



## Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth II

1926–2022

### A life of service, duty and devotion



## Fruity Hatfield-Peverel Award for Unabashed Excellence Bestowed for First Time

By Larry

CONGRATULATIONS must go to club member Luigi Sbaffi for winning the newly-minted Fruity Hatfield-Peverel Award for Unabashed Excellence at the New Sheridan Club 'Raising Spirits' Summer Party in June. I have it on good authority that our Italian friend won the award for his sheer enthusiasm, excellent attendance record, and vast number of extraordinary costumes, which require their own room in his house in Ancona. I'm sure Fruity would have thoroughly approved of a man with whom he had so much in common.

For those of you who may not have known the award's namesake, perhaps a little explanation is necessary. The trophy was presented to the club during the memorial dinner at the Oriental Club for our erstwhile colleague Flight Lieutenant Fruity Hatfield-Peverel who sadly dropped off the perch back in October last year. Fruity (Michael to his mother) was a beloved member of our dear club who sprang onto the scene fully formed in 2006 when he won the Golden Cravat at the Chap Olympiad. You can buy photographs of this auspicious occasion from Getty Images for the bargain price of £375 each. He was a member of the original Sheridan Club and was there from the inception of the New Sheridan Club, never missed a Christmas House and could get anywhere in London in just over two hours.

You may be aware of the recent sale of his vast collection of militaria and chappist paraphernalia which he had amassed in his headquarters at Rorke's Drift—including a collection of re-enactment costumes to rival Signor Sbaffi's, which has raised over £7,000 thanks to the hard work of Clayton Hartley. Fruity loved nothing more than to don his WWII Irvin flying jacket and itchy blue trousers and, together with his chums, stumble upon unsuspecting passers-by, looking dishevelled and demanding to be told what year it was.



Others may have known Fruity as the excellent DJ of the equally excellent Candlelight Club, a career sadly cut short by his regular bouts of ill health. Suffice to say his knowledge of music was encyclopaedic and his vinyl collection the envy of many an eye. Fruity was indeed a man of numerous talents who in his time wrote several plays and poems and also engaged in a brief dalliance with journalism. This began when he left university, writing for the Windsor and Eton Observer and finished with his coverage of the Reader's Digest Great Race from Land's End to John O'Groats, which he memorably won by beating some teenage girls and a couple of pensioners.

The Award for Unabashed Excellence takes the form of a golden hand pinching a hand-rolled cigarette which hopefully captures the essence of Fruity who never knowingly didn't have a weeze dangling from his lips. Many will fondly remember him cooking breakfast with fag ash hanging precariously over the bacon. Unquestionably a gourmet, he served the tastiest Quorn bacon simply by cooking it with the regular rashers.

Fruity Hatfield-Peverel is survived by his mother Gwen, his beloved Isabel and his goddaughter Michaela and joins James Bond, Bertie Wooster and Captain James Hook in the pantheon of fictional Old Etonians. He will be sorely missed as attested to by the large turnout for his memorial dinner and the warm speeches and tributes. His untimely passing also means there is currently a vacancy in the club for a gloriously grouchy raconteur with appalling time-keeping—so applications to the usual address.



## King Proclaimed at World's Oldest Parliament: Veteran Sheridanite Witnesses History Made

By Juan Watterson

LIKE MANY Sheridanites, it was with great sadness that I learnt of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at 6:30pm on Thursday the 8th of September. In the modern era of social media, the protocols that should have informed Governments around the Commonwealth fell flat. Like so many others, instead of hearing the news through the carefully designed official channels, I learnt through the BBC.

As Speaker of the House of Keys in the Isle of Mann, this immediately meant the suspension of all Parliamentary sittings and committee meetings until after the funeral, as a mark of respect. A flurry of media interviews followed soon after, remembering the Queen's visits to the Island as well as those of the now King.

On Saturday, the Accession Council met in London, and afterwards, King Charles III was proclaimed King. In the Isle of Mann, alongside other nations, the Lieutenant Governor was joined by other dignitaries for a short ceremony at Government House, where King Charles, Lord of Mann was proclaimed our Head of State.

A far grander proclamation ceremony occurred on Friday 16th. Members of the World's Oldest Parliament, Tynwald, gathered alongside church and civic representatives at the Royal Chapel at St. John's. The ceremony commenced with divine service, before processing to the ancient hill where each midsummer's day new laws are proclaimed to the people.

In a sea of wigs, gowns, and top hats, of which Members of the New Sheridan Club will doubtless approve, the Governor again proclaimed King Charles III the Lord of Mann. There were three cheers for the King before the assembled returned to the Royal Chapel for the passing of a motion of loyalty and condolence to present to His Majesty.



We look forward to King Charles, Lord of Mann's return to the Island to preside over the ancient Tynwald ceremony, as he has done before and as previous Kings and Lords of Mann have done for over a thousand years.

## Sandwiches, Cake & Cricket for HM

A selection of views on the club's  
invasion of Hyde Park for the  
Queen's Platinum Jubilee

TO CELEBRATE Her Majesty's seventy glorious years on the throne the massed ranks of the New Sheridan Club (including a good showing from the cadet branch) gathered on Friday 3rd June in Hyde Park. We met as usual by the statue of Achilles before sending out a reconnaissance party to establish a perimeter (sentries posted, Claymore mines deployed) and bag a shady picnic spot near the Serpentine.

The New Sheridan Club flag was hoisted and the Earl of Essex unfurled a Platinum Jubilee banner in honour of Her Maj. The weather gods smiled on us as we spread blankets, unpacked our hampers and broached bottles. Chez Hutchinson brought along a Jubilee cake, with the Union Flag picked out in white icing, raspberries and blueberries. Some people followed the Jubilee theme by bringing along Coronation Chicken. Any latecomers to the picnic easily found the group by scanning the park for a cluster of Panama hats.

While the adults grazed and sluiced, several children climbed a nearby tree while the others on the ground attempted to dislodge them with various missiles. James Rigby and Mrs. Morley had kindly brought along two cricket bats and a set of stumps, so an impromptu cricket match ensued. Luigi Sbaffi was instructed in the rudiments of the game and proved to be a natural batsman.

As is usual at any Club gathering our presence attracted much curiosity from passers-by. One couple asked if we were all part of the same family, which I suppose, in many ways, we are... Many thanks to Chez and Scarheart for organising the picnic. And thanks to all the Club members who toddled along, brightening the park with a hefty dash of elegance. I'm sure Her Majesty would have approved.

—Torquil Arbutnot, 59 and one-quarter-years-old



The event of the jubilee picnic was widely enjoyed by everyone. While the grownups contented themselves with eating and talking the children indulged themselves in running around, climbing trees and hitting things (and people) with sticks.

As the picnic went on the adults became more docile and unfortunately the children became ever so slowly more violent. Photos were taken, flags were tied to trees and a general jubilee feeling was widely felt. Many fun things were to be done and were done and I am glad to say that fun was used to its fullest extent and many people must have been in need of a nap in the events afterwards.

A union flag was a commonplace item at this celebration. Sometime in the proceedings a cricket set was brought out and a very far fetched idea of 'cricket' was played by all who desired so. In this so-called game of cricket the wickets were not needed and the mistake of leaving them out was made, soon instead of wicket sticks there were ancient cannibal war drumming sticks.

An odd game was being played by the younger

members of the Sheridan club through all this which involved claiming a tree, climbing it, going away, attacking someone else and their tree then getting back into your tree. Although it was a very far-fetched but simple game, it was enjoyed by many.

In conclusion I would say that the Sheridan jubilee picnic was a great success!

—Caroline, nine-years-old

'I had ice cream and won at cricket. God save the Queen!'

—Quentin, five-years-old

'On Friday the 3rd June we assembled at Hyde Park, in our Sunday clothes for a picnic, with our friends, their parents and a bunch of old people in funny clothes.'

We had a land battle inspired by *Swallows and Amazons*, one of our favourite books. Most of us had read it, but those who hadn't quickly grasped the rules of the game: destroy your opponents. The Chocolate Penguins under the command of the Beckwiths vs. the bloodthirsty Valkyries led by myself and Caroline waged enthusiastic war on land and in the trees until it was time to stop for ice cream.

There was a short break for cricket and tea, with delicious Union Jack cake baked by Max's mother. We investigated the pedals, which were closed, so we climbed some more trees instead until we were all dragged off home.'

—Gwendolyn, 11-years-old

## The Aztecs and Their Pantheon

By Timothy Eyre

THE AZTECS were the dominant culture in what is today Mexico from around 1430 until their demise at the hands of the Spanish conquistadors in 1521. They were notable for their sophisticated society, aggressive militarism, bloody religion and colourful arts and crafts.

The Aztecs called themselves the *Mexica*, hence the name of the modern-day nation of Mexico. Their founding legend was that their tribe originated in a mythical place called Aztlan. Their patron god Huitzilopochtli told them through a shaman's dream to leave Aztlan and seek another place to live. In 1325, after two hundred years of wandering, the Aztecs saw an eagle perched on a cactus, holding a snake in its beak. They took this as a divine indication that they should build their settlement in this location. This image of an eagle on a cactus eating a snake appears on the flag of Mexico today.

The divinely-ordained location was unpromising. It was a small swampy island in the middle of the brackish Lake Texcoco. This lake no longer exists, with modern-day Mexico City now standing in its place. Over the next two hundred years, the Aztecs built a city called Tenochtitlan on the island. It was home to at least 200,000 people, which made it one of the largest cities in the world at the time. By way of comparison, in 1521 London's population was a mere 50,000. Territorial control in Mesoamerica was divided into city-states (known as *altepete*) rather than what we understand today as nations or countries. The Aztecs set about conquering their surrounding city-states until they exerted political hegemony over most of what is today central Mexico. Client states were required to send tribute to the Aztecs in Tenochtitlan. Money in the sense that we understand it did not exist in Mesoamerica, so tribute was paid in the form of goods such as food, tropical feathers, incense, precious stones and warrior costumes. These were sold in orderly markets by a hereditary merchant class known as *pochteca*. Commodity money in the form of items such as cacao beans and squares of cloth was used as the means of exchange.

Conquest meant war, and war was fundamental to the Aztec way of life. The primary weapon of the Aztecs was a wooden club edged with razor-sharp obsidian blades; the Aztecs made only limited use of metals in warfare. Warriors wore cotton armour and carried shields decorated with feathers.

The Aztecs' patron god Huitzilopochtli was a god of war and also of the sun. The Aztecs viewed each sunrise as a battle between the sun

and the moon, with the latter being personified in the Aztec pantheon by Huitzilopochtli's sister, Coyolxauhqui. In the Aztec worldview, Huitzilopochtli needed sustenance to win this daily battle and that sustenance was provided by sacrifice, including human sacrifice. The sacrificial ritual was performed by a priest, who would cut open the individual's chest with an obsidian dagger, pluck out the still-palpating heart and raise it to the sun. The Aztecs' drive to wage war was motivated as much by a need to capture sacrificial victims as it was to exert hegemony and extract tribute. Indeed, once the Aztecs had conquered so much territory that they had started to run out of people to fight, they devised the ritual 'Flower War' (*xōchiyāōyōtl*) to maintain the supply of sacrificial victims and provide ongoing combat training.

The number of human sacrifices made by the Aztecs remains a topic of debate among historians. Otherwise credible contemporary accounts put the numbers in the tens of thousands per year. However, archaeological excavations have only revealed several hundred victims, raising suspicions that the Spaniards inflated the numbers to justify the brutality of their colonisation.

The main temple to Huitzilopochtli stood atop a sixty-metre pyramid in the centre of Tenochtitlan. Alongside stood the temple of the rain god Tlaloc. Agriculture and therefore rain was crucial to the Aztecs, who raised crops of maize, squash, beans and much else on artificial islands that they created in the lake. The Aztecs sacrificed children to Tlaloc, with their tears seen to represent imminent rain.

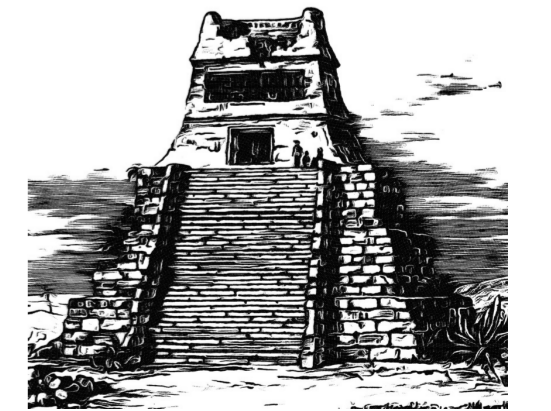
The god of agriculture and spring was Xipe Totec 'Our Lord the Flayed One', whose own flayed skin was seen to represent the growth of new vegetation. A sacrificial ritual for this god was to lash a victim to a wooden frame and shoot him with arrows, with the spilt blood representing the hoped-for nourishing rain. The priests then removed the victim's heart, flayed him and wore the skin ritually for twenty days.

In Aztec mythology, Huitzilopochtli and Xipe Totec were two of the four gods who created the world. The third creator-god was Tezcatlipoca, the god of the night, obsidian and hostility. His name meant 'Smoking Mirror', an allusion to his connection with sorcery and divination. In veneration of this god, the Aztecs would select a physically impressive captured warrior and treat him as a personification of Tezcatlipoca for a year. They furnished him with every luxury and people worshipped him as the embodiment of the deity. At the end of the year, the man-god was sacrificed by the priests of Tezcatlipoca and the next victim was chosen.

The fourth creator-god was Quetzalcoatl, meaning 'Feathered Serpent'. Quetzalcoatl's origins predated the Aztecs by hundreds of years. He was associated with life, light and wisdom. In some myths, he was seen as being opposed to human sacrifice. An engaging (but largely discredited) historical narrative tells that the Aztec emperor Moctezuma II took Hernán Cortés, leader of the Spanish conquistadors, to be Quetzalcoatl making a prophesied return from the east, with this misapprehension of divinity leading to the Aztecs' defeat.

In reality, the Aztecs' defeat came about through a combination of smallpox, against which the Mesoamericans had no natural defence, and Cortés's considerable skill in forming alliances with the Aztecs' rivals and tributary provinces, leading to what was in effect a civil war. As a monument in the centre of today's Mexico City says, 'It was neither a triumph nor a defeat. It was the painful birth of the Mestizo people that is the Mexico of today.'

See Dr. Eyre's full talk, and others, at [newsberidanclub.co.uk/watch](http://newsberidanclub.co.uk/watch).







Club members enjoy RESIGN! (poor buggers)

Wyrd goes on at the NSC 'Raising Spirits' Summer Party

Ridade Stardust's June club talk delights

David Saxby speaks in August

Flying Custard: the winning Bentley

Audience in awe to Tim's Aztecs

A summer of picnics. What could be finer?

Seth illustrates a point at his September talk

