

## **Mauritius Gymkhana Club**

**Created in 1848**

### **President Ball**

The history of the Mauritius Gymkhana Club is laced with many long standing British traditions. The Club was first founded by the British as a Service Club for British officers in the first half of the nineteenth century (between 1834 and 1849) and stayed so till 8 years after the Independence of Mauritius in 1968.

It was only in 1976, that the Commanding Officer of the British Naval Base handed over the then Mauritius Naval and Military Gymkhana Club to the very first Civilian management Committee and the Club became to be better known as the Mauritius Gymkhana Club.

The President Ball is the premier event in the annual calendar of activities at the Club.

This is a formal occasion and is meant to pay tribute to the Presidents of the Club, in recognition of their services to the club.

At the President Ball, the members of the club and spouses dress up in black tie and lounge dresses for the ball to mark the formality of the occasion.

Traditionally, the President welcomes all present and formally thanks the members for their support and contribution and celebrates by dancing away all evening..

A variation in dress code was introduced when the Navy joined the Military as members of the Club.

The wearing of the cummerbund, which is very specific to Navy traditions, became part of the dress code for the men.

Red Sea rig was originally a Royal Navy concept appearing during the nineteenth century. Historically, it was felt that Royal Navy officers, like their British Army counterparts, should wear the full appropriate uniform for all formal events, whatever the temperature. The sole exception was in the Red Sea, where the heat and humidity often made this physically impossible. Here, officers were permitted to remove their jackets in the wardroom, provided they added a cummerbund to temper the somewhat informal look. Royal Air Force officers serving on Navy ships follow the naval tradition wearing a Red Sea rig version of their own mess dress.

Many of the senior members of the Club still wear their cummerbund on this occasion.

This year's President Ball will be held on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

RHP\_Feb 2018