

DESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • ISSUE 103 MAY 2015

Gala Nocturna

Miss Minna reports from Belgium's annual pageant of gothic peacockry

The Tweed Run

Stephen Myhill reports from London's annual gentlemanly bicycle rally

AVAST BEHIND!

Artemis Scarheart reports from the Club's annual Oxford punting trip

The Island of Tresco

Tim Eyre reports from the most pleasantly twee place on earth





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 6th May in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm, when The Earl of Essex will address us on the subject of *Lord Halifax: The politician's choice to be wartime Prime Minister, but who ceded in favour of Churchill, and disappeared from history.*

We also have another treat for you: following the success of the impromptu "Paul Gunn infallible bow-tie class" last month (see below), when against all odds Mr Gunn instructed Artemis Scarheart in the arts of bow-tie assemblage (he is now fit for society), Mr Gunn would like to invite fellow members wishing to learn said skill to bring their bow ties and he will be happy to instruct them. He adds that the best type of tie with which to learn is the "straight" type, not the "shaped" type with pinched waist.

The Last Meeting

At our March Club Night the speaker was supposed to be Simon Pile, telling us all about "his" fort, Fort Burgoyne, a coastal fortification built in

the 1860s and now owned by the charity The Land Trust, for whom Simon works. Sadly Mr Pile had to pull out on the day. But the NSC are nothing if not resourceful: as mentioned above, Mr Paul Gunn was in attendance and leapt into the breach with an impromptu bow-tie workshop. (Sadly this happened before I arrived, hence no photographs.) Then Dr Tim Eyre stepped up to the plate and delivered an off-the-cuff address on the nation of Eritrea, following on from his feature article in that month's *Resign!*, describing what this incredibly poor (but very good natured and architecturally fascinating) place is like to visit as a tourist. Many thanks to Paul and Tim.



Lord Halifax with Winston Churchill



(Top left) Tim Eyre; (top right) Scarheart wings it; (above) Stephen Myhill; (above right) Mark poses a tricky question



(Above) Robert Bell (foreground) and new chums; (left) Mark's friend Patrica, a psychologist; (right, top to bottom) making our own entertainment, with a parlour game called Reverend Crawley's Game in which players must untangle themselves while holding hands; (below, left and right) Anton and Mr White puff thoughtfully in Smoker's Alley



THE GODS DEFIED

*Artemis Scarheart sends a postcard from
A WORLD WHERE HEROES
WRESTLE WITH THE
ELEMENTS, CHALLENGE TIME
and get a little squiffy on the riverbank*

THIS YEAR MARKED the tenth Annual New Sheridan Club Punt and Picnic. Yes, it really has been that long. In fact, the first punting trip predated the NSC but was one of the foundation events which have left us all in the sorry state we are today—rampaging gout, a hacking cough and a continuing chill in the bones. Still, nothing that pâté and Champagne can't sort out. Plus a cigar to settle the stomach.

The 2015 punting trip was the first for four years were we have been able to go above the rollers, where it didn't rain (or even hail as it did three years ago) and—to our eternal shame, regret and bafflement—no one fell in. The proud Club record of an unbroken streak of people falling in, sometimes more than once, has been broken. Nine years in a row isn't bad, but the River Gods took pity on us this year. Perhaps the three brides they took last year have settled their damp hunger for three years? Will we now

have three dry years? Only time will tell. A happy fall-out of this was that the traditional sweepstake pot went unclaimed. As no one fell in, no one could claim the prize and this will be rolled over to next year for a bumper sum which could be so large as even to buy a round at The Turf... heady days indeed!

So on the Friday before our journey upriver a merry throng met up at the Cherwell Boathouse for a black tie dinner. In the absence of a guard's van or portable bamboo modesty screen your correspondent had to get dressed in the toilets on the train which (after a swift pint at the station and a large G&T en route) could well be a new Olympiad event. Arriving relatively shevelled we then tucked into a feast of crab, lamb and strudel among much chatter and blarney.

There was wild talk of the weather being not too wet and side bets on who would fall in. At least one attendee had taken their plunge into the river on a previous trip and in quiet moments must have



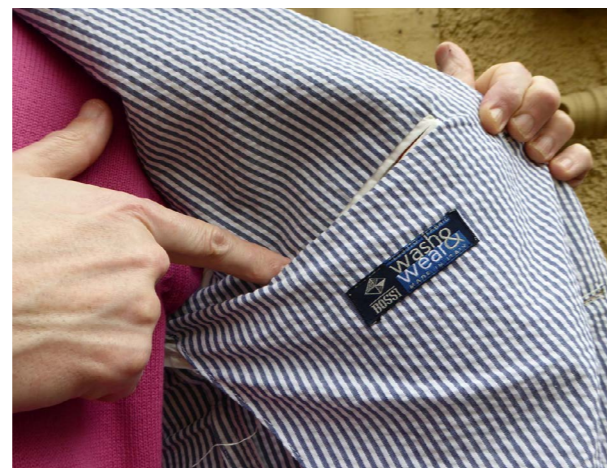
Artemis Scarheart, a man with a tale to tell

Henry Ball taking on
the forces of Nature
(shortly before
stripping off his shirt
to do some scything)





(Above) Fresh-faced and as yet unscarred by battle, our punting party assembles at the Turf Tavern; (right) Scarheart collects sweepstake money, betting on who will fall in this year; (below) Oliver gurns while Chico St Martin looks chic in a seersucker jacket—but Chico knows the taste of river mud from a previous year and wisely sports washable garb (below right)



nostalgia and elegance we bring to all events but because last year he confiscated a bottle of nearly empty but strictly verboten booze of someone in our group or so he claimed. For shame, anonymous Sheridanite, for shame! How dare you disgrace our proud name by not finishing all your booze on the river!

The watchful landlord aside, the rest of the staff were as charming as ever and the various hand-steadiers we gulped down made the conversation between old and new friend flow like the Cherwell. The Sweepstake money rolled on and was secured in a waterproof bag in my possession. If I fell in, I would take the money with me to a watery grave.

Just before midday I called a halt to jollity and fun and we headed off to the boats. The weather was looking good and I wanted us to set off afore it turned. Once we were afloat, abandoning the day to spend it in the Eagle and Child is so much

thought about what may lie ahead.

Rising early the next morning a party of us headed from our trains and hotels into Oxford proper. The sun was up and out and we mooched around the covered market picking up pies and bread and the like, before making for The Turf Tavern and its proud chalk drawing of either Inspector Morse or a random customer.

On arrival there were already a set dug in with pipes and pints on the go and apparently the landlord “remembered us”. Not, sadly due to our attire, our manners and the heady brew of



(Above, l-r) Henry Ball, Viscount Rushen and Oliver Lane, looking proprietorial at the boat house as we prepare to set off; (above right) new crewmembers this year, Stuart and Frances Mitchell; (right, l-r) Ella Armstrong-Lach, Chico St Martin, Stewart Lister Vickers, Harrison Goldman and Helena Watterson



harder. At the Magdalen Bridge Boat House Andrew the Boat Master of The River People had our five punts ready and waiting for us. No waiting around to queue for us—when you go with the Club you go First Class [for N. Korea—Ed]. Juan had taken on his usual role of Beach Master and was organising people into their various craft with the level of competence, tact and people skills that only a professional politician can have. Where those babies he kissed came from I don't know, but after he cut the ribbon in front of the dock (I'm pretty sure he brought that, the photographers and the brass band himself) we were off. Upstream, the above and below watery graveyard of our punting dreams for several years...

Due to the absence of some usual stalwarts, your brave and fearless correspondent was in a punt handled by one of the master coracle pilots of his generation. His familiarity with the water and the intricacies of the pole meant that even though we left last we were soon scudding along

at a pleasant pace, with bottles open and a cigar lit. The next thing we knew the sun was out! Remarkable. Utterly remarkable. I was reminded of my youth, or at least punting when it didn't rain cats and dogs.

As soon as we saw the signs declaring MAGDALEN COLLEGE. STRICTLY NO MOORING AT ANY TIME we hove to and moored up—a traditional pit stop to rest weary arms and allow empty bottles to be surreptitiously slipped into other punts and full ones to be snaffled. It is also the point where a new punter may throw their sodden arms up in despair and refuse to continue their Sisyphian task or a mutiny overthrows an enthusiastic but clumsy punter and a new engine is “elected”.

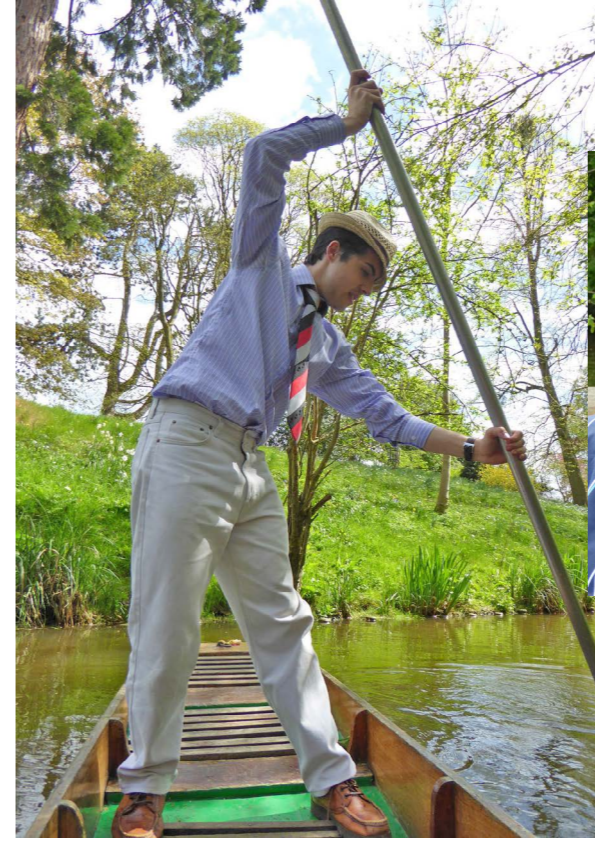
After this short break we continued our journey, old hands surprised by the weather which was



holding out and even getting better and new hands now wondering what all the fuss is about as they trailed their hand in the water, thoughts of Weil's Disease far from their mind.

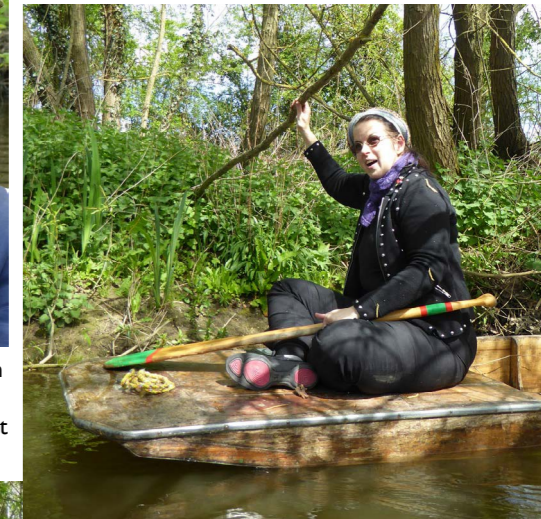
Arriving first at the rollers your noble, brave and heroic reporter decided that we could and would Fitzcarraldo over them. And so, after a complicated process of disembarking, cargo handling, man and woman handling (in around three inches of wet goose droppings), we were ready to heave like the Argonauts and get our noble crafts to higher water. We had to wait for several craft to rattle down, one of which included a punter clad only in wet shorts. Clearly standards upriver had slipped in our absence.

With mighty galley-slave pulls and roars, the first punt crested the top of the rollers and was swiftly followed by the other four, all lashed



(Left) Unable to decide between the Oxford or Cambridge ends, Harrison decides to punt from the middle of the boat

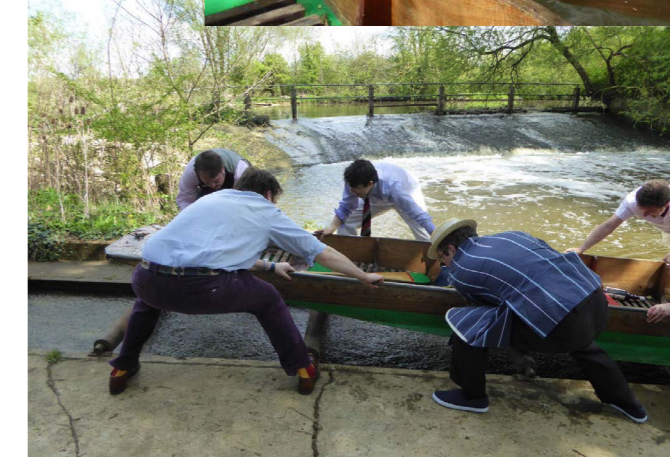
(Left) Viscount Rushen is unimpressed; (below) Birgit assists with the paddle, Indian style



(Top left) once away from the boathouse, down to business; Priya Kali and Stuart Turner are punted by Tom Redknap; (left) this sign is a red rag to a bull, so obviously the party moors precisely there (left)

together with everyone's personal versions of famous knots.

A camp site was soon covered with blankets and even a wooden table. Pies and cakes were cut. Famous scotch eggs were hoarded. Pâté was smoothed on to fresh loaves. Quails' eggs and sandwiches, strawberries and flans disappeared in an almost hysterical atmosphere as the rain held off and gentlemen removed their jackets. Claims that the hysteria may have had anything to do with the absinthe that was present are gutter-press rumours.



(Above) Overhanging trees are a major obstacle; (above left) Miss Minna keeps her head down; (far left) approaching the rollers, over which punts can be dragged to a higher section of river; (left) Fitzcarraldo couldn't have done it better



(Left) The punts are temporarily abandoned for lunch; (above) note the name plate Birgit made for her vessel; (right) the crew get down to the business of making their own entertainment; (below and bottom right) amazingly the weather holds out for the picnic



After a brief oration from Scarheart (left) the flotilla sets off back downriver



After a delightful afternoon, your noble and humble narrator decided that the time had come to end this madness and head back to the bridge. Accordingly, the picnic was packed and the punts unleashed (with someone in each of them this year) and were heaved and ho'ed over the rollers once more and were heading back.

Before this, however, a short speech was delivered marking the ten years we have been punting and making clear that the sweepstake was still up for grabs. Lusty cheers greeted this as did the short Shakespearean speech celebrating this England on such a wonderful day.

Bobbing back along, punts lighter and punters heavier, we again moored up at Magdalen College for what could accurately be called one of history's worst renditions of "Jerusalem". Added to this was the frisson of seeing that no one had taken a dunking yet, although one pair of cream trousers had a new go-faster stripe in stunning brown.

Finally, we were back; even in the last stages of returning no one fell in. The Hartley Manoeuvre was not repeated. Handing our groats to the River People we bade farewell to the Cherwell for another year and headed back to The Turf for a real drink. As the ale flowed and a generous benefactor provided the inexplicably hungry crowd with yet more goods, the heavens finally opened, soaking baskets left in the open and various backs.

The River Gods had been cheated and now they wept to try and drown the whole of Oxford on their soggy fury. They failed, as they always do.

Most photos © Suzanne Coles



(Middle left) Although no one fell in, Gervaise Loraine looks like a man who slipped in goose excrement at the rollers; (centre right) Rushen scarcely pauses for breath; (above) Robert deploys his famous one-handed punting while dreaming (above right) of a pint of cider; (right) back at base for an evening of larks in the Turf Tavern



(Above) a souvenir from Switzerland, apparently



Oliver and Ella in Edwardian picnic mode



Gloved Up!

Dr Timothy Eyre on his new five-fingered friends



MANY DECADES AGO daywear gloves were considered an essential part of a gentleman's wardrobe. These days they are one of those accessories that are considered to be entirely optional. As such, like pocket squares and detachable collars, they distinguish those who wear them as being serious about dressing well. Besides, covering as they do a useful and sensitive part of the anatomy, one is especially aware of their presence and therefore a good pair of gloves can bring the wearer all the more pleasure.

Unlike winter gloves, daywear gloves are thin and unlined. They fit snugly about the hand

and can be worn whenever outdoors. Daywear gloves are especially useful in spring and autumn when the weather is not cold enough to warrant thick padding but the morning chill demands a little protection.

Daywear gloves are, of course, made of leather. Only leather can take on the form of the wearer over the years to provide a perfect fit. One might assume that kidskin is the preferred gloving leather. However, the most luxurious material for gloves is in fact a type of skin called peccary. Peccary is beautifully tactile and soft to the skin while at the same time being hard wearing. This makes it ideal for unlined gloves.



Note the distinctive grain of peccary leather

The peccary is a pig-like animal native to South America. It is a social animal, living in herds of several dozen. Being somewhat myopic, it does not identify herd members and territory by sight but rather by smell. Peccaries have glands beneath each eye, which they use for scent marking. This gives them the somewhat unlovely alternative name of "skunk pig". The animals are not farmed but caught wild, which accounts for the rarity of peccary leather. Fortunately the peccaries themselves are in no way endangered. Peccary leather can be identified by the pore marks in the texture of the skin: they appear in distinctive groups of three, as if the surface had been repeatedly stabbed with a tiny pastry fork. Peccary leather is difficult to sew, which is another reason peccary gloves are expensive and hard to come by.

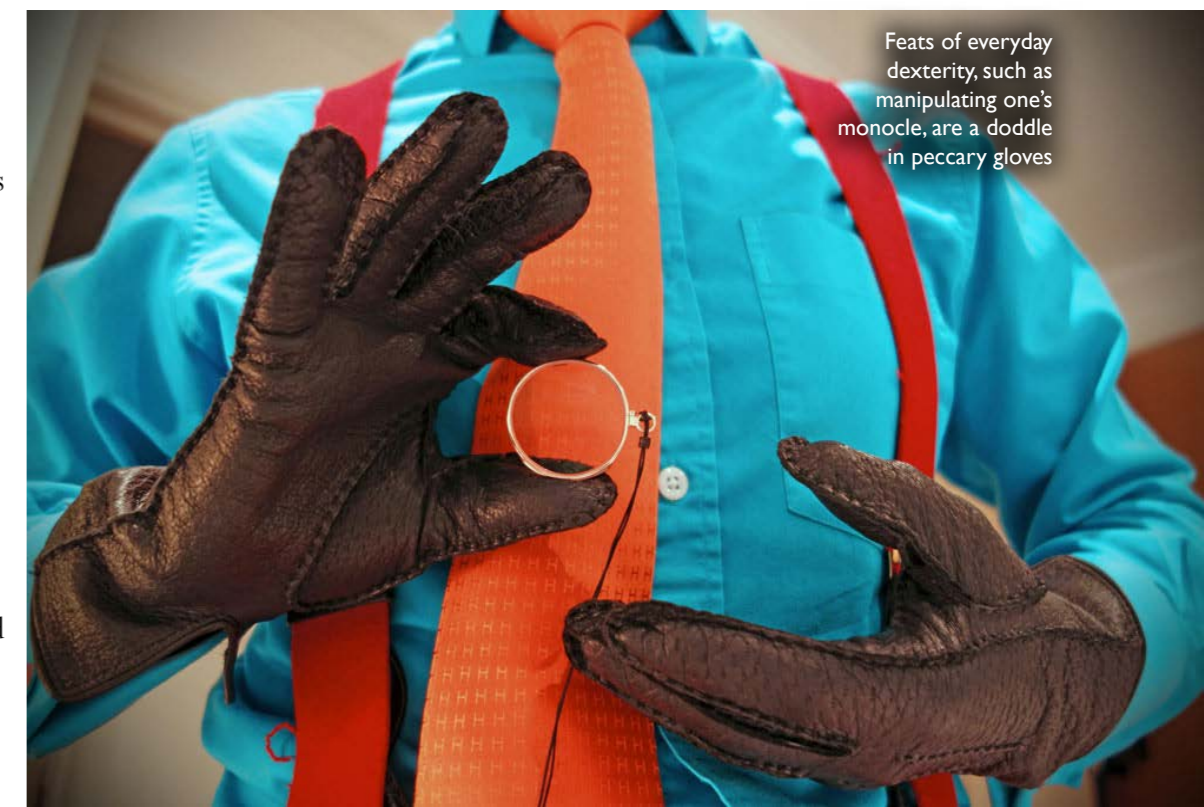
Having learned

all this, I recently set about acquiring a pair of peccary daywear gloves myself. I have somewhat short fingers so I was keen to have a pair made to fit me. Webular searching took me past some attractive but pricey offerings until I ended up on Etsy, that redoubt of the vintage shopper. Here I found a Romanian outfit that promised peccary gloves in a variety of colours made especially for the buyer according to glove size and, crucially for me, finger length. The price was little more than I had paid a few months earlier for a pair of off-the-peg winter gloves from Thomas Pink. I went ahead and ordered a pair in black.

The vendor only took the length of one finger, but that seemed to do the trick. When the gloves arrived a few

weeks later they fitted perfectly and I have worn them every day since. A card that came with the gloves warned me not to karate-chop between my fingers to adjust the gloves but rather to smooth the leather around my knuckles. An unexpected bonus of the thin, well-fitting leather is that I do not need to remove my gloves to handle house keys, pocket change, monocles or other fiddly items. All in all, they were a splendid buy.

Now all I need to do is master glove etiquette. If only acquiring that were as easy as ordering something from Etsy.



Feats of everyday dexterity, such as manipulating one's monocle, are a doddle in peccary gloves

Gala Nocturna

ON MARCH 7TH this year the annual pilgrimage to Gala Nocturna took place. Gala Nocturna describes itself as the world's "most famous dark romantic costume ball" which is in this case not hyperbole, except that perhaps it is famous within a specific community. Basically it's a Goth ball, but you can put any ideas of sticky cider

Miss Minna visits the most exotic ball of them all

floors, faded Bauhaus t-shirts and night buses home from Camden out of your mind. This event reflects the melodramatic, imaginative, flamboyant side of the sub-culture. "Once a goth, always a goth"—this applies to several NSC members and there was a sprinkling of us in attendance. In reality though, the event attracts a diverse crowd from all corners of the globe.

It takes place in Belgium, most recently Antwerp and Brussels, and uses the kind of venue most event promoters in London can only dream of. On my first visit we celebrated "The Pope's Daughter" in a Cathedral Church. Last year we were flouncing around being beauties and beasts in the Winter Gardens of Antwerp Zoo. This year we were in the Concert Nobile, an elegant suite of 19th-century rooms in Brussels with a veritable flock of "Swan Princesses" swirling around underneath huge crystal chandeliers.

The event itself is simple and seems to run to a proven format. The evening opens with a period dance class related to the theme of the event. There is an opening dance performance, this year a professional ballet duet and then an eclectic mix of dramatic music. There are not many events where the floor fillers are written by Liszt and Grieg. Guests have the opportunity to practise their historical dance but due to the size of the costumes an elegant sway is the pervasive dance style of the evening. Others meander around or just catch up with friends. A small area is filled with dealers selling an amazing range of headpieces, clothing and jewellery.

On offer this year was a buffet of "food for swans". It literally was; consisting mainly of



canapes containing insects. Others queued for gold temporary tattoos, some were still showing them off a fortnight after the event. This was all obviously accompanied by reasonably priced cocktails, beer and the services of an absinthe fountain. Despite the venue and attention to detail the event is very reasonably priced at 40 Euros or thereabouts.

The thing that is remarkable about the event is the level of commitment to costume. The classic situation for the first time visitor is to worry about being overdressed only to realise

on arriving that they are woefully underdressed. Then they promise themselves they will do better next year, and then the next year they arrive and realise that just reaching the bar is fine. Some attendees spend the four or five months beforehand planning, making and discussing their outfits—a familiar lament being "what am I going to wear to Gala Nocturna...", in fact one of the best bits of the evening is gathering in the hotel lobby beforehand in a flurry of corset tightening, necklace fastening and sword fiddling. I can't sew and I'm not





handy with a glue gun so this year I hired an Edwardian walking suit from the National Theatre and commissioned a galleon hat from talented steam punk maker Professor Maelstromme. And yes, I was still underdressed. My favourite outfit of the evening included a dark swan exoskeleton; there were more feathers than Vegas and some beautiful tailored frocks.

The theme this year was based around Swan Lake and most guests took inspiration from it, though many, like myself, ignored it (I find that ballet irritating). Pandora Harrison came looking like an Erte fashion plate whilst Birgit Gebhardt was resplendent in purple.

One of the appealing aspects of this event is that as long as you make an effort no one will give you a hard time; fetish wear, steampunkery, cross-dressing or simply wearing good evening dress will suffice. It is not elitist or exclusive and there is no need to spend a fortune. It reminds



me quite a lot of 1980s London clubbing, on a grander scale. Of course it is pretentious and melodramatic, but I don't expect most readers of this newsletter to have a problem with that. In fact I was struck the first time I went by how friendly people were and what a pleasure it was to be with people who had travelled from all over Europe and from even further afield. There are also all age groups and backgrounds, even the occasional well-behaved child (I would have died and gone to heaven if my parents had taken me to an event like this).

Although the event is cheap, you do have to factor in the cost of travel and accommodation but most of us make a weekend of it with the Ball as the highlight. This meant we were able to fit in some sight-seeing





Soulsister



Mr and Mrs Harrison



Birgit

and dining. A trip to Belgium comes with the added appeal of beer, Jenever and waffles not to mention a visit to the most bizarre bars that can be found (in Brussels I am thinking of the Coffin Bar in particular).

It is a tribute to the event that it is slowly

growing in popularity; let's hope organisers Viona and Dirk can cope. It is all very deflating when it is over and the real world has to be engaged with upon your return to London. All you can do is wait patiently for the next one and its theme, announced, naturally on Halloween.

NSC FILM NIGHT

The Sweet Smell of Success (1957)

Wednesday 13th May

7.30pm–11pm

The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)

Admission: Free

This noir movie stars Burt Lancaster as powerful newspaper gossip columnist J.J. Hunsecker and Tony Curtis as press agent Sidney Falco, down at heel and always trying to persuade his clients that he is worth his fee. Hunsecker knows Falco needs his good favour to survive



tips. The plot is intense and strangely engaging considering that both the main characters are pretty reprehensible, but the question is how far is Falco willing to stoop in his quest to have



what Hunsecker has—is there a point where even he has pangs of conscience? Where he decides that perhaps some things are more important than “success”? It’s an interesting question whether today any one columnist could wield that much power—the media is certainly powerful but is it more driven by the mass of social media, viral posts and “citizen journalism”? (And although dropping a hint that someone might have communist sympathies is obviously not the career-destroyer it might have been in the 1950s, there are doubtless modern equivalents—such as a

and treats him like the running dog he is, demanding, “Match me, Sidney,” when he wants a light for his cigarette. At the same time Hunsecker needs sycophants like Falco to prove his importance in the ultimately insubstantial world of newspaper gossip.

suggestion of paedophilia, for example.)

The film focuses on this relationship, not just of mutual need but of mutual loathing. The plot revolves around Hunsecker’s insistence that Falco break up a budding romance between a jazz musician and Hunsecker’s own sister, whom he guards jealously. Most of the action takes place in Manhattan nightclubs, where Hunsecker never has to pay for anything while Falco leaves his coat at home to avoid paying



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.



living in Las Vegas with a fair amount of time in a tiny hamlet called Schodack Landing, New York.

Favourite Cocktail?
Sidecar.

Most Chappist skill?
The printable one is probably the ability to make a Parisian waiter laugh with me, not at me (that's easy).

Most Chappist possession
A vintage, and very heavy, Harris Tweed three-piece suit with plus-sixes. Living in the desert, it is an act of faith and sheer stubbornness to wear it.

Personal Motto?
What my crew coach always told me: row your own boat.

Favourite Quotes?
"God gave us the gift of life; it is up to us to give ourselves the gift of living well." —Voltaire

Not a lot of people know this about me, but...
Best to keep it that way.

How long have you been involved with the NSC?
Seems about 4 or 7 years.

How did you hear about the Club to begin with?
An internet search (during working hours)

Col. Cyrus Choke

"Row your own boat"

Name or preferred name?
The Colonel

Why that nickname or nom de plume?
Based upon one of the few (if only) American characters that Dickens created, General Cyrus Choke (*Martin Chuzzlewit*) a southern gentlemen who sells poor Martin swamp land. I demoted myself to colonel out of modesty.

Where do you hail from?
I was born in Oak Park, Illinois, USA. Presently

for the origins of the fictional Sheridan Club referenced in John Mortimer's *Rumpole of the Bailey* series of books and television shows. It was like discovering the lost tribe of Israel in darkest Africa.

What one thing would you recommend to fellow Members and why (cocktail, night out, tailor, watchmaker, public house, etc.)?
La Civette off the Palais Royale. The only decent *tabac* in Paris.

Your three chosen dinner party guests from history or fiction and why?
Mark Twain, Voltaire and Lola Montez for dinner, and a slim, 20-year-old Errol Flynn dropping in for coffee after. Lots of iced, pink demi-sec champagne. What a night.

Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?
Answer: Artemis Scarheart. Of course, but does he own a pair of perfect "episcopal purple" socks from the Bishop of Rome's very own sock-maker?



Col. Choke and Dr. Strangelove—could they be related?

Have you done a Turn yet? If so what was it on, if not what are you planning to do?
Unfortunately not. Perhaps something on Mr Robert Evans' ancestor helping to torch our White House in 1814. No, we're not still bitter.

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.

THE NEED

Stephen Myhill reports from a day of vintage tweeds and vintage steeds at the seventh annual Tweed Run bicycle rally through the streets of London

FOR TWEED



NEW SHERIDAN CLUB Members were well to the fore at the 2015 Tweed Run. On a gloriously sunny day, NSC representatives joined nearly 700 other riders in Trafalgar Square in preparation for the big spin around the city. Mingling with baffled tourists, Club Members included Pandora and Andrew Harrison, Sally Sweetlove, Mai Britt Møller, Mikhail Korasch, Harrison Goldman, Craig Young and your correspondent (with apologies to those I have omitted). And at the lunch break in St Pancras Gardens, we were joined by Auntie Maureen (spinning 78s and clogs), the Contessa

di Campari (moral support and sandwiches) and James Blah (gin and more gin).

The day had a slightly different feel to it this year as TFL had informed the organisers that closing junctions was no longer permissible. This meant that riders split into numerous small groups on the road as traffic lights and give-way signs were obeyed (honest, guv). But the marshals did a quite magnificent job and we all got round the 12-mile course without a problem, taking in Parliament, Drury Lane, Red Lion Square, Chinatown, Hyde and Regent's Parks and Camden Town.

Photos this page © Matt Shaw



Our final destination was the Bloomsbury Ballroom where the awards ceremony was followed by a full-on party with a live band, burlesque and cocktails. (I wonder if Sir Dave Brailsford and Team Sky ever think to take this approach after a stage of the Tour de France?) Sadly, we were unsuccessful when it came to the awards, but were first in line when they started to hand out free pie and mash and Champagne. We may have left the trophy cabinet untroubled, but the Club's reputation remains intact for all the right reasons.



(Left) Sally Sweetlove and Harrison Goldman; (above) the Rae family; (below left) Mai Møller; (below right) a clog-sporting Auntie Maureen entertains the troops at lunchtime with tunes from her wind-up gramophone

Photos this page © Suzanne Coles



(Left) The author poses for a portrait before setting off; (above) Pandora and Andrew Harrison; (below left) Craigoh questions the appropriateness of "beach barbecue" flavoured crisps; (below) former prize-winner Mikhail Korasch takes tea (N.B. prizes tend to be for spiffing attire and certainly not sporting prowess)



Tresco

ENGLAND'S ISLAND PARADISE

TRESCO IS A SMALL ISLAND that forms part of the Isles of Scilly. It is situated about 28 miles from Land's End and, lest there be any confusion, has nothing at all to do with the similarly-named major supermarket chain, the nearest branch of which lies over 35 miles away in Penzance. Indeed, the absence of supermarkets, car parks and indeed the stresses and strains of everyday life help to make Tresco the relaxing and blissful place that it is.

Back in Roman times, and even as recently as the reign of Henry I, the beautiful archipelago of the Isles of Scilly was a single island. The

By Dr Tim Eyre

geological rebound after the last ice age caused this island to sink gradually into the Atlantic. This sinking has now stopped and where there was one larger island there is now a scattering of smaller islands and islets. The shallow waters around the islands mean that the landscape changes dramatically with the tides; a clutch of wave-washed rocks may transform to an expanse of sand between lunch and afternoon tea. This twice-daily dramatic variation in vista makes the

gentle pastime of sitting on a rock and staring at the sea especially rewarding.

Five of the islands are inhabited: the main island of St Mary's is home to around 1,700 people, Tresco, the second-largest and second most populous has a population of 180. The remaining islands of St Martin's, Bryher and St Agnes have barely 300 inhabitants between them. Tourism accounts for fully 85% of the islands' economy, with fishing and flower-farming also important. Objectively, the mild maritime climate and the archipelago's official status as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty make it easy to understand the appeal to tourists. However, what really makes the islands special is less tangible. Think of the scenes depicted in a Boden, Joules or Seasalt catalogue, of improbably chic middle-Englanders in idyllic rural settings. Scilly is just like that in real life and Tresco, if anything, takes the idyll one step further.

Imagine a white beach with flecks of mica sparkling in the sun. The sea is crystal clear as it laps the shore, transforming to a shade of genuine turquoise in the distance. Nearby is a castle dating back to the English Civil War. The whole island is barely two miles long but the landscape varies from heathland to forest to lake to sub-tropical botanical garden. There are no cars on the single-track lanes, just bicycles and a few golf buggies. The fields look as though they are trimmed with nail-scissors, there is not a scrap of litter anywhere and the houses are perfectly maintained.

Red squirrels jump around in the trees. Island-grown flowers, fruit and vegetables are sold from honesty box stalls by the roadside. Crime is unknown. The island's shop is closer to Fortnum & Mason than Waitrose on the food poshness scale, selling artisan chocolate and ice cream made on a tiny dairy farm three miles away on St Agnes and



not exported beyond Scilly...

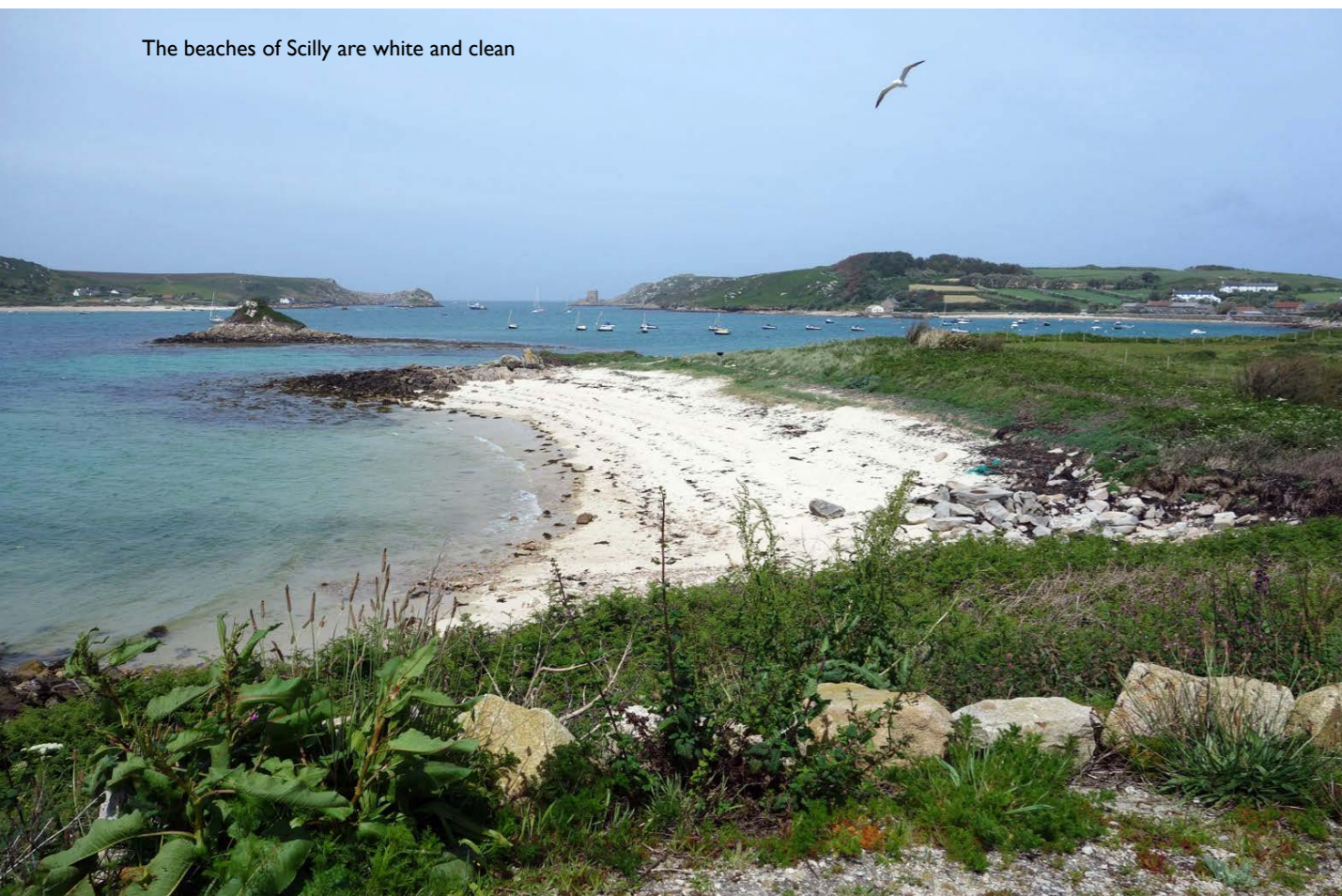
Here is a place where the world of the Famous Five becomes real. Except that Enid Blyton never included palm trees in her books and Tresco has those too. Just in case the place didn't sound idyllic enough already.

How can this happen? What is special about Tresco in particular that it can be a holiday spot where families can allow their children to roam freely without fear by day and dine on foie gras and truffles in pristine cottages by night? The answer is simple but perhaps a little unsettling: a

modern form of feudalism.

The Isles of Scilly are part of the Duchy of Cornwall, which is owned by Prince Charles. However, the Duchy of Cornwall has for many centuries leased out Tresco to other landowners. In 1834 the Duchy leased the whole of the Isles of Scilly to the Hertfordshire squire,

The beaches of Scilly are white and clean



An 1890 postcard showing Tresco Abbey





One of the well-maintained timeshare cottages. Note the sub-tropical foliage

Augustus Smith for £20,000. Smith became Lord Proprietor of the islands and had a house built on Tresco. This house still stands today as Tresco Abbey. Smith's lease expired for most of the islands in 1920 and ownership returned to the Duchy of Cornwall, with whom it remains to this day. However, Smith's family retained the lease for Tresco and his fifth generation descendant, Robert Dorrien-Smith with his wife Lucy, own the entire island as a private estate. All the residents of the island are tenants of the Dorrien-Smith family and most of them work for the Dorrien-Smith family too. This arrangement has a slight feeling of feudalism to it. However, rather than tending crops on strips of land the tenants of Tresco tend to tourists, because Tresco is run as a timeshare resort.

Timeshare is not a pretty word, being associated with high-pressure sales and sharp practice. However, on Tresco somehow it works

very well. By signing up to return to the same

place each year for thirty years, visitors are committing themselves to the island's way of life and have an interest in maintaining it. Similarly, the residents share a common purpose and therefore an ethos and common interest in keeping the island in its pristine state.

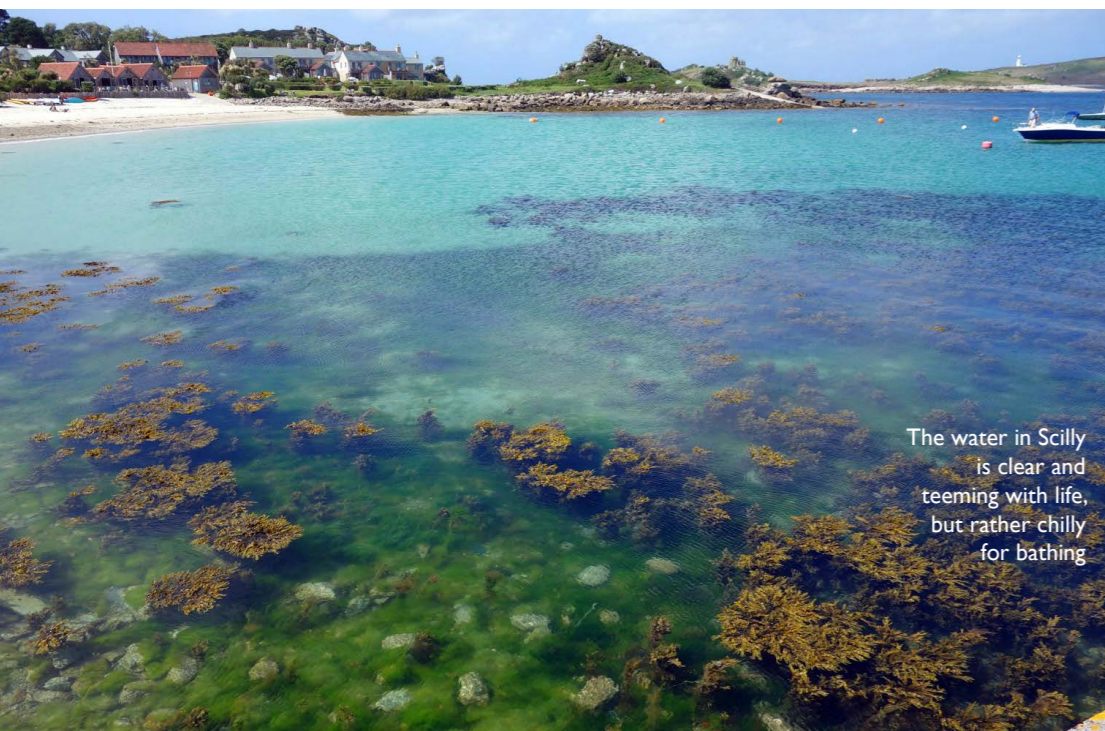
So what's the catch? Price is the main one. It used to be that there was very little non-timeshare accommodation on Tresco, thus requiring visitors to either stay in the extravagantly-priced hotel or else hand over a small fortune for a thirty-year timeshare. This has eased up a little in recent years but a self-

catering family cottage in high summer can still cost north of five grand for a week. The other inhabited islands have campsites, which allow for an economical stay, but not Tresco.

The other catch is that the Isles of Scilly are a bit of a faff to get to. Especially well-heeled visitors to Tresco used to be able to fly there



A sculpture in Tresco Abbey Gardens



The water in Scilly is clear and teeming with life, but rather chilly for bathing

from Penzance directly by helicopter. Nowadays one must first get to Penzance (I favour the overnight sleeper train from Paddington), then take either the nauseating 1970s-vintage ferry to St Mary's or else fly to St Mary's in a tiny plane from Land's End Aerodrome. From St Mary's one must take a smaller boat on to Tresco. It is easier and cheaper to fly to Continental Europe. But the experience there is somewhat different. Besides, getting to Tresco is half the fun and working out the logistics adds to the sense of anticipation.

The Isles of Scilly are a corner of England that will remain forever Boden. Tresco is but the poshest of the islands; all of them are well worth visiting. Just don't forget your sunglasses and your blue-and-white striped top.

In case you think I'm making all this up, you can see a real-time webcam view of Tresco by pointing your web browser at <http://www.tresco.co.uk/webcams>.



The beach at New Grimsby, one of Tresco's two main settlements



The subtropical Tresco Abbey Gardens host thousands of unusual plants



Low tide at Old Grimsby, Tresco's other main settlement

Rhubarb, rhubarb, rhubarb

By David Bridgman-Smith

I was recently on a trip to Dungarvan to take part in the West Waterford Food Festival. Readers will surely fail to be surprised that my contribution was solely booze-related. While there, I discovered the local affinity for rhubarb (it seemed to be in everything at breakfast) and I even tried some illicit rhubarb moonshine. I'm a big fan of rhubarb and, with spring firmly in my step, I decided to make it the focus of this month's Cocktail Cabinet.

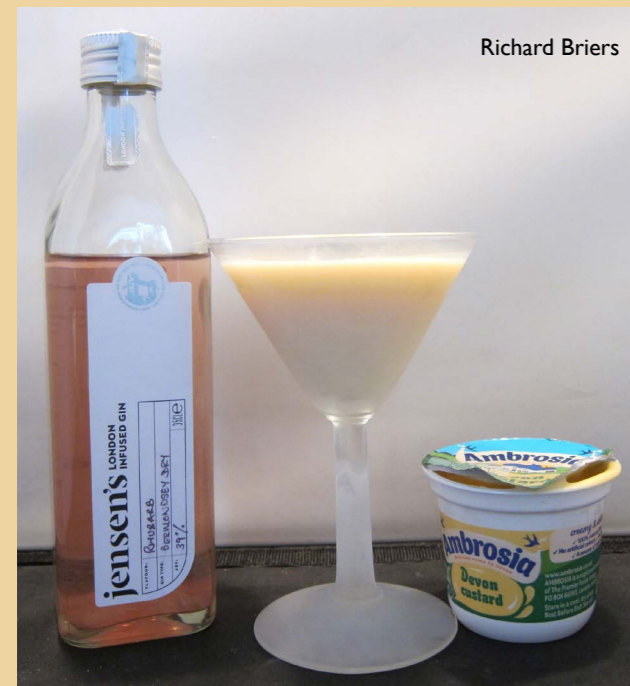
Richard Briers

The Making

2 parts Jensen's Rhubarb-Infused Gin
1 part Ambrosia tinned custard
Shake with ice. I used Jensen's Rhubarb-Infused Gin: think sloe gin, but made using rhubarb instead. The gin on its own is delicious, with the tartness of a putdown from Margo Leadbetter.

The Drink

Splendid, tremendous, and a fitting tribute to the late Mr Briers. The rhubarb gin brings a backbone of tartness, while the custard brings richness, balance, and viscosity. Superb!



Richard Briers



Rhubarb and Alex

Rhubarb & Alex

The Making

25ml Warner Edwards Rhubarb Gin
25ml rhubarb yoghurt
10ml Crème de Cacao

Shake with ice. Warner Edwards works really well in a normal Alexander and the rhubarb is a good addition, introducing an extra complexity and fruitiness.

The Drink

Substituting rhubarb yoghurt for the cream in an Alexander creates a drink with dryness and a touch of rhubarb bitterness that is both different and delightful. The yoghurt also adds a thickness, but with a less rich texture, somewhat reminiscent of frozen yoghurt with juice.

Rhubarb Julep

The Making

Rub some mint leaves around the inside of a glass or julep cup, then discard. Fill the cup with crushed ice. Add 10ml sweetened rhubarb



Rhubarb Julep



Rhubarb Toddy

juice and 50ml of bourbon whiskey. Lightly stir.

With the Kentucky Derby on the 2nd May, it would be remiss of me not to have a nod to this famed drink. The rhubarb adds a pleasant,

tart fruitiness that works well with the sweet, creamy, woody flavours of the bourbon. Quite excellent and a good variation on a classic.

Rhubarb Toddy

The Making

25ml brandy
10ml honey
15ml lemon juice
150ml rhubarb tea

The Drink

This is a warming drink, working well whether served hot or cold. The tartness of the rhubarb works well with the lemon, and the brandy and honey add a warm sweetness and balance.

Still Mad About Rhubarb

The Making

25ml dry gin
10ml Dubonnet or red vermouth
60ml sweet rhubarb iced tea

The Drink

As a still drink, this is a good choice. The gin adds some dry botanical flavours that work well alongside the fortified wine (think Gin & Dubonnet, the Queen's favourite tippie), which is followed by a fruity freshness from the tea and hints of vanilla from the rhubarb.

Rhubarb Rhubarb Rhubarb

The Making

50ml Jensen's Rhubarb-Infused Gin



Still Mad About Rhubarb

150ml Rhubarb Soda (made by Square Root London in Hackney)
10ml lemon juice
Stir with a rhubarb stalk.

The Drink

Magnificent! Definitely one for fans of rhubarb. The squeeze of lemon adds balance to the drink, combining the creamy fruitiness of rhubarb with the tartness that you would expect from the fresh stalks. Delicious and definitely one to try.

One of the things that I found interesting while writing this article was the sheer range of rhubarb-flavoured ingredients available: there are preserves, juices, smoothies, sodas, ice-creams and spirits, all of which have great

mixing potential. Then, of course, there are the fresh stalks themselves, which also have a lot of potential, whether gathered from the grocer or the allotment.

What I like most about rhubarb is that it provides a new avenue with which to explore tart drinks with dryer flavour profiles without having to resort to citrus. For me, the Rhubarb Rhubarb Rhubarb was a firm favourite and is a drink that I would heartily recommend that you all try.

For more cocktail recipes, reviews, group tests and musings on booze, see the New Sheridan Club's fabled **Institute for Alcoholic Experimentation**



Rhubarb Rhubarb Rhubarb



CLUB NOTES

Club Tie Corner

YOU CAN'T GO WRONG with Jimmy Stewart, and we have Craig Young to thank for this snap of Jimmy in his NSC tie (bottom). Meanwhile, to celebrate the spring Col. Cyrus Choke sends this still of Peter Lawford in *Easter Parade* (1948), sporting both Club bow tie and a boater with ribbon in NSC colours (below). Finally, in a



Luca Jellinek

shop window in *Rye Mrs H.* spotted what could be taken as a Club baker boy cap. (It's the Stetson Hatteras Stripe, though I admit the colours aren't quite right, more navy and pale gold than black and silver.)

New Members

CONGRATULATIONS TO Luca Jellinek, who has been a



Prof. Philip Hancock



Alex Mendham and His Orchestra: recreating the Golden Age of night clubs

cautious visitor to our Club Nights for some time and has now taken the plunge and become a Member. Congrats also to new recruit Professor Philip Hancock of Colchester, Essex, a man who earns a crust in the sociological backwaters of a business school, where he has become an expert on Christmas...

By Public Subscription

IN THE OLD DAYS those of an artistic bent frequently relied on wealthy Patrons of the Arts to keep them alive while they followed their muse. The modern equivalent seems to be "crowdsourcing", and this month two musical combos with whom you might be familiar are launching campaigns to raise funds to produce long-playing records: Alex Mendham and His Orchestra, an elaborate and faithful recreation of the dance bands of the 1930s, are looking to produce their second album, while the Top Shelf Band, arguably diametrically opposed from the Mendham Orchestra in terms of lewdness, loucheness and general skulduggery, are about to launch a similar campaign.

The general idea is that you contribute funds up front, in return for which you get, at the very least, a copy of the finish disc, while

those offering larger sums also get treats such as a name-check on the album sleeve, tickets to gigs, a private performance, the bass player's firstborn, etc.

Alex Mendham's campaign is firmly under way, offering tiers of funding named after famous nightclubs of the era. See www.alexmendham.com/2ndrecord for details of the options.

Top Shelf's campaign launches in about two weeks: keep an eye on thetopshelfband.co.uk where you can sign up to their mailing list to be informed of the funding options when they are revealed.



The Top Shelf Band: recreating the seventh circle of Hell



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 6th May,
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
Passing Clouds, 1 Richmond Road, Dalston, London E8 4AA
Admission: Free before 9pm, £5 after that
Dress: 1920s/1930s preferred

Live swing jazz every Wednesday, on 6th May featuring the Dixieland Knee Tremblers with Hugo Simmonds and Sky Murphy.

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 Ewan Bleach with various guests.

Paul Gunn Company at the Pheasantry

Saturday 9th May
Doors 6.30, show 8.30
The Pheasantry, 152 Kings Road (between Boots and Waterstones), London

Admission: £15 (box office 08456 027017/020 7439 4962)

Join Paul Gunn Company (formerly the Chappist combo known as Worsted, featuring musicians formerly with legendary American Jazz singer Billy Eckstine, Ian Dury, and Gloria Gaynor) for an evening of dark humour, rhythm and wit. Mr Gunn cocks a snook at traditional cabaret in his own style, one best described by critics as “Noel Coward meets the Bonzos”. *Downton Abbey* creator Julian Fellowes said, “It made me laugh out loud. It’s truly original—something one almost never feels.” *Venue* magazine opined: “Vocalist Paul Gunn, a sort of continuation of Viv Stanshall by other means, crooned his way expertly with such wit, panache and musical expertise that the audience were baying for more.”

One Room Paradise

Saturday 9th May
9pm–1am
Fontaine’s, 176 Stoke Newington Road, London N16 7UY
Admission: £5

Ginger Fizz has moved to London and set up shop at the gorgeous Bamboo Lounge at Fontaine’s offering the best of rhythm & blues, rock ‘n’ roll, doo wop, British beat, sleaze and northern soul, all played on shiny 45s. So come on down for an evening of delicious cocktails, South Pacific décor and a selection of the best records the 1950s and 1960s have to offer.

🎩 NSC Film Night

The Sweet Smell of Success (1957)
Wednesday 13th May
7pm–11pm
The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)
Admission: Free
See page 19.

1940s Weekend at the East Anglia Transport Museum

Saturday 16th–Sunday 17th May
12–9pm Saturday, 10.30am–4.30pm Sunday
East Anglia Transport Museum, Chapel Road, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 8BL
Admission: £8 (OAPs £7, children £6)
A maiden 1940s special event for the museum, whose collection of trams and



trolleybuses will take visitors back in time. The bus fleet will be in action offering visitors free services to Lowestoft railway station and the market town of Beccles with visiting buses complementing this service. There will also be a free Park & Ride bus service. The evening opening on Saturday will offer a barbecue and live band and will give visitors a rare opportunity to experience the historic vehicles illuminated by the museum’s street lighting. For further details and updates visit the museum’s website, www.eatm.org.uk.

Black Tie Ballroom Club

Saturday 16th May
Beginners’ class from 2.30, main dance from 7.30pm
Colliers Wood Community Centre, 66–72 High Street, Colliers Wood, London SW19 2BY
Admission: £10 for the dance, £15 for dance and lesson
Dress code: Strictly black tie, evening dress or vintage


A monthly event featuring live sets from the ten-piece strict-tempo Kewdos Dance Orchestra with vocals from Alistair Sutherland singing

though the voice trumpet. Period records from the 1920s and 1930s for Charleston, waltz, quickstep, slow foxtrot and tango, 1940s for swing and 1950s for cha cha, rumba and jive. Interactive social activities include a “bus stop” for waltz and quickstep and a “snowball” and “excuse me” dance. Prizes of free glasses of bubbly for the ten most glamorous looking female dancers to perform a jive or swing dance with a partner. Male and female taxi dancers available.

For absolute beginners there is a “learn to dance in a day” class from 2.30pm to 7pm in the same building. The main dance is from 7.30 pm to 11 pm. Prosecco and ice bucket at just £15 per bottle, wine £10. For further information dial 020 8542 1490.

Lipstick & Curls and Sin Bozkurt present Vintage Photography Studio

Sunday 17th May
10am–6pm
The Factory, 55 Holmes Road, London NW5 3AN
Admission: £175 for a two-hour session
A collaboration between vintage styling crew Lipstick & Curls and vintage scene photographer Sin Bozkurt. Your £140 buys you hair and make-up from Lipstick & Curls, the use of their props collection, liaison with your photographer before the shoot by email to ask questions about outfits, styles, and requests, direction and advice on posing specific to you, five super high-resolution retouched images of your choice, chosen on the day, delivered within seven days, and your own private web gallery with customizable print products ordered at cost with leading partner photolabs through



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& HIS RHYTHM MAKERS PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

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sinbozkurtshop.com. Additional images are available at £5.00 per photo. To book or for more info please email info@lipstickandcurls.net or sinbozkurtphoto@gmail.com.

The Great British Dance Band Show

Friday 22nd May
10.30–12.30pm
Crazy Coqs at Brasserie Zedel, 20 Sherwood Street, Soho, London W1F 7ED
Admission: £15

Brandyn Shaw, best described as a reincarnation of Al Bowlly, performs with his Rhythm Makers plus special guests at the cabaret venue within the Art Deco splendour of Brasserie Zedel. (It looks as if Julian Clary is performing earlier in the evening, but there now seems to be a separate £15 ticket to see Brandyn's show from 10.30pm.)

Court Ballroom, where Tango first scandalised Edwardian London society in 1910. These black tie events are hosted by professional Argentine Tango dancers, Leonardo Acosta and Tracey Tyack-King. On arrival at 6.30 you will be greeted by your hosts and receive the specially created cocktail, Tango Essence. Leonardo and Tracey will then give a 45-minute lesson of Argentine Tango which is suitable for all levels. The two-course supper and dance will follow and during the evening there will also be a performance of Tango through the ages by your hosts. Carriages at 11pm.

Brighton's Genuine Vintage Monthly Swing Dance

Saturday 23rd May
7.30–11pm
Patcham Memorial Hall, Old London Road,

The Ric Rac Club: Maritime Midsummer Shindig

Saturday 23rd May
8pm–1am
Fontaine's, 176 Stoke Newington Road, London N16 7UY
Admission: £10 in advance including a cocktail and canapés, £5 for entry only from 10pm
Dress: Your finest sartorial splendour

The Vintage Mafia return with their irregular club night, with vintage DJing and classic cocktails in Fontaine's, the Art Deco bar opened last year by burlesque performer Emerald Fountain.

Tango Supper

Sunday 24th May
6.30–11pm
Palm Court Ballroom, Waldorf Hilton, Aldwych, London WC2B 4DD
Admission: £69

A regular event at London's Waldorf Hilton, in the beautiful Palm

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."

The Candlelight Club

Friday 29th and Saturday 30th May
7pm–12am

A secret central London location
Admission: £20 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 with live music from the Dixie Ticklers.

Lipstick & Curls presents Hair and Makeup Academy

Sunday 31st May
11am–6pm
Rosemary Branch Theatre, 2 Shepperton Road, London N1 3DT
Admission: £120

Vintage styling team Lipstick & Curls offer this full-day course, covering basic techniques such as pin curling, a range of classic hair styles, such

as the victory roll, the poodle and the French pleat, plus a run-through of vintage makeup styles from the 1920s to 1960s. Includes lunch. For more details see at lipstickandcurls.net.

Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair

Sunday 31st May
11am–5pm
The Old Finsbury Town Hall, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4RP
Admission: £4

Some 45 stalls offering vintage clothes, shoes, handbags, hats, gloves, textiles and jewellery from the 1800s to the 1980s. There is also a tea room, alterations booth plus sometimes live entertainment too. More details at www.clerkenwellvintagefashionfair.co.uk.



Listen to the Dixie Ticklers (below) and conga your way to happiness at the Candlelight Club



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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Shades of *Fitzcarraldo*: on the Oxford punting trip Members haul a punt over the rollers on to a higher section of the river. It was the first time in several years that the water levels were low enough to make this possible. See the full report from page 4

