

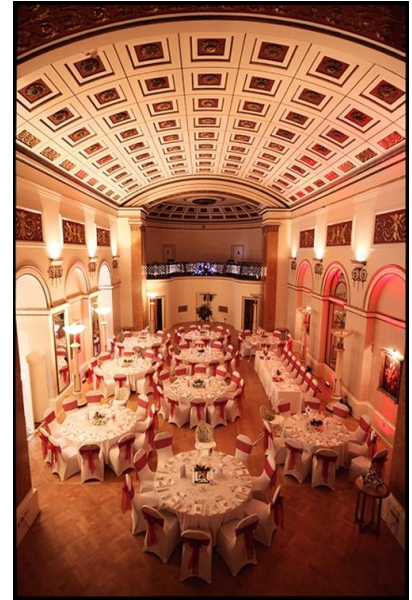
Without This Club, We Would Still Be at War with Britain!

The Lansdowne Club, Mayfair, London

by
Lew Toulmin

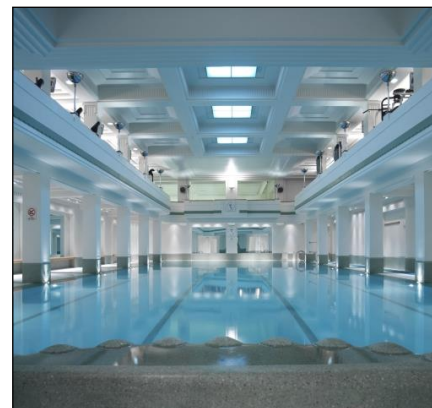
We visited the Lansdowne Club in early June 2010 for lunch and inspected two bedrooms but did not stay overnight.

HISTORY: The Club is housed in the great house designed by Robert Adam for the Marquess of Bute in 1763. In 1765 the house was sold to the Marquess of Lansdowne, hence the name. In 1782 the Treaty of Paris was drawn up in the Round Room of the house, with Benjamin Franklin negotiating for the American side, thus leading to the end of the Revolution, and independence for the USA. Subsequently the house was frequented by Dr. Johnson, scientist Joseph Priestley and other notables.



In the 1930s the house was converted to a private club, and a swimming pool and squash courts were added. Two rooms of the house were lost during expansion of the nearby roads, and these were removed to America, where one (the First Drawing Room) is located in the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the other (the Dining Room) is located at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. In 1935 the Lansdowne Club opened for “members of social standing,” with men and women having equal access and rights. The Club location is excellent, at the SW corner of Berkeley Square in Mayfair.

FACILITIES AND RULES: The Club is decorated in the Art Moderne style of the 1930s. The Treaty of Paris Round Room (the only original room) is quite attractive and has an amusing period painting of the American negotiators, which shows them but only a blank canvas for the British negotiators, who refused to be portrayed! There are several other large function rooms. The gym includes a seven lane lap pool. There are about 20 exercise and weight machines around the mezzanine overlooking the pool. Staff state that the pool and gym will undergo major reconstruction shortly; you may



wish to call about that if this facility is important to you. There is an open collar policy, with jackets required but not ties; this policy was instituted two years ago. No trainers (running shoes) or jeans allowed. Staff are very friendly, helpful and informed. No direct gratuities to staff are permitted. The Club has reciprocal relations with over 250 clubs worldwide, a very large number, and over 90 in the US alone.

FOOD: For lunch I had a ham and cheese sandwich and a Caesar salad; at a cost of 5.80 pounds. I gave this a “B-” since the mustard was rather overpowering and the bread was gummy. My wife had a ciabatta sandwich grilled with sun-dried tomatoes, avocado, brie, and chard; cost of 6.50 pounds: very nice, an “A-.” These were very reasonable prices for London. We ate outside in the open-to-the-sky courtyard. The weather was nice but the architecture in the courtyard is rather plain and unattractive. Club bedrooms surround and overlook three sides of the courtyard. Staff state that the fourth side was until recently the MI6 offices, with MI5 not far away. Interesting neighborhood.



MEMBERSHIP: The Club history describes the members as requiring “social standing.” There is apparently no requirement for publishing, or specific requirements for distinguished service. New members must have two letters of support from existing members, or failing this, may undergo a not-too-rigorous social interview. New single adult members pay a one time entrance fee of 520 pounds and a 700 pound annual fee; joint married members pay 720 and 860 respectively. Overseas single members pay a 520 pound entrance fee and 290 annual subscription; and overseas joint married members pay 520 and 310 respectively. There is a special category for overseas retired members: for singles, 440 entrance fee and 200 per year, and for a joint couple, 440 and 225 respectively. There is a very active junior membership with numerous activities.



BED ROOM DESCRIPTION: There are 72 bedrooms, all re-done recently, all en suite and all with air conditioning. We inspected a double room, about 12 x 15 feet, en suite with a tub and shower. The bedroom had grey paint and walnut burl fixtures, panels and furniture, and was attractive but perhaps a little cold-feeling. All bedrooms have windows

facing the courtyard or a nearby road. We inspected a small standard room, which was available to reciprocals only on the weekends. This room was quite small, with a small double bed, and would be recommended only for a very friendly couple!

BED ROOM RATES: Rates include 17.5 percent VAT and breakfast. Reciprocal rates for a standard (rather small) room, weekends only, are 140 pounds double occupancy and 110 single occupancy. For a double or twin room, weekday rates are 190 double occupancy and 155 single; these rates drop to 150 and 125 on the weekend. Junior suites are 10 to 35 pounds more.