



# NANCY WAKE

The Kiwi  
bombshell  
the Nazis  
couldn't  
catch

(though she killed at  
least one of them with  
her bare hands)

**Didn't we have  
a lovely time**

the day we went to  
Henley on Thames?

**Costume vacuum**

Roy Engoron learns to deal with  
*Downton* withdrawal

**The Club on TV!**

Your chance to see us as French  
television audiences see us, as we  
star on *L'Emission d'Antoine*

# RESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • ISSUE 112 FEBRUARY 2016



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 3rd February in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm. Ed Marlowe will deliver a frisson with a lecture entitled *Leather Chaps: The Case for the Leather Jacket as Chappist Wardrobe Staple*. I predict a riot.

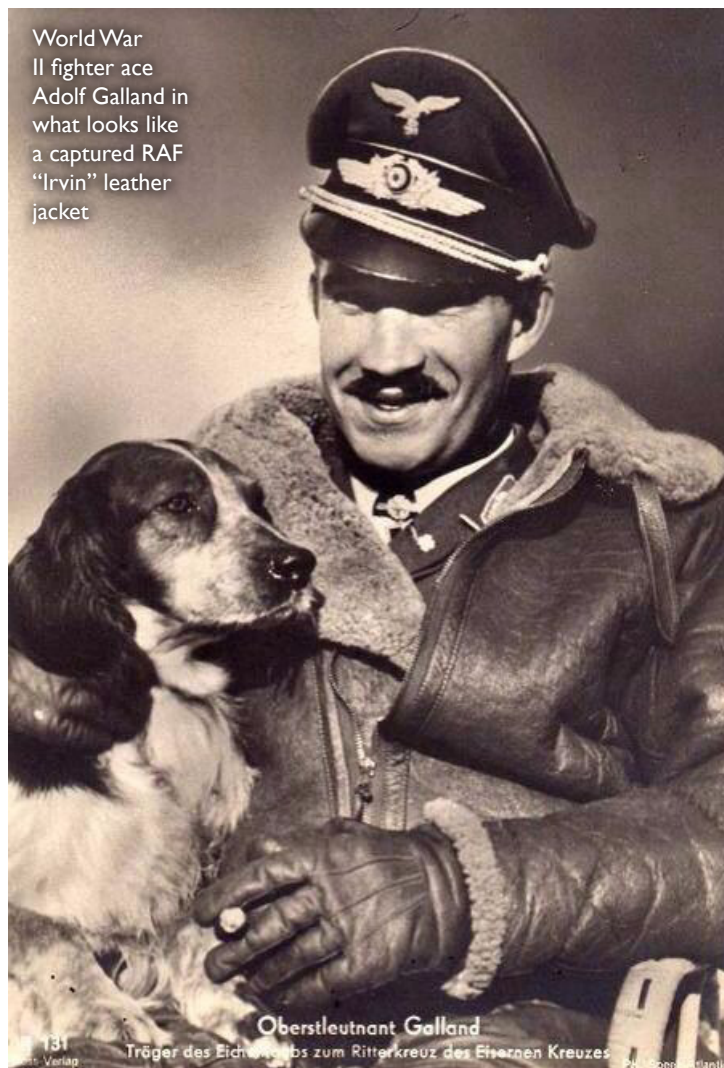
### The Last Meeting

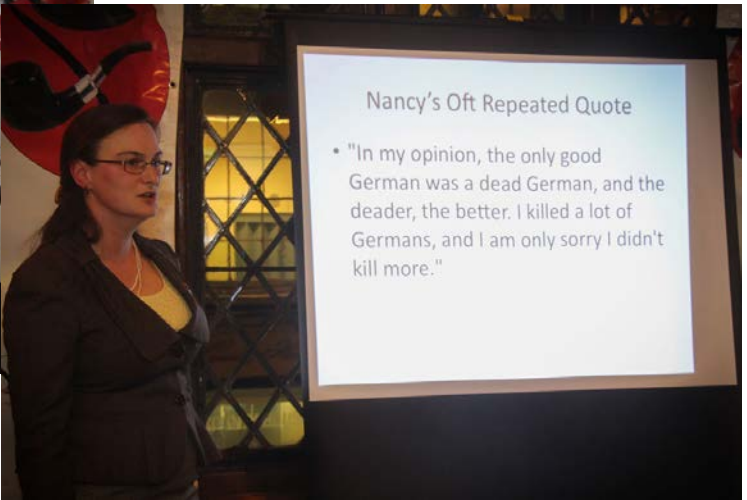
At the first meeting of 2016 Ensign Polyethyl told us all about World War II heroine Nancy Wake, whom she actually met. New Zealand born, Nancy travelled the world in the 1930s and worked as a journalist before marrying a

Frenchman. When the Nazis invaded she became a courier for the resistance, earning herself a 5-million-franc bounty on her head and the

Gestapo nickname of The White Mouse for her ability to escape capture. Fleeing to Britain she joined SOE and was later parachuted back into France to help put together a 7,000-strong resistance force that harried the Germans for the rest of the war, inflicting 1,400 casualties with only 100 losses. Described as a "bombshell" often able to flirt her way out of trouble, Nancy was also a crack shot, happy to execute traitors, and once killed a German sentry with her bare hands.

An essay version of the talk begins on page 4.

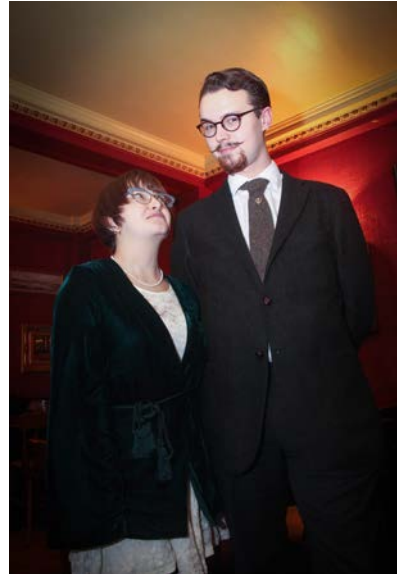




(Above) Torquil introduces our speaker; (right) Ensign Polyethyl gets to grips with Nancy's forthright attitudes towards Germans; (below, left and right) an attentive crowd soak up the derring-do



(Below) Polyethyl carefully prepared a physical map of France, complete with arrows to show key movements—but in the absence of a map stand, Craigoh was pressed into service; (right) Eugenie sketches (she was sketching Hartley in a top hat, for some reason); (far right) new Members Jack Defer and Jessica von Hammersmark



Robert Beckwith (l) and Luca Jellinek



Scarheart tells it like it is, while Ian White gently ignores him



# NANCY WAKE

She was the Second World War's most decorated woman. She was in the French Resistance from its creation until the liberation of France. She said, "In my opinion, the only good German was a dead German, and the deader the better. I killed a lot of Germans and I am only sorry I didn't kill more." Her fellow resistance officer said of her, "She is the most feminine woman I know, until the fighting starts. Then she is like five men." Here is her story. **By Ensign Polyethyl**

**N**ANCY WAKE WAS born in Roseneath, New Zealand, in 1912, of mostly Anglo-Saxon but also part Maori heritage. At the age of two her family moved to Sidney, Australia, where her father abandoned them all when she was four, selling the house from underneath them. Her mother was left in poverty to raise 6 children, of whom Nancy was much the youngest. Her mother became resentful and loveless and an extreme Bible-basher until Nancy ran away from home at 16, jumping out of a window during an argument with her mother. She hid under a relative's house while the police searched for her. Lying about her age, she worked as a nurse until an aunt, a black sheep of the family, gave her £200; with this she took ship to America, in December 1932, aged 20. She trained in journalism in London and got her first job in Paris, working for Hearst News at the age of 22.

She adored Paris, and rapidly settled into a boozy, journalist, café lifestyle, got herself a lap-dog called Picon and proceeded to have a huge amount of fun. Her journalism work meant that she witnessed the assassination of the king of Yugoslavia in Marseille in 1934. Hearst News also sent her to Vienna and Berlin to cover the rise of Fascism. In Vienna she saw Brownshirts tie Jews to large cartwheels and roll them down



the street, whipping the Jews as the populace of Vienna laughed. (The film in her camera was confiscated.) Similarly in Berlin she saw Brownshirts whip Jewish shopkeepers. It formed



her lifelong opinion of the German peoples.

On 30th November 1939 she married a wealthy Marseilles industrialist, Henri Fiocca (1898–1943), much to his Catholic family's horror. She delighted in becoming a rich lady of leisure, dressing in the choicest fashions and living an idle life of luxury. However, when Henri was called up to the French army she took a van from his factory, learnt to drive in a day, converted it to be an ambulance and drove herself to the war front, the Belgian border, in May 1940. She was one of many unofficial ambulances transporting the injured and refugees. When the fall of France was obviously imminent she filled her ambulance with refugees and returned to Marseilles, where her husband rejoined her upon his demob.

One day they were drinking in the back bar of a hotel when they saw an English-looking man reading an English book. They were intrigued and worried. Who was he? An English fool, making himself conspicuous, or a German spy there to tempt Anglophiles into revealing themselves. Conversation began, and he said he was a British officer, captured in the fall of France and imprisoned in Marseille, but allowed out of prison during the daytime, upon giving his parole. They arranged to meet the next day, but spent that night full of trepidation and fear. What if he is a spy? What if the Vichy police, the Milice, come to arrest them? The next day the officer brought a few of his friends to their meeting. All doubts about whether he was English or German were allayed by his friend's

Nancy's impressive collection of medals: Companion of the Order of Australia, George Medal, 1939–1945 Star, France and Germany Star, Defence Medal, War Medal 1939–1945, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, Officier de la Légion d'Honneur, Croix de Guerre with two Palms and a Star, United States of America Medal of Freedom with Bronze Palm, Médaille de la Résistance, New Zealand Badge In Gold.

huge ginger, RAF-style moustache. No German spy would ever grow such absurd facial hair.

Nancy promptly started to help them get false ID cards and set up escape networks—thus was the French Resistance born. She helped those officers escape over the Pyrenees (after they returned to their prison, formally withdrew their



Nancy with husband Henri Fiocca

parole to the guards, then escaped the next day.)

She helped Jewish families escape and wrote movingly in her memoir about the discipline of Jewish children in not crying or giving the game away as she couriered them about the country. Young Frenchmen also needed to escape, as they had been called up by Germany to go to work camps in German factories. So many escapees passed through her hands that she rented another apartment, pretending to the estate agent that she needed it for extra-marital affairs. Her life as a rich young wife meant that she had reason (and funds) to travel about socialising, so her war effort at this time was accompanying escapees on trains, moving them from one safe house to the next. She was the courier for the Pat escape line, run by “Pat O’Leary” (in reality Belgian army doctor Albert-Marie Guerisse, retrained and renamed by SOE). She worked with Ian Garrow, an officer of the 51st Highland Division, a unit that had been left behind at Dunkirk fighting a rearguard action and members of which had filtered to the south seeking a way out of France. When Garrow was arrested and imprisoned Nancy pretended that they were cousins and visited him every Saturday, making sure to be as ostentatiously rich as possible. Eventually a corrupt prison guard contacted her and, after a hefty bribe, Garrow was smuggled a police uniform and escaped



Pat O’Leary



Ian Garrow



Denis Rake

by marching out the gate at guard change.

Henri had given Nancy an Alpine ski chalet as a wedding present, which she put to use hiding escapees. The local peasants were unfriendly to Resistance work, but very friendly to black market food. So Nancy bought a piglet, and asked a neighbouring farmer to fatten it up. When slaughter time arrived Nancy returned to the chalet, collected her three escapees and a suitcase full of dead pig. The villagers all knew about the pig, but not the men. Supportive of black market activity, they warned her that the Germans had set up a road-block looking for a woman (they thought because of the pig) so she skied down the mountainside and met up with the bus once it was past the road-block.

Once on the train to Marseille a Gestapo officer got into Nancy’s compartment and flirted with her. She arranged a date with him, and asked him to carry her heavy suitcase through the ticket gate, thus avoiding having it searched.

Nancy (and the Pat line) helped 1,037 escapers reach Perpignan and then over the Pyrenees to neutral Spain. The Germans started to look for a female courier they named “The White Mouse”, offering a 5 million franc reward. The Marseille Gestapo knew that Nancy was a person to watch and the Paris Gestapo knew what “The White Mouse” was doing. Luckily the Marseille and Paris offices refused to co-operate—both wanting the

glory of catching her.

Nancy's phone was tapped and her post searched. Then one day a neighbour warned her that she'd been followed. It was time for her to escape. First she packed a trunk with her Chanel clothes and posted it to Madrid. That night she walked out of her flat, kissing her husband goodbye and leaving her dog howling.

Six fruitless journeys to Perpignan followed—on each occasion, seeing bad weather in the Pyrenees mountains, she turned back. She couldn't stay in Perpignan as the town, being so close to the border, was heavily controlled, so she was on a train to Toulouse when suddenly it stopped. All the passengers were put in trucks, she jumped, but was caught in a crowd of protesting students. She was accused of a Resistance bombing she had nothing to do with, thrown in prison, kicked around and beaten (except at night when most of the guards went home and the remaining one allowed her to sleep in the warm office, before returning her to her cell at dawn). Pat O'Leary arrived, posed as her lover and talked her out of jail, by pretending to be a member of the Milice and saying that Nancy was his mistress.

On another escape attempt a train guard ran down the train's corridor warning that the Germans were stopping the train. Nancy jumped from the moving train, dodging machine gun bullets. She left her handbag behind and so lost her jewellery, identity card and walking boots (but had cash in her bra). She sprinted up a hill, through a vineyard, and hid in a barn for two nights, with no food, water or blankets. She walked for five days to get to a safe house, eating only what she could steal from peasants' gardens. She caught scabies so, when she returned to Toulouse, she had to be scrubbed down with disinfectant. No longer was she a cosseted lady of leisure.

On 2nd March 1943, three months after Nancy had left Marseille but with her still no closer to escaping France, Pat O'Leary was betrayed by a man named Roger. He spent the rest of his war in Dachau (which meant he was one of the main witnesses to tell the tale of the Germans' murders there). The loss of Pat meant that Nancy did not know the passwords to contact the mountain guides—so she searched out her own guides and browbeat them into agreeing to help her escape. The woman who

had helped create an escape network was struggling to escape herself.

In early May 1943 she was hidden under coal in a truck and driven to the foot of mountains. She walked for five nights through the Pyrenees, wearing espadrilles and dragging a defeatist American escapee by the hair. (She couldn't leave him to freeze on the mountain tops as a corpse would have revealed to the Germans which routes they used.)

After various problems and imprisonments she arrived in Barcelona. Her clothes trunk was awaiting her in Madrid. From Gibraltar she took ship to Scotland, arriving on 17th June



Nancy in FANY uniform

1943. Escaping out of France had taken her six months.

In London she applied to join De Gaulle's Free French, but they rejected her, thinking her a British spy. She was accepted by Maurice Buckmaster's French Section of the Special Operations Executive (SOE). She joined the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY) and trained at Ringway, Scotland and Beaulieu. She chose the following poem as the basis for her code.

She stood right there  
In the moonlight fair

And the moon shone  
Through her nightie  
It lit right on  
The nipple of her tit  
Oh Jesus Christ Almighty!

On the 31st March 1944 she parachuted into L’Auvergne, with “Hubert” (Major John Farmer). She carried silk stockings, two revolvers, a red satin cushion, two hand embroidered nightdresses, 1 million francs and red Chanel lipstick. She landed in a tree, prompting Henri Tardivat, a Resistance officer, to exclaim, “Ah, that England should send us such a beautiful flower.” To which she replied, “Enough of that French shit, get me down from here!” The first of many security lapses was that although the parachute was suppose to be buried to hide it, Tardivat forbade this because of the value of the silk. She’d been taught never to use cars, only to walk or cycle, yet the pride of the Maquis meant they went everywhere by car—their only nod to security was to not use headlights. Her host took her for an evening stroll around Cosne-d’Allier, where everyone greeted her, knowing who she was.

Her contact, Maurice Southgate, was arrested. Her next contact, Gaspard, lived in the forest near Saint-Flour, but he didn’t want British help, only Du Gaulle’s Free French, as he was preparing his position for post-war political power. He had a ragtag army of ill-disciplined Maquisards. Nancy and Hubert were unimpressed. Gaspard’s men planned to seduce Nancy, kill her in her sleep and steal her money, but she heard their plans by listening at their window.



Nancy and Hubert’s effectiveness depended on being able to contact London by radio. But their radio operator, Denis Rake, couldn’t parachute due to an old injury from Gestapo torture on a previous mission, so he had been flown by Lysander to a landing strip 120 km north. Southgate’s arrest, however, meant that the Germans were everywhere and Rake couldn’t get through for two weeks. During that delay Rake met up with a lover and spent the time in bed. Rake was openly and flamboyantly homosexual, in a time when it was still illegal. Once he finally reached the resistance he was surrounded by fit young Maquisards, at whom

he made passes. Nancy had to placate irate farmers about the insult to their sons.

Nancy and Hubert’s mission was to organise the Resistance in preparation for D-Day, establish ammunition and arms caches from nightly parachute drops, and arrange





wireless communication with England. Nancy was *chef du parachutage* and would only arm and pay the Maquisards when they had proved they were up to the job, became more disciplined and developed a strategy. In Rake's absence Gaspard, deeming Nancy and Hubert useless, had sent them off to his rival, Fournier, at Chaudes-Aigues. Fournier was a hotel manager who impressed Nancy with his dedication and discipline. So Fournier's group were the first to receive a parachute drop of weapons and ammunition from London.

The plateau above Chaudes-Aigues was a natural stronghold in the "Fortress of France" (the Massif Central) which was perfect for parachute drops. On six consecutive nights they had successful drops, getting all the weapons and ammunition off the plateau to safe points, cleaning the transport grease off the weapons and arming and training the Maquisards.

Nancy had arrived with just a handbag full of money and a pistol.

One month later she was the leader of the Maquis d'Auvergne, as it was Nancy who decided which of the Maquis groups was deserving of receiving London's support. Rake sent the messages. Hubert did the military tactics and weapons training.

As well as weapons, ammunition, boots and socks, in the parachute drops London also sent Nancy silk stockings and Elizabeth Arden face cream—by this point she was one woman living amongst thousands of men.

Gaspard, in a proud show of strength, had



Nancy's Maquis escaped on stepping stones across the Truyère

gathered all his men in one place. So on 10th June 1944 the Germans attacked him at Mont Mouchet. The Germans came with 11,000 troops, artillery, tanks and armoured cars—versus Gaspard's lightly armed ragtag army of 3,000. But they fought a successful fighting retreat, killing far more Germans than they were taking casualties. Nancy's group could hear the battle, but due to the terrain they were completely cut off from helping. In the aftermath Gaspard's men joined Fournier's group—which meant that Nancy and Hubert had to interview, equip and train them. Thus a 150 plane parachutage came and Nancy spent an entire day and night opening containers.

Afterwards she was so exhausted she went to the town's hot springs to bathe and then to bed, only to be woken by gunfire. This time the Germans had come with 22,000 SS troops to attack Nancy's 7,500 maquisards. The Germans had artillery, mortars, mobile guns and ten aircraft. But the Maquis had a better understanding of the land, planned ambush points, escape routes and support lines, so



Hubert in later life (he lived to 95)



Nancy's fake ID card

a bitter battle ensued. Nancy drove over the plateau to give orders to withdraw to the various groups and gather up the unopened containers. However Gaspard refused to withdraw, preferring to die fighting gloriously. So Nancy arranged a special radio message specifically ordering him to escape, which she claimed came from the Free French General König. By the time the Germans fought their way to the summit of the plateau the Maquisards had vanished away. 1,400 German troops lay dead, for only 107 of the Maquis.

The Maquis had prepared their escape route by building stepping stones under the water level at the deepest stretches of the river Truyère. They literally walked on water to get to their emergency rendezvous in Saint-Santin.

The attack had forced Denis Rake to burn the code books and bury the radio. To restore communications, Wake bicycled more than 500 km in 72 hours through German-held territory from Saint Santin to Châteauroux in search of another Resistance radio operator.

In order to prepare for the bike ride Nancy needed new clothes. Her battle dress was eye-catchingly dishevelled, so in order to look inconspicuous she cycled to Aurillac, where a tailor made her a new suit in a day. She had no ID papers as in the aftermath the Germans

changed the card's design and obliged all citizens to reapply—and Nancy was disinclined to attend the German HQ to be issued with a new card. This meant she had to make herself look as uninteresting and unremarkable as possible. So a lady's bike was found. From the handlebars she hung a string bag of vegetables and groceries and, looking like

a housewife on a shopping trip, she set off. She cycled from Saint-Santin to Montluçon, Saint-Amand, Bourges, Issoudon, Brion, Willédiur-sur-Indre, arriving eventually at Châteauroux. There she was unable to persuade the radio operator to help her, as he believed her a German spy. However she met another Resistance friend, who knew where an Algerian Free French Resistance group were in Creuse. So they cycled on to Creuse, and there the Algerians agreed to send their message to London via Algeria. From there she cycled directly straight back to Saint-Santin. Throughout this mammoth journey Nancy ensured her clothing was neat and clean, by taking it off and sleeping in a hay barn in her underwear (with no blanket). She had to always appear as if she had just cycled a short distance, so as to not excite any curiosity. She also carried cosmetics, blotting any sweat and reapplying lipstick. When she approached roadblocks, she slowed down and fumbled with her pockets as though reaching for her ID card—but looked so uninteresting that the guards waved her through unchecked. In a post-war interview she said, "When I got off that damned bike I felt as if I had a fire between my legs. I couldn't stand up. I couldn't sit down, I couldn't walk. When I'm asked what I'm most proud of doing during the war, I say: "The bike ride.""

The message reached London. Not only did they send codes but they also sent a 19-year-old American, non-French-speaking radio operator. In another drop they sent two American, non-French-speaking weapons instructors. After their journey the two instructors were shown to a bed in a farmhouse (with real sheets and forest flowers in a vase) and assured that the Germans would not attack that night. A few hours later 6,000 Germans attacked. Nancy took charge of the battle, despite being dressed in her pink embroidered, satin nightdress, with 200 Mmaquisards, a new container of bazookas—not yet unpacked—and two instructors who couldn't speak the language. In the midst of the battle Nancy acted as translator while the Americans gave instruction on how to fire the bazookas. Nancy sent an SOS to Tardivat to create a diversion—he and his Frenchmen abandoned their lunch to go to her rescue.

By this time Nancy was famous within the Resistance, and the groups that she had declined to supply with London's weapons were resentful. A drunken communist tried to murder her with a grenade, but he blew himself up, spattering her car with his flesh. As a consequence Nancy was issued a bodyguard of Spaniards (survivors of the civil war). So from then Nancy went everywhere in a convoy of three cars bristling with bren guns. Now instead of flirting or deceiving her way through road blocks she twice shot her way through. To celebrate the Resistance's successes, and the German retreat in France, Nancy and her men decided to have a forest banquet and "kidnapped" an obliging chef. In the months between D-Day and the liberation of France Nancy engaged in an enjoyable round of blowing stuff up. Convoys, bridges, roads, cable lines, railways,

factories, everything except a synthetic petrol plant which they simply stole instead.

Other successes were a raid on the Gestapo headquarters in Montlucon. At 1225hrs, with German punctuality, the Gestapo always gathered for their pre-lunch schnapps. At 1225 Nancy, together with French and Spanish fighters, leapt from four cars, dashed into the building and cleared each room with grenades and machine-gun fire both upstairs and down, and within thirty seconds were back in their cars and away. 38 Gestapo were killed.

In a raid on a gun factory she killed an SS sentry with her bare hands, using a judo-chop blow to the throat she had learned during SOE training. In a post-war interview she said it "was the only time I used it...and it killed him all right. I was really surprised."

And now for the less appealing stories—skip this paragraph if you are of a gentle disposition. The Maquis captured a German female spy and two French women. They raped all three women repeatedly and tortured the spy. This their honour as Frenchmen permitted, but they couldn't shoot her, as they couldn't kill a woman. Nancy ordered she be shot immediately and if the Frenchmen wouldn't do it then she would do it herself. The two French women prisoners were brought to her. One Frenchwoman was a lover of a member of the Milice, so a collaborator. Nancy released her. The other Frenchwoman was just a pretty 17-year-old that a Maquisard

Chateau de Fragne, at one point Nancy's HQ





Nancy's 32nd birthday party, 30th August 1944

had fancied, kidnapped, raped and then passed around his comrades. Nancy released her but, her honour ruined, she had nowhere to go, so she became Nancy's maid.

In another incident the Germans captured a Maquisard's seven-month pregnant wife and two-year-old daughter. They tied the wife to a lamp-post in the village square and, when the village didn't betray the Maquis they sliced open her womb, the toddler screaming as her mother bled to death.

And the final unpleasant story—Roger, the man who had betrayed Pat O'Leary, was captured. He was tortured with a red hot poker up the arse, then Nancy ordered he be shot.

By now the war in France was drawing to an end. In late August 1944 Nancy and her men moved into the abandoned Chateau de Fragne, near Montlucon. They organised *parachutages* to drop into the chateau's gardens. The main road passed the gates of the Chateau, so when the Germans evacuated the area Nancy and her men hid inside the Chateau, watching through the shutters and let them pass. (They didn't

attack, as you don't start a fight on your own doorstep if you want to sleep there that night!)

On 30th August 1944, to celebrate Nancy's 32nd birthday and the liberation of Paris, the Maquisards organised a march-past. Having saluted Nancy, they ran around the chateau to rejoin the marching squad to keep an endless loop of a victory parade.

In September 1944 Vichy was liberated, and all the Resistance groups gathered there for a service at the town's Great War memorial. There, in the crowd, she saw someone she'd known from her days as a wealthy wife in Marseille. With no preamble, and in public, she was told that her husband had been tortured to death on 16th October 1943. The Germans beat him until his kidneys fell out of his back, trying to get him to betray Nancy. They even brought in his father to try to persuade him, but he said nothing. Fiocca's involvement in the resistance had been revealed by Pat O'Leary, from his prison cell, who had been tricked into speaking to someone he thought was a fellow prisoner. All the Fiocca wealth had been stolen, furniture, bank safety deposit boxes, factory—

all gone. Nancy raced to Marseille that same day, and saw her father-in-law in the street. He screamed, “You have assassinated my son!” and slapped her. Nancy was promised reparations of over 5,000,000 francs, but received just £70. However she was reunited with her dog, Picon, who recognised her joyously, but died of old age shortly after.

By September 1944 the work of the Resistance was over so Nancy returned to Paris then London. Subsequently she said “It’s all been so exciting...and then it all fizzled out. I had a very happy war.” Nothing after the war would be so exciting. She was poor, she had medals and friends, but not importance and purpose. She worked as a passport officer and as an Intelligence Officer. She returned to Australia, working her passage home as a nurse on a troop ship.

In Australia she stood as a Liberal candidate at the 1949, 1951 and 1966 Australian elections, but was not elected. In December 1957 she married RAF bomber pilot, John Forward. They were married 40 years, had no children, and lived in Australia. Once re-widowed she sold her medals and flew back to England. In 2001 she moved into the Stafford Hotel, near Piccadilly, as it was owned by Louis Burdet, a Resistance friend. There she had her own bar-stool. The hotel paid for her stay, and Nancy required the hotel’s visitors to pay for her gin and tonics (including journalists from the nearby *Economist*



Nancy’s ashes are scattered at Chateau de Fragne

office, who wrote her the warmest of obituaries). When her debts accrued they were occasionally paid off by the Prince of Wales.

She left the hotel after a fall and a stay in hospital, after which, in 2003, she moved into the Royal Star and Garter Home, Richmond. There I had the honour to take tea with her, having remembered to bring her a tribute of New Zealand and Australian white wine. She died, aged 98, in 2011. I was an usher at her Memorial Service at St Clement Danes church—and it was from Nancy’s choice of hymns that I was inspired to have the traditional words of “To Be a Pilgrim” at my own wedding. Nancy’s ashes were scattered at Chateau de Fragne, before G&Ts were drunk in her memory.

The FANY remain proud of Nancy’s service and in 2014 a group re-created her 500 km cycle ride. However they used modern road bikes, slept in hotel beds, had a support van and instead of completing the ride in 72 hours my comrades took their time, making a holiday of the journey.

Of the 39 SOE women who were infiltrated into France, 12 died in concentration camps and three survived concentration camps. Of all of them Nancy was the most redoubtable.



Modern FANY personnel recreate Nancy’s 500 km bike ride for charity in 2014

# Hooray for Henley!

Last month a sizeable posse of Sheridanites gathered in Henley on Thames for no other purpose than to idle away an afternoon

**W**HEN WE FIRST conceived of the New Sheridan Club the idea was simply to provide a nexus through which various jaunts and wheezes (hitherto proposed and arranged by various habitués of the existing sheridanclub.co.uk chatroom) could be communicated to other Members. We assumed that different activities would be popping up in different parts of the country, or indeed the world, and the Committee would corral the information and list it. In practice, however, most of the NSC events end up being organised centrally and, inevitably, mostly take place in London.\*

Last month, however, a group of us enjoyed a splendid day trip organised by Mr Stewart Lister Vickers to Henley on Thames, his own stomping ground. There was no particular event to draw us there: Henley is best known for rowing and its annual regatta in particular, but January was not an ideal time of year for messing about in boats, so we stayed very much on dry land and simply admired the river from afar.



(Left) The cross-country group, from left to right, Mark Gidman, Priya Kali, Scarheart, Jack Defer, Priya's beau, Stuart and Frances Mitchell, Stewart Lister Vickers, Chez Hutchinson, James Blah, Birgit and Lord Hare; (opposite, top) hardy souls tramp to the pub; (below) the lunchtime target, the taxidermy-filled Flower Pot Hotel



The main wave arrived by train at midday. (Be warned that this can be a time-consuming process, as there is no direct train from most places; travelling from London you must change at Twyford and wait for the connection that trundles along the spur that ends at Henley.) Mr Vickers then led them on a cross-country ramble, soaking up the fresh air and leafy vistas that seem to exist outside the capital, building up an appetite for the next stage, which was lunch at the Flower Pot Hotel. I wasn't present for this segment of the day, but I





(This page) Interior and exterior of the delightful Upstairs and Downstairs; (opposite, top) the trek back from the pub; (centre) The Mitchells decided to bring Bob, the plastic lobster won at our Christmas Party raffle; you can't really see but he has his own Club Tie; (bottom) the sun sets on a splendid day

heard many effusive comments about the quality of the food. The venue also turned out to be full of stuffed creatures, something of a delight to member Jack Defer who is frightfully keen on taxidermy. (Apparently the Flower Pot has the largest private collection of cased freshwater fish in the world, it says here.)

Meanwhile I had arrived a couple of hours later and spent an agreeable time picking through a couple of Henley's vintage shops. There are several; admittedly Henley is the sort of upmarket place where a shrewd dealer would go to sell at a high price things he had bought cheaply elsewhere, but in fact the most interesting shop we saw, The Vintage Look, was quite reasonably priced.

The rest of the group joined me very briefly in The Vintage

Look (but not so briefly that James Blah was not able to find a pair of dress trousers that fitted), before we all trundled on to the Upstairs and Downstairs tea room, a place where Stewart





we were joined briefly by the Mayor of Henley (who happens to own and run the tearoom).

The rest of our time was earmarked on the itinerary for visiting pubs, of which Henley does indeed have many. We headed for the Angel on the Bridge, a pleasant riverside establishment with rustic charm and a roaring fire. We immediately bumped



into a couple of locals who took great interest in what we were doing and proved both friendly and proud of their town.

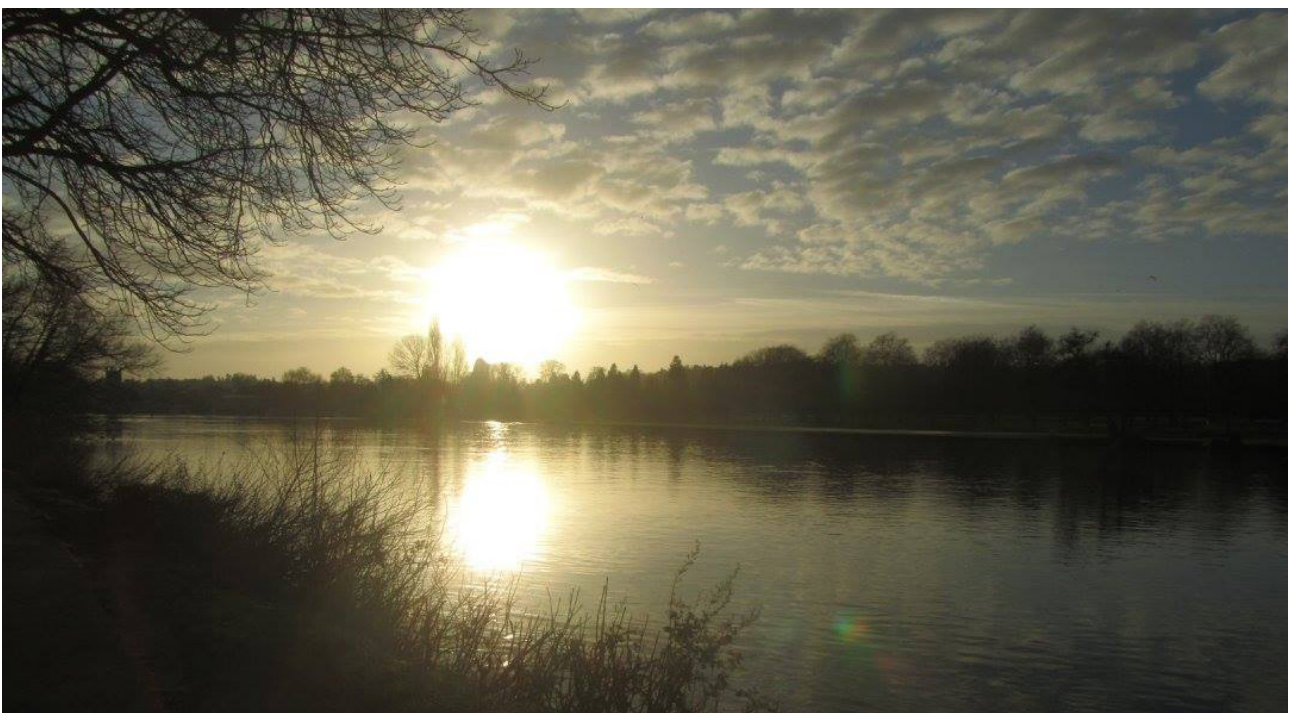
I don't know if anyone actually made it to any other pubs after this, as people started to peel away early on to make the long trek back home. I left about 7.30, but I believe those living closer aled further into the night.

Many thanks to Mr Vickers for organising this trip. And I hope it inspires other Members to plan similar wheezes, inviting their fellow Sheridanites to come and see the best of what an area they know has to offer. If you feel inspired, drop us an email, or just post on the Sheridan Facebook page to gauge the level of interest.

himself used to work. Downstairs was mostly off-sales of many, many different types of tea. Upstairs was a delightful tea room, carefully fitted out with an Art Deco fireplace and a fine collection of Art Deco teapots and furniture. All agreed the tea and cakes were very good, and

*Thanks to Floyd, Jack, Stuart and Birgit for the photos.*

\*An exception being the infamous Christmas House, where we hired a country mansion and spent a week pretending to live like we were in *Downton Abbey*. This was always organised by someone outside the Committee, but it was such a strain that no one ever did it twice.



# 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.*



## E. Tory Laitila

“Life is a concept—grasp it”

### **Name or preferred name?**

E. Tory Laitila is my chosen name, and I will also respond to either Holmes Trooper or Commander.

### **Why that nickname or nom de plume?**

I commanded the local trooper garrison and have a fondness for the briar.

### **Where do you hail from?**

My home is Honolulu, Hawaii but I was raised on Guam, where some but not all of my family resides.

### **Favourite Cocktail?**

As a declared teetotaler I prefer a London Fog (Earl Grey tea, steamed milk and vanilla syrup), but will sample the specialty of the house whatever that may be. It does get somewhat warm in Hawaii and cool, fruity drinks tame the daytime heat.

### **Most Chappist skill?**

After some thought, I might say my Chappist skill is the ability to dress appropriately for any occasion at a drop of a hat, including the hat.

### **Most Chappist possession?**

An Italian fencing foil given to me by Lt. Col. Don Appling, a US military biplane pilot, who used the foil to teach Jonathan Quayle Higgins III how to fence on the television show *Magnum, P.I.*

### **Personal Motto?**

I personally believe “Life is a concept—grasp it,” but I also live with “Be prepared,” “Semper vigilans,” and “Noblesse oblige.”

### **Favourite Quotes?**

“Cowards die many times before their deaths. The valiant never taste of death but once.” —Julius Caesar

“Never give up, never surrender!” —Commander Peter Quincy Taggart

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

I used to model clothes for the advertisement illustrators at Liberty House, a chain of department stores in Hawaii.

**How long have you been involved with the NSC?**

I've been happily involved with the club since the winter of 2014.

**How did you hear about the Club to begin with?**

An acquaintance of mine, Lt. Col. Curtis A. "Manny" Manchester, was sporting this downright dashing lapel pin at a society event and after some discussion revealed the New Sheridan Club. Soon after, my wife secured membership for me as a Christmas present.

**What one thing would you recommend to fellow Members and why (cocktail, night out, tailor, watchmaker, public house, etc.)?**

I would recommend if you are able, by location and ambulation, to take part in a Tweed Ride. 'Tis a quite dashing way to see the sights and hopefully make a few new like-minded friends.

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

For a dinner party—and I am thinking about a night out on the town—I choose Fred Astaire for his style, Audrey Hepburn for her grace, and Julie Andrews for all her talent. Just imagine how the evening will go with dinner and dancing.

**Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?**

Why, Artemis Scarheart, of course.

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



No, but

I could do something on the Hawaiian Monarchy, vexillology or the like. "Did I ever tell you about the time when at the Battle of Monmouth I..."

*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.*



# DISTANT ISLAND OF

## Tim Eyre on an unusual tourist destination in the middle of the Pacific Ocean

SOME FOUR HUNDRED miles south of the Japanese mainland and two hundred miles east of the main island of Okinawa lies an island by the name of Minami Daito Jima. Its name means “Southern Great East Island”. Despite its grand name, the island is a modest flat oval, only three miles in length. Other than its smaller companion island a few miles to the north (whose name means “Northern Great East Island”), Minami Daito lies isolated in the Philippine Sea, hundreds of miles from the next patch of land. Although it is administered by Japan, it is a world away from the skyscrapers and bright lights of Tokyo.

Minami Daito started life as a coral reef; a ring of coral in the ocean creating a lagoon within. Aeons ago, some great geological uplift raised the reef above sea level. This geology gives the island its peculiar shape: the coastline is rimmed by a steep rocky ridge with sheer cliffs falling down to the tempestuous waves below. In contrast, the low-lying interior is as flat as Norfolk. This leads to the peculiar situation of a small island where the sea is mostly out of sight.

Minami Daito has no indigenous inhabitants. It is thought to have been first sighted by a Spanish navigator by the name of Bernardo de la Torre in September 1543. Over the next few centuries, a few other ships sighted the islands but their discoveries were quickly forgotten. It was not until July 1820 that a Russian ship by the name of *Borodino* surveyed the islands and made the discovery stick. They named what

is now known as Minami Daito Jima “South Borodino Island”.

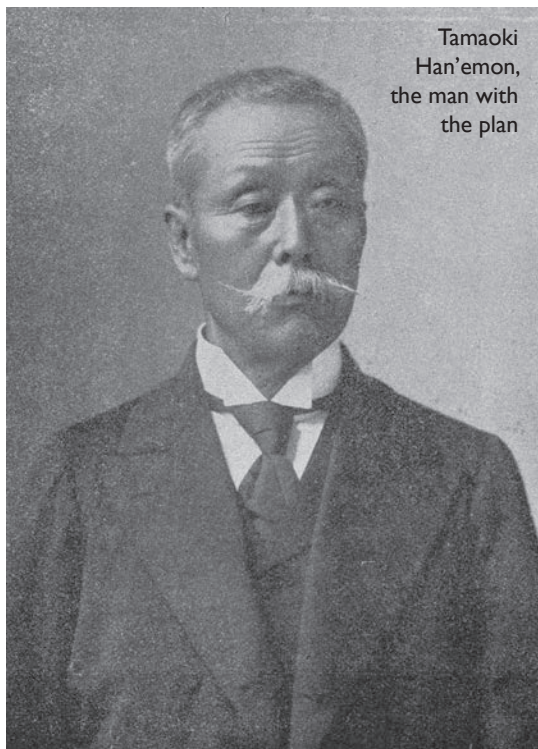
However, Russia did not assert sovereignty over the uninhabited land of South Borodino Island, let alone attempt to settle it. It was not until 1885 that the Empire of Japan formally claimed the island. Fifteen years later, in 1900, a group of 23 pioneers came to live on Minami Daito. Led by a Japanese entrepreneur by the name of Tamaoki Han’emon (1838–1910), they had travelled from another remote Japanese island called Hachijo Jima, which lies about 180 miles south of Tokyo. They drained the swampy

interior of the island into a network of pools and started cultivating sugar cane in 1902. The colonisation and sugar plantation appears to have been a major success because by 1919 the island had 4,000 inhabitants.

Unfortunately, the remoteness of Minami Daito did not save its inhabitants from the violence of the Second World War. As the conflict turned against Japan, the people of Minami Daito were evacuated to less vulnerable parts of the country. Being garrisoned by Japanese

troops and lying in an unprotected position in the Pacific, the island was a natural target for American bombers and suffered heavy damage as a result. With the Japanese surrender in 1945, Minami Daito was handed over to America along with the rest of the Okinawan archipelago. It was not until 1972 that the island reverted to Japanese control.

Today around 1,400 people live on Minami



Tamaoki  
Han’emon,  
the man with  
the plan

# THE SUGAR TRAIN



Minami Daito  
Jima seen  
from the air

Daito, mostly in a single village located in the centre of the island. The settlement is a surprisingly lively place, with a small entertainment district, a few supermarkets and a comfortable hotel. The island's primary product continues to be sugar and so the village is dominated by a sugar mill, one of ten located on the islands that lie to the south of mainland Japan. Even today, farmers harvest the sugar cane by hand. Once cut, the stalks are transported to the local mill in trucks. However, until 1983 this transportation was by rail.

Unlikely as it seems, this small and remote island was once equipped with nearly 20 miles of railway line. In terms of size and isolation, is as though the tiny Scottish island of Eigg were similarly equipped. However, the railway makes perfect sense when seen in the context of the island's colonisation. The settlement of Minami Daito was an act of agricultural entrepreneurship, with the whole island being the factory floor. The sugar cane needed to be conveyed to the refinery somehow and the island's pancake-flat interior made it suitable for a railway. The original system carried hand-pushed trucks on narrow 457 mm tracks. When Toyo Sugar Refining took control of the



Map  
of the  
island  
showing the  
railway lines

enterprise in 1917, the island's new operators upgraded the tracks to 762 mm gauge and introduced steam locomotives. By 1927 the network had reached its full length of 30 km. In addition to its primary duties, this Sugar Train carried passengers and mail as it chugged around the island.

The railway was destroyed in the Second



that the people of Minami Daito should seek to manufacture a high-value product from their highly fungible commodity. To this end, Grace Rum Distillery opened on Minami Daito in 2004. They produce two brands of rum: Cor Cor Red Label and Cor Cor Green Label. The difference between the two lies in the raw material, with the Red being made



(Above left) Remnants of the old narrow-gauge track; (above) one of the original steam trains, on display; (left) one of the carriages used to carry passengers; (right) local cane juice rum

from molasses and the Green being made from the juice of sugar cane. It is one of the few rums produced in Japan and is marketed as a prestige product: only 600 bottles of Cor Cor Green Label are produced each month.

However, little of this rum is actually drunk by the island's population. The local tippie of choice is called *awamori*, a fairly strong (30–43% ABV) drink made by distilling *saké* (rice wine). Awamori is aged in traditional clay pots, and the value of a bottle increases with the age of the contents.

More startling are the bottles of awamori that are presented with a dead Okinawan pit viper at the bottom. These large and venomous snakes are common in Okinawa but fortunately the only place a visitor is likely to encounter one is at the



World War but was brought back into operation in 1950 while the island was under the administration of the USA. Six years later diesel locomotives started to run on the rails. This system continued to operate until 1983. The rails have since been torn up but a few fragments remain and are marked on the local tourist maps. The island has taken the trouble to preserve two of the locomotives, one each of steam and diesel. They take pride of place in the centre of the village, by the local equivalent of the town hall. Also on display are carriages of the sort used to haul sugar cane and people. A map shows where the rails were laid.

With all this sugar around, it is only natural



(Above left) The island has unique species of fruit bat; (right) Stalactites and stalagmites in one of the caves; (below) the local firewater sometimes comes with a venomous snake in the bottle

bottom of a bottle in a liquor store.

Awamori is central to a poignant local custom. Minami Daito has no senior high school and therefore at 15 years of age children must leave the island to complete their education. Shortly before departure, fathers go with their sons to a cave where they leave a bottle of awamori to mature in the stable underground environment. When the son returns to the island he and his father drink the bottle together, the son having come of age and the awamori having matured.

Being formed of coral limestone, Minami Daito has over 120 caves and is a popular destination for Japanese potholers. The island's largest cave has been fitted with walkways and lights so that visitors can admire the impressive and well-preserved stalactites and stalagmites. The caves provide a habitat for bats: the isolation of the island means that it has much unique wildlife, including a local species of fruit bat. Copious information about



crane. Even passengers disembark by being lifted in a crate. In recent years a port was blasted out of the rock on the north side of the island but it is only big enough for fishing vessels. The passage from the main island of Okinawa takes 12–16 hours and therefore most people travel to the island by plane. The flight from Okinawa's capital city of Naha takes an hour whereas the inter-island flight between Minami Daito and its northern neighbour takes just six minutes and is said to be the shortest commercial flight in Japan. The steep cliffs and heavy seas mean that there is no inter-island ferry service.

Like Hucknall in England (see issue 101 of *Resign!*), Minami Daito Jima is a fine example of a small and little-known place where a modicum of scrutiny turns out to yield a great deal of interest. Although it is remote enough to deter all but the most determined travellers, this sugar-laden spot of coral in the Pacific is an ideal destination for the armchair tourist.

the natural history of the island is displayed at the large visitors' centre.

Another quirk of the island's unusual geology is that the steep cliffs encircling the island make it difficult for ships to dock: the island has no bays, let alone a natural harbour. As such, the ferry that serves the island must tie up at a wharf exposed to the open ocean and all cargo must be unloaded by



Ship passengers must be craned on and off the island

# THE VIEW FROM ACROSS THE POND ON THE LOSS OF FRIENDS

**Roy S. Engoron** is suffering *Downton Abbey* withdrawal

“**T**HOSE FRIENDS THOU HAST, and their adoption tried / Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel...” Such was Polonius’s admonition to Laertes. Friends are an important part of one’s life. There is an old saying that we can’t choose our relatives, but we can choose our friends. I treasure my friendships with others. However, I have recently undergone a loss. I’ve lost about 20 of my friends at one time. That’s a pretty big hit. While the mood around the house is far from funereal, and I am not incapacitated with grief, I feel the loss all the same. Alas, the last season of *Downton Abbey* has ended. From the first five minutes of the first episode, I was hooked. I have been so obsessed with this series, that I have persuaded some of my very dear British friends to send me each season’s DVD

set before it even begins to air in the US. At the beginning of December, I received Season Six of the series and binge-watched the entire thing in two days.

After finishing the last of the episodes—except for the special last Christmas offering which will not show here until 6th March (my friends are working on that one too)—I wanted to see how some of the characters aged. I noticed that Hugh Bonneville’s hair was decidedly grayer at the end than at the beginning; well, life has been hard for the 7th Earl. I put in the first disc of the first season. There was the close-up of the hand on the telegraph key signalling the fact that the *Titanic* had sunk. I was hooked all over again. It took me a week to do it, but I watched all six years of the show again. The holidays were over, and

Highclere Castle in Berkshire, which plays the role of *Downton Abbey* in the series







Some of the cast in a publicity photo for the fifth series

what else was there to do? There was certainly nothing on the air that could even come close to the writing, production values, and acting of *Downton Abbey*.

So my friends are gone. It is my understanding that while the series was merely popular in the UK, it was a run-away smash in the United States. I was chatting with a friend the other night who quickly said, “I have to go. They have the TV on and it’s time for my favorite show.” The influence of the show is so entrenched that one US congressman had to resign in disgrace and pay back thousands to the government for using public funds to decorate his office like the Downton dining room. Watching the entire series again, I realised that there were a number of plot points that I had forgotten. I had completely put out of my head that Lady Cora had had a miscarriage due to the actions of the evil O’Brien. It was probably over-shadowed by the untimely death of Kemal Pamuk. As the series unfolded, flaws in the characters and/or the plot became evident to me. It became obvious that the 7th Earl of Grantham was not only a poor business man,

but a horrible judge of character. How many underhanded things did Thomas Barrow have to do before the master of the house caught on? Come on, Robert, pull your head out of your starched collar.

It became obvious that, with the exception of the likes of O’Brien, Barrow, and the blackmailing Denker, most of the really “kind” people were below stairs. Even the Dowager Countess would stick her nose in where it didn’t belong—and talk about being dogmatic. Of course, Dame Maggie could play Attila the Hun so sympathetically that one would want to invite him for tea. I was devastated by the loss of Sybil and Matthew, I admire the likes of Branson, but my heart is really with those who really ran the place. This is true because, from my point of view, they are characters most like the people I find in my culture. This is not surprising. Without question, both floors of my entire house could fit into the Great Hall of Downton Abbey. And in my small, but comfortable home, I have no one to cook or clean for me. I must do all of that myself. I even have to do my own laundry. Fortunately, I have a machine that does

that. And despite Mrs Patmore's protestations, I also have and use an electric toaster, electric mixer, and a refrigerator. They are not as classy as servants, but I don't have to feed them either.

The question then must be asked as to why this series about a group of spoiled aristocrats and their servants should ring so true to an American audience. I think the answer can be found in one character—at least as far as I'm concerned. No, not Tom Branson. He most certainly bettered himself by marrying the boss's daughter, but there is another character who literally pulled herself up by her bootstraps. Daisy begins as the probably the lowest on the servants' pecking order after the groom who mucks out the stables. This scullery maid learns how to cook, and cook well, giving Mrs. Patmore a run for her money. She studies and passes tests proving that there is an innate intelligence there. She is kind enough to marry a man on his deathbed out of sympathy, and she is more than kind to her father-in-law. She is not afraid to take on anyone—even if they are peers. That includes the new owner of the adjoining estate who is bent on throwing out some of his farmers who have been on the land for generations. She speaks her mind; she refuses to be trapped in the confines of the British caste system. She, whether by design or happenstance, represents the American dream. It is the belief in the United States that anyone can achieve anything he or she desires if they just work at it. In all honesty, I must admit that had I been living in that time frame, I would much rather have been one of the Crawleys than one of the servants, but that doesn't stop me from admiring the hired help.

The careful weaving of actual events and their effect upon the fictional characters helps to add an air of reality to the various plots. They provide an interesting interaction of plot points and fact. First, there is the *Titanic* disaster. There is, of course, the war, which changed so much of Europe. There was the Spanish flu epidemic, and Teapot Dome, the oil scandal in the United States which somehow affects Cora's brother who leaves the States with his mother presumably to avoid further scandal.

The exceptional writing and acting in the series would mean little were it not for the *mise en scene*. There is a very unscientific rule of thumb in the theatre that for every person who appears

on stage, there are at least two people backstage making them look good. It's safe to say that number is much higher in this case. All of those people behind the camera who brought this event to life are entitled to the highest praise. After all, they also are artists.

So I've lost my friends. I can't help but wonder how Anna and Bates will get on. Will Mr Carson ever learn to appreciate Mrs Hughes' cooking? What's in store for Daisy? Will the estate survive the modern world? A group of us, last year, were discussing the possible direction of the series in the last season. One suggested that the series would go on until the outbreak of the Second World War. Another suggested that the Dowager Countess would die; I said that was much too obvious. I thought there was a possibility that the story would go up to 1929 when the Depression hit and the Crawleys would lose almost everything. Those questions will be resolved only in the minds of the viewers—no, not viewers, but stakeholders in the lives of those that reside at Downton Abbey.

A further word about friendships. My friend David, knowing my obsession with the series, emailed me before I left for the UK last autumn. He said he had tried to get us a tour of Highclere Castle. Sadly, the castle closed for the season at the beginning of September and I didn't leave home until the end of the month. But David had a Plan B. He asked me if I wanted to go to the Bluebell Railway in East Grinstead. I had never heard of the Bluebell and had no idea where East Grinstead was. I was informed that, while Highclere was closed, the railway was open and this is where all of the train and station scenes for *Downton Abbey* were filmed. I told David that I was in and he could take charge. On the appointed day, I met him and two others at Victoria Station, and off we went. We spent the entire day riding on these beautiful trains. I was even in one of the First Class carriages with the blue velour upholstery—the same one, I was told, that had taken Matthew Crawley off to war and delivered the Dowager back home from London. Friends are indeed assets.

Bonnie Strote, Howard Kurtz, Edith Clay (the first love of my life), Miles Weiner, Stan Flatow, Herbie Budolph, Bobby Fiddler, Norma Circle, Robie Luthart, Gary Jacobson—these



The author at Horsted Keynes station (which plays Downton station in the series)



Waiting to board on the Bluebell Railway

are names of the people who were my friends in my early years. I've not seen or heard from any of them in decades. They are memories of my childhood. I don't even know if they are still of this earth; I fear some of them may be *in* this earth. *Downton Abbey* is also now a memory with one major difference. While I can't call Edith Clay up and renew an old acquaintance, all I have to do with my recently lost friends is go to the shelf, pull out the DVDs and put them in the machine. And that is closure, my friends.



Vintage carriages on the Bluebell Railway

## NSC FILM NIGHT

### *The Two Jakes* (1990)

**Wednesday 24th February**

7.30pm–11pm

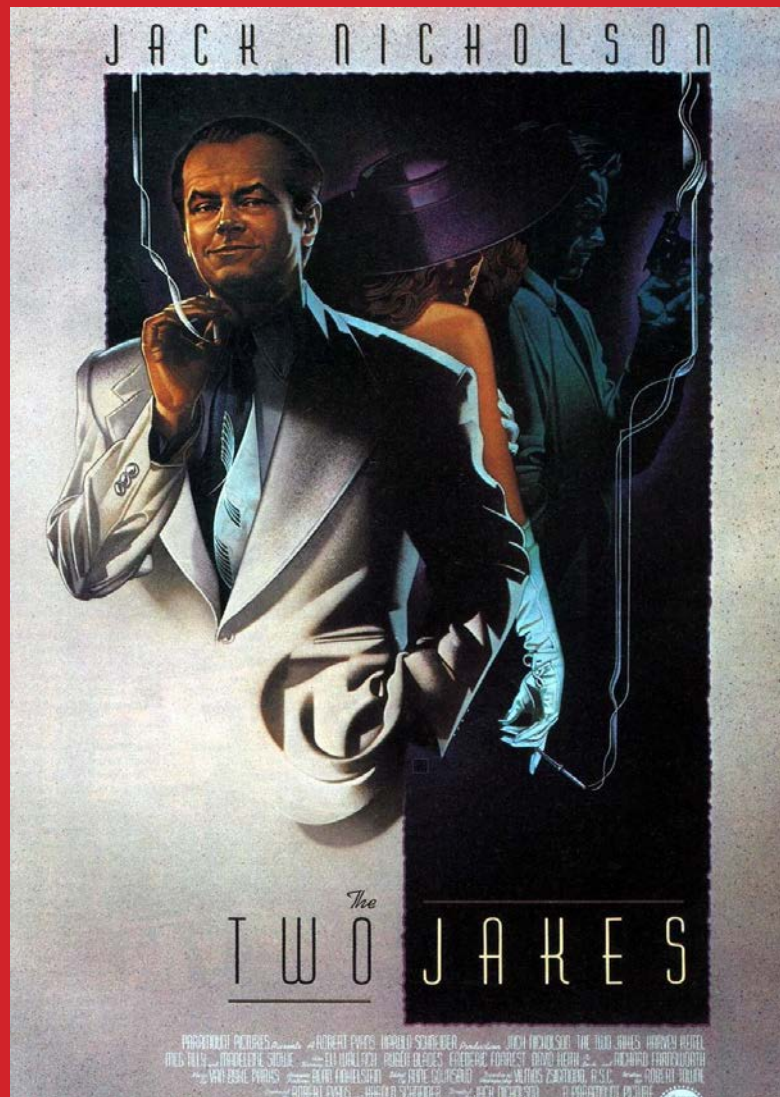
The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk,

London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)

Admission: Free

The Earl of Essex will finally (after two postponements) present this sequel to *Chinatown* (1974), one of the most iconic and studied movies of all time. Where *Chinatown* was set in LA of the 1930s, here the action has moved on to the post-war 1940s, with Jack Nicholson's private eye Jake Gittes now running a team of investigators. In *Chinatown* what starts as a classic low-rent adultery case reveals immorality and corruption at such high levels that it is not something Gittes can fix: he is simply granted a glimpse of the lies and greed at the core of the system. Here Gittes is still haunted by his experiences then, and the film is less a genre detective story and more a meditation on guilt and motive.

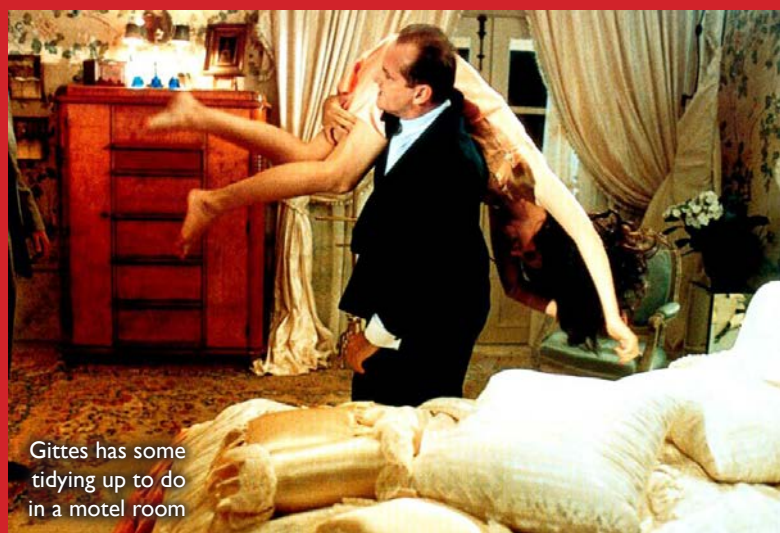
The second Jake is property developer Jake Berman (Harvey Keitel) who fears his wife is having an affair with his partner, but Gittes's attempt to help him get the photographic evidence he needs for the divorce court soon turns messy. The screenplay is by Robert Towne, who also wrote (and received an Oscar for) *Chinatown*, but instead of Roman Polanski the director here is Nicholson himself. The film was seven years in the making thanks to studio problems (it was meant to be made in 1985),



but critic Roger Ebert called it at the time “such a focused and concentrated film that every scene falls into place like clockwork”. Towne actually intended it as the second of a trilogy, with the final film, *Gittes vs. Gittes*, set in 1968 and dealing with Jake's own divorce, but this movie has, to date, not been made.



Meg Tilly as  
Kitty Berman



Gittes has some  
tidying up to do  
in a motel room



### CLUB NOTES

## Club Tie Corner

THE GLUT OF CLUB colours this month is so profound that it feels like a portent or omen (doubtless signalling the rise of some foppish Antichrist). Clockwise from right we have this footman's livery at Versailles, courtesy of Lord Compton-Basset; we've had Basil Fawcety before, but in this recent TV advert in which John Cleese reprises a scene from *Fawlty Towers* (presumably to fund another divorce) he is once again wearing a Club tie; *Mr Blandings Builds His Dream House* may be a black and white movie but, as Actuarious observes, "Cole, Bill Cole, friend of the family" is clearly wearing a Club



tie; eagle-eyed Mark Gidman spotted this NSC cushion in That Vintage Look on our jaunt to Henley (see pp.14–17); we have Anton Krause to thank for this photo of TV presenter Monty Hall, showing he has been a Member since 1963.





Scenes from *L'Emission d'Antoine*, featuring Members of the New Sheridan Club



## Metrotrash Part II

LAST ISSUE I mentioned how I had been contacted by the producers of late-night French TV programme *L'Emission D'Antoine*, the current vehicle for Antoine de Caunes, whom you may remember from the UK shows *Rapido* and *Eurotrash*. They were filming a segment on Chappism and vintage enthusiasts over the weekend of 12th and 13th December. In addition to chatting with NSC Member Mark Gidman and *Chap* drinks editor Neil Ridley at the Candlelight Club, M. de Caunes attended an Extraordinary Meeting of the NSC at our traditional haunt of the Wheatsheaf pub, where Chairman Torquil Arbuthnot and *Chap* co-founder Vic Darkwood taught him the Chap Olympics disciplines of Trouser Semaphore and Hop, Skip and G&T. Earlier in the day Antoine

popped into David Saxby's establishment to get kitted out in Chappist attire, then he sat with Torquil and Vic in Soho Square (looking for all the world like well-dressed tramps—see above) as they taught him some basic doffing and shared a Martini. I'm pleased to say that footage is now available online: go to <https://vimeo.com/152140459> and enter the password 84w6ji7j. This is the entire show (with an overall theme of "vintage"), and there is a seven-minute segment on us starting around 33 minutes in.

## New Members

TWO PLUCKY SOULS have signed up in the last month, Jack Defer and Jessica von Hammersmark. They are pictured on page 3, and Jack also pops up in photos of the Henley trip on pages 14–17.



## 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](http://www.newsheridanclub.co.uk) plus our Facebook page and the web forum.

### **🎩 NSC Club Night**

Wednesday 3rd February  
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 hosted by Ewan  
Bleach with guest performers  
each time.

### **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.

### **The Coco Club**

Saturday 13th February

7.30pm

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

Admission: £18 available online

Dress: “Your best classic clothing”

An evening of 1930s glamour featuring live music from Benoit Viellefon and his Orchestra and DJing from Empire Radio.

### **Valentine Swing**

Saturday 13th February

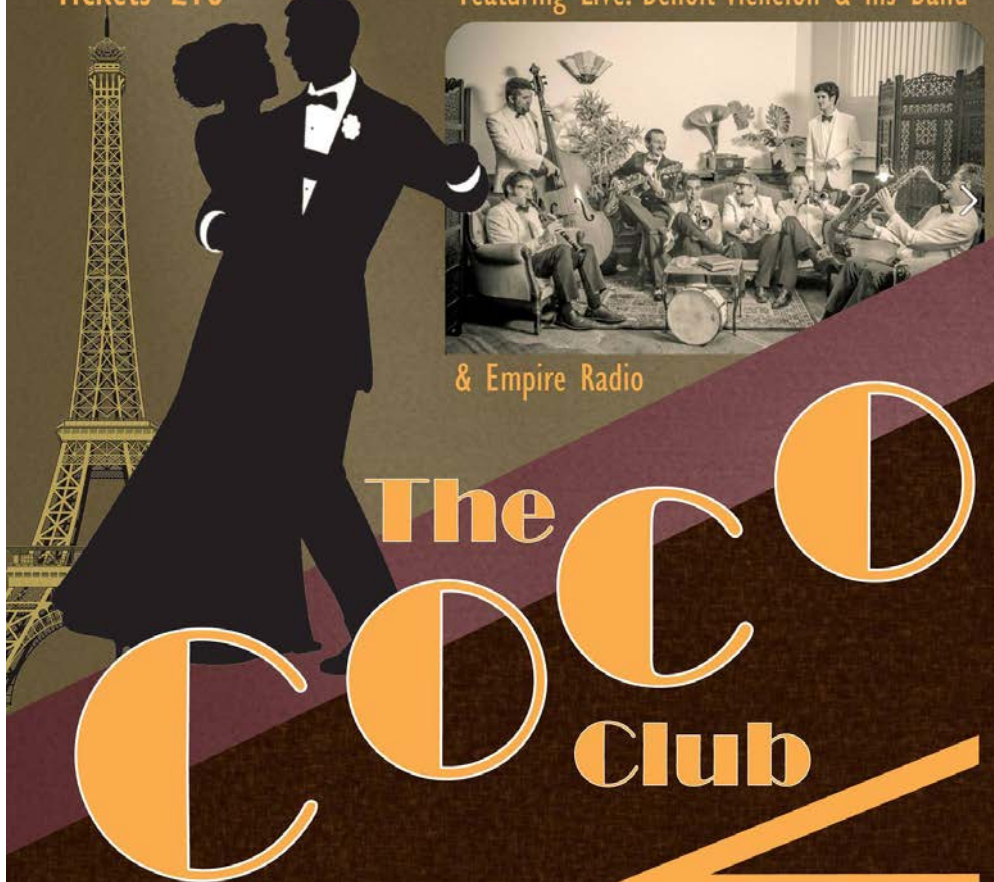
7.30–11pm

Another opportunity to wear your best classic clothing and enjoy an evening of fabulous music & social dancing in a unique vintage nightclub atmosphere

**Valentines Night — 13 February 2016 — 7.30pm**

Tickets £18

Featuring Live: Benoit Viellefon & his Band



& Empire Radio

**The COCO Club**

STAG THEATRE PLAZA SUITE  
SEVENOAKS, KENT TN13 1ZZ  
BOX OFFICE 01732 450175  
[WWW.STAGSEVENOAKS.CO.UK](http://WWW.STAGSEVENOAKS.CO.UK)



Get browsing at the Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair

Hoxton Hall, 130 Hoxton Street, London N1 6SH

Admission: £10 from [hoxtonhall.co.uk](http://hoxtonhall.co.uk)

The Swing Time Dance Company present a Valentines special with music from the 30s, 40s and 50s. Specialising in the Lindy Hop and the American Jitterbug, Swing Time Dance Company offer the chance to learn at your own pace in a unique setting. Whether you're new to swing dancing or an experienced dancer, don your best vintage attire and join us for a good old fashioned knees up.

### Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair

Sunday 14th February

11am–5pm (trade from 10.30am)

The Old Finsbury Town Hall, Rosebery

Avenue, London EC1R 4RP

Admission: £4

A special Valentine's edition of the regular event, fresh from their win in the 2015 *Time Out Love London Awards*. 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](http://www.clerkenwellvintagefashionfair.co.uk).

### Black Cat Valentine's

Sunday 14th February

6.30pm–4am

The Rah Rah Room, 215–217 Piccadilly, London W1J 9HN

Admission: From £25 with various VIP options

Black Cat Cabaret presents a Valentine's special, with a stage show from 8.30 to 10.30 featuring Dusty Limits, Cabaret Rouge showgirls, aerialist Katharine Arnold, juggler Florian Brooks, string quartet Bowjangles, foot-balancer Ulrike Storch, acrobats Brothers of Eden, fire-breather Missy Macabre and Boom



Some of the exotica you can expect at the Black Cat Cabaret



Boom Club DJs. It's also possible to have dinner, reserve a table, etc. See [www.theblackcat.info](http://www.theblackcat.info).

### **Black Tie Ballroom Club**

Friday 19th February

Beginners' class from 7pm, followed by the main dance from 7.30pm

The London Welsh Centre, 157–163 Grays Inn Road, London WC1 X 8UE

Admission: £15 in advance

Dress code: Strictly black tie, evening dress or vintage

Ballroom dancing to vintage records and the strict-tempo ten-piece Kewdos Dance Orchestra featuring operatic vocalist Alistair Sutherland singing through the voice trumpet. Candlelit tables for all guests (limited to 100 number to ensure plenty of space on the large sprung dance floor). Beginners' dance lesson in slow waltz from 7 pm to 7.30 pm. Main dance from 7.30 pm to 11 pm. Fully licensed bar at pub prices, four or five male and female taxi dancers available at no additional charge, quickstep Bus Stop, an Excuse Me dance and five minutes tuition en masse for the Lilac Waltz sequence dance. A free glass of bubbly for the ten most glamorous female guests. For more info call 020 8542 1490.

### **NSC Film Night:**

*The Two Jakes* (1990)

Wednesday 24th February

7.30pm–11pm

The Tea House Theatre, 139

Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL

(020 7207 4585)

Admission: Free

See page 26.

Early warning:

### **The NSC Annual**

**Punt 'n' Picnic**

Saturday 23rd April

From 11am

Oxford

Admission: A share of the punt hire (around £20)

The Annual New Sheridan Punting Trip is traditionally held

on a Saturday close to St George's Day. Since that day, 23rd April, actually falls on a Saturday this year the choice of date is a no-brainer.

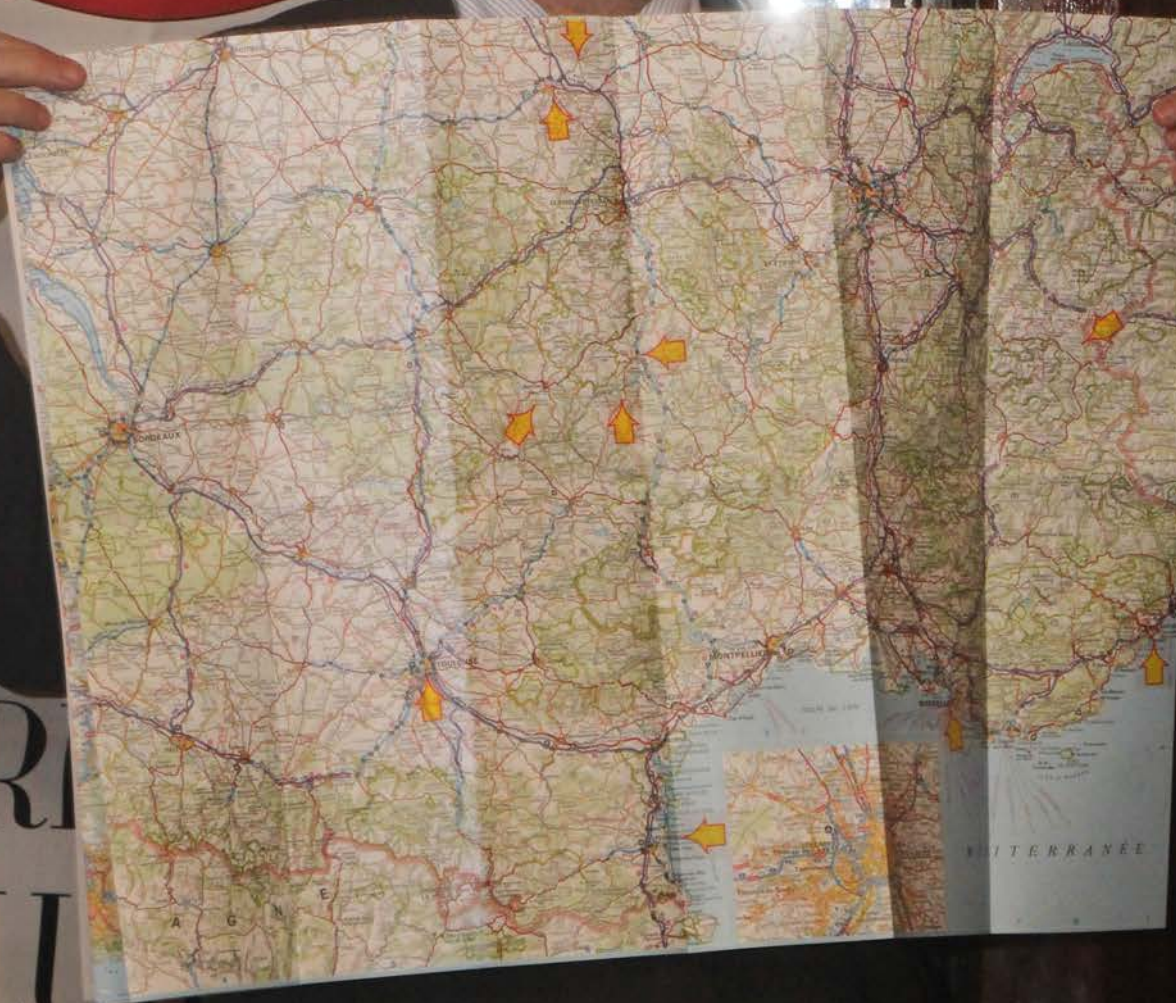
There may be a (black tie) dinner on the Friday night and a potter around the shops on the Sunday for those who wish to make a weekend of it but we will meet on Saturday as usual in The Turf Tavern for an eye opener at 11am, then on to Magdalen Bridge Boathouse to pick up the boats at midday, before punting up river to a shared picnic. Then down river again to return the boats and into the Oxford night for pies and pints.

There was splendid weather last year and no one fell in so the plunge pot sweepstake for this year is already into double figures. More details to come.



Dynamic scenes from last year's punting trip

Craigoh is pressed into service as a map stand to illustrate Nancy Wake's movements around France during the war. See page 4.



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FOR THE LATEST information on what the Club is up to, who has been arrested, etc., have a squizz at [www.newsheridanclub.co.uk](http://www.newsheridanclub.co.uk).

For more photos of Club events go to [www.flickr.com/sheridanclub](http://www.flickr.com/sheridanclub). You can even befriend us electrically at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).