



**For the love of
a good scrap**

“Chuckles” Younghusband on the
history of bareknuckle boxing

**A life at the
end of the pier**

Lobby Lud lifts the lid

Club summer party unveiled!
(Hope you like calamari)

**A good
place to die**

Tim Eyre on the quiet
Nottinghamshire
town with some
unusual graves

RESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • ISSUE 101 MARCH 2015



The New Sheridan Club traditionally meets in the upstairs room of The Wheatsheaf, just off Oxford Street. The Wheatsheaf is one of Fitzrovia's historic pubs, a one-time haunt of Dylan Thomas, George Orwell, Augustus John and Julian Maclaren-Ross. In fact Thomas met his wife Caitlin in The Wheatsheaf and, legend has it, he was known to flash at women there as well. Fitzrovia's associations with literature go back to the eighteenth century. In the twentieth century both Woolf and Shaw lived in Fitzroy Square; Pound and Lewis launched *Blast!* at the Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel in Percy Street. John Buchan lived in Portland Place and in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* Richard Hannay has a flat there. Both Lawrences (D.H. and T.E.) took rooms there, as did Aleister Crowley, Wilfred Owen, Rupert Brooke and Katherine Mansfield.

The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 4th March in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm, when Eugenie Rhodes will expand our horizons with *What a Drag!*, "A skip through the history of cross-dressing and a saunter through the life of the Abbé de Choisy, courtier, writer, womaniser, transvestite and man of the Church."

The Last Meeting

The lecture for our February meeting came from "Chuckles" Younghusband (red shorts, 168 pounds, undefeated), who took us for a brief whirl through the history of bare-knuckle boxing, with a particular focus on the Victorian Camden-based hard man, Tom Sayers. Chuckles cheerfully admitted that it would have

been a more thorough presentation had he been able to find time over the weekend to do a bit of research, but we nevertheless learned that in the early days it was a case of two men standing still and pounding away until one of them fell over; the largest invariably won, and it was not until the rise of the stocky but diminutive Daniel Mendoza that the idea of dodging or blocking blows caught on. Sayers was even lighter at 150 pounds, but went on to beat national heavyweight champion Bill Perry before accepting a challenge from US champion John Camel Heenan. The two-hour bout ended in chaos and was declared a draw, and Sayers did not fight again, but he had become so popular that public subscription raised a mighty £3,000 pension and his funeral was attended by 100,000 people. An essay version begins on page 4.



Fanny and Stella, aka Ernest Boulton and Frederick Park



Chuckles launches into his subject



Torquil kicks the evening off with a twinkle



(l-r) Matthew Howard with Craigh and aspirant Robert Bell



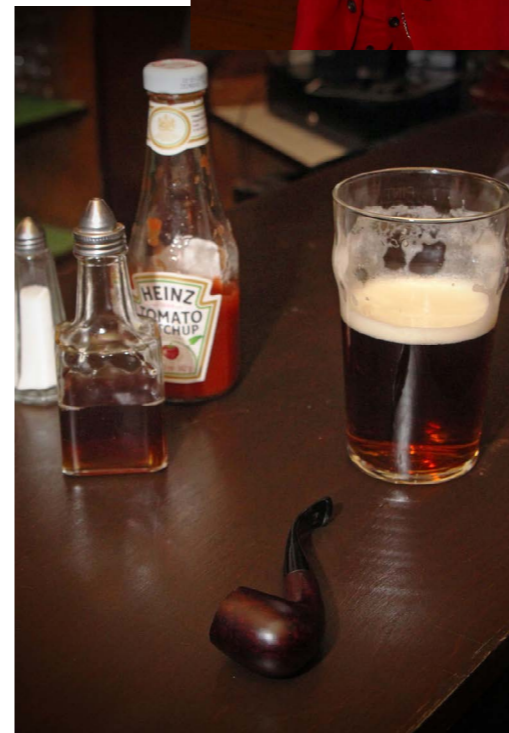
(Above) Craigh and Luke prop up the bar; (left) Tim proves his loyalty by flashing his NSC cufflinks; (right) Birgit with cufflinks made from old coins; (below left) a heart-warming still life



Joshua Dobrick chooses an unusual mode of transport

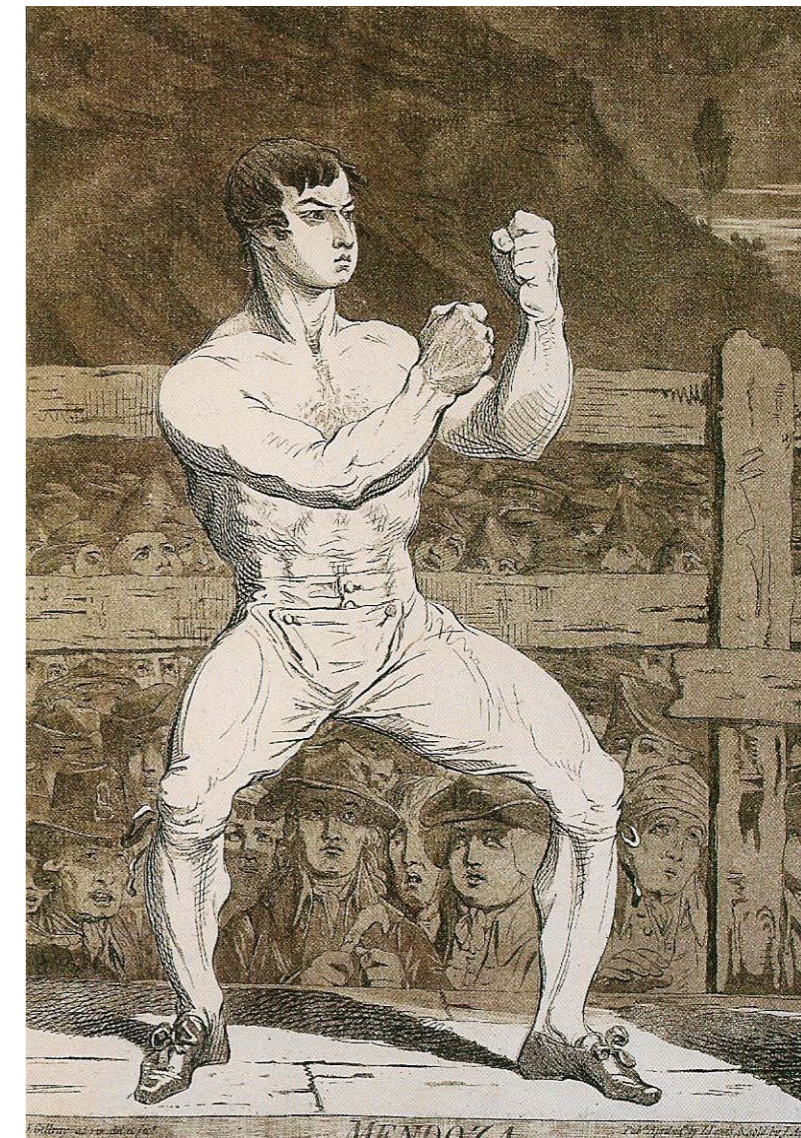
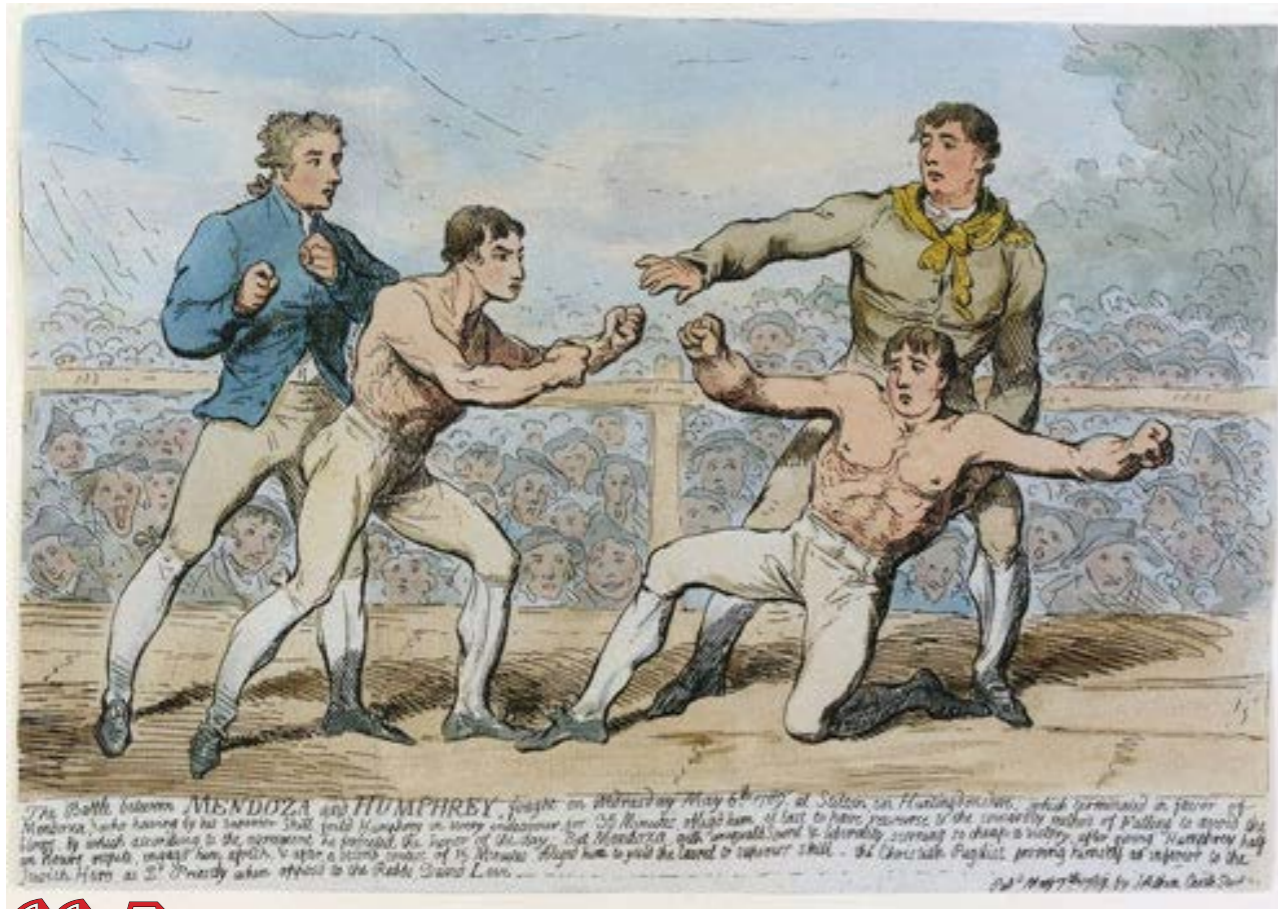


(l-r) William Cole, Mark Gidman and Giles Culpepper



A GOOD SCRAP!

“Chuckles” Younghusband on some luminaries of bareknuckle boxing



(Above) Daniel Mendoza; (right) Mendoza developed theories about the science of boxing, including the novel concepts of dodging or blocking blows; (below and far left) contemporary images of the famous first fight between Mendoza and his former mentor Richard Humphries in which the latter's second controversially blocked a punch from Mendoza. The pair fought three times and the bouts were hyped by combative letters between the two in the press. The third fight was also the first time that spectators were charged a fee for such a match

“**A**NYTHING THAT LOOKS like fighting...” wrote the Frenchman Misson de Valbourg in 1695 “is delicious to an Englishman.”

How right he was. Few things create such glee in the heart of an Englishman as the cry of “Fight! Fight! Fight!” and the sight of two fellows, red in the face, knocking eight bells out of each other in the middle of the street.

This modest epistle treats of two famous scrappers who, some considerable time after M. de Valbourg made his observations, carried on the noble tradition in some style and to great acclaim.

Daniel Mendoza was a Portuguese-Jewish Londoner who lived from 1764 to 1836. No-one could have described him as a large fellow—he was 5’7” and weighed roughly 160 pounds—but despite this he ruled the roost as

England’s 16th Heavyweight Champion from 1792 to 1795. What made Mendoza different was his “scientific” style, or what one might call “getting out of the way”. Prior to Mendoza, pugilists would simply stand a couple of feet apart and batter each other until one could no longer stand. Mendoza decided it might be advantageous to try to avoid his opponents’ blows by ducking and weaving, or what he called “side-stepping”. This revolutionary approach so bemused his opponents that he was able to overcome fighters considerably larger than himself. Mendoza capitalised on the success of this method by opening a boxing academy, and publishing a book—“The Art of Boxing”.

Mendoza was as keen as mustard when it came to swapping blows, to the extent that he reputedly got into fights on several occasions while on his way to take part in an bout. His





(Above) Mendoza's blue plaque; (right) Mendoza immortalised in *The Victor* comic;

reasons for these extra-curricular punch ups? A) a cart cut in front of him; B) he felt a shopkeeper tried to cheat him: and C) he did not like the way a man looked at him. Fair enough.

His decline began in 1795 when he fought "Gentleman" Jim Jackson who was five years younger, four inches taller and a full 42 pounds heavier than Mendoza. Jackson won in nine rounds, perhaps in part due to the fact that Mendoza's "scientific" style did not stretch to cutting his flowing hair, which Jackson seized with one fist whilst pummelling Mendoza with the other.

After this Mendoza seemed to think it was time to focus on more elegant pursuits, becoming landlord of the Admiral Nelson pub in Whitechapel, publishing his memoirs, and appearing in a pantomime entitled "Robinson Crusoe, or Friday Turned Boxer", printing his own money (why didn't I think of that?) and acting as a recruiting sergeant for the Army. He made a fortune and then followed the established storyline of losing the lot, dying in poverty at the age of 72. Intelligent, charismatic but chaotic, Mendoza was a colourful figure who caught the public imagination, even to the extent of featuring in a rather good series, which this author himself greatly enjoyed, in *The Victor* comic in the late Sixties or early Seventies.

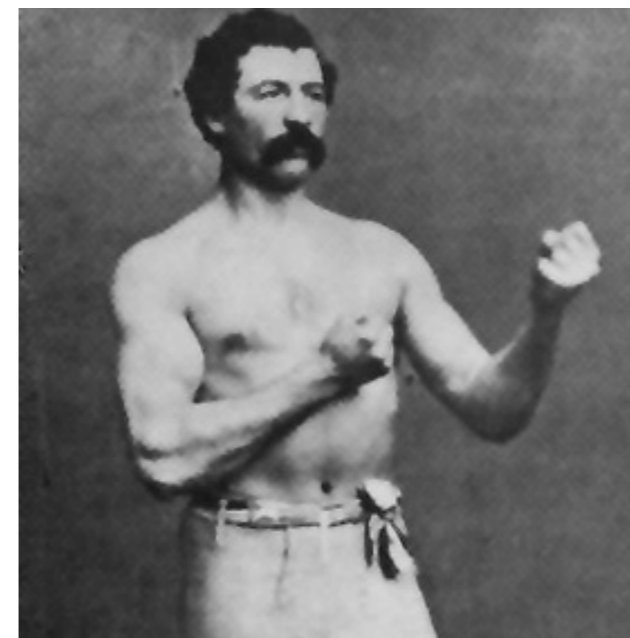


Our second hero is Tom Sayers, who lived from 1826 to 1865. Like Mendoza, Sayers was no giant—just 5'8" and weighing in at a modest 150 pounds—but this did not prevent him from winning all but one of his 16 professional bouts, almost all of them against men considerably larger than himself.

Born in a Brighton slum, Sayers made his way at the age of 13 to London, where he became a bricklayer, finally settling in Agar Town, just north of the current site of St. Pancras station.

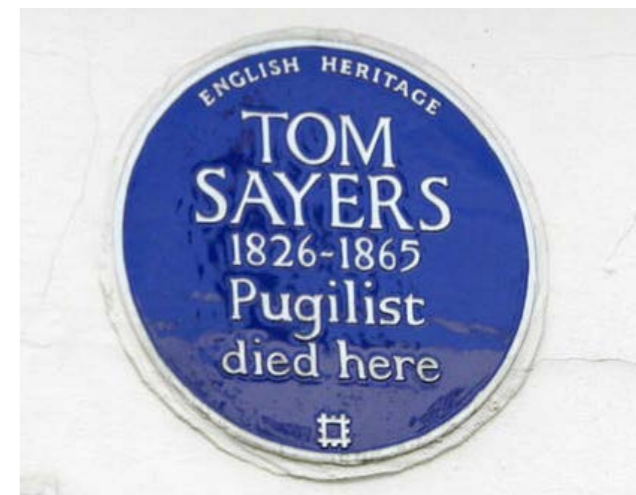
Prize-fighting was now illegal, but still popular, and Sayers, who made a name for himself with a series of informal fights, decided it was time to go pro. Sadly, despite suffering his only one defeat, Sayers' reputation quickly become so formidable that it was hard for him to find anybody who was prepared to face him.

By far the biggest fight of Sayer's career took place in Farnborough, in Hampshire, on 17th



(Below and right) Tom Sayers; (above) Sayers's most famous opponent, John Camel Heenan; (above right) Sayers's blue plaque

April 1860, when he took on the American challenger John Camel Heenan, who had made a belligerent name for himself as an "enforcer" in rigged elections in and around the sweatshops of the steamship dockyards at Benicia, San Francisco. The Sayers-Heenan bout is widely accepted to have been boxing's first world championship. The build-up to the fight had been so successful, and excitement at such a pitch, that the illegal match is said to have been attended by the 19-year-old Prince of Wales, Charles Dickens, W.M. Thackeray and the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, who, within days, was being asked pertinently sharp



Dear Sir
 I accept your
 Challenge to fight
 without gloves
 on October 24.
 Yours truly
 Thomas Sayers
 stakes of 500. a side
 J. C. Heenan Esq

that the police did arrive, as at that point the vastly larger Heenan was strangling Sayers in the ropes, and the crowd had intervened to save the latter's life. The fight was declared a draw and the men shared the £400 purse. Post-fight, Heenan spent 48 hours "in a totally darkened room in Osborne's Hotel in the Adelphi". He died in poverty in Wyoming in 1873, aged 38. The considerable sum of £3,000 was raised by public subscription to persuade Sayers to retire for his own sake. Wisely, he took the money and set up a circus before dying at the age of 39 at 257 Camden High Street, where a Blue Plaque in his memory can now be seen.

Sayers' funeral was a grand affair, with a crowd variously estimated at between 30,000 and 100,000 making their way from Camden to Highgate Cemetery, where he has an impressive tomb adorned with a statue of Lion, his beloved mastiff, who was chief mourner at the funeral.

By now, however, the writing was on the wall. In 1867 the "Marquess of Queensbury rules" (actually written by fellow named John Graham Chambers, but endorsed by John Douglas, the 9th Marquess) were published, introducing such killjoy nonsense as the use of boxing gloves, the ten-count and three minute rounds. Even the use of spiked shoes was to be disallowed. The fun of bare-knuckle boxing was, for those of us unfortunate enough not to live amongst gypsies, over.

(Above) Sayers's letter to Heenan accepting his challenge; (below left) a contemporary drawing of the bout; (below right) Heenan after the match

questions in the House of Commons.

"We have a fine morning for our business," Heenan said. "If a man can't fight and win on such a crisp morning, then he can't fight at all", said Sayers. At 6' 2" and 195 pounds, Heenan towered above Sayers's 5' 8" and 149 pounds as they were called to the "scratch" at 7.29am. Each severely battered and bloodied, yet unbowed, they would finish fully two hours 27 mins and 42 rounds later when the Aldershot police, brandishing magistrates' warrants, stormed the ring. It was just as well



The New Sheridan Club summer party

20,000 COCKTAILS IN GLORIOUS CHAP-O-VISION! UNDER THE SEA!

Saturday 6th June

6-11pm

The Water Poet, 9-11 Folgate Street, London E1 6BX

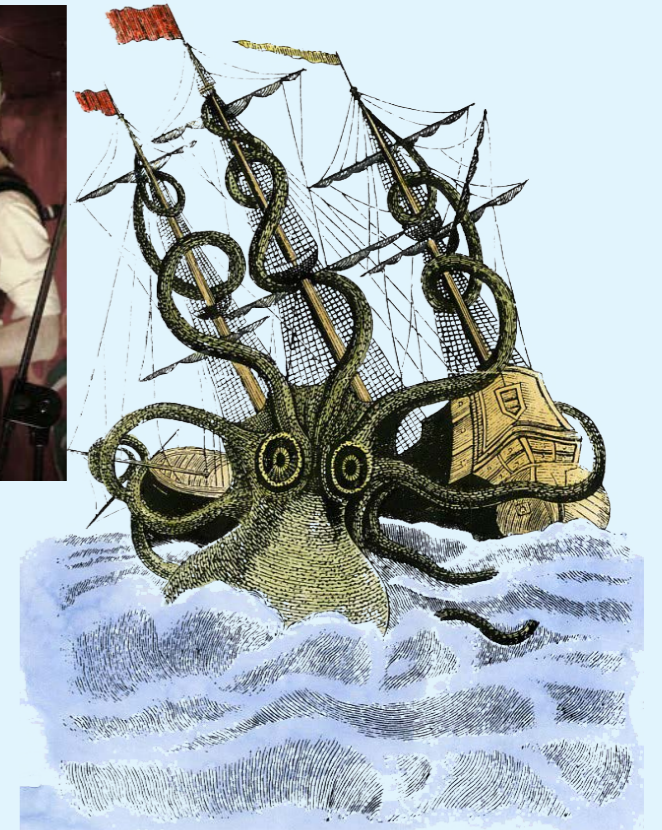
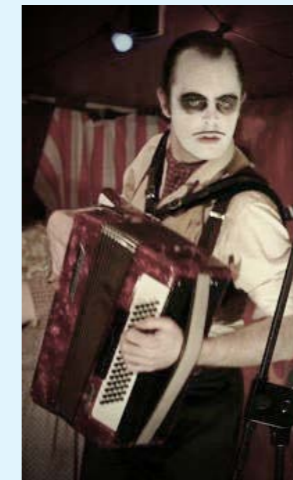
Dress: Salty

Admission: Free for NSC Members, £5 for guests

Join us as we go a bit nautical and celebrate a life on, and under, the ocean wave (it is, of course, also the anniversary of the D-Day landings).

Think Captain Nemo, elegance and adventure, mermaids and sea beasts, pirates and privateers, steampunk technology, dressing for dinner at fifty fathoms...

The venue does reasonably priced food and has its own beer garden for the smokers. There will be the usual silly games, free snuff and our famous Grand Raffle (entry is free but only to Members of the NSC, including anyone who joins on the night). We will have live entertainment from The Bohemianauts, a grog-sozzled, accordion-driven combo offering sick shanties of demi-monde decadence, cabaret carnivalism and tentacled menace from the deep... So pull on your velvet sea boots, grab a harpoon and prepare to lash yourself to the wheel!



THE GRAVES OF HUCKNALL

Dr Timothy Eyre on the town's secret history of boxing, poetry and computer programming



tramline that links Hucknall with the centre of Nottingham, making it an attractive location for commuters.

However, this apparently undistinguished town has a corking trump card. The churchyard of the parish church of St Mary Magdelene is the final resting place of three notable individuals. I learned this by the simple expedient of wandering into the church grounds out of idle curiosity after eating an inexpensive Sunday lunch at the

Wetherspoon pub on Hucknall's high street. Here I was



Pugilist Ben Caunt

HUCKNALL IS A TOWN seven miles north-west of Nottingham. The town dates back a long way; it was even mentioned in the Domesday book as “Hochenale”. More recently Hucknall was a centre for framework knitting (a technology invented in the nearby town of Calverton in 1589) and, from the 1860s, coal mining. Deindustrialization was unkind to Hucknall and now it is one of the less prosperous parts of England: house prices remain in five figures and when a branch of the Costa coffee shop chain opened last year it attracted 1,300 job applications for six positions. Thankfully the town's fortunes have been revived somewhat by a sleek modern

somewhat surprised to find the graves of Ben Caunt, Ada Lovelace and Lord Byron.

Ben Caunt is perhaps the least well-known of the trio. However, he is especially relevant to this issue of *Resign!* because he was a notable bare-knuckle boxer (see pages 4–8). It seems that Mr Caunt probably never fought either of the pugilists that Chuckles discoursed upon at the February meeting—he was born in Hucknall in 1815 so he came well after Mendoza and, although Caunt was contemporaneous with Tom Sayers, I was unable to find any references to their having fought a match. At six feet and two inches in height and weighing in at anything up to 17 stone, Ben Caunt must have cut a formidable figure. Indeed, Caunt was sometimes billed as “Big Ben” and a leading theory for the origin of the name of the bell in the clock that stands over the Houses of Parliament is that it was named after this Hucknall-born boxer.

Caunt was also billed as The Torkard Giant. As well as being a name suitably tough-sounding for a heavyweight boxer, it was also a reference to the pugilist's home town, for Hucknall was known as Hucknall Torkard from 1295 until 1915. “Torkard” was derived from Torcard, the name of a locally dominant land-owning family.

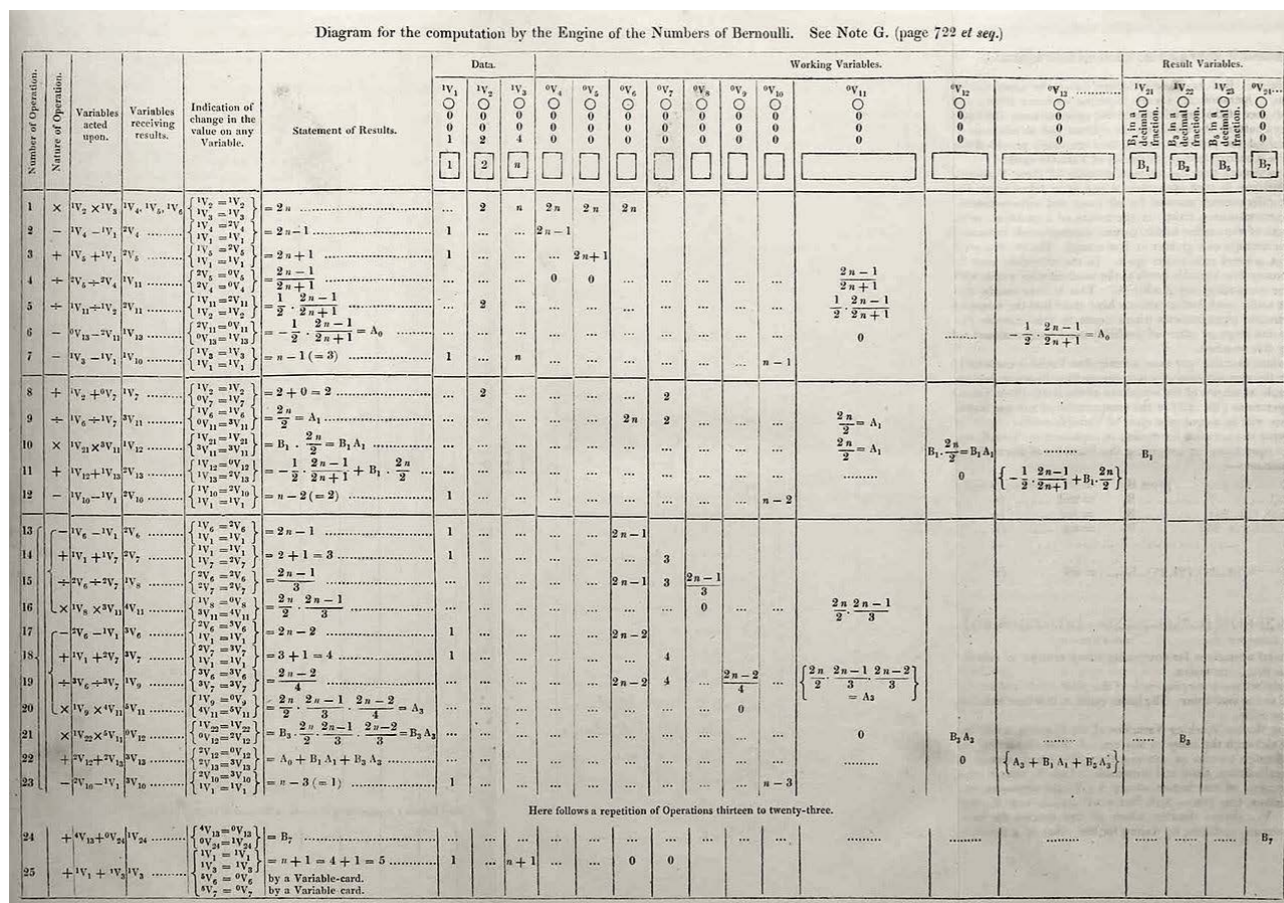
Caunt declared himself the English champion in 1835 after a dubious victory over William “Bendigo” Thompson. However, five years later a clear victory in a 101-round fight against Bill Brassey at Six-Mile Bottom in Cambridgeshire made Caunt England's undisputed boxing champion. In 1841 Caunt went to America in search of a world title but returned without having found a match. Instead he was accompanied by an American boxer who stood almost seven feet in height. Caunt had sensibly declined to fight this giant and instead opted to act as the even bigger man's PR agent for a series of exhibition matches.

Caunt declared his retirement in 1845 after the 93rd round of a controversial match against a challenger for the English heavyweight title called William Thompson. The ex-boxer ran a successful pub on St Martin's Lane; presumably he had little to fear from patrons trying to pick a fight with the landlord. Tragically his pub burned down in a fire that killed two of his children. Caunt returned to the ring in 1857, where The Torkard Giant brought the middleweight pugilist Nat Langham to a draw



(Above) Countess Lovelace and (below) her gravestone





Ada's game-changing notes on the computation of Bernoulli numbers after 95 rounds. Langham was noted as the only boxer who ever defeated Tom Sayers; make of that what you will. Caunt died of pneumonia at the age of 46 and was buried at St. Mary Magdalene Church in his home town of Hucknall, where he remains to this day.

Ada Augusta, Countess of Lovelace was rather less robust in constitution and certainly less violent in her endeavours. Like Caunt she was born in 1815, but the similarities end there. She belonged to an aristocratic family and Ada's mother saw to it that her daughter received a sound education. Lovelace excelled in mathematics despite repeated bouts of illness. Through her relationship with the Scottish polymath Mary Somerville, Lovelace became acquainted with some of the foremost British mathematicians of the day, including the logician De Morgan and, most notably, Charles Babbage.

Shortly after their introduction in 1833, Babbage invited Lovelace to view the prototype of his Difference Engine (a full version of which was not completed until 2002, by the Science Museum in Kensington). She was enthused by

the sophisticated calculating machine and the two struck up a lively correspondence. Babbage admired Lovelace's mathematical abilities and described her as his "Enchantress of Numbers". Babbage went on to design his Analytical Engine, a truly remarkable device that has never been built in real life but anticipated in principle the most important features of modern computers.

Babbage's designs for the Analytical Engine fascinated Lovelace. In 1843 she published a translation of a paper about the Analytical Engine written by the Italian mathematician Luigi Menabrea. Lovelace appended a set of her own notes to the translation. These notes were more than twice as long as the original paper and, crucially, the final section included a detailed description of an algorithm for calculating Bernoulli numbers (a set of numbers of great import in advanced mathematics). As a result of this exposition Countess Lovelace is widely considered to be the first ever computer programmer, despite her work preceding the first physical computers by more than a hundred years.

Some hard-nosed scholars doubt whether this attribution is warranted, claiming that Babbage

himself was responsible for the Bernoulli numbers algorithm. However, what is beyond doubt and perhaps even more remarkable is that Ada Lovelace's notes to Menabrea's paper show that she was the first person to recognize the true power of the Analytical Engine and, by extension, of the computers that now, 170 years later, dominate the world. While Babbage saw his Analytical Engine as a sophisticated calculating machine for the service of mathematicians, Lovelace correctly recognized that its uses could extend well beyond mathematics.

That Lovelace perceived the potential of computation was perhaps related to her metaphysical approach to mathematics, which sometimes bordered on the mystical. It is difficult to imagine quite what she would make of the deluge of spam and comedy cat photographs that infest today's computers. She may have been further unsettled by the primary accolade paid to her by computer science: when in 1979 the United States Department of Defense commissioned a programming language for use in its war machines they named it Ada in her honour. The language continues to be used today in many military systems.

One might well wonder why Ada Lovelace's mother steered her daughter towards mathematics at a time when women were

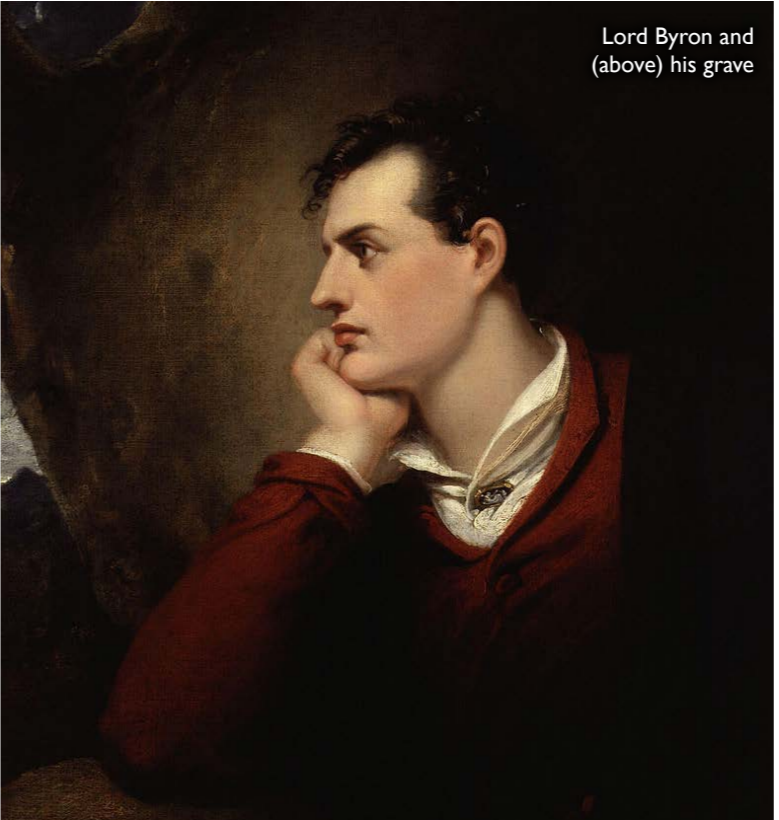


discouraged from such pursuits. The answer lies next to Ada Lovelace in the graveyard of St Mary Magdalene in Hucknall: Lord Byron.

Countess Lovelace was born Augusta Ada Byron to Anne Isabella Byron, Lord Byron's wife. Ada was their only child and the couple separated acrimoniously shortly after her birth, with Lord Byron leaving England for a life of self-imposed exile. Lady Byron was herself mathematically gifted and also deeply religious. She saw Lord Byron's impressive excesses as a form of insanity and feared that his temperament might be passed on to his daughter. Ada's mathematical education was Lady Byron's bid to counteract any such tendencies.

As a towering figure in the Romantic movement, Lord Byron needs no introduction. He died of fever in 1824 at the age of 36 while on a military campaign in Greece, whence his mortal remains were sent back to England. As a poetical superstar, he attracted large crowds while lying in state but Westminster Abbey refused him a spot in Poets' Corner because of his "questionable morality". As a result he was buried at St Mary Magdalene, close to his ancestral home of Newstead Abbey. Although Countess Lovelace had not met her father since infancy, she requested to be buried next to him. Her wish was granted when she died of uterine cancer in 1852, also at the age of 36.

So it is that the graveyard of St Mary Magdalene Church in Hucknall holds the graves of three very different individuals. It just goes to show that even the most modest of English towns deserve a closer look, for our country is so stuffed full of history that one never knows what one might find in the most unlikely of places.



Lord Byron and (above) his grave

THE BROGUES GALLERY

WITH ARTEMIS SCARHEART



In which a Member of the New Sheridan Club is asked to introduce themselves to other Members so that those at Home and Across the Seas may all get to know fellow Club Members. No part of this interview may be used in court or bankruptcy proceedings.



Lobby Lud

“What could possibly go wrong?”

Name or preferred name?

C.M.G. Ryan (they never told me what the “G” stood for) but I’m generally known as Lobby Lud.

Why that nickname or nom de plume?

It epitomises the End-of-the-Pier Pointlessness that characterises my musical endeavours.

Where do you hail from?

Dorset, in the imaginary resort of Regis-On-Sea; currently living in North London and hoping to retire on Büyükada.

Favourite Cocktail?

Negroni.

Most Chappist Skill?

Never ever sick at sea (what, never?) but very prone to landsickness, clumsiness and falling over &c. (see below) on dry land, even when apparently sober. For my own safety I spend as much time as possible on boats. I’m told I also bowl right-handed but with left-handed legs.

Most Chappist Possession?

My Great Uncle Walter’s silver pocket watch, a family heirloom. I once fell head-first down a 30-foot ditch at some ancient monument or other in Wiltshire (Avebury, I believe) and lost the minute hand, so I can only approximate the time as “eleven-ish” or whatever it may be, but it does the job well enough otherwise.

Personal Motto?

“What could possibly go wrong?”

Favourite Quotes?

I agree with most of what is written above the bar in the Old Eagle in Camden, although I did get an unforgettable price from a tiler once.



Lobby Lud and the Ludlites

Not a lot of people know this about me, but...

I was rejected for service in the Liechtenstein Navy. I probably failed the medical given my aforementioned problems with landsickness, but I rather suspect it was because no such force exists.

How long have you been involved with the NSC?

Since quite early on I think, after the demise of the original Sheridan Club. I just don’t get out much.

How did you hear about the Club to begin with?

Some fellow telephoned me in the middle of the night.

What one thing would you recommend to fellow Members and why (cocktail, night out, tailor, watchmaker,



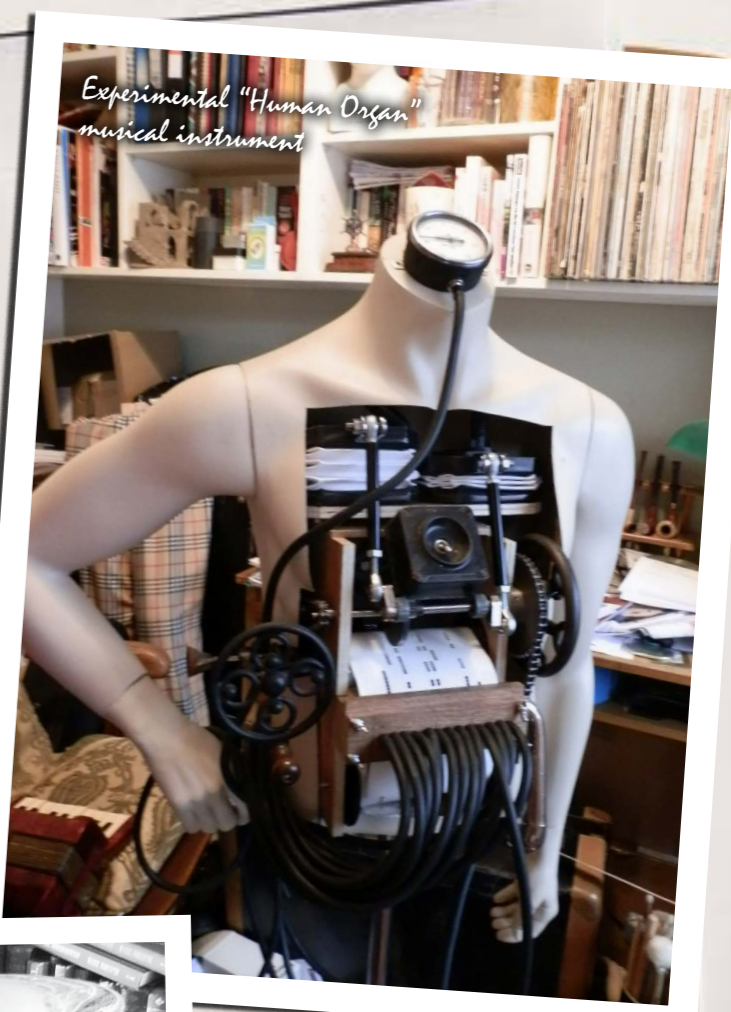
Euphonimatic

public house, etc.)?

Modesty prevents me from mentioning my critically acclaimed album *Is that a real*

remind people about that.

Thank you for allowing yourself to be interviewed in the palatial surroundings of the NSC Club House. On behalf of the Members may I respectfully ask you to resign.



Experimental “Human Organ” musical instrument

false beard? [see www.lobbylud.com —Ed] so I’d probably suggest a 1954 Lagonda 3-litre coupé or gin.

Your three chosen dinner party guests from history or fiction and why?

William Stukeley, Gerard Hoffnung, Edwin Balthus, David Niven and Vivian Stanshall; because I can’t count to three properly.

Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?

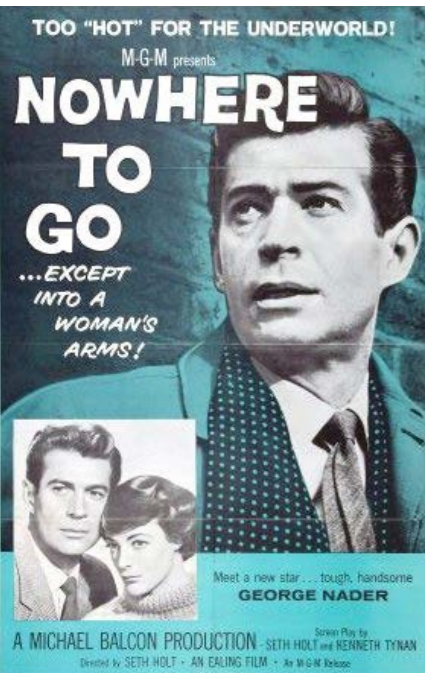
Answer: Artemis Scarheart. Absolutely.

Have you done a Turn yet? If so what was it on, if not what are you planning to do?

I think it is best if we don’t

NOWHERE TO GO

Sean Longden on his film choice for our February Film Night



film critic Kenneth Tynan have done to prevent Ealing Studios' decline and fall if his time at the studios hadn't come when the writing was already on the wall?

If *Nowhere to Go* (1958)—the only film that came to fruition during Tynan's brief tenure as script editor—is anything to go by, the company might have been saved, instead of gradually declining and being forced to end its illustrious run of productions. In those final years *Nowhere to Go* stands out from among the rest of the company's lacklustre output—films like *Davy* (1958), a woeful tale of a music hall act, or *The Siege of Pinchgut* (1959), a dull, almost pointless, crime drama set in Sydney, Australia.

Instead, we have a film that is stylish and thoughtful. Right from the start, with its long, dialogue-free introductory sequence, where there is more shadow than light, we enter a bleak world that is styled more like French films of the period than most of the British screen offerings of the mid-1950s. This is British "film noir" at its darkest: no heroes, no sympathetic characters and almost no daylight. The central character, a Canadian (or maybe an American)

THE HISTORY OF cinema is littered with unanswerable questions: what might have happened if...? Could Michael Reeves have saved British cinema from mediocrity in the 1970s if he hadn't thrown away his life in a barbiturate overdose? Might Pen Tennyson have fulfilled his early promise if war hadn't curtailed his career so early? And the one that intrigues me most: what could the legendary

called Paul Gregory (or at least we think that's his name) is trapped by his double-crossing partner (a rare example of Bernard Lee playing a villain), abandoned by fellow criminals (with London's top crime boss played wonderfully by Harry H. Corbett) and only helped by Maggie Smith, a rootless and disturbed young woman who appears to help him simply because she has nothing else to do. Everyone's an outsider, no one can be trusted and there's precious little morality on display. Even Smith's fiancé has fled London for Tangiers after an embarrassing and inconvenient court case. We all know what that means.

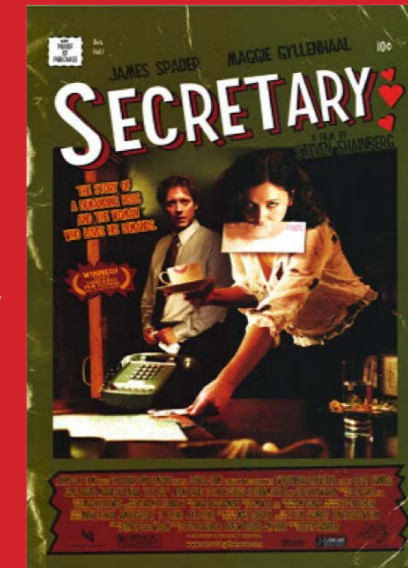
They inhabit a bleak world. This is a London of dark streets: there are no travelogue shots of palaces, grand squares and buses crawling around Piccadilly Circus. Instead we enter a claustrophobic world where crowds go nowhere in particular and Paul Gregory is trapped in a prison cell, a dark apartment, cars, telephone boxes and even a tumbledown cottage. Even the shadows appear like bars that trap him and he chooses shoes that cripple him.

Brilliantly directed by Seth Holt—one of the "almost men" of British cinema who later made two of Hammer's best films, *The Nanny* (1965) and *Taste of Fear* (1961)—*Nowhere to Go* is the pinnacle of British "film noir". Dark and depressing, it leaves the modern viewer realising that British cinema can offer us so much more than Imperial costume drama and the sort of nonsense that producers think they should cast Keira Knightley in.



NSC FILM NIGHT *Secretary* (2002)

Wednesday 11th March
7.30pm–11pm
The Tea House Theatre, 139
Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL
(020 7207 4585)
Admission: Free



Now that the horrors of Valentine's Day are a dim memory, the NSC Film Club offers us an alternative take on boy-meets-girl, *Secretary*.

At the time of its release in 2002 Steven Shainberg's film was largely known for its kink elements. The film itself however is a gloriously off-key, slightly subversive romance between two outsiders. Maggie Gyllenhaal gives a stand-out performance as Lee, the kooky self-harmer who decides to take control of her life by giving it up. The film is also a homage to David Lynch in its setting, cinematography and score (it is scored by Angelo Badalamenti of *Twin Peaks* fame).

In this film, in contrast to another—ahem—recent BDSM phenomenon, S&M is not presented as particularly dark or oppressive and the subject is often tackled with a sly humour. James Spader's Mr Grey is far from being in control and the classic *Pretty Woman*/*My Fair Lady* trope of transformation is gently mocked.

The film will be presented by Miss Minna, who would like to point out that she has only ever walloped a gentleman as the result of sheer annoyance.

But if you do like spanking you'll probably enjoy the film...



Creeping the Boards

In which **Mark** **Gidman** drops titbits of tittle-tattle from his stellar career in the movie business

YOU HAVE ABOUT one hour to make your choice when the text message or email comes from the agency in deciding if you want to accept the role. In most cases you don't know what the film is about, as it's usually just given a working title. Mainly this is to try and keep the production secret. *Captain America* had the working title *Frostbite* for instance. I was pleasantly surprised then, when I found I would be appearing in *Mortdecai*.

Another 7.00am call for Pinewood studios which usually means getting the 5.20am first Metropolitan Line train from Baker Street. This particular role simply required me to wear my own suit, for which you get an additional payment. This has indeed become useful as most of my suits have in effect become half price over the years which is of course is very handy if you have had them made.

I was very impressed to find out that I was going to be a supporting artiste. In effect it's a non-speaking role but with a little extra camera time, a few seconds where you are close to or make a small contribution to the principal actor—say by handing them a glass of Champagne (which I did to Vin Diesel, as a bartender at the old Billingsgate fish market in *Fast and Furious 6*) or in this case as a “frightened auction bidder” as Johnny Depp makes his appearance as Mortdecai just as the lights go out in the auction house.

Being a supporting actor, you come under more scrutiny by hair, makeup and costume. Naturally having the knowledge of at least four different tie knots to suit the collar, I thought I would make an extra special consideration for “Fast and Furious” by tying a “St Andrew” as recommended in *The 85 Ways to Tie a Tie* by Fink and Mao. At first glance the knot is fairly large and “John” the costumier pondered this one deeply: “Looks like a very strange knot—never seen one of these before and I noticed it when you were in costume line-up.” (*Strange knot?*)

But you work in costume, I thought...) “Right, no, got to change it—you stand out far too much on camera.” Anyway as he tried to undo it, he tied the knot into a knot—well, a bird's nest might be better description—and then started to ask “what kind of thing was this” that I tied. I did explain that a St Andrews can be started upside down with the seam lying upwards with a subsequent four knot movement around the spoke... In effect I was explaining, and possibly unwittingly implying that he did not know, his job.

With seconds to go before “picture up” and the cameras about to roll “John” was busy wrenching my neck trying to undo my tie. In the end I managed to undo it and he gave me what he thought suited me, which turned out to be a straight “four-in-hand”. Damn it, how is anyone supposed to get on if one doesn't have a decent tie knot?

On another note, I am sure the Committee and Club members would be delighted to learn I surreptitiously attached my club pin to my suit and it was present during filming at the auction room scene. However a rather—how can we say?—“over efficient” costumier spotted it and asked if I could take it off. I am not sure if the camera ever noticed this medallion of greatness and style, but when the film comes out on digital format I will confirm and attempt to get a screen shot.

A soundstage at Pinewood had been recreated to the exact interior of the entrance and one of the rooms of the Athenaeum Club, even down to the reproduction floor tiles. I am always impressed that they can build almost exact replicas of rooms and buildings, and you do start to get a better idea of the costs that go into making films—the set painters, designers, and lighting, not to mention the actual hire of the stages themselves.

Then a break for an afternoon snack, and who comes loitering around the cheese and

bully beef sandwiches (a regular feature on film set catering) but Mr Depp. This is very curious: principals never usually meet support actors, as they normally have their own green rooms to which food is brought. It's also a useful time to rehearse lines as I found during *Air Aces*.

“That's a really nice suit you have,” he approached casually and quite disarmingly after sizing me up, which I thought was a really pleasant remark to make! I thought I might not have anything meaningful to contribute, lest we talk about the weather, but he comes across as warm and friendly, interested in who you are and what other films you have been in. I was surprised how softly spoken he is, yet with a demure and sophisticated charm.

After a few minutes chatting about my suit and my tailor (yes, I managed to slip that one in) I suddenly had an idea.. “You don't fancy coming for a pint after work?” It must have sounded well meaning but wan, and to be fair I don't know any pubs around Pinewood (unless his chauffeur was keen to drive around looking for a decent pint). Cue

a very pleasant chuckle and a polite decline. At that very moment a producer or assistant came along and he was whisked away never to be seen again. As far as “colleagues” go, that was a pretty good moment and certainly an improvement on having my neck wrenched by “John”.

So at least I got to “have lunch with” Johnny Depp. For five minutes—not enough to get a promotion. Better luck next time, Mark!

Next time: The smell of putrefying fish and David Williams, but not at the same time.



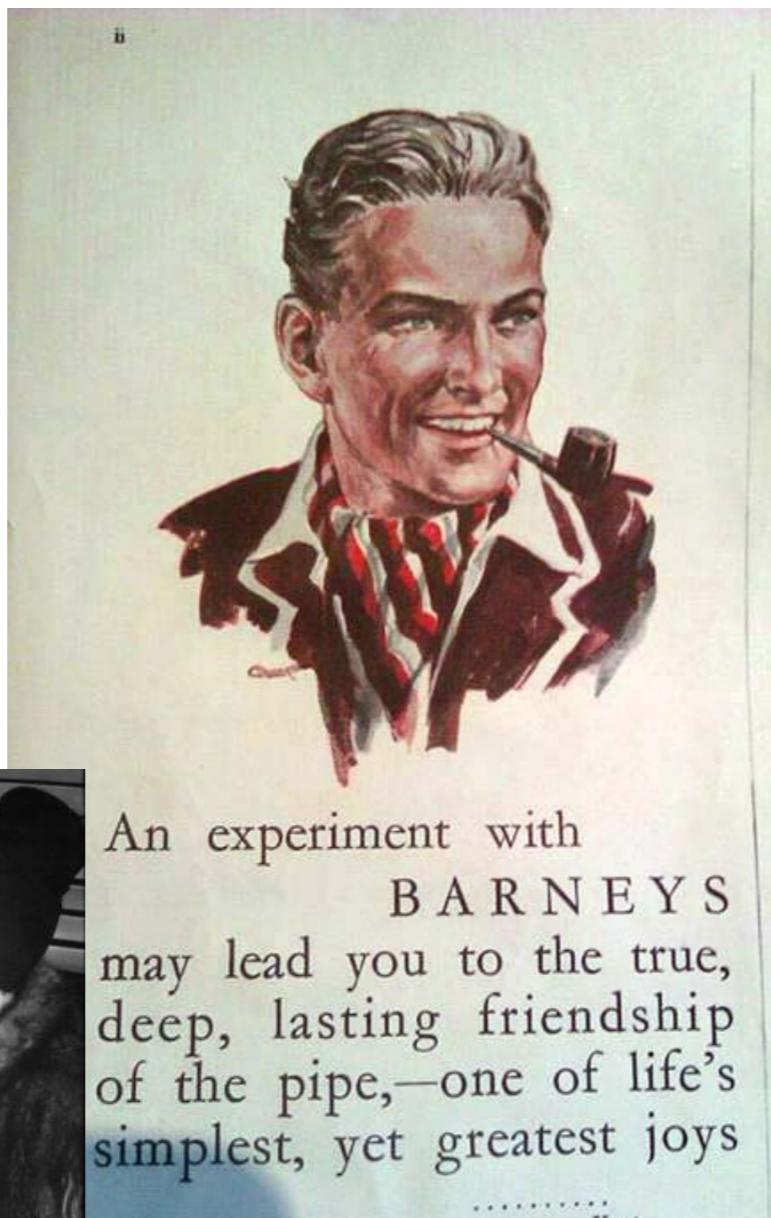
Photographed on the day of filming, in that suit admired by Johnny Depp



CLUB NOTES

Club Tie Corner

OUR TIE SPOTS this time range from the surefire heavy-hitter of veteran scribbler Bill Deedes (bottom, courtesy of Iain Treal, who isn't even a Member), clearly wearing an NSC tie and challenging the viewer to do something about it, to the frankly tenuous—a black and white Clark Gable (below, thanks to Will Smith) in what *may* be a Club Tie, but which is more striking for the beard as opposed to the customary pencil moustache. Finally we have an artist's



impression of an NSC cravat, from this advert in *Punch* from 1951, inviting us to “experiment with Barney’s”—with Barney’s *what*, one wonders?

New Members

THREE PLUCKY SOULS have chosen to join the ranks of the dapperly affable in the halls of the New Sheridan Club in the last month: Alexis Hira from Shershed in Leicestershire, Floyd Toussaint from Sandhurst, Berkshire, and Dwight Johnson from Marquette, Michigan—



Alexis Hira

“a charming spot that made national news yesterday for achieving -28 degrees in temperature,” he comments. “Otherwise so remote it is often left off modern maps... much to the delight of its denizens, who enjoy the wilds as they are.”



Forthcoming Events



BOTH OFFICIAL NSC JAUNTS (🎩) AND THIRD-PARTY WHEEZES WE THINK YOU MIGHT ENJOY

FOR THE LATEST developments, see the Events page at www.newsheridanclub.co.uk plus our Facebook page and the web forum.

🎩 NSC Club Night

Wednesday 4th March

7pm–11pm

Upstairs, The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB

Members: Free

Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)

See page 2.

Cakewalk Café

Every Wednesday

7pm–1am (swing dance classes 7–8pm, 8–9pm)

Passing Clouds, 1 Richmond Road, Dalston, London E8 4AA

Admission: £8 for the dance class, £4 for the club (discounted if you're doing the class)

Dress: 1920s/1930s preferred

Live swing jazz every Wednesday featuring Ewan Bleach and chums, with optional dance classes from Swing Patrol.

The Golden Era of Jazz

Every Thursday

7pm

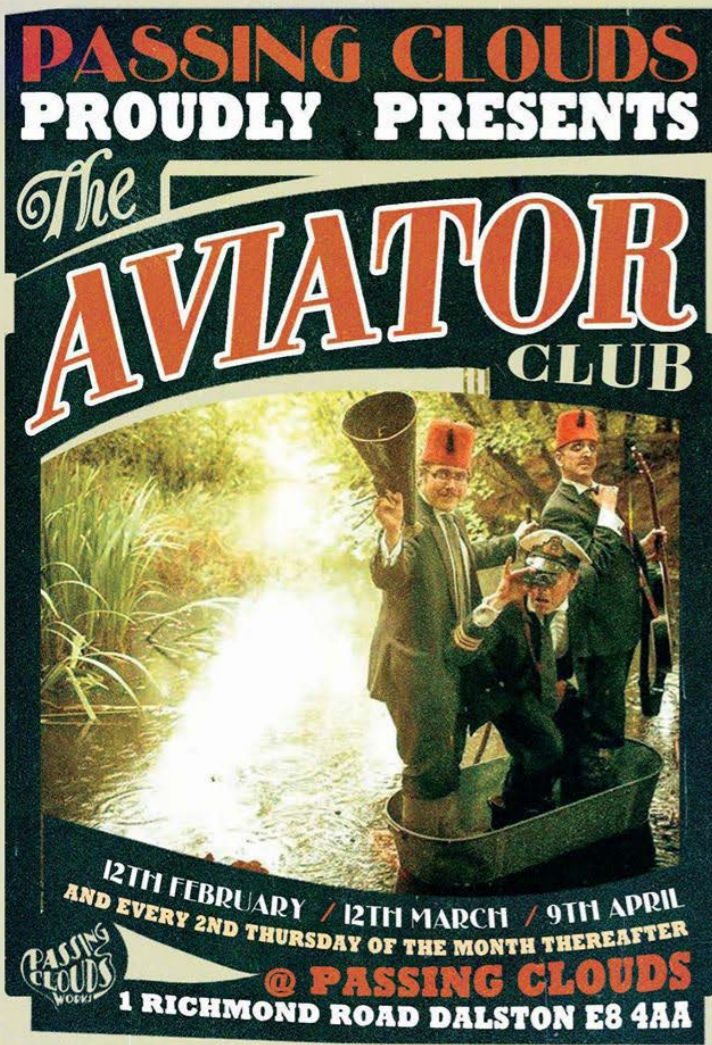
Jamboree, 566 Cable Street, London E1W 3HB

Admission: Free before 8pm, £4 between 8 and 9.30, £5 after that

A weekly night of 1920s jazz and 1930s swing presented by clarinetist



Floyd Toussaint (right) with Mr B. the Gentleman Rhymer and Mrs B. the Gentleman Rhymer's Wife



Ewan Bleach with various guests.

Black Tie Ballroom Club

Friday 6th March
7–11pm
London Welsh Centre, 157 to 163 Grays Inn Road WC1X 8UE
Admission: £10

Dress: Black tie, evening gowns, vintage attire

A monthly social for ballroom dancers in a hall with a sprung wooden floor and plenty of space. The eight-piece Kewdos Dance Orchestra will play two sets of strict tempo vintage dance music. The rest of the evening will be pre-war mainly English Dance Band records. A free dance lesson in slow waltz for beginners is included in the ticket price. Taxi dancers will be available at no extra charge. The beginners' dance lesson is from 7.15–7.55 and the main dance from 8pm. More at www.facebook.com/BlackTieBallroomClub.

The Reading Kabaret Kollektiv

Saturday 7th March
8–10pm
Rising Sun Arts Centre, 26–30 Silver Street,

Reading RG1 2ST
Admission: £10 (£8 concs)

First of a monthly show MCed by chanteuse and NSC Member Baroness Maria von Hackemann, with dancers the Ring A Ding Dings, special guests and cabaret virgins.

Wellington: The Waterloo Years

Monday 9th March
7pm
The Fan Museum, 12 Crooms Hill, Greenwich, London SE10 8ER
Admission: £10 (£5 students)

Our own Compton-Bassett (aka Robert Evans) will be delivering a talk on the life of Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, with a focus on the period of the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815. Evans will explore both the personal and public image of the Duke as the archetypal hero figure, and will bring to life the extravagant social scene of the period, which revolved around glittering events such as the Duchess of Richmond's Ball. The talk is to coincide with the Fan Museum's exhibition, *Waterloo: Life & Times*.

NSC Film Night

Secretary (2002)
Wednesday 11th March
7pm–11pm
The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)
Admission: Free
See page 17.

The Aviator Club

Thursday 12th March
7pm–1am
Passing Clouds, 1 Richmond Road, Dalston, London E8 4AA
Admission: Free before 9pm, £3 after

Foul-mouthed swing outfit the Top Shelf Band take over Passing Clouds with their Indy-Vaudeville Ram-Raid—songs of debauchery and unabashed wrongness. Joining them will be Jaz Delorean, of Tankus the Henge, who will be singing a solo piano set with songs of romantic misadventures, plus Frank Sanazi presenting a new act, appearing as “Putin the Boot In” and offering a fresh angle on the Kremlin's homophobia and matters Ukrainian. After the live sets DJ David De Vynél will spin some hot tunes for your debauchery.

The Eccentric Club Annual

Friday 13th Dinner
Friday 13th March
7–10.30pm
The Oriental Club, Stratford House, Stratford Place, London W1C 1ESN
Admission: £55 (members and their guests) or £65 (all others) in advance
Dress: Eccentrically overdressed, glamorous (expressly no trainers, as if you needed telling); Gentlemen, jackets, preferably club ties and badges; ladies, evening wear

Allegedly held since the 1780s, this is the traditional superstition-defying bad-luck-omen-denying Annual Dinner of the men and women of reason and science. There are written records of this event held in the 1860s and 1880s and a few much-publicised photographs of such a dinner held at the Eccentric Club on Friday 13th November 1936. Price includes a welcome drink on your arrival, dinner served in reverse order, eccentric entertainment, annual insurance from bad luck, wine and refreshing tea or coffee before you leave.

Dare to come and find out what else is on the menu... More at www.eccentricclub.co.uk.

Classic Car Boot Sale

Saturday 14th–Sunday 15th March
10am–6pm
South Bank Centre, London SE1 8XX

Admission: Free

An ingenious idea—vintage traders gather to sell goods out of the boots of vintage cars. A double whammy, appealing to lovers of vintage clothes, accessories, homewares, records and pop memorabilia as well as fans of classic automobiles. Held by the banks of the Thames at the Southbank Centre, the event will also feature street food, musical performances and street theatre. More details at classiccarbootsale.co.uk.

Old Town Come to Town

Saturday 14th–Monday 16th March
Shop hours (please telephone 01263 710001 before the event to make an appointment)
A discreet London location (probably Spitalfields if it's the same place as usual)
Admission: Free, though the clothes will obviously cost

The marvellous Old Town, purveyors of new clothes cut to vintage patterns, make their biannual trip to London from their shop in Holt, Norfolk, to show their current range of wares. The whole enterprise has a very carefully considered aesthetic, from the clothes themselves to the website. The emphasis is primarily on salt-of-the-earth vintage workwear rather than Savile Row, though their jackets, trousers and waistcoats can be combined to make smart, characterful and yet rugged suits. Miss Willey



Some of the offerings from Old Town

would prefer customers to book ahead of time so that she is not overwhelmed, but bear in mind that the number given is for the Holt shop, so obviously there won't be anyone there while the event is going on.

The Candlelight Club's Spring Ball

Saturday 14th February

7pm–12am

A secret central London location

Admission: £33 in advance

Dress: 1920s dandies and swells, gangsters and molls, degenerate aristos and decadent aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know

A pop-up 1920s speakeasy, in a secret London venue. Each event offers cocktails and dinner options, plus live period jazz bands and vintage vinylism (usually from the NSC's own Auntie Maureen). Ticket holders get an email two days before revealing the location.

This time we offer a special Spring Ball in an original 1920s ballroom, lit by hundreds of candles below and lofty chandeliers above, with palm trees and an Art Deco stage set. There will be dancing to live music from the Shirt Tail Stompers, cabaret from your host Andrew Pepper, dance routines from the Gatsby Girls and vintage DJing from Auntie Maureen.

A three-course set meal will be prepared by our Michelin star trained chefs and served on crisp linen by uniformed staff, accompanied by a fine wine list and Champagne from Moët & Chandon. From our specially built ornate 30-foot bar comes a classic cocktail menu courtesy of Brian Silva (The Connaught, Rules).

Brighton's Genuine Vintage Monthly Swing Dance

Saturday 14th March

7.30–11pm

Patcham Memorial Hall, Old London Road, Brighton, Sussex BN1 8XR

Admission: £7

Strange name, but the concept seems simple enough: "Tony & Jackie of Bal-Swing Jive present an evening of vintage music from the 1930s and 1940s chosen with care by resident DJs Rick's Community Swing and The Swinging Detective for all period dance styles. Admission £7 to include refreshments. For more information call 07522339392/07588806654."

Hep Cats Holiday

Friday 20th–Monday 23rd March

3pm Friday until 10pm Monday

Pontins Pakefield, London Road, Kessingland, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 7PF

Admission: From £189

A weekend of music from the 1930s to the early 1950s, with live bands and DJs playing swing, jump jive, rhythm and blues and doo-wop, plus dancing, a vintage market, barber shop, hair salon and beauty parlour, classic movies and the centre's pool and leisure facilities. For remaining ticket options see hepcatsholiday.com/book_now_march_2015.html. Prices include all entertainment, chalet accommodation, breakfast and evening meals. More details at hepcatsholiday.com.

The Vicar's Garden Party

Friday 20th March

8pm

The Jericho Tavern, 56 Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6AE

Admission: £8 from www.wegotickets.com/event/309102

Dress: Vicar, little old lady, local historian, farmer, the only hipster in the village

A night presented by swing overlords the Original Rabbits Foot Spasm Band performing old favourites alongside songs from their new limited edition CD *Sunday Night Jamboree*. They will be supported by country quartet Huck and the Handsome Fee and Steampunk acapella group Zeppelin Crew, plus DJing from the Revd John Bates of the Vicars of Twiddly. You are also requested to contribute some bric-a-brac, which will then be sold back to those in attendance to raise money for the Betjeman Society.

Tango Supper

Sunday 22nd March

6.30–11pm

Palm Court Ballroom, Waldorf Hilton, Aldwych, London WC2B 4DD

Admission: £69

A regular black tie event at London's Waldorf Hilton, in the beautiful Palm Court Ballroom, where Tango first scandalised Edwardian London society in 1910. Includes a special Tango Essence cocktail, a 45-minute lesson, two-course supper and dance plus a short performance of Tango through the ages by your hosts. Carriages at 11pm.

Mrs Peel's

Saturday 28th March

8pm–2am

The Eight Club, 1 Dysart Street, London EC2A 2BX (Old Street, Shoreditch High Street, Liverpool Street and Moorgate stations)

Admission: £15

in advance, £20

on the door

Dress: 1960s

The Swinging Sixties party of your dreams! Inspired by Emma Peel, the iconic character from *The Avengers*, played by Diana Rigg, this event features live

music from The Adventures of Parsley, grown men who dress as Gerry Anderson characters and play TV and film themes from the 1960s, plus loungecore DJing from Martin Karminsky, compère and lounge legend Count Indigo, go-go dancing from Tippi Ryder, cocktails, free face-painting and hair styling services from Jenny Green, psychedelic light effects and stunning views from heated open terraces See www.mrspeels.club.

The Coco Club

Saturday 28th March

7.30pm

Plaza Suite, Stag Theatre, London Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1ZZ

Admission: £15 available online

Dress: "Your best classic clothing"

An evening of 1930s glamour featuring live music from the Benoit Viellefont's Hot Club and DJing from Empire Radio.

Carradine's Cockney Sing-Along

Monday 30th March

8–10.30pm

Wilton's Music Hall, Graces Alley, London E1 8JB

Admission: Pay what you can (minimum £1)

Tom Carradine leads an evening of timeless songs with audience participation. In the atmospheric surroundings of Wilton's Music Hall you'll bellow along to traditional tunes from the music hall era, the First and Second World Wars, the West End stage and popular tradition from across the decades. See www.wiltons.org.uk.



At the February meeting Mikhail's chum Joshua G.H. Dobrick exits by the unusual means of a skateboard



FOR THE LATEST information on what the Club is up to, who has been arrested, etc., have a squizz at www.newsheridanclub.co.uk. For more photos of Club events go to www.flickr.com/sheridanclub. You can even befriend us electrically at www.facebook.com.

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