



THE RAG

ARMY & NAVY CLUB

Welcome To Spring At The Rag

Issue 68 - April 2025

Inside This Issue: Updates from the Chairman and CEO, Staff Update, Celebrating International Women's Day, Easter at The Rag, Membership Update, Local Retail Discounts, Obituary, Art & Artefacts, Club Events, Cultural Calendar, Barbecues and Picnics

ARMY AND NAVY CLUB UPDATES

Update from the Chairman



As the grey days of winter give way to spring in St James's Square our thoughts turn to enjoying the Club's facilities and events over

the coming months. There is an exciting programme of events, including the Club Dinner which is always a highlight of our social calendar year.

Having taken on Chairmanship of the RAG last July, it hardly seems possible that I am already asking members to think about Board Elections at our next AGM on

July 2nd this year, but we do need to start planning now. Could I therefore encourage all members to consider what skills they could bring to Board deliberations and, if you are interested, do please approach Laurence Denton in the office or by email laurence@therag.co.uk. She will explain the election process and provide any necessary assistance. However, please remember that the deadline for nominations to stand for election is 1 May 2025.

On a directly related subject, but for discussion and consideration in slower-time, I mentioned in January's "From the Boardroom" message, the need for us to think about how we attract the best skills and talents to future Boards from across the entire RAG membership, both Military and Non-Military. I recognise the sensitivity of

this debate, and that we must protect and ensure the continuation of our precious military ethos, but current restrictions on Board composition could become a problem in the future [though hopefully not during my term] and we should address the issue while we have the luxury of time for proper consideration, rather than rush when it is too late?

Your Club is busy and thriving. I look forward to seeing many of you at the RAG over the coming weeks and months.

Neil Johnson
Chairman

Update from the CEO



I write this, we are in the midst of a particularly exciting week at the Club, with a range of events and initiatives that are bringing our members together. From the Club Dinner to the Tattinger Lunch and Rag Masterclasses, these gatherings are fostering meaningful connections and enhancing the Club's community spirit.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for the Honorary Members Lunch on May 9th, which promises to be a wonderful occasion to celebrate our longstanding members and their contributions to the Club.

Our Cultural Calendar continues to grow with exciting new additions, including the

Club's Rag Concerts, the second sell-out Stellar Theatre evening (this Saturday) and our inaugural Opera event, being planned by the team for later this year. We are also planning more theatre evenings and tours in partnership with TLC, ensuring that we offer our members a rich and diverse cultural programme.

I am pleased to report that our website redesign has received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with over 350 responses so far to a questionnaire circulated last month. We have already had three presentations from potential website designers and the team is busy making sure that we appoint the right company for an overdue website redesign.

On the operational front, we are moving ahead with the soundproof pods which will be in place by July in the Jacob Cook Library and there is much happening in the background with regards to the planning of

the gym and bedroom refurbishment. As soon as we have plans to share, they will be made available to view in the front hall.

We are also in the midst of important security upgrades around the building with enhancements to our intruder alarm system and CCTV. This will also include securing the door from the garage into the Club with a card reader.

These developments, alongside ongoing efforts to foster deeper connections among our members, are helping to strengthen the Club's position as a vibrant hub for engagement and community. I want to thank you for your continued support as we strive to deliver excellence across all areas.

Sara Kent
CEO

STAFF UPDATE

Meet Martina Curlejova - Front of House Manager



I want to express my sincere gratitude for the warm welcome I have received over the past five months since starting as your Front of House Manager. The transition from the hotel industry to the

Club has been an incredible journey, and your support has made me feel at home. A bit about me: I was born in Czechoslovakia, now Slovakia, and have spent 15 years in London's hospitality sector, primarily in hotels. I am truly impressed by the expertise and dedication of my team, reflecting their

commitment to the Club. I would also like to introduce Emmanuel, our Porter Team Leader, who recently marked six months with us. His professional yet warm approach ensures a welcoming atmosphere while upholding our high standards.

As part of our ongoing improvements, we are introducing several service enhancements. The Front of House Team now have new uniforms, reflecting our commitment to excellence. An updated Wi-Fi password is now available at Reception for member convenience. From March 2025, our revised cancellation policy will extend the notice period from 24 to 48 hours, reducing waiting lists and maximising availability.

To streamline payments, we are also introducing a new payment link, eliminating the need to provide card details over the phone for smoother and secure transactions.

These initiatives rely on collaboration across all departments, with strong support from our General Manager and CEO. Thank you for your ongoing support—I look forward to our continued journey together.

Martina Curlejova
Front of House Manager

Celebrating Women's Day At The Rag



We celebrate the incredible contributions of women everywhere, whose dedication, innovation, and leadership continue to inspire and shape the world around us. A special mention goes to the talented women within our team (pictured) and our remarkable members, whose passion and hard work leave a lasting impact.

EXPERIENCE EASTER HERE AT THE RAG

This Easter, Rag Members can enjoy their Easter break in the heart of London, taking advantage of the city's Easter festivities.

STAY DATES:

Book between **14 April – 27 April** and enjoy our weekend rates when staying two nights or more.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Complimentary Welcome Drink** – Enjoy a glass of our signature Club Wine upon arrival
- Easter Sweet Treat** – A delightful gift waiting in your room
- Activities Pack** – A curated guide of Easter events in London
- Self-Guided Tour** – Perfect for first-time visitors
- Exclusive Walking Tours** – Discover London guided by one of our esteemed members
- Memorable Moments** - Book a quintessentially British Afternoon Tea

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Membership Update



As Chairman of the Membership Committee, I would like to welcome you to the first quarterly membership update. This will be a regular feature within each quarterly newsletter

going forward and I look forward to providing regular membership updates to you all.

It has been a good start to the year in terms of people wishing to join, with 110 applications and enquiries in the pipeline. To date, this has resulted in over 55 new members since January 2025, with an average age of 47.

In September 2026, former Naval Club members who joined The Rag in 2021, will be invited to renew their membership as individual members for the first time. Together with myself and the CEO, the membership team are already working hard on this process.

In the lead up to the renewals, all former Naval Club members will be invited to a presentation and drinks reception followed by regular updates. The Club has been enriched by the addition of the former Naval Club members and long may that continue. While we recognise not every former Naval Club member will renew, the Membership Committee continues to assess appropriate strategies to ensure the Club maintains a healthy total membership.

It is to this end, I would like to remind members of the attractive family packages and gift scheme for both serving officers and non-serving membership applicants under the age 29. Further details can be obtained by emailing membership@therag.co.uk.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a good Spring and please do visit The Club website which highlights all that membership of The Rag has to offer.

Mark Spragg
Membership Chairman

Make use of Local Retail Discounts

Davy's Wine Merchants

Rag members can enjoy a 15% discount across a wide selection of wines from Davy's Wine Merchants. Members can order directly from the [A&N Wine Club website](http://www.davy.co.uk), hosted by Davy's, featuring options like Club Claret, Club Sauvignon Blanc, and Army & Navy Club Champagne NV.

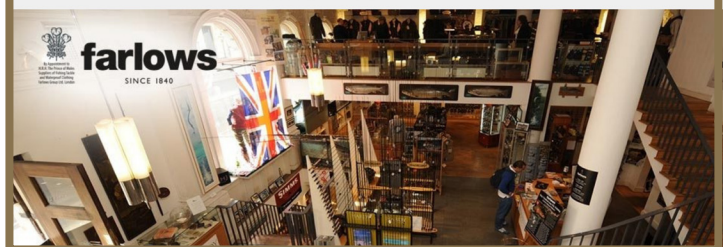
DISCOUNT CODE: **DWDKS**



Farlows

Farlows offers top-quality gear and expert advice for fishing and shooting, including fly-fishing kits, traditional shooting attire, performance footwear and accessories. Club members receive an exclusive 10% discount with code **AMNY10** online at farlows.co.uk and sportfish.co.uk, or in-store - 9 Pall Mall.

DISCOUNT CODE: **AMNY10**



Apsley Tailors

With over 130 years of experience, Apsley creates affordable bespoke suits of the finest quality. Whilst primarily known for its suits, Apsley also tailor bespoke shirts, topcoats, dinner jackets and tweeds for Gentlemen and Ladies, within weeks. They welcome all members of the Club with an exclusive 20% discount on bespoke tailoring when you visit their showroom - 2 Mill Street.

To access the discount, please present your Rag Card.



Floris of London

Floris of London are proud to have stood as the destination for fine fragrance and craftsmanship since 1730. For anyone with a love of perfume and British luxury, 89 Jermyn Street is the ultimate destination to enliven your senses. They welcome all members of the Club with an exclusive 10% discount on all Floris non-sale products.

To access the discount, please present your Rag Card.



OBITUARY

Major Paul Skelton-Stroud Remembered



Paul Skelton-Stroud, the most likeable and clubbable of men, was a Rag member for nearly 34 years. He loved our Club and was very generous with his time working to maintain and improve it. Our art and artefacts and our library greatly benefitted. He catalogued, had photographed and valued those items that catch the eye and bring joy to the discerning member. Paul ran tours of the art and artefacts giving detailed accounts

of provenance with amusing anecdotes.

Paul weeded the less interesting or relevant books from the Library and, when the Finance Committee allowed, restocked it with more recent publications.

Paul organised private tours of the Royal Mews for Club members and to the Royal Horse Artillery where he had been Honorary Vet. These contacts and others – usually cemented with a couple of bottles of “Scottish Wine” (Whisky) – brought benefits to Club members. In halcyon days, a secret contact at London District also produced best stand tickets for the Birthday Parade.

Paul, “S-S” to many of his friends and “The Major” to our staff, greeted most of the Rag’s staff in the language of their birth and always remembered names.

He rarely spotted anyone in the club looking uncertain, or whom he did not recognise, without talking with them. His strong views on standards of dress and behaviour prompted some less welcome interventions. It is possible that Paul was seen in his garden without a tie but never so in SW1.

Paul steered the Bar Flies who, after drinks took luncheon (never lunch!) in the Coffee Room (never The Dining Room!). At the Bonny Lunches, the Club Dinner and Christmas Lunch, he said Grace - carefully crafted, amusing, appropriate and loyal to the Monarch as our Patron.

He promoted the Club Table and regretted members dining alone in the Coffee Room. “This is a club, not an hotel”.

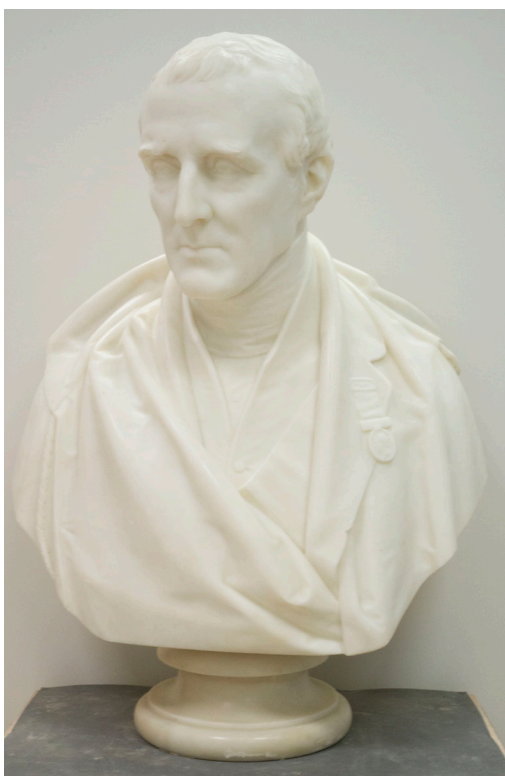
Paul, married for over fifty happy years to Davina, was a father, grandfather, Liveryman of the Farriers, Relief Vet in Hong Kong, veterinary support at the Royal Tournament.

It is to be hoped that the Rag can find another Paul Skelton-Stroud and if it does, it will be very lucky and it will be an even better Club for that discovery.

Major Paul Skelton-Stroud BVSc PhD MVSc MPhil FRSB FRCVS was born on 3rd March 1939. He died at home on 7th December 2024 after a long and demanding illness.

Art & Artefacts

Duke of Wellington Bust



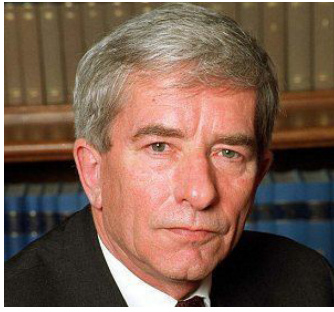
On 31st March, a marble bust of the 1st Duke of Wellington will be returned to us by The National Army Museum, and swapped with the one in the Front Hall which belongs to them. It was carved by the prolific Victorian sculptor Matthew Noble (1817-1876) in 1851, the year before the Duke died. The life-size portrait bust depicts the Iron Duke as a statesman in old age, wearing a cloak and the Waterloo Medal. It was given to the Club by Admiral Sir Arthur Cumming, K.C.B, in 1884.

After the Duke died, Noble created several subsequent copies of this original bust, including a bronze version in the British Embassy in Paris. It is thought that the bust formed the basis for Noble’s bronze Wellington Monument in Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, completed in 1856.

Born in Yorkshire, Noble studied under sculptor John Francis, and exhibited around one hundred works at the Royal Academy from 1845 until his death. He carved the likenesses of many famous figures of his time, including Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, Sir Robert Peel and Michael Faraday. His works can be found across the UK (and a couple in India) most notably in Westminster Abbey, St. Paul’s Cathedral and Parliament Square, London.

CLUB MEMBER EVENTS

Discover This Season's Exciting Events



FIRESIDE CHAT WITH LORD SAVILLE

7TH APRIL



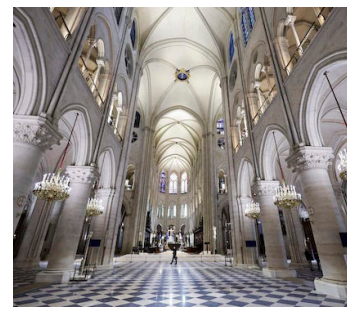
COFFEE + CONNECT

10TH APRIL



RAG CONCERT

20TH APRIL



TLC - REBUILDING NOTRE DAME

28TH APRIL



WATCH SUPPER

29TH APRIL



LUNCH WITH DAME WENDY HALL

14TH MAY



BOARD GAMES & COCKTAILS

16TH MAY



LITERARY LUNCH WITH LORD DANNATT

21ST MAY

2025 Cultural Calendar

The Rag's 2025 cultural calendar offers a season of extraordinary experiences. From Stellar Theatre to Rag Concerts, this season's events ensures there is something for everyone. The Marlborough Suite sets the stage for an exclusive Easter Sunday concert featuring violinists Lily Harwood and Alexandra Peel. We also have the ever-popular Lana-May returns for a sold-out evening of 1920s-1930s New Orleans Jazz, Blues, and Swing, transporting guests to the golden age of music.

Barbecues and Picnics



As the days grow brighter, it is time to look forward to warmer weather and outdoor dining. Join us for our Summer Barbecue on the Ribbon Bar Terrace, where you can enjoy delicious food from the grill, refreshing drinks, and great company. Or, for a more leisurely treat, book a Picnic in the Park and savour a classic hamper in the serene St James's Square Garden. With a choice of British, Mediterranean, or Vegetarian options – plus a Teddy Bear hamper for little ones – it is the perfect way to make the most of the sunshine. Stay tuned for more details on dates and availability!

