

Clifton Club News



The Clifton Club

ISSUE 20 WINTER 2017



Chairman's Welcome

I am now six months into my chairmanship. It has been fun but also a really busy time with preparations for the Bicentenary celebrations and building work within the Club.

The varied array of events and activities in the Club continues to surprise me. Are there many places in the UK where one can play backgammon and bridge, take a Pilates class or have a game of snooker followed by lunch, and possibly spend the evening taking a reeling class or attending a superb Black Tie dinner in good company?

On this theme, my chairmanship has also allowed me to see how many of our Members use the Club regularly or not so frequently. I would urge you all to try something new in the Club from the vast list of options available to you. Especially in 2018 when we will have some truly unique and one-off experiences here in the Club, more news on this to follow soon.

The Committee Members all dedicate a great deal of time and effort into the successful running of the Club. I am immensely grateful to them, and your gratitude can be demonstrated by joining in as much as you can!

The new room, further news inside,

is looking wonderful and adds an additional dimension to our facilities. I'm excited to hear your feedback in due course.

You will note from this newsletter that the Founders Dinner in October has provided us with some peculiar and hugely entertaining photographs. It was a wonderful surreal evening with a huge amount of attention to detail. Special thanks to Delphine and Sarah for all their planning and the all the staff on the night.

Unfortunately, I would like to note that Past Chairman Dick Pearce recently passed away. Dick was Chairman of the Club from 1999 to 2001 and indeed approved my own proposal to the Club. He will be sadly missed by his family and friends.

Finally, it remains for me to wish you all a lovely festive period. Hopefully I will see some of you at either the Christmas cocktail party or the Christmas lunch. Failing this I hope to see you in 2018, our 200th year.
Jerry Barnes, Chairman.

Bicentenary Celebrations

In 2018 The Club will be celebrating its 200th year anniversary, to mark this memorable occasion we have a number of special events throughout the year.

A special edition of the newsletter along with a calendar of events will be released in New Year to inform members of celebratory proceedings throughout the year. We look forward to seeing you all at the various events and activities over the next 12 months.



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Opening Times

Office

Monday - Friday: 9.30am - 5.00pm

Members Club

Monday - Friday: 9.30am - 10.00pm

Saturday: 4.00pm - 10.00pm

Sunday: 4.30pm - 8.30pm

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Founders Dinner

The 2017 Annual Founders Dinner took place on Saturday 7th October; this year's theme was 'Alice in Wonderland'.

The Club had undergone a huge transformation, with flamingos and playing cards around every corner. Members made their way through the keyhole to be greeted with cocktails served in tea cups and entertainment from The Mad Hatter and The Queen of Hearts from local performers Circus Fantastic. Members and guests enjoyed a 5 course magical meal prepared and created by Head Chef Philip Clench & Sous Chef Yordan Yordanov. Dishes included 'Eat Me, Drink Me'; a mustard & cauliflower macaroon with a shot of jagermeister, 'Mock Turtle Soup'; a Chicken and Beef Consomme and 'The White Rabbit'; Confit Rabbit Leg, Rolled Rabbit Loin, Bunched Carrots. To Finish a trio of desserts were served on vintage tea stands and included homemade Jammy Dodgers, Lemon Tarts and Chocolate Opera. During the meal entertainment was provided by Alice herself who hula hooped around the dining room, The Mad Hatter & The Queen of Hearts who both performed very memorable shows.

Over 60 Members and their Guests dressed to impress with a broad range of Mad Hatters, Playing Cards, Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum, Alice and The Queen of Hearts. A huge thank you to everyone who embraced the theme to provide a truly memorable event.

Next Years Dinner will be celebrating something rather special and will be held on Saturday 6th October - Theme to be announced.



The Auriol Room

Coming soon to the Clifton Club: a quiet space for work and study.

Members will know of this year's project to reopen and refurbish the space 'behind the Greenway room' on the second floor of the Club. This space will be known as the Auriol Room, making reference to the individual who first proposed the building of the Assembly Rooms in Clifton. (There is much more on John Auriol in this issues 'From the Vault').

The Auriol Room will provide a completely new facility, open to all Members and aimed especially at those who need a calm space to work or study. There will be good access to WiFi and plenty of power points for laptop users. We think of it as the Clifton Club's

answer to the Quiet Carriage on GWR – however without the ban on telephone calls! We don't see it as a meeting room, as we would like to allow Members to be able to drop in whenever they like. However we will monitor the room's use during 2018, and keep an open mind on additional purposes: it is quite a 'grand' room with a high quality wooden floor and so could lend itself to a wider range of activities.

The project is almost at an end, and we can expect to see the room in its finished state by the middle of December (although we may need a bit more time to set it up for Members' use). This is a significant moment in the Club's recent history: bringing the last of our large rooms back into service for the benefit of it's Members, in time for the Club's bicentenary year. **By Chris Day.**

John Lewis Auriol and the Clifton Assembly Rooms

I have previously written of John Lewis Auriol, but as we come to name our newly renovated public room, it is appropriate to revisit his life.



John Lewis Auriol painted by Johann Zoffany in 1783. The full painting is on display at the Holburne Gallery in Bath.

Auriol was born in Lisbon in 1755 – the year of the great earthquake and fire. His father James had left France for England via Switzerland following the Huguenot purges of the Seventeenth Century and in 1739 was naturalised by an Act of Parliament. James joined his uncle's merchant company in Lisbon and in 1752 married Charlotte Russell the daughter of the British Consul. Their three sons James, Charles and our John Lewis were educated in England before joining the East India Company in Bengal.

John Lewis Auriol painted by Johann Zoffany in 1783. The full painting is on display at the Holburne Gallery in Bath.

John Lewis Auriol remained in Bengal until 1803 and, having made a modest fortune, retired and returned to England, settling in Clifton in 1804. He purchased a small manor in the village of Wick Wick, near Frenchay. The manor house today is the 'Willy Wicket' pub and restaurant. Auriol also purchased a number of houses in Royal York Crescent which may have brought him into contact with Francis Greenway, who was then completing houses in Cornwallis Crescent.

In December 1804, following the Jane Austen edict 'that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife', Auriol married a young widow Anna Whyte: Auriol was 49 and Anna 27. A marriage settlement of £20,000 of 3% consols was agreed.

Auriol and Greenway commenced plans for the construction of a Hotel complex in Clifton. At that time Hotwells was the centre of social activity but despite the economic disruptions created by the ongoing war with France, housing development was gradually creeping up the steep slopes towards Clifton. Hotwells was also being affected by the creation of the Floating Harbour, and the move of the resort to Clifton was perhaps only a matter of time.

In March 1806, Auriol purchased land on the Mall, and together with Greenway covenanted to construct buildings to be used either as rooms of public resort or as seven dwelling houses. If Auriol had constructed houses, the top end of the Mall would probably have been enclosed to form a housing square. The decision had yet to be made when Auriol addressed a meeting of the nobility and gentry at the Sion Hill Pump Room with his proposal for building a new Assembly Room, offering either the Mall site or an alternative on Sion Hill. The Mall site was approved and within six weeks the foundations were being laid.

Variants of the Front Elevation of the Hotel and Assembly Rooms provided by Francis Howard Greenway. Prominent changes are that there are only two arched stairway entrances, while a dome is included over the central pediment

The signature of F H Greenway as it appears on the purchase documents of the parcel of land on the Mall

Three years later, the exterior of the Assembly Rooms was almost complete, but Francis Greenway and his brothers were in financial strife. Auriol filed a suit for bankruptcy against him, and a week later the Hotel and Assembly Rooms were advertised either for sale or to let. Within three months the Bristol Mirror advised that Auriol had now 'given his consent to convert the centre part of that beautiful building into a Chapel,

which will be one of the most elegant and extensive in England, capable of containing nearly 1000 persons, including about 200 poor, who are to be allowed admission gratis'. This never came to fruition although Auriol later chaired a number of meetings to raise subscriptions for a chapel in Clifton.

Work continued under the guidance of another architect – a Mr Kay of London. In April 1811 the Clifton Hotel opened, with William Mangeon the hotelkeeper. The venture was not financially sound; in 1808, Auriol had had to sell the Manor of Wick Wick (perhaps to William Wilberforce, the slave abolitionist) and in 1811 he redeemed the 3% consols from his marriage settlement at a considerable loss and soon after borrowed a further £5000 from his sister Sophia (married to John Prinsep). When Auriol died in 1839, the mortgages were outstanding and unable to be discharged. When Anna Auriol asked for her marriage settlement, Auriol's estate was placed into the hands of the High Court of Chancery where it was to remain for the next 16 years.



The signature of F H Greenway as it appears on the purchase documents of the parcel of land on the Mall

John Lewis Auriol is one of the unrecognised characters in the development of Clifton. His initiative to build the Hotel and Assembly Rooms wrested control of the resort away from the Hotwells and today gives Clifton its most historically significant and majestic building. From its completion in 1811 until the Victoria Rooms opened in 1842, the Hotel and Assembly Rooms were the centre of Clifton's social activity and, today, his legacy remains resplendent, a convivial centre of social activity for the successors of the Nobility and Gentry that frequented the watering place resorts of Clifton and Hotwells.



Calendar Of Events

December 2017

FRIDAY 1ST

Cocktail Party

THURSDAY 7TH

Film Night

Starter for 10

WEDNESDAY 13TH

Ladies Lunch

TUESDAY 19TH

Members Christmas Lunch

January 2018

THURSDAY 4TH

Film Night

What We Did on Holiday

WEDNESDAY 10TH

Ladies Lunch

THURSDAY 18TH

Film Night

My House in Umbria

SUNDAY 21ST

Family Sunday Lunch

FRIDAY 26TH

Burns Night Dinner

February 2018

THURSDAY 2ND

Film Night

Erin Brockovitch

WEDNESDAY 14TH

Ladies Lunch

THURSDAY 15TH

Film Night

The Constant Gardener

FRIDAY 16TH

Valentines Taster Dinner

SUNDAY 25TH

Family Sunday Lunch



Reciprocal Clubs

As a Full Member of The Club you have exclusive access to over 80 Reciprocal Clubs in the UK and Worldwide, a full list is available on the Clubs website.

Access to these Clubs may vary as a rule; a letter of introduction will be required to make reservations for dining and overnight accommodation, and some of the more high profile London Clubs will ask for an additional email confirmation from our Club Office prior to your visit. A Letter of Introduction can be requested at any point from the Office for more information or advice, please contact the Membership Secretary. We are always looking to enhance our reciprocal portfolio; suggestions are welcome along with any feedback from your experience at our Reciprocal Venues.

New Reciprocal Clubs

LONDON

Eight Club

The Sloane Club

OHIO - USA

The Clifton Club

INDIA

Calcutta Rowing Club

Newly Elected Members

Mr Jonathan Dembo, Mr Alec Heywood, Mr Ralph Maddan, Mrs Cilla Paget, Ms Joelle Berger, Ms Dene Bristol, Mr Steven Ferris, Mr Graham Gilding, Mrs Elizabeth Gilding, Mrs Sheila Marsden, Mr Tim Akrill, Mrs Claire Cook, Mrs Joanna Fuller, Dr Mark Mason, Mrs Philippa Mason, Mr Denis Mullan, Mrs Sheila Mullan, Mrs Roya Rosengren, Mr Andrew Scott, Mrs Lindsay Telling, Mr Charles Caton, Mr Niall Leighton-Boyce, Dr Charlotte Waelde.

COME AND JOIN IN THE ANNUAL FESTIVITIES
CHRISTMAS
AT THE CLIFTON CLUB

THE CANDLELIGHT
DINNER

Tuesday 28th November

THE CHRISTMAS
COCKTAIL PARTY

Friday 1st December

THE MEMBERS
CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Tuesday 19th December

The Club will close from Friday 22nd December – Tuesday 26th December.

Open from Wednesday 27th – Friday 29th December for light lunches and the bar.