



# THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB

Sheridan Towers,  
The Village,  
Borsetshire

Telephone: 07768 628 788  
telegrams@newsheridanclub.co.uk  
www.newsheridanclub.co.uk

*Committee: Mr Torquil Arbuthnot (Chairman), Mr Artemis Scarheart (Treasurer),  
Mr Horatio Scotney-Le Cheyne, Mr Clayton Hartley*

## **ATTENTION! URGENT MESSAGE TO ALL GUESTS**

Welcome to Sheridan Towers and the New Sheridan Club's Christmas party. But I am sorry to have to tell you that something terrible has happened---there has been a murder in the Club!

As you were doubtless aware, your guest of honour was to have been the eminent art historian Dr Black who was to unveil his remarkable new invention, which he called his "art historical spectacles", a device resembling an ordinary pair of spectacles but which, when adjusted correctly, enables the viewer to see through the layers of paint on a canvas, revealing anything that may have been painted underneath, any later corrections, and so forth.

Dr Black arrived at the party at about 4.30pm. At that time none of the staff was here yet---only the four Club Committee Members, who had been here since the morning. According to these men, they welcomed Dr Black, chatted for a while, hung around the snuff bar with him and showed him round the venue before all five of them retired to their respective rooms to dress for the evening. I arrived at the Club at about 5.30pm, having been held up by the heavy snow which you doubtless encountered on your journeys here. I immediately checked on the guests present. The Committee Members were dressing in their rooms.

Dr Black was also in his room---sprawled on his bed, dead.

It seems he had been in the process of dressing: he was wearing a normal day shirt with a New Sheridan Club tie knotted crisply around his neck. But he wore no trousers---he had removed the trousers from his lounge suit and his evening trousers were still in the Corby trouser press (his is the only room to feature such a device). I could not tell what had killed him, though he had a look of surprise on his face.

Shocking as it is to realise that one of the Club's own Committee Members must be the murderer, it would be even more damaging for the Club to have to endure a protracted investigation, with the authorities raking through everyone's affairs. The police have, of course, had to be called. But, owing to the heavy snow, it will take them a good while to make it up here from the village: I don't expect them till about 11pm. So if one of you guests were able to solve the mystery of who is the murderer before then, so that we could present the police with an open-and-shut case, it would be best for everyone.

I have searched the premises and found a few items which I attach for your scrutiny. I've also included a few notes about the Committee Members themselves for the benefit of newer Members.

I do hope you'll be able to help us in this matter,  
Youssef  
Chief Steward

## **The New Sheridan Club Committee**

### **Chairman: Mr Torquil Arbuthnot**

Mr Arbuthnot has impeccable breeding, springing from a long and distinguished line--the Arbuthnots have been generals, statesmen, archbishops and diplomats. Torquil's father was gracious enough to run large parts of the Empire and the young Master Arbuthnot spent most of his childhood in Nigeria. Independently wealthy, thanks to his lineage, he is also an accomplished scholar--but as Chairman, he has the responsibility of being the public face of the Club, and consequently spends much of his free time drinking, gambling and swearing.

### **Treasurer: Mr Artemis Scarheart**

Mr Scarheart has the responsibility of handling all the Club's funds. Sometimes he even has a hazy idea of how much those funds actually amount to. His upbringing was modest but his heritage is anything but--for it is an open secret that he is the illegitimate son of none other than Dr Black. Black himself is unmarried and has no other children: so in all likelihood Black's not inconsiderable fortune (and the rights to his art historical spectacles) will now pass to Mr Scarheart.

### **Mr Clayton Hartley**

Despite having no official portfolio, Mr Hartley makes up for his modest origins through boundless hard work for the Club. Despite having to work long hours scraping a living as a hack reporter, much of his recent energies have gone into creating and distributing the Club Ties. He has hinted that he will be unveiling a new "improved" version of the tie in the new year. Who knows how much he could achieve if he had a fortune of his own and didn't need to work to sustain himself and his wife (a would-be art historian herself who sadly has never achieved the dizzy heights of Dr Black's career)?

### **Mr Horatio Scotney-Le Cheyne**

Also without a portfolio within the Club, Mr Scotney-Le Cheyne is lucky enough to have cash coming out of his ears, thanks to his lucrative family business (which keeps him in the manner to which he is accustomed without his having to contribute any involvement). He cuts rather a raffish figure about the club not least because of the nature of that business--it is an extremely popular chain of burlesque night clubs.



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*My Dear Pinkerton*

**I am very glad to hear that you will be attending the New Sheridan Club Christmas party; as you know I'm going to be unveiling my Art Historical Spectacles, and I've discovered just the thing to demonstrate them on.**

**While I was up at the Club a few weeks ago, I had a wander round when no one else was about, trying out my spectacles on some of the Club portraits.**

**When I casually glanced at old Arbuthnot's picture—you know the massive ancestral one with all the family coats of arms and everything—I had the shock of my life!**

**The old boy's face turns out to have been painted on much later. The original face in the painting—the real face of Torquil Arbuthnot, son of the great Arbuthnot of Nigeria—is someone completely different!**

**Well, as you can imagine, I couldn't resist making this the piece de resistance of my little demonstration at the party. I haven't told Arbuthnot, of course. I want it to be a surprise!**

**Anyway, Pinkers, old fruit, I'll see you at the party!**

**Yours, as ever,**

*Black*

**Dr Jonathon Black**

*This letter was delivered to the Club some days ago, but it disappeared from Professor Pinkerton's pigeon hole. This afternoon, while searching the building, I found it under the lining paper in a drawer in Mr Arbuthnot's room.*

# curtsey to Camilla?

**G**ORDON BROWN'S wife, Sarah Brown, curtsies to the Duchess of Cornwall when they meet in Kampala, Uganda.

To 'make a curtsey' is described in dictionaries as 'a gesture of respect or reverence' towards someone of higher rank, or royal. Does Camilla fall into this category when meeting Sarah Brown? Presumably she does, by virtue of marrying the heir to the throne.

Yet curtseying seems more demeaning than bowing, the male

equivalent. One always looks subservient doing the former, whereas you can never tell if the other isn't mock subservience.

A Clarence House spokesman says of Mrs Brown's graceful example: 'It's a mark of respect. We are all encouraged to curtsey to her [the Duchess of Cornwall] and it's correct protocol for a member of the Royal Family.'

Cherie Blair didn't curtsey to the Queen. It's unlikely she would have done so with Camilla. Was this a mark of her disrespect? Or a principled refusal to take part in a cynical charade?

Ten years ago — when we were still coming to terms with the sensational death of Charles's ex-wife, Diana — it would have been unthinkable that the wife of the Prime Minister (a Labour Prime Minister!) would curtsey to the notorious royal mistress Camilla Parker Bowles.

The story then was that Charles and Camilla were content to be together at last and the latter sought no fancy titles and dignities.

On the contrary, we were told modest-seeming Camilla was being snubbed and cold-shouldered by senior members of the Royal Family and plotted against by palace courtiers.

**W**AS this part of a public relations campaign aimed at portraying Camilla as a victim? Some members of the public remain implacably against her to this day, but waverers were brought into the fold.

Senior members of the Royal Family seemingly distancing themselves from Camilla was surely a necessary ruse. After the death of Diana, Camilla's name was poison.

Having Diana's sons William and Harry accept Camilla publicly — they could hardly do otherwise without virtually orphaning themselves — helped reduce public opposition.

But who would have guessed she



**HAVING** deplored 'celebrity culture', Gordon peerage and a Government job to Fiona Phillips interviews celebs who perch on GMTV's sofas to tell us how they do it. When it got out, the PM's spin merchants: about leading a campaign for health... thus undoing any good the... day, bad into c... of makin

*Found underneath a cushion in Mr Scotney-Le Cheyne's room.*

## Boffin's Magic Spex Could Have a Saucy Side Effect

If you're in the habit of reading dusty academic journals (yeah, right!) you may have noticed that an art expert called Dr Black has invented a new gadget to help him study old paintings. So far, so deathly. But get this—his gizmo is a pair of glasses that lets art nerds see through layers of paint at what is underneath. About as interesting as watching that paint dry? Maybe, but a few enterprising souls have been pointing out that these specs, if they were made available to the likes of you or me, could have another use altogether—looking at what lies underneath a different kind of layer. For if you can look through paint, why not through, say, women's clothes? Imagine how much fun you could have just sitting on a park bench watching ladies go by! I wouldn't want to be in the strip club business if these magic goggles became available to every filthy-minded male in the country. Who's gonna pay to see what they can get an eyeful of for free any time they want?

## Passengers don't drown at S

**CRUISING** to Antarctica seems an almost comically inappropriate activity while we're being told global warming is melting the ice there. If the point of such voyages is to see such damage, do they take into account their own contribution to carbon burning?

My old granny's response to any tragedy, on air, sea or land — 'they'd no business being there' — seems fitting in the case of the liner Explorer, which struck an

iceberg. A friend says his mother, who's from Birmingham, notifies him about such disasters by sending text messages. During this summer's floods, he got one saying, tersely: 'Pets are drowning in Wales.' (To savour fully the unintentional comedy of this brief dispatch, it's best to imagine it being uttered in a Birmingham accent.) He awaits a text about the Explorer. Perhaps: 'Cruise folk haven't drowned'?

c/o The New Sheridan Club  
Sheridan Towers  
The Village  
Borsetshire

The Editor  
The Times  
1 Pennington Street  
London E98 1XY

26th November

SIR,

How can that bounder Dr Black be allowed to continue to gather the acclaim of the great and the good when he is nothing but a common thief? Black's fame seems to have taken off with the announcement of his much-awaited "Art Historical Spectacles". Imagine my horror when I heard this: for the device is without doubt plagiarised entirely from a design painstakingly prepared, over years of diligent study, by my own wife, a design the plans for which mysteriously went missing one weekend 18 months ago - a weekend when none other than Dr Black had come to visit us.

I demand that he be publicly exposed as the fraudster he is and horsewhipped on the steps of his club.

Cordially yours,

*Clayton Hartley*

Clayton Hartley

Discovered -  
miraculously unburnt  
- in the fireplace  
of Mr Hartley's  
room

Mr Clayton Hartley  
c/o The New Sheridan Club  
Sheridan Towers  
The Village  
Borsetshire

The Times  
1 Pennington Street  
London E98 1XY

Dear Mr Hartley,

13<sup>th</sup> December, 2007

Thank you for your letter of 26<sup>th</sup> November. I regret to say that we are unable to publish it in The Times. Our lawyers have advised us that it would be legally unwise. Moreover; your letter is clearly the product of a deranged and pitiful mind: to think that you could pollute our in-tray with such foetid ramblings against the god-like Dr Black. You have made the entire staff physically sick by your very existence.

I am sorry that I cannot be of any more help in this matter. Thank you for thinking of our publication.

Yours faithfully,

*N. Casual*

Nevison Casual  
Letters Editor

*St Hubbins's Church  
The Village  
Borsetshire*

15<sup>th</sup> December

Dear Mr Scarheart

It was such a pleasure to chat with you last week when you came to examine the parish records. I do hope that that birth certificate we found was of some use to you: you certainly seemed quite excited when you saw it, though not necessarily in a good way.

I know you said most emphatically not to bother sending you a copy, but I just thought that, to be on the safe side, I would have one sent up to your club house anyway. Please don't thank me: it really is no bother at all.

I attach it with this letter.

Good luck with whatever genealogical project you are engaged in. If I may be of any further help, just let me know.

Merry Christmas!

*Michael*

Revd Michael Muskrat

*Delivered to the  
house this afternoon.  
I took the liberty of  
opening it.*

**CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH**



**GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE**

Application Number 791656

**REGISTRATION DISTRICT BORSETSHIRE**

**20 April 1979 BIRTH in the Sub-district of** The Village **in the** Borsetshire **District**

Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Name entered after registration
	<b>20 April The Village</b>	<b>Artemis</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Ron Hutchinson</b>	<b>Mrs Ron Hutchinson</b>	<b>Peniless hack writer</b>	<b>Revd Muskrat, St Hubbins's Church, The Village</b>	<b>24.04.79</b>		

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 13th day of December, 2007.

**BXCC 000000**

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WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.



# **MURDER, MYSTERY AND MINCE PIES!**

## AT SHERIDAN TOWERS

Fill in your solution to tonight's murder mystery here:

My name, sir, is.....

I submit that the killer is.....

Because: