code: 16-00-38
Account Number: 00737981
Account Name: Army & Navy Club
Chair
Bank: RBS