

# Indian Ocean Club Pre-Launch Evening

9th March, 2002, Sandson Palais/Mystique, Hounslow West.

By Lewis Betsy, Managing Director, Indian Ocean Club

Welcome everyone to the first gathering of the newly formed Indian Ocean Club.

I hope you have all enjoyed the evening so far... Tonight is just a taste of the many special events we have planned in the months ahead.

So, the purpose of this evening is to introduce you to the Indian Ocean Club. This is in advance of our public launch in July. I'll tell you more about that in a moment.

You will no doubt be pleased to hear that I am going to keep this speech as short as possible!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All of you are special guests tonight for this first gathering of the Indian Ocean Club in Hounslow.

The Indian Ocean may seem far-away, but this evening somehow it seems that much closer.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to each of you, and thank you for attending.

First, I would like to convey special thanks to Mr Gwilym Sicobo of SeyNews.com for helping promote this event on his website. Also, to all of you who have made this event possible.

The reason for this evening, then, is to introduce you to the Club before our public launch in July.

For this evening, I first decided to invite those individuals I thought would have a special interest in the activities of the Club.

And so, most of you are here tonight . . .

For some years now, I have considered the possibility of a forum to celebrate the life and culture of the entire Indian Ocean region. . . Not just the islands, but the Indian Ocean Rim as well.

In this way, membership of the Club is open to anyone from the Indian Ocean - or anyone with an interest in the region as a travel destination.

The purpose of the Club is to provide a forum for individuals who have some association with the Indian Ocean region - wherever they may be in the world.

We intend to promote travel and tourism. We are also interested in the music and food of the region. That is what "culture" means - something everyone has in common. For this reason, the new Club is already attracting serious attention in the UK, Europe, and the region itself.

The Club's focus will be the well-known Indian Ocean Islands, such as Mauritius and Seychelles, as well as the Indian Ocean Rim - from Cape Town to Jakarta and Singapore.

We have already published our first Information Leaflet - which tells you more about our plans. This is available here this evening. Please take some additional copies away with you . . .

Now, how will the Club operate?

First of all, the new Club will NOT overlap with the activities of any national club or organisation.

The Club seeks to promote a better understanding of the Indian Ocean and its people. I am, therefore, prepared to work with anyone to accomplish this task.

Our calendar of events, then, will not detract from their existing social functions in London.

The Indian Ocean Club is based in London, but we will also be arranging visits abroad.

I look forward to your involvement in these activities.

I repeat: everyone is welcome to join as a member of the Indian Ocean Club - in the UK, Europe or anywhere else.

Briefly, members are entitled to discounts on our special events. Soon, our first newsletter will be published, and this will be sent to all members . . .

In addition, if any of you have experience of organising and promoting social events, you may want to consider joining the Club's Advisory Group.

Alternatively, you may want to nominate another individual. Either way, you can come and talk to me afterwards if you have any ideas or suggestions. . . Basically, the Advisory Group will act as agents for the Club, represent the views of members, and help organise our social calendar.

Sounds like good fun to me anyway . . .

International Advisors based in Mauritius, Seychelles and elsewhere, will also be appointed in due course.

Here are some of the events we are planning.

A regular visit to a curry house or restaurant. This will be for members interested in a regular night out at some of London's best curry restaurants.

A Christmas or New Year Dinner & Dance will be organised, and held at a Central London venue.

An Indian Ocean Festival is something I have in mind for next year: there are so many good "live" bands from the region who deserve to be heard . . .

We will also organise trips to the Indian Ocean Islands. The tours will include packages for hotels or guests houses, excursions and many other activities while visiting the islands.

These are just some items in our programme. The diary of events will be published in our regular Club newsletter.

Well, I hope you have enjoyed the evening so far.

The NEXT Indian Ocean Club event will be on 29th June, 2002, we have a special "Seychelles Night" to mark the Republic of Seychelles Independence Day. This event will be held here - at Sandson Palais.

On July 20th, we have the Indian Ocean Club Gala Evening in Central London. This is the Club's public launch. Again, you will also be provided with the details by post.

After that, we aim to hold meetings on a regular basis. My main aim is to have our own club-house one day. Once this is established, the Club will have a permanent base for all kinds of occasions.

I look forward to meeting you all again at our next meeting.

I hope I can count on your future support!

Once again, thank you for coming along to support the Indian Ocean Club. If you have any questions, then please come and talk to me afterwards. Enjoy the rest of the evening.

**RAISE YOUR GLASSES TO THE INDIAN OCEAN CLUB!!!**

Thank you for your attention.