

DESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • ISSUE 117 JULY 2016

Twiglet of the Gods

Getting back to nature with the return of the Club Picnics

Bargain bespoke

Tim Eyre discovers a secret source of budget tailoring

In praise of tar

Cally Callomon gets worked up about the black stuff

Inside the mind of Norton of Morton

Up close and personal with NSC Member and Chappist blogger G.M. Norton

Doing the right thing

Ahead of the Rio Olympics, and as part of the Teahouse Theatre's summer festival, we show pluck-filled classic Britflick *Chariots of Fire*





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 July in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm. Luca Jellinek will make us swoon with his talk on *The Era of the Grand Hotels*.

The Last Meeting

Our guest speaker in June was Miss Minna, telling us about the workings of the City of London and its various institutions, including the Freedom of the City of London, something she both has herself and helps to administrate. Like the concept of the City itself, the Freedom dates back to medieval times and represents a freedom from persecution by nobles and royalty, an ancient commune. Minna also explained the role of the livery companies and why we might consider joining one. They do not just represent ancient trades like the cutlers and bowyers—there are entirely modern ones, such as the Worshipful Companies of Marketors and Information Technologists, while older orders take on new interpretations, such as the Fan-Makers who now admit heating and ventilation engineers.



The iconic lobby set from the 1932 movie *Grand Hotel*, a love-song to the opulence and romance of the hotel and the intrigues of the community centred around it



(Above and right) Minna attacks her subject



(Right) Frances and Lord Hare examine a very old Freedom document; (above) the O'Callaghans plan naval movements



(Above) Ashley, C-B's bride, makes her first visit; (right) Oliver lets the side down



Eugenie, a still point in a turning world

(Below right) Helen Cashin returns after a long stint in Canada; (below left) Brandi and Birgit work it



Darcy heads home, happy with his new purchase



Twiglet of the Gods



(Above, l-r) Darcy, Louise and Clayton, looking like they've just popped up in your dream with a bizarre request; (below) Stewart and George

HERE WAS ONCE a time—it seems like a mythical, bucolic Golden Age now—when the NSC used to have picnics quite regularly. The sun always shone, the youth were gilded and verdant trees would bend to offer us succulent fruits for our sustenance. Maybe I'm not remembering it right, but we definitely used to have picnics. So we thought that, since the usual summer party is being amalgamated with the Christmas party into a single 10th Anniversary Bash, we'd have another picnic.

The appointed site was Hyde Park, with an arrangement to meet by the statue of Achilles before heading off to find a suitable spot. About half those in attendance didn't make it in time for the rendezvous, but locating the picnic-party proved pretty easy—you just look for a concentration of hats.

Of course any attempt to do anything outdoors in summer in this country will be haunted by the possibility of deluge. Indeed rain had been forecast for 4pm, and sure enough it arrived





Thanks to Seonaid and Jeremy for additional photos

(Left) Jocelyn and Paul, picnicking in style; (top) the Club's urbane sprawl, with the Serpentine visible beyond the trees; (above) Louise Newton, rocking a 1960s look

right on cue preceded by peals of thunder and a darkening of the skies. We had taken the precaution of setting up next to a large and especially leafy tree, and when the rain came we simply dragged everything under its protective embrace and carried on (see the front cover). After a short while the skies cleared so we emerged; then it rained again so we went back under.

“Park-friendly games” had been mentioned and I had brought along a *boules* set, but in fact only young Lizzie Beckwith (small but fierce, according to her T-shirt) experimented with this. Everyone else was content to laze in the summer haze, peeling grapes and lobbing *bons mots* like hand grenades. There were various more official events happening elsewhere in the park and at one point we were treated to a fly-past by the Red Arrows, trailing smoke in what were *almost* Club colours.

Eventually the booze ran out and we repaired to a hostelry, the Grenadier on Wilton Row, a place we had previously graced with our presence on one of Mr White’s excellent Club pub crawls. Even at this stage new faces were arriving, such as the one attached to the head of Mr Timothy Williams.

Thanks to all who turned up and helped to make it such an agreeable day. Our Chairman was so inspired by its success that he proposed another picnic, currently scheduled for 20th August.



(Above) Lizzie Beckwith, small but fierce; (below) when the rain comes we simply duck under this tree





(Left) Darcy Sullivan; (above) hijinks outside the Grenadier; (top) smoke trails from the Red Arrows



(Above) Manfred (r) and Giles take the weight off their feet; (left) Timothy (far left) makes a belated appearance



BARGAIN BESPOKE HONG KONG

HONG KONG IS second only to London as a centre for bespoke tailoring. When work took me to the nearby city-state of Macau for a fortnight's stay I was delighted. I would be able to have a bespoke suit made for a price that would not have me living in constant fear of soup spillages.

With this opportunity before me, I had to make two decisions of grave importance. The first was my choice of suit, the second my choice of tailor. It was easy to decide the sort of suit I should have made. I was visiting a tropical country in August, so a heavy tweed three-piece was out of the question. A tropical suit, on the other hand, was exceedingly appealing. I pictured myself sitting on a verandah dressed in

By **Dr Timothy Eyre**

a linen suit and Panama hat, sipping a gin and tonic as the sun slid behind the mountains. A tropical suit it would be.

As for the tailor, I found myself drawn to the familiarity of Raja Fashions. Raja has been reviewed positively in the pages of *The Chap* and they advertise a visiting service heavily in the British press. A webular search suggested that dissatisfaction with their service derived mainly from delivery problems rather than the garments themselves. It seemed that in the absence of any other guidance, Raja was a reasonably safe choice.

So it was that I flew from London to Hong







Kong on a scorching August day and took a bus directly from Hong Kong's glistening airport to Kowloon. Here I located Raja Fashions in a surprisingly small shop on Cameron Road. Inside I was greeted by a young Indian man. There was no small talk or chit-chat; he simply listened to my requests and entered them by hand into a large red ledger. I had come prepared with pictures of the style and features I had in mind: a fitted jacket with working cuffs, lapels on the waistcoat and a fishtail back to the trousers. Although the assistant spoke perfect English, the attention he paid to my images suggested that these were the tailor's preferred means of communication; inexperienced suit buyers may struggle to articulate their requests in words but pictures allow far less scope for misunderstanding.

The freedom of choice was at once liberating and bewildering. All of a sudden I was able to specify any combination of styles and features I desired. When bargain hunting in vintage and charity shops one must almost always compromise, but here I could specify exactly what I wanted and expect to receive it. I earnestly hoped that my choices were wise.

The last choice I made was the cloth. Raja stocks a vast range of cloths and I was pleased to be presented with a decent selection of linens. I chose a slightly off-white fabric with a pleasingly coarse texture. The assistant then measured me, instructed me to return the following Saturday for a fitting and saw me on my way.

As I toiled in Macau, I thought of the tailor making my suit somewhere in the New Territories or Shenzhen. Come Saturday, I took a boat from Macau over to Hong Kong and returned to Raja. Here the tailor draped sections of the suit over my shoulders and pinned and chalked the cloth to fit it around my form. He seemed to know what he was doing but there was little in the way of pleasantries. The assistant asked me

to return the following Thursday for a second fitting.

There is something special about travelling to one's tailor by boat, whether it be a Thames Clipper to Embankment or the Cotai Jet from Macau to Hong Kong. When I returned to Raja on Thursday evening the tailor surprised me by declaring that the suit fitted perfectly and needed no further adjustments. I felt a little suspicious; a bespoke suit normally requires two or three fittings. However, the fit was indeed impeccable, the quality of the construction was even higher than I was expecting and Raja had heeded every single request I had made. Although I felt a little as though I had been processed through a sausage machine, I was happy to declare that Raja made fine sausages. At around £700, the price of a cheap made-to-measure suit in London, I felt I had received good value for money, if not an outright bargain.

Having achieved my primary sartorial objective, I explored the nearby streets a little. On Mody Road I encountered a shop called Nita Fashions. Here I saw a shirting cloth in the bright green colour that I had recently tried and failed to find on both Jermyn Street and Savile Row. My hands shook with excitement as I handed over my credit card; the only greener shades in Bloomsbury would be found in the envious faces of my fellow dandies.

I collected my bright green shirt from Nita



the following evening on my way to the airport. I was sufficiently delighted with the flamboyant garment I had received for my £30 that I ordered a further seven shirts from the same shop by post on my return home. They arrived without incident and now form an important part of my wardrobe.

Suitably impressed by Nita's friendly manner and capable tailoring, I became a regular visitor when I returned to Hong Kong for a longer stay a few months later. They made me some more shirts, a black blazer with white piping (inspired by the 1960s television classic *The Prisoner*) and a pair of pyjamas in a bold black gingham check. It is important to build a good relationship with a tailor and I feel I have done this with Nita.

If you are in Hong Kong for a few days then a suit makes an excellent souvenir. However, be aware that the tailoring business here has something of a Wild West edge to it.

Avoid anywhere that fields touts, be clear and firm about what you want and, above all, caveat emptor.

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+852 23667624

Nita Fashions, 16 Mody Road, Ground Floor, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong
info@nitafashions.com www.nitafashions.com
+852 27219990

JACK TAR

AND

KING CREOSOTE

OR

ADVENTURES WITH THE BOYS AND THE BLACK STUFF

BY CALLY CALLOMON

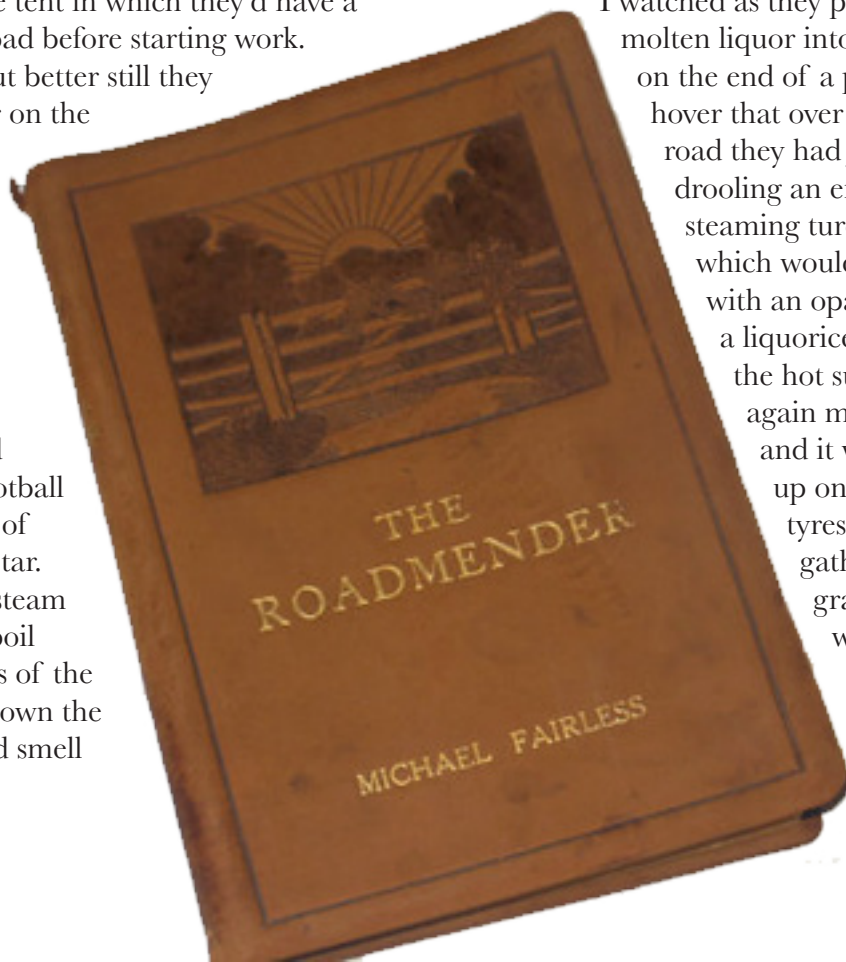
“**W**HAT DO YOU want to be when you grow up?” A much discussed topic behind the wall in the playground where my nine-year-old chums suggested the usual occupations: yes, astronaut; yes, deep-sea diver; yes Vulcan bomber pilot. But my answer was always “road-mender”.

The men who mended the roads of Brookmans Park enthralled me. They had towed wagons and a little tent in which they'd have a brew beside the road before starting work. That was good, but better still they also cooked up tar on the back of their 350 FG BMC Three-Penny Bit lorry. Huge gas canisters fuelled flames beneath a massive cooking pot into which their gloved hands dropped football size crystal shards of solid purple shiny tar. This brew would steam away, sometimes boil over, leaving traces of the black sticky drip down the outside, and would smell heavenly.

Various smells enticed the nostrils at that tender age: the exhaust from the rear pipe of the Consul Deluxe, the heady pong from a freshly creosoted fence, the carbolic sting in the Durnsford swimming pool corridors, the Super Grade petrol in printed tin gallon cans in the garage, the smoke of distant bonfires and the fumes found in dead fireworks—we now know that, like so many pleasures to follow, the best smells were all heavily addictive and also deadly toxic.

I watched as they poured the molten liquor into a tiny funnel on the end of a pole and hover that over the scar in the road they had just mended, drooling an erratic black steaming turd over the joint which would dry dull black, with an opaque skin, like a liquorice slug—until the hot summer would again melt the insides and it would bubble up on to my bicycle tyres which, by turn, gathered up sticky granite chips that would, in turn, clog up my brakes.

No, it had to be



the itinerant, heaven-scented verge life of a road-mender for me.

My second brush with the black stuff was found in birthday trips to London's Madame Tussaud's in which was built a two-decked depiction of Nelson's *Victory* at battle. Deafening roars, cries of pain, flashing lights and that amazing smell hovered in the air. I'd stay there for hours, my jumper stinking of the stuff when I got home. "That's cordite, son," said my dad and, being a chemist, he should know.

He didn't. It was tar. I was to learn what tar it was much later. (My father carried on mowing the lawn, unconcerned that his son may have been tampering with cordite, a step up from the weedkiller bombs we had made the previous weekend, anyway).

My third brush with the black stuff came from a flaking pubescent scalp, aged 15. My mum bought me a tar-based shampoo that smelt just the same. I had long hair, I could sniff it in double-maths, it didn't work on the scalp but it worked on me in other ways. I failed maths CSE.

Agreed, there was Wright's Coal Tar Soap but more significantly, during the so-called "Troubles" across the six counties in black and white on Clive Liggatt's telly, were the shaven heads of women being dragged through the streets shouting, kicking, screaming, covered in black tar and white feathers. I wondered why the tar didn't burn through their flesh to the bone, I shuddered at their fate. I thought of the scars. I still do.

The Devil is in the Danger

Just last month a great cycling and sailing chum flashed a bright red tin of Stockholm Tar under my nose... I was hooked, transported back to my road-mending days, and I rushed to buy a tub of the stuff from the local Horse & Garden



Supplies. It comes thick and black like molasses or marmite. The world stocks many brands of tar: Stockholm Tar is pine tar. It dribbles out of trees. The other stuff comes from the ground and is number 1,999 (with a bullet) on the United Nations list of dangerous goods. Best not get these confused.

If you make charcoal you get tar as a bonus. Like turpentine, it's a by-product of high-pressure distillation of wood. Traditionally pine tar comes from the root stock only—never forget

your roots.

Like so many offshoots, pine tar has a multiplicity of uses. The extensive forests of North Carolina yielded such massive exports to the maritime industries, who used it to waterproof everything on ships and boats including the aforementioned HMS *Victory*, of course,* that North Carolinians became known as "Tar Heels". Tar was liberally applied to hemp ropes, which would otherwise rot; sailors' hands thus turned black and they were nicknamed "Jack Tars". (Jack went on to be named Jack Ironside as metal cladding replaced timber altogether.)

Pine tar finds its way into baseball (applied to the bat handle for grip) and medicine (as an antiseptic). Contrary to the many "they-don't-make-it-like-they-used-to" bemoaners of "health and safety", much tar use became banned for good reason—creosote, a known carcinogen, was often found in the tar, depending on how it was manufactured.

Like any fine spirit, of all the different genuses derived from tar, the king, creosote, is probably the most sinister and best avoided if long life is selected in your drop-down menu. Cheapskate neighbours used to coat their fences in used engine oil and probably lived longer as a result of avoiding the Big C. Their fences burned well, though, as I discovered when my dad was away.



Yet here we meet the great divide that confused me for so long. Creosote made from pine tar has many beneficial applications such as for smoking meats, anaesthetics and antiseptics, but its sisters, the mighty coal-tar-based creosotes, bring only death and woe to the local hardware-shop sniffers.

Coal tar, the hot stuff, is a by-product of coke production. Well do I remember countless nights in my bedroom listening intently to Jim Morrison singing about the La Brea Pits on the Doors' *L.A. Woman* album and wondering just what those pits were (they are the rocking ostrich pumps over bitumen pits one sees when driving away from Los Angeles Airport and thus became legends of popular music). Coal tar is the one I saw on the back of the lorry being cooked up like works only without needle or spoon. That's why the ladies didn't catch fire when tarred and feathered—they were covered in the other stuff, the Stockholm tar. Problem solved. Not much of a punishment then.

Tar Very Much

Mention of this humiliating torture goes as

far back as 1189 and Richard I, who decreed to his navy: "A thiefe or felon that hath stolen, being lawfully convicted, shal have his head shorne, and boyling pitch poured upon his head, and feathers or downe strawed upon the same whereby he may be knowen, and so at the first landing-place they shall come to, there to be cast up." Okay, he cooked up the tar before liberal application, but its boiling point is mercifully low. One imagines that there were plentiful supplies of both tar and feathers on board, perhaps planks too.

In 1696 a London bailiff, who attempted to serve process on a debtor who had taken refuge within the precincts of the Savoy, was tarred and feathered and taken in a wheelbarrow to the Strand, where he was tied to a maypole that stood by what is now Somerset House, as an improvised pillory. This was also a relatively rare form of mob punishment for Republican African-Americans in the post-bellum US South, as the goal was typically pain and humiliation rather than death (which was the object of the more common and far more acceptable lynchings and burnings alive). There were several examples of tarring and feathering of African-Americans in the lead-up to World War One in Vicksburg, Mississippi.**

Edgar Allan Poe's humorous short story, "The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether", features the staff of an insane asylum being tarred and feathered. In the superlative HBO Series *Carnivale*, set in 1930s midwest America, one of the carnival workers is kidnapped and has what appears to be bituminous tar applied to him as torture for the accidental death of a "townie" at the carnival's previous venue, followed by covering with feathers from a pillow.

Yet what serious pop scholar could forget the lead singer of King Kurt being tarred and feathered during their performance of the minor hit song "Destination Zululand" on *Top Of The Pops* in 1983? Come to that, tarring and feathering is mentioned in the chorus of the song "To Kingdom Come", from The Band's album *Music from Big Pink*. The much-missed electronic music artist Fad Gadget often performed on stage while tarred and feathered. He was later photographed in tar and feathers for the cover of his album *Gag*.

As the nights draw in and the dubbin is applied, one more ritual remains: the tipping of a small quantity of best Stockholm Tar into a jam jar which is then placed on a hot radiator and the fumes fill the room and I am back on the *Victory*, back mending roads—but not back in the dreaded double maths, thank you.

Stocks of Stockholm Tar are not available from those Jonathan-cum-lately vendors of gentlemen's (not ladies') moustache wax or beard oil, but it may only be a matter of time.

* If the *Victory* had sunk, if we had lost, would it still be called that? Was it wise to name a ship the *Belgrano* and expect it to stay afloat? As with the *Titanic* both in size and death toll.

** If we called The Great War "World War One" did that mean that ideally America wanted to sit that one out, saving their best for the expected Round Two? And was their reluctance to join that one because they thought that World War Three was a much easier option?

And was The Great War really that great?



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



G.M. Norton

"If life gives you lemons..."

Name or preferred name?

G.M. Norton. It puts me in rather fine company, alongside the likes of A.A. Milne, H.G. Wells, P.G. Wodehouse, J.M. Barrie and of course, from the Yellow Pages advert, J.R. Hartley.

Why that nickname or nom de plume?

In an effort to remain semi-anonymous, I use my initials when publishing my memoirs over on electronic periodical, Norton of Morton. Contrary to spurious rumours, my first name is not Graham. Actually, it's Gary. The middle name will

remain a mystery. For now, at least. I'm rather fond of the surname Norton. Of course, there are Norton motorbikes and Norton is also the main antagonist in *Curtain: Poirot's Last Case*.

Where do you hail from?

I was born and still reside in T'North, from the same Manchester town as Steve Coogan. I was a home birth as mater has a fear of hospitals. Upon arrival, the delightfully named Dr Peck exclaimed, "What a fine young specimen." I should perhaps point out that the doctor was no relation to Gregory. But as I am left-handed, I may share the same ancestral heritage as Damien.

Favourite Cocktail?

A Gibson. As favoured by Cary Grant in *North By North West* and Roger Sterling in *Mad Men*.

Most Chappist skill?

Seat warming, to prevent fair maidens from the horror of a cold bottom. Now, warming a seat may sound quite simple but it requires a great deal of practice and dedication.

Most Chappist possession?

A signet ring, engraved in reverse with my monogram. Known as "the gentleman's ring".

Personal Motto?

If life gives you lemons, make a G&T.



Favourite Quotes?

I believe it was the (not so) great Keating who once remarked, "Life is a roller coaster, you just gotta [sic] ride it."

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

I once bathed in a cow trough in the middle of a farmer's field. For money, naturally.

How long have you been involved with the NSC?

I've been a member for a little over two years. It's been a life-changing experience.

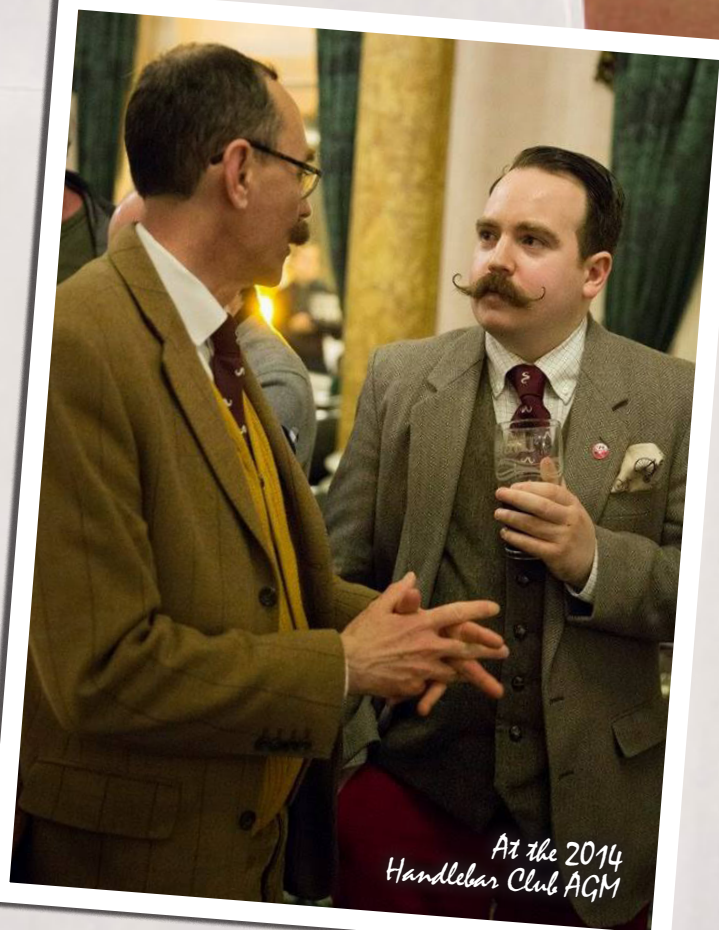
How did you hear about the Club to begin with?

I remember it like it was only yesterday. It was a lovely afternoon, replete with blue sky, beaming sun, buzzing insects and what not. An afternoon that seemed to call to one to be out in the open with God's air playing on one's face and something cool in a glass at one's side. Suddenly, a mysterious raven-haired beauty approached me. Draining my glass (which I was jolly miffed at, I must say) she proceeded to start blathering on about a Club I should join and her mission to stop secrets being smuggled out of England to the enemy. As I turned to hand the lady a refilled

glass of the strong stuff (I had decided that she seemed in greater need than I), she was gone. Vanished. The only trace she left behind was a New Sheridan Club calling card.

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

If you've not already done so, toddle along to one of the Handlebar (Moustache) Club's First Friday meetings. They are held each month at the Windsor Castle drinking tavern in Marylebone. You do not need a large lip weasel to attend, and they're a delightful bunch of coves. Pipes, tweed and snuff all feature.



*At the 2014
Handlebar Club AGM*

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

Having given it the cream of the Norton brain, I'd plump for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Houdini and 1950s television starlet Sabrina. I absolutely adore Sherlock Holmes so it would be an honour to meet Sir Arthur. We could talk science, cricket, criminology, fairies and spiritualism. All while Houdini attempts to escape from a giant martini glass before the starter goes cold. Then I could attempt to stare deeply into Sabrina's eyes as she regales me with stories about Arthur Askey, Alastair Sim and George Cole.

Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?

Artemis Scarheart, whose stainless steel leg I've spent many an hour admiring.

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

Alas, I'm embarrassed to report that I've not yet made it to a meeting. Once I eventually journey south, I'd waffle on about Alfred Hitchcock until you politely request that I stop.

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.

*In a Peckham Rye
faux-fur collar*



CINEMATIC NECTAR

Dorian Loveday on his choice for the June Film Night, the low-key Edwardian comic fantasy *Dean Spanley* (2008)

THIS IS GOING to be a bit of an unusual introduction to a film featured at the NSC, as I'm not going to talk a lot about the story. The reason for this is simple—I'd like you to know as little as possible about *Dean Spanley* before you watch it, which is the condition in which I discovered it. You may know a little about the plot from last month's newsletter, but I'm going to keep any more details under wraps so that you can experience the really rather gob-smacking, eyebrow-raising plot twists and turns of this subtle, funny, moving, well-made and simply wonderful movie for yourself.

I came across *Dean Spanley* quite by accident—via a trailer on a different DVD—and only a few months ago. Nevertheless, I was so amazed by it, it's raced straight into my top ten favourites. Why? Simply, because the story is so very, very eccentric,

and the performances by the ensemble cast are brilliant: in particular Peter O'Toole, in one of his last major screen roles, and Sam Neill pull theirs absolutely from out of the top drawer.

My only complaint (well, not really a complaint, I'm just being finicky about details—as every gentleman should, at least in matters of dress) is that one of the best jokes in the film is a slight anachronism. I'll leave you to spot which joke that is. But this is a film that repays a second or third viewing—there are so many little bits one misses first time around.

Otherwise, the film's fantastic—in every sense of the word—but equally unbelievable is the author of *My Talks With Dean Spanley*, the novella on which the film is based. That author was Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett, 18th Baron of Dunsany (24th July 1878–25th October

A SHAGGY DOG STORY THAT WILL WARM THE HEART OF EVEN THE MEANEST SCROOGE
"A GENUINE AND SURPRISING PLEASURE"

JEREMY NORTHAM SAM NEILL BRYAN BROWN AND PETER O'TOOLE



FROM THE CLASSIC NOVEL BY LORD DUNSANY
DEAN SPANLEY



IN THEATRE FROM 11th DECEMBER 2008
www.deanspanley.co.uk



Much of the “action” of the film revolves around a series of dinner parties, at which Dean Spanley makes some unexpected revelations

1957), who was an Irish writer and dramatist and someone who should surely be elevated to the pantheon of New Sheridan Club gods.

Publishing under the name Lord Dunsany, he wrote more than 80 books, hundreds of short stories, as well as successful plays, novels and essays. His best-known work is perhaps the fantasy novel *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, published in 1924. It's proved massively influential—as indeed have all Dunsany's works—with writers such as W.B. Yeats (with whom Dunsany was pals), H.P. Lovecraft, J.R.R. Tolkien, Ursula le Guin, Arthur C. Clarke (who corresponded with Dunsany), Jorge Luis Borges...the list goes on.

Born to the second-oldest title in the Irish peerage, Dunsany lived much of his life at what may be Ireland's longest-inhabited house, Dunsany Castle near Tara. His mother was a cousin of Sir Richard Burton, while his younger brother fought at Jutland and in the 1930s helped give David Niven his big break in Hollywood.

Apparently Dunsany never drafted anything—he wrote all his manuscripts longhand with quills he used to make himself. He served as a Second Lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards during the Second Boer

War and as a Captain in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in the First World War, and the Home Guard in the Second.

He supported scouting, Dublin's Abbey theatre, was a major mover and shaker in Ireland's literary scene, was the president of the Kent branch of the RSPCA, and was also a fiendish chess player—he set chess puzzles for *The Times* and once played the world champion José Raúl Capablanca to a draw. And if that isn't enough, he was once the champion pistol shooter of Ireland.

Another thing I've become inordinately interested via the film is Tokay (or Tokaji), which



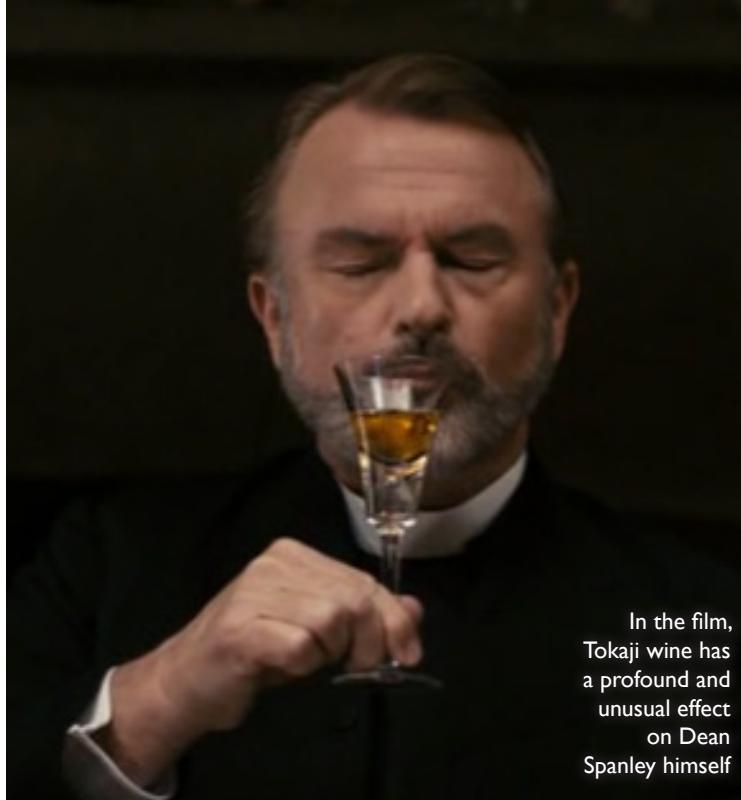
Essencia wines are so sweet thta it is pretty much impossible for them to go off

plays a massive role in the plot. Which is interesting, as somehow it's found its way into a ton of my favourite bits of culture (such as Terry Gilliam's *The Adventures of Baron Munchhausen*, the Sherlock Holmes novel *The Sign of the Four*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and Philip Pullman's novel *Northern Lights*). So, what is it?

Traditionally, Tokaji is a sweet and syrupy dessert wine, produced in the eponymous region of Hungary. It's a fairly small region (less than half the size of the Isle of Wight and only slightly larger than Jersey) on a mountain plateau near the border with Slovakia, and its production of tokaji is correspondingly small—just 10 million litres a year, compared with Italy's total annual wine production of nearly 5 billion litres.

The two main grapes in use are Furmint and Hárslevelű, which account for 90% of production, with four other varieties that are even harder to spell, so I'm not going to bother mentioning them. These are left on the vine in the plateau's warm microclimate as late as December, until the “noble rot” fungus grows on the grapes to seal them and the fruit itself has turned more sugary.

This is turned into Aszú, the syrupy wine, sweetness of which is measured in *puttonyos*, a grade ranging from 1 to 6. But the juice that runs off naturally from the Aszú grapes (before pressing) is used to create Eszencia, also known as nectar, which is technically not a wine since the massive amount of sugar keeps the alcohol content down to 5–6%. Eszencia goes off the *puttonyo* scale and can have a sugar content of anything up to 700g



In the film, Tokaji wine has a profound and unusual effect on Dean Spanley himself

per litre. But the Hungarians are proud of it—it's mentioned in the lyrics of the national anthem.

And the stuff has a proud history: it's been produced since at least the mid-1500s and was subject to the world's first appellation control, established several decades before port and over 120 years before Bordeaux. You'd also be surprised how many famous faces have succumbed to the gloop's sticky charms. Beethoven, Liszt, Schiller, Goethe, Voltaire, Schubert, and two “great” leaders—Frederick of Prussia and Peter of Russia—have all sung its praises, while Louis XIV served Tokaji at Versailles to Madame Pompadour, declaring it *vinum regum, rex vinorum* (“wine of kings, king of wines”). So perhaps there's something in it.

Maybe, like many luxury products, Tokaji's appeal has more to do with exclusivity than taste. Just as in *Dean Spanley*, the finest Tokaji is indeed

hard to come by. A case of 2003 Eszencia from the Royal Tokaji Wine Co.—a case comprising six 37.5 cl bottles—will set you back nearly £2,400. So, before you ask, no, I've not tried it yet.

However, a new (and thankfully cheaper) development in the region is dry white wine made from Furmint grapes—a bottle of which I was able to procure for the film night, which was readily and gratefully shared by attendees. I sincerely hope it satisfied their palates. *[It did. —Ed]*

And I sincerely hope also that you will procure a copy of *Dean Spanley* and enjoy it as much as I have.



To make the top Aszú wines, the most shrivelled grapes are hand-picked from the vines

NSC FILM NIGHT

Chariots of Fire (1981)

Wednesday 13th July

7.30pm–11pm

The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk,

London SE11 5HL

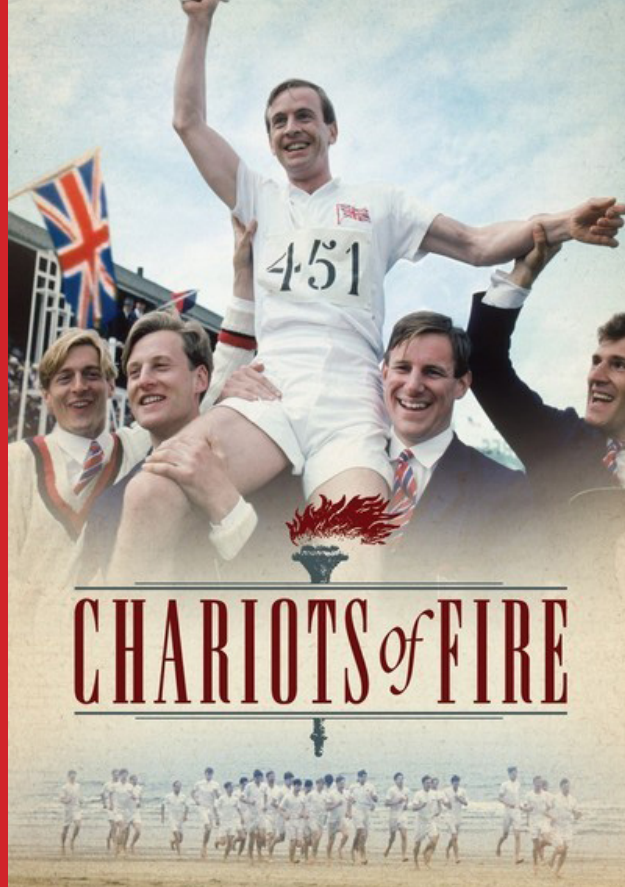
(020 7207 4585)

Admission: Free

David De Vynél presents this multi-Oscar-winning tale of two athletes preparing for the 1924 Olympics and facing the choice of whether or not to follow their consciences. Rated by the BFI as No.19 in the 100 best British movies, it is based on the true stories of Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams: Liddell is presented as a devout Scottish Christian running for the glory of God, while Abrahams's motivation is to confront and defeat anti-Semitism.

But plenty of historical liberties are taken; for example, Abrahams is shown completing the Great Court Run—sprinting around the Great Court of Trinity College, Cambridge, in the time it takes the clock to strike midday—for the first time in history, while in reality he never tried it. (It was achieved in 1927 by Lord Burghley, aspects of whose character appear in the film as “Lord Lindsay”, although Burghley and Abrahams did not attend Cambridge at the same time.)

There is something very British about the fact that many of these changes revolve around deference to the wishes of the real people: Lord Lindsay is primarily based on the aristocratic Douglas Lowe, who was in the original script but refused to be involved. Kiwi 100m bronze medallist Arthur Porritt wouldn't let his name



be used out of modesty, and is renamed Tom Watson. Meanwhile, US runner Jackson Scholz is shown giving Liddell a note with an inspirational Bible quote: in fact the note was from the British team, but when Scholz was asked if he minded his character being given the role for dramatic purposes, he replied, “Great, as long as it makes me look good.”

Ian Charleson, who plays Liddell, studied the Bible intensively for the role and insisted on writing his speech to the crowd of working men after the Scotland vs Ireland race, wanting to use words he personally found inspirational. The uplifting tone initially qualified the movie for the inoffensive G rating in the US—but as this was associated with children's movies, the producers inserted some obscene language, simply to get bumped to a PG rating.

Today the film is probably most associated with the synth-heavy soundtrack by Vangelis, and the combination of the theme tune and the slow-motion shots over which it plays is iconic enough to have been much parodied. (Rowan Atkinson made a Mr Bean spoof that was screened at the opening to the 2012 Olympics.) Darcy Sullivan insists the tune is a rip-off of “On Top of Old Smokey”—come to our screening and decide for yourself...



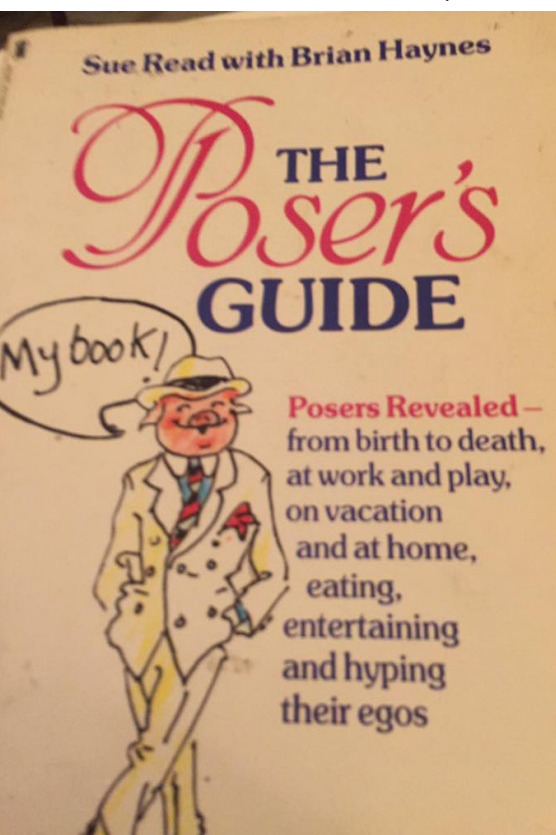
Nigel Havers as Lord Lindsay shows us how a gentleman trains for the Olympics



CLUB NOTES

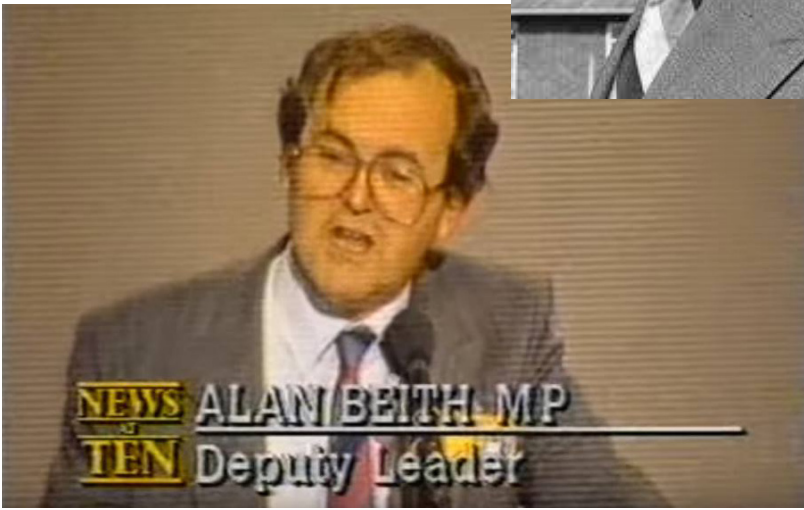
Club Tie Corner

WE HAVE A record number of sightings this month, not just of NSC ties but other forms of Club merchandise so imaginative and sophisticated that the Committee had quite forgotten they ever devised them. ***This page clockwise from right:*** Antoine de Caunes threw together a one-off revival of his 1990s TV vehicle *Eurotrash* to show viewers what they would lose with Brexit, including transgender model Andreja Pejic in a NSC dress; we've had several shots of Basil Fawlty in a Club tie but here is one of Ballard Berkeley as The Major also from *Fawlty Towers*, courtesy of Harrison Goldman; Stephen Smith points out the Club tie in this hunting scene; Matthew Howard spotted this book cover. ***Facing page, clockwise from top left:*** now you know where your subs go—we agreed to sponsor Tim Peake's rocket, as noticed by Actuator; Adrian Prooth observed that Sir Ludwig Guttman, founder of the Paralympics, was also a Clubman; ...as is Ryan Gosling, if Rob McNaught's eyes are to be believed; Stewart Lister Vickers recently found himself behind these Club Trousers in Henley; Martin Bell partners



his trademark white suit with Club silk, as spotted by Mark Gidman; Clark Cable reveals his affiliations in *It Happened One Night* (1934); Baron Beith, one time deputy leader of the Liberal party looks oleaginous at a conference in 1986.





New Members

THREE NEW LAMBS have gambolled gamely to the slaughter this month, and they could hardly have been more geographically spread out. Nigel Rodgers is close enough to home in Salisbury, Wiltshire, while Malakai Halcyon reaches out to us from Indianapolis in the USA (a man who describes his areas of expertise as “manipulation of global airline and hotel industry, stealthy skullduggery and various circus skills”). Finally Stewart Stirling hails originally from Scotland but has spent the last decade living in Western Australia. He mentions that he strives to maintain Chappist standards but asks Members to make allowances for the local climate and overlook the fact that he is sporting what is colloquially known as a “bush hat”. Mr Stirling will endeavour to provide an occasional column on life as an expat would-be gentleman in the Antipodes, for example examining the expanding range of excellent beverages to be found Down Under—aside from the obvious wine trove, he notes that there is an increasing range of first-rate boutique malt whisky from Tasmania and Western Australia, excellent beers and ciders and a flourishing gin industry.



Nigel Rodgers, in a photograph he admits was “taken about 3,000 years ago”



Malakai Halcyon



Stewart Stirling



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 July

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 clarinettist Ewan Bleach
with various guests.

East Anglia Transport Museum presents
“**London**” Event

Saturday 9th July–Sunday 10th July

11am–6pm (Saturday)/5pm (Sunday)

East Anglia Transport Museum

LONDON EVENT

Saturday 9th July 2016 11am - 6pm

Sunday 10th July 11am - 5pm



Vintage trolleybus rides
Vintage motorbus rides
Narrow gauge railway
Vintage tram rides
BBQ both days
Café
Gift Shop
Tel: 01502 518459



Free vintage bus services
Vintage vehicle displays
Free park & ride
Trade stalls
Visiting vehicles
Including LCC tram No.106
On loan from Crich
eatm.events@gmail.com



East Anglia Transport Museum, Chapel Road, Carlton Colville, Suffolk NR33 8BL
www.eatransportmuseum.co.uk Reg. Charity 268204
Park & Ride - Co-op Food Store, Ashburnham Way, NR33 9EJ
Supported by:

East Anglia Transport Museum, Chapel Road,
Carlton Colville

Lowestoft (01502 518459)

Admission: £9

One for fans of vintage public transport: the museum is having a special weekend to celebrate the 80th birthday of its London trolley bus No.260. Running alongside will be guest vehicles including LCC tram 106 on loan from the Crich Tramway village. There will be free vintage bus trips around town, a barbecue, half-hourly free bus services from Lowestoft and Beccles and a park-and-ride service.

The Order of the Fez and the Sunken Cities

Sunday 10th July

2pm

The British Museum, Great Russell Street,
London WC1B 3DG

Admission: £16.50

The shadowy but essentially benign Order of the Fez is organising a group visit to the BM's exhibition about the recently rediscovered lost cities of Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus, hidden under the sea at the mouth of the Nile.



Heart-stopping action at last year's Tashes cricket match

We are meeting at 2pm on the steps of the museum. Tickets are timed, so buy yours in advance: we are going for 2.30 entry to allow for stragglers.

NSC Film Night:
***Chariots of Fire* (1981)**

Wednesday 13th July

7.30pm–11pm

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

Admission: Free

See page 21.

The Chap Olympics

Saturday 16th July

1pm till 6ish

Bedford Square Gardens, Bloomsbury, London

Admission: £25

The Chap Magazine's annual tournament of silly games designed to display prowess in Chappist skills such as *élan*, *froideur*, *savoir faire* and other French words, in which winning is

frowned upon and creative cheating positively encouraged. From its early days as a group of 20 people in a park with picnics, it is now a huge affair organised by Bourne & Hollingsworth, with bars, food stalls, live entertainment, portaloos and retail opportunities. Be warned that the stormtroopers will confiscate any booze you try to bring in—and the NSC usually has an informal competition to find the most creative way to smuggle it in past the guards.

Head to Toe in Berlin

Wednesday 20th July

9pm

Shehnai, 75–77 London St, Reading RG1 4QA

Admission: £8 from the festival website

The Club's own Baroness Maria von Hackemann offers a night of 1930s Berlin Lieder as part of the Reading Fringe Festival. Join her vintage Weimar Cabaret for a collection of songs penned during the world's first global financial crisis performed with charm, humour and elegance.

The Chap Olympics: bit difficult to explain



The New Sheridan Club presents

The Tashes

Saturday 23rd July

From 10am

Rangers Field (near Blackheath Gate, by the pavilion), Greenwich Park, London SE10 8QY

Admission: players will be asked to make a contribution to hire fees (probably around £5–10); you may wish to bring a picnic lunch too

The Club's annual cricket match between the hirsuit and the cleanshaven is once again at its new home in Greenwich (where the cost is only a third of what it was at Roehampton and there are better facilities). If you would like to take part please email Watermere at cgvowles@gmail.com. Spectators are also welcome and picnicking is traditional. The precise location is Rangers Field: it's in the bottom left corner of this map. See also the Facebook event

Black Tie Ballroom Club

Friday 29th July

7.30–11.30pm

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

Admission: £10 in advance

Dress code: Strictly black tie, evening dress or vintage

Vintage ballroom dancing at the Tea House Theatre with American-Parisian performer Hailey Tuck, who will sing two half-hour sets of strict-tempo songs, plus a selection of vintage records for dancing slow and Viennese waltz, quickstep, slow foxtrot, tango, rumba, jive, plus some cha cha, samba and Charleston. There will be an absolute beginners' dance lesson in slow waltz from 7.30 to 8pm. There is no need to bring a partner as guests are encouraged to mix and there will be five male and female taxi dancers available free of charge for all guests. Diversions will include a quickstep bus stop and an "excuse me" waltz. There will be a fully licensed bar and an intimate atmosphere. Dress code is black tie and evening dress and the ten most glamorous ladies will be awarded a free glass of bubbly. For tickets at £10 see wegottickets.com. Facebook: www.facebook.com/BlackTieBallroomClub.

The Dixie Ticklers present

Golden Grinde

Friday 29th July

Doors 6.30, music from 7.30pm

The Golden Hinde, St Mary Overie Dock, London SE1 9DE

Admission: £10 (£6 concs) from www.goldengrinde.com

Live New Orleans jazz

aboard the Golden Hinde in dry dock with special guest vocalist and DJing till late, plus cocktails (which you can sip in Drake's private cabin) and hearty food menu by Porky's BBQ.

The Candlelight Club's Summer Party

Saturday 30th July

7pm–12am

A secret London location

Admission: £25 in advance

The Candlelight Club is a clandestine 1920s speakeasy party in a secret London venue completely lit by candles, with live period jazz bands, cabaret and vintage vinylism. The bar dispenses vintage cocktails and the kitchens offer bar snacks and sharing platters, as well as a fine-dining set menu option.

Come and salute the summer with hosting from cabaret cove Champagne Charlie, live music from the Shirt Tail Stompers and the NSC's own DJ Auntie Maureen. Let the music play and the bootleg liquor flow! Guests receive an email two days before revealing the secret location and are encouraged to dress in 1920s outfits—so pull on your flapper dress and get ready to Charleston!

"The closest you'll find to an authentic Jazz Age experience in central London. Its unique ambience, fuelled by hundreds of candles, is truly a scene to behold." —Time Out

As seen last summer on BBC2's *Hair!* More at www.thecandlelightclub.com. See the video.



Vintage speakeasy fun at the Candlelight Club

© michael s marks 2011
www.michaelm.zenfolio.com/candlelight

Eugenie Rhodes fits in a quick photographic session in Smoker's Alley at our June meeting



CONTACTING US

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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. For more photos of Club events go to www.flickr.com/sheridanclub. You can even befriend us electrically at www.facebook.com.