



# AWAY WITH THE PHARAOHS

Adrian Prooth  
unravels the  
mystery of  
the mummy's  
curse

## Grand Hotel

Luca Jellinek on the  
Golden Age of luxury  
hospitality

## Daytrip in Greenland

Tim Eyre goes  
iceberg-spotting in a  
land with no roads

## Leather on willow

Tashes 2016: the  
official match report

## The New Sheridan Club's 10TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Come to the bash of the decade on 1st October

# DESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • ISSUE 119 SEPTEMBER 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 7th September in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm. Luke Wenban will explore his grandfather's exploits in a talk entitled, *Behind the Lines: Kent Fortress Royal Engineers*. "After signing up to his works Territorial Army Unit at the outbreak of the Second World War it was not long before Granfer Wenban was in France blowing things up," Luke explains. "As a member of the Kent Fortress Volunteer Force, later the Kent Fortress Royal Engineers, he was spirited away as part of the secret XD force to 'decommission' all stocks of oil and petrol in France and Belgium. A race against time ensued; to beat the German 'blitzkrieg' was paramount. Fighting against local French military opposition, herds of fleeing refugees and then attempting to leave with the retreating



Granfer Wenban (seemingly with the Club's own Auntie Maureen)

BEF was all in a day's work for these plucky sappers. The success of these raids led to further incursions into Norway, Greece and finally the Middle East. But I knew none of this until a chance Facebook post by my Aunt. 'Oh yes, he never had any issues with explosives, did Granfer, he blew so much up during the war.' ¿Qué?"

**The Last Meeting**

In a busy house for an August night, our guest speaker, Adrian Prooth, took us through the growing influence of Egyptian art and the romantic notion of Egyptian culture in late Victorian Britain, growing to a frenzy when Howard Carter discovered and opened the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922. But the tomb had a curse written on it, promising death to those who breached the seal—and Adrian went on to look at the untimely deaths of many of those associated with the tomb-raiding, raising the question of whether those who believe in the curse have a case or not...



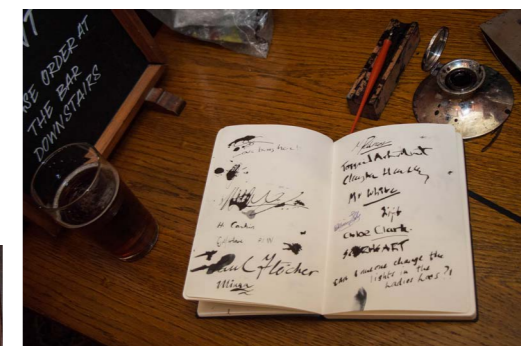
(Above) Torquil kicks things off; (left and above right) Adrian takes us through the building blocks of his thesis. In a fez. (Right) The rapt audience falls prey to his eldritch charisma



(Above) Craigh shows Essex his Crowley impression; (left) Chloe claims her pyramid handbag is pure coincidence; (below, l-r) Luca Jellinek, Tim Eyre, Matthew Howard



(Above) Matthew, a potential new Member quivers on the brink; (left) the Signing-In Book, a treasure house of knowledge or a portal to madness? (Below) Men in Fezzes



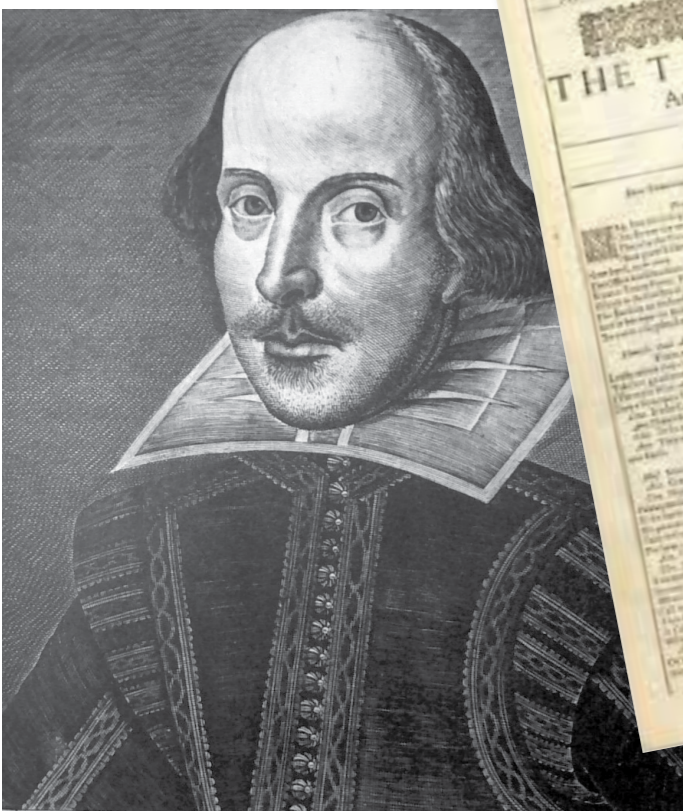
# THE CURSE OF THE PHARAOHS

**W**HAT IS SO FASCINATING about Ancient Egypt and in particular the story of the Mummy coming to life? Well, let's start with a little history.

Beyond the Bible the first major time Ancient Egyptian culture enters British culture is Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*. After this there is not much that happens till the end of the 18th century. Napoleon decided to try and block Britain's access to India by taking over Egypt but his ambitions were thwarted by Nelson at the Battle of the Nile and then on land by Sir Ralph Abercrombie at the Battle of Alexandria. This brought Egypt into the British sphere of influence

The resulting interest in Egypt, and in particular Ancient Egypt, only increased with the arrival of Cleopatra's Needle on the Embankment in London in 1878. Further fuel was added by the rise of the "Lost World" genre of literature, which started with *King Solomon's Mines* in 1885. The resulting fascination with societies completely different from those

Shakespeare and his play, with actress Dorothy Green (1886–1961) in the role of Cleopatra



By **Adrian Prooth**

of Victorian Britain found fertile ground in Ancient Egypt—precisely because, beyond the fact of the civilisation's existence, very little else was known about it. In this vacuum a whole culture was imagined, featuring strange symbols, rituals and—possibly as a backlash against Victorian values—a lot about sexuality. There was a revival of Shakespeare's play and the start of Egyptian Revivalist Architecture. The best surviving example of this is a Synagogue in Canterbury, but the most famous was the Egyptian Hall on Piccadilly, London.

### The lure of the mysterious

This Egyptian Hall was commissioned by William Bullock as a museum to house his collection (which included curiosities brought back from the South Seas by Captain Cook) and was

The unwrapping of a mummy as public spectacle, depicted in *Examination of a Mummy – The Priestess of Ammon* (1891) by Paul Dominique Philippoteaux



completed in 1812 at a cost of £16,000. It was the first building in England to be influenced by the Egyptian style, partly inspired by the success of the Egyptian Room in Thomas Hope's house in Duchess Street, which was open to the public and had been well illustrated in Hope's *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration* (London, 1807). But, unlike Bullock's Egyptian temple in Piccadilly, Hope's Neoclassical façade betrayed no hint of the Egyptianising decor it contained. Detailed renderings of various temples on the Nile, the Pyramids and the Sphinx had been accumulating for connoisseurs and designers in

The Carreras Cigarette Factory in Camden, London, erected in 1926–8, originally had a solar disc and a pair of colossal cats. These were removed in the 1960s but replicas, seen here, were restored in the 1990s

works such as Bernard de Montfaucon's ten-volume *L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* (1719–24), which reproduces, methodically grouped, all the ancient monuments, Benoît de Maillet's *Description de l'Égypte* (1735), Richard Pococke's *A Description of the East and Some Other Countries* (1743) and Frederic Louis Norden's *Voyage d'Égypte et de Nubie* (1755), and the first volume of the magisterial *Description de l'Égypte*



# EGYPTIAN HALL, LONDON.



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able, consequently unique.

ADMISSION FROM ONE SHILLING TO FIVE SHILLINGS.

The Egyptian Hall (below) became known for mystical performances (1810) had recently appeared in Paris. The plans for the hall were drawn up by architect Peter Frederick Robinson. Bullock, who had displayed his collection in Sheffield and Liverpool before opening in London, used the hall to put on various spectacles, from which he made money from ticket sales. The museum was variously referred to as the London Museum, the Egyptian Hall or Museum, or Bullock's Museum.

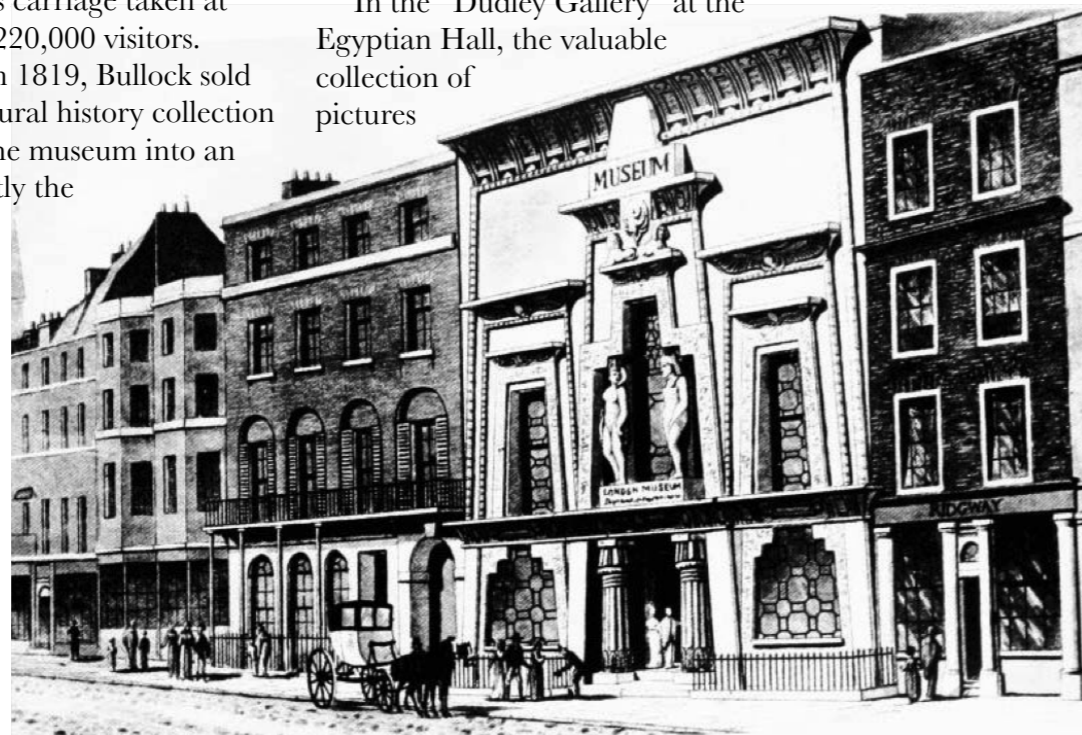
The Hall was a considerable success, with an exhibition of Napoleonic era relics in 1816, including Napoleon's carriage taken at Waterloo, attracting some 220,000 visitors. (Bullock made £35,000.) In 1819, Bullock sold his ethnographical and natural history collection at auction and converted the museum into an exhibition hall. Subsequently the Hall became a major venue for the exhibiting of works of art; it had the advantage of being almost the only London venue able to exhibit really large works. Usually admission was one shilling. In 1820, *The Raft of the Medusa* by Théodore Géricault was exhibited from 10th June until the end of the year, rather overshadowing Benjamin

of the Hall in 1825 and went on to use the facilities to show panoramas, art exhibits, and entertainment productions. The Hall became especially associated with watercolours. The old Water-Colour Society exhibited there in 1821–22, and it was hired by Charles Heath to display the watercolours commissioned from Joseph Mallord William Turner forming *Picturesque Views in England and Wales*. Turner exhibited at the Hall for a number of years and it was also used as a venue for exhibitions by the Society of Painters in Water Colours.

In the "Dudley Gallery" at the Egyptian Hall, the valuable collection of pictures

Robert Haydon's painting, *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*, on show in an adjacent room. (Haydon rented rooms to show his work on several occasions.) In 1821, exhibitions included Giovanni Battista Belzoni's show of the tomb of Seti I in 1821 and James Ward's gigantic *Allegory of Waterloo*. In 1822 a family of Laplanders with their reindeer were imported to be displayed in front of a painted backdrop and give short sleigh-rides to visitors.

The bookseller George Lackington became owner



belonging to the Earl of Dudley was deposited during the erection of his own gallery at Dudley House in Park Lane. The room gave its name to the Dudley Gallery Art Society (also known as The Old Dudley Art Society) when they were founded in 1861 and used it for their exhibitions. It was also the venue chosen for their first exhibitions by the influential New English Art Club.

The hall was used principally for popular entertainments and lectures. Here Albert Smith related his ascent of Mont Blanc, illustrated by some cleverly dioramic views of the Alpine peaks.

By the end of the 19th century, the Hall was also associated with magic and spiritualism, as a number of performers and lecturers had hired it for shows. In 1873 William Morton took on the

Egyptian-inspired Art Deco details on the Chrysler Building in New York and (below) the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, California



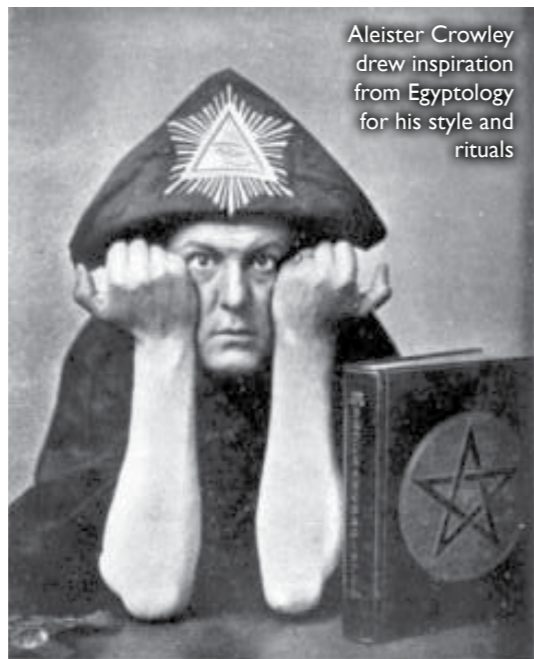
management of the Hall and modified it for his proteges, Maskelyne and Cooke, whose run there lasted a remarkable 31 years. The Hall became known as England's Home of Mystery. Many illusions were staged including the exposition of fraudulent spiritualistic manifestations then being practised by charlatans. The final performance was on 5th January 1905.

In 1905 the building was demolished to make room for blocks of flats and offices at 170–173 Piccadilly. Muirhead Bone captured its demise in his work *The Dissolution of Egyptian Hall*. The Maskelynes relocated to the St George's Hall in Langham Place, which became known as Maskelyne's Theatre. The site is now occupied by a branch of Starbucks.

There are a number of other notable buildings that follow the Egyptian style, such as the old Carreras cigarette factory opposite Mornington Crescent station and the Hoover building in Perivale, and even in the current day a lot of the buildings in Canary Wharf have Ancient Egyptian influences.

A novelty lamp in the shape of a sarcophagus that opens up to reveal a winsome mummy





Aleister Crowley drew inspiration from Egyptology for his style and rituals

On the style front there were obvious Egyptian influences in the Art Deco design movement. One major

factor was the image of Egyptian society as freer and more fun, so referencing it was an excuse to use nudity and sexuality, in a way that was not permissible in the contemporary era. Then there was the appeal of the mysterious and the idea of secret societies wielding power by practising ancient Egyptian mysticism: the Illuminati, possibly the most famous (albeit non-existent) secret society, has the symbol of the pyramid associated with it. The Freemasons' symbol is also supposed to have such a representation in it and there are claims that the order traces its roots back to the masons who built the pyramids; quite a few Masonic buildings are in the Egyptian style. Then you have Alistair Crowley and the Golden Dawn who definitely were quite prepared to claim Egyptology as a basis in their rituals and links to

the ancient culture, though the idea of ritual and the use of sex and sexuality may have been the main appeal for Crowley.

One whose interest was piqued by all of this was Lord Carnarvon, an enthusiastic amateur Egyptologist who undertook in 1907 to sponsor the excavation of nobles' tombs in Deir el-Bahari in Thebes. Howard Carter

joined him as his assistant in the excavations. It is now established that it was Gaston Maspero, then Director of the Antiquities Department in Egypt, who proposed Carter to Carnarvon. In 1914 Carnarvon received the concession to dig in the Valley of the Kings, replacing Theodore Davis who had resigned. In 1922 he and Carter together opened the tomb of Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Kings, exposing treasures unsurpassed in the history of archaeology.

### Raiders of the lost tomb

Howard Carter grew up in Swaffham near Didlington Hall, which contained a magnificent collection of Egyptian antiques that sparked Carter's interest in that subject. In 1891, the Egypt Exploration Fund sent Carter to assist an Amherst family friend, Percy Newberry, in the excavation and recording of Middle Kingdom

Carter (left) and Carnarvon (right) with Carnarvon's daughter Lady Evelyn Herbert and the governor of Qena province,



tombs at Beni Hasan.

Although only 17, Carter was innovative in improving the methods of copying tomb decoration. In 1892, he worked under the tutelage of Flinders Petrie for one season at Amarna, the capital founded by the pharaoh Akhenaten. From 1894 to 1899, he worked with Édouard Naville at Deir el-Bahari, where he recorded the wall reliefs in the temple of Hatshepsut.

In 1899, Carter was appointed to the position of Chief Inspector of the Egyptian Antiquities Service. He supervised a number of excavations



Carter in the tomb

at Thebes, now known as Luxor. In 1904, he was transferred to the Inspectorate of Lower Egypt. Carter was praised for his improvements in the protection of, and accessibility to, existing excavation sites, and his development of a grid-

block system for searching for tombs. The Antiquities Service also provided funding for Carter to head his own excavation projects and during this period he discovered the Tombs of Thutmose I and Thutmose III, although both tombs had been robbed of treasures long before.

Carter resigned from the Antiquities Service in 1905 after a formal inquiry into what became known as the Saqqara Affair, a noisy confrontation between Egyptian site guards and a group of French tourists.

In 1907, after three hard years for Carter, Lord Carnarvon employed him to supervise Carnarvon's

Egyptian excavations in the Valley of the Kings. The intention of Gaston Maspero in introducing the two was to ensure that Carter imposed modern archaeological methods and systems of recording.

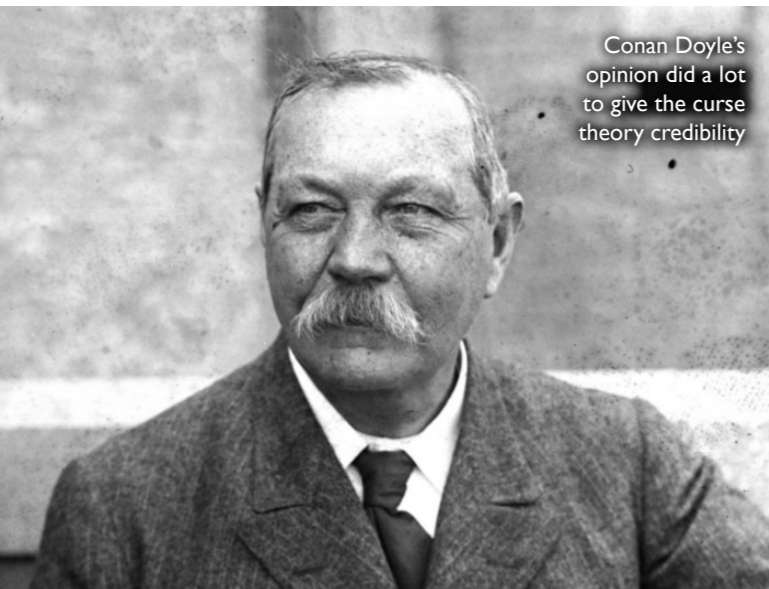
Carnarvon financed Carter's work in the Valley of the Kings to 1914 but until 1917 excavations and study were interrupted by the First World War. With the end of the war Carter aggressively resumed his work.

But after several years of finding little, Lord Carnarvon became dissatisfied with the lack of results, and in 1922 informed Carter that



(Above) The media goes crazy with reports of a curse; (below) Carter was inundated with letters such as this one from wealthy eccentric Margit Labouchere

21. 1. 25  
 Brovi. Istria. Italia  
 Howard Carter. Esq.  
 Nobody is allowed to open the coffin.  
 Listen to your inward voice.  
 M. Labouchere.



Conan Doyle's opinion did a lot to give the curse theory credibility

he had one more season of funding to search the Valley of the Kings and find the tomb of Tutankhamun.

On 4th November 1922, Howard Carter's excavation group found steps that Carter hoped led to the boy king's tomb (subsequently designated KV62)—the tomb that would be considered the best preserved and most intact pharaonic tomb ever found in the Valley of the Kings.

He wired Lord Carnarvon to come and on 26th November 1922, with Carnarvon, Carnarvon's daughter and others in attendance, Carter made the "tiny breach in the top left hand corner" of the doorway with a chisel his grandmother had given him for his 17th birthday. He was able to peer in by the light of a candle and see that many of the gold and ebony treasures were still in place. He did not yet know whether it was "a tomb or merely a cache", but he did see a promising sealed doorway between two sentinel statues. When Carnarvon asked "Can you see anything?", Carter replied with the famous words:

"Yes, wonderful things!"

The next few months were spent cataloguing the contents of the antechamber under the "often stressful" supervision of Pierre Lacau, director general of the Department of Antiquities of Egypt. On 16th February 1923, Carter opened the sealed doorway and found that it did indeed lead to a burial chamber, and he got his first glimpse

of the sarcophagus of Tutankhamun. All of these discoveries were eagerly covered by the world's press, but most of their representatives were kept in their hotels; only H.V. Morton was allowed on the scene and his vivid descriptions helped to cement Carter's reputation with the British public.

Carter's own notes and photographic evidence indicate that he, Lord Carnarvon and Lady Evelyn Herbert entered the burial chamber shortly after the tomb's discovery and before the official opening.

### The case of the curse

The opening of KV62 launched the modern era of serious Egyptology. Yet belief in a "curse" surrounding the tomb began to spread almost immediately due to the sometimes mysterious deaths of members of Carter's team and prominent visitors to the tomb shortly thereafter.

The famous Egyptologist James Henry Breasted worked with Carter soon after the first opening of the tomb and reported how Carter sent a messenger on an errand to his home. Approaching the house the messenger thought he heard a "faint, almost human cry". Upon reaching the entrance he saw the bird cage occupied by a cobra—the symbol of Egyptian monarchy—with Carter's canary in its mouth. This fuelled local superstition of a curse.

Arthur Weigall, a previous Inspector General

Claudette Colbert in the title role of *Cleopatra* (1934)



of Antiquities to the Egyptian Government, reported that this was interpreted as Carter's house being broken into by the Royal Cobra on the very day that Carter was breaking into the King's tomb. An account of the incident was reported by the *New York Times* on 22 December 1922.

The first of the "mysterious" deaths was that of Lord Carnarvon. He had been bitten by a mosquito, and later slashed the bite accidentally while shaving. It became infected and blood poisoning resulted. Two weeks before Carnarvon died, Marie Corelli had already written an imaginative letter, published in the *New York World* magazine, in which she quoted an obscure book that confidently asserted that "dire punishment" would follow any intrusion into a sealed tomb. The media interest that followed included reports that a written curse had been found in the King's tomb, though this was untrue. The superstitious Benito Mussolini, who had once accepted an Egyptian mummy as a gift, ordered its immediate removal from the Palazzo Chigi.

So when Carnarvon died just six weeks after the opening of Tutankhamun's tomb a frenzy of curse stories appeared in the press.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, suggested that Lord Carnarvon's death had been caused by "elementals" created by Tutankhamun's priests to guard the royal tomb. Arthur Weigall reported that, watching the Earl laughing and joking as he entered the King's tomb, he had been inspired to remark to H.V. Morton, "If he goes down in that spirit I give him six weeks to live." The first autopsy carried out on the body of Tutankhamun by Dr Derry found a healed lesion on the left cheek, but as Carnarvon had been buried six months previously it was not possible to determine if the location of the wound on the King corresponded with the fatal mosquito bite on Carnarvon.

In 1925 the anthropologist Henry Field,



Boris Karloff in *The Mummy* (1932), the first of a whole genre of revenant movies



accompanied by Breasted, visited the tomb and reported that a paperweight given to Carter's friend Sir Bruce Ingram was composed of a mummified hand with its wrist adorned with a scarab bracelet marked with, "Cursed be he who moves my body. To him shall come fire, water and pestilence." Soon after receiving the gift, Ingram's house burned down, followed by a flood when it was rebuilt.

Howard Carter was entirely sceptical of such curses, although he did report in his diary a "strange" account in May 1926, when he saw jackals of the same type as Anubis, the guardian of the dead, for the first time in over 35 years of working in the desert.

Sceptics have pointed out that many others



Carnarvon's half-brother, became almost blind and died on 26th September 1923 from blood poisoning related to a dental procedure intended to restore his eyesight.

- Sir Archibald Douglas-Reid, a radiologist who x-rayed Tutankhamun's mummy, died on 15th January 1924 from a mysterious illness.
- Sir Lee Stack, Governor General of Sudan, died on 19th November 1924, assassinated while driving through Cairo.
- A.C. Mace, a member of Carter's excavation team, died in 1928 from arsenic poisoning.
- The Hon. Mervyn Herbert, Carnarvon's half-brother and the aforementioned Aubrey

Herbert's full brother, died on 26th May 1929, reportedly from "malarial pneumonia".

- Captain The Hon. Richard Bethell, Carter's personal secretary, died on 15th November 1929, found eating poison in his bed.

• Richard Luttrell Pilkington Bethell, 3rd Baron Westbury, father of the above, died on 20th February 1930; he supposedly threw himself from his seventh floor apartment.



Popular music jumps on the Egyptomania bandwagon, with some rather implausible results

who visited the tomb or helped to discover it lived long and healthy lives. A study showed that of the 58 people who were present when the tomb and sarcophagus were opened, only eight died within a dozen years. All the others were still alive, including Howard Carter, who died of lymphoma in 1939 at the age of 64. The last survivor, American archaeologist J.O. Kinnaman, died in 1961, a full 39 years after the event.

Nevertheless, this is the commonly accepted list of those who died due to the curse:

- Lord Carnarvon, financial backer of the excavation team who was present at the tomb's opening, died on 5th April 1923, four months and seven days after the opening of the tomb.
- George Jay Gould I, a visitor to the tomb, died in the French Riviera on 16th May 1923 after he developed a fever following his visit.
- Prince Ali Kamel Fahmy Bey of Egypt died 10th July 1923, shot dead by his wife.
- Colonel The Hon. Aubrey Herbert, MP,

Whatever you may think of the "curse" theory, our fascination with all things related to Ancient Egypt carries on to this day, represented healthily in music—from the 1923 ditty *Old King Tut* by Harry Von Tilzer to the Bangles' *Walk like an Egyptian*—and films. The mummy movie is a whole genre in its own right, but the influence also extends to Indiana Jones and *Young Sherlock Holmes*, which was released in a number of countries under the titles *The Secret Pyramid*; while written by Chris Columbus, it was a homage to Conan Doyle and his contribution to the curse of the Pharaoh.



# DECADENT

## The New Sheridan Club's 10th Birthday Party

**Saturday 1st October**

7pm–1am

Ground floor events room, Cecil's, 8 Holyrood St, London SE1 2EL

Admission: Free for Members, £5 for guests and strangers (refundable if you join the Club on the night)

Dress: Decadent, or revive your favourite costume from the previous 18 parties

Yes, the New Sheridan Club is ten years old in October. Born both from the ashes of the first Sheridan Club, the official social club of *The Chap* magazine, and the corporeal urges of the online chatroom ([www.sheridanclub.co.uk](http://www.sheridanclub.co.uk)), the NSC has been a meeting place for tweedy fops, retro dandies, affable nostalgists and, of course, readers of *The Chap*. To mark this anniversary, instead of our usual summer and Christmas parties, we're having one big birthday party.

As usual **entry is free** for Members and just £5 for

guests, a sum that is refunded if they decide to join the Club on the night.

Entertainment will come from Chappist music god **Mr B. the Gentleman Rhymer**, as well as singing from Jennifer Grundulis and DJing from Auntie Maureen.

There will be our usual silly games, this time combining favourites from the past with new decadence-themed wheezes. There will be a lucky dip, dispensing prizes of jaw-dropping worthlessness. There will be our trusty Snuff Bar.

There will, of course, be our famous Grand Raffle, with prizes themed around decadent art, practices and individuals, and ten years of the

Club. Entry to the raffle is free, but only to Members of the New Sheridan Club—including anyone who joins on the night.

The venue is on the ground floor of Cecil's (the main bar is in the basement) and is decked out like a surreal Garden of Early Delights, complete with an indoor treehouse. There will be forbidden fruit. There will probably be a cake.



# THE AGE OF THE GRAND HOTEL

**B**ETWEEN THE 1870s AND 1930s, roughly, a cosmopolitan culture emerged among the upper classes that had many physical and cultural manifestations. Prominent among these was the rise of Grand Hotels; hospitality businesses that set new standards of luxury, comfort and social influence. How did this come about? What characteristics and themes define Grand Hotels? Why did the era end, and what are we left with now? In answering those questions, we argue that in addition to being physical places, Grand Hotels are an idea, indeed an ideal, a palimpsest upon which society projected its priorities, an archetype of a modern community relatively unmoored from nationality, tradition and class.

The contemporary form of a hotel did not fully exist before the early 19th century. Travelling aristocrats tended to be hosted by their peers in grand country homes or equally

By Luca Jellinek

lavish town-houses. In other words, they enjoyed private hospitality. Everyone else had to rely on rather basic accommodations provided by inns, a surviving late-medieval example of which can be found in Southwark: the George Inn. The old-French word *hôtel* actually stems from the Latin word for one offering hospitality (*hospes*) and, as early as the 16th century, denoted a part-time residence (as the nobility's town-houses were considered) as opposed to the main seat, in the country. Being private in nature, they became known as *hôtels particuliers*. Paris retains many of these noble structures, usually now adapted as high government offices or museums, such as the graceful Hôtel de Saint-Aignan.

## Rising Tourism Demand in the 1800s

The fact that all these former "private hotels" are now public buildings while a small number of comparable edifices, such as Spencer House, in London, survive as private residences provides a hint of the next stage in our journey. The unimaginable political and social rupture caused by the French Revolution and the resulting Terror meant that many *hôtels particuliers* became suddenly expropriated and vacant; some were turned into inns. More importantly, probably, in the development of high-quality public hospitality was the fact that many of the best cooks, suddenly unemployed, opened restaurants in France and other European capitals, bringing a new degree of sophistication to a somewhat broader audience. Only the very rich

could permanently employ a great chef but the moderately wealthy could patronise his restaurant from time to time.

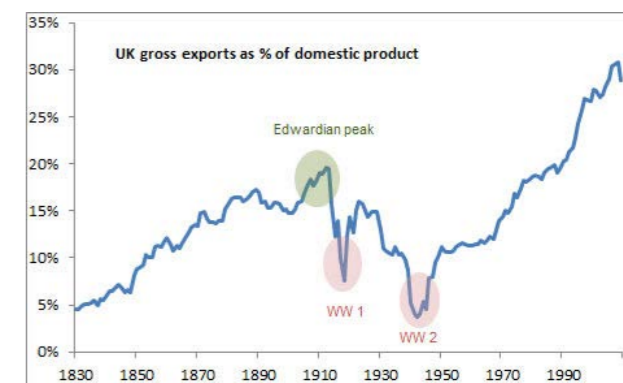
In the period of relative peace and prosperity that followed the end of the Napoleonic wars, Grand Tourism flourished to an extent that reciprocal private-home hosting struggled to accommodate and, at that point, something approaching the modern concept of a quality hotel began to emerge. For instance, in 1812 Mivart's Hotel opened its doors in London, later changing its name to Claridge's. Through the middle of the 19th century, as rapid economic growth multiplied the numbers that could afford foreign travel while steam propulsion greatly aided such travel, the hotel industry flourished. However, most quality hotels still approximated in size, personal facilities (especially plumbing) and public amenities a rather spacious mansion but fell well short of a palace.

The age of the Grand Tourists, which overlaps with but precedes that of the Grand Hotels, gave us iconic figures such as the Earl of Bristol. Frederick Hervey, 4th Earl of Bristol

The strange case of the Earl of Bristol



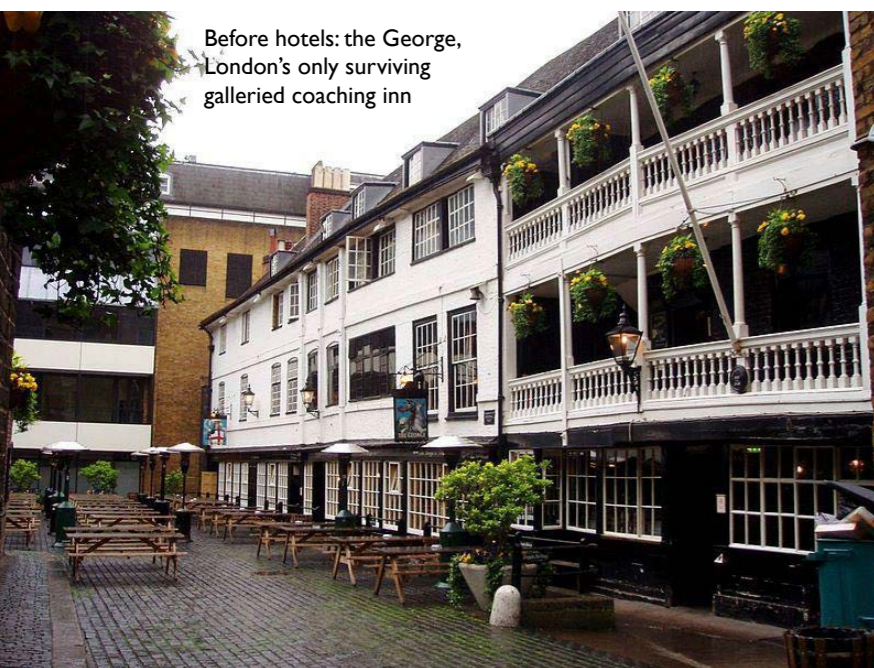
(Above) Hôtel de Saint-Aignan, Paris (1650), now a museum; (below) the expanding wealth and internationalism of the Edwardian era would not be matched again until the 1990s



on this, much as modern vendors publicise the patronage of some celebrity or royalty, a clever Parisian hotelier renamed his Place Vendôme establishment Hotel Bristol in 1816. There are currently over 200 hotels around the world called Hotel Bristol.

## The American Connection

The market for quality hotel services leapt ahead from the 1860s–70s due to the huge boost in long-distance travel afforded by the spread of steam traction, on land and sea. The concomitant acceleration in wealth meant that a few small hotels could not accommodate the growing traffic. At the beginning of this period, in his travel book *North America* (1862), Anthony Trollope remarked on how much larger American hotels were relative to British ones. They were also typically first in introducing technological advances like lifts, running water, modern lighting, etc. The Tremont House hotel, in Boston (1829), for instance, is considered to be the first hotel to provide indoor plumbing.

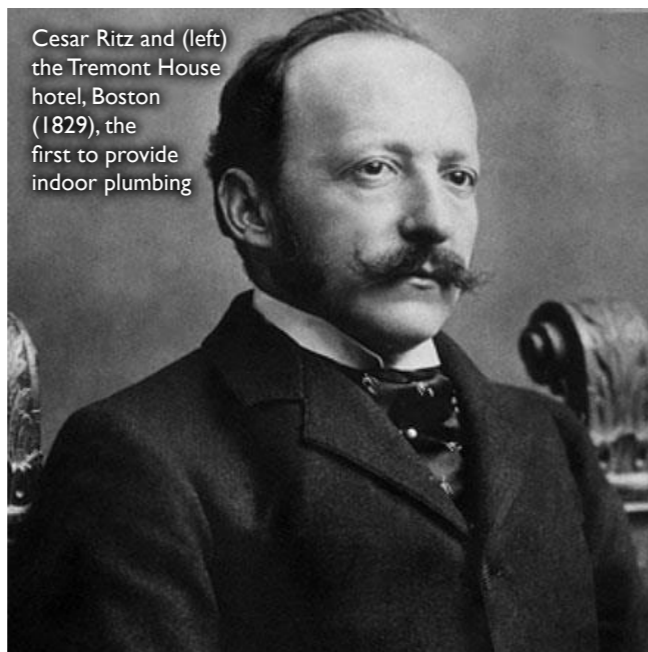
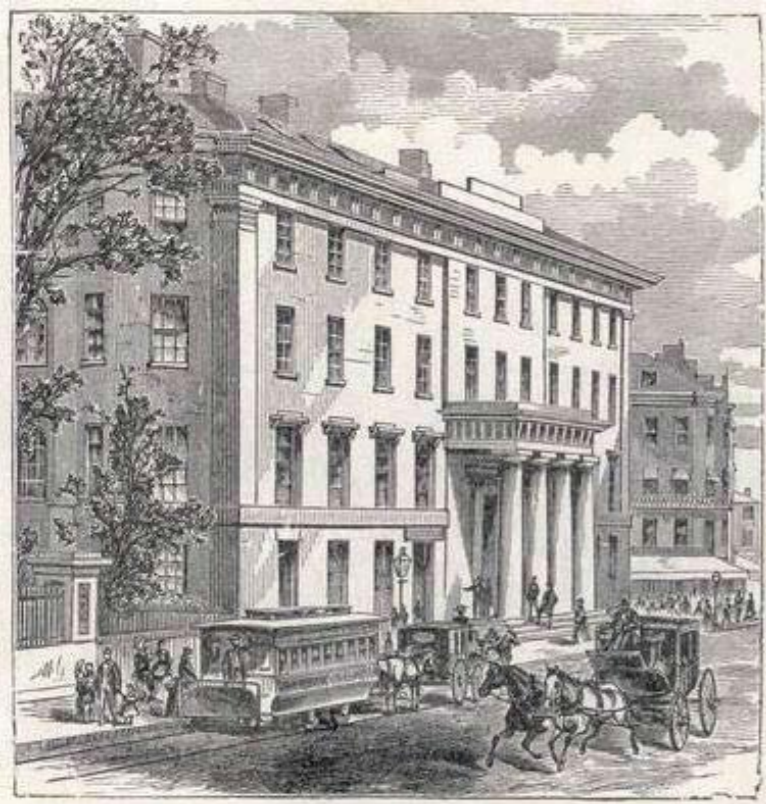


Before hotels: the George, London's only surviving galleried coaching inn



and Bishop of Derry (1730–1803) was "so widely famed...as a traveller, and so great his reputation as a connoisseur... that Lord Bristol's hotel... came to be the best known and regarded in every city or town where he sojourned." Capitalising





Cesar Ritz and (left) the Tremont House hotel, Boston (1829), the first to provide indoor plumbing

The Americans and, in Europe, railway companies introduced the large modern hotels.

However much the rapidly growing US moneyed class grew in splendour at home, its aspirations lay in experiencing the sophistication, the civilisation at the base of their own culture in its place of origin: Europe. Steam-driven trains greatly improved European travel but steamships brought legions of Americans hungry for European culture and with bulging purses to the old continent. The combination of European taste, refined by service to the aristocracy over centuries and now more widely marketed, together with a vast American market and high standards of upper-middle class living there, combined to give rise to Grand Hotels. All historical accounts of the great hoteliers and shipping lines from the golden period emphasise the degree to which US clients were the bedrock of their business but also that this customer base wanted to and needed to be leavened by a healthy sprinkling of European aristocracy (including the famously expansive Russian nobility). Similarly, contemporary gilded age biographies strike our modern perspective with the extent to which successful Americans spent their money around the Spas, great capital and monumental historic cities of Europe. Think of the novels of Henry James, or the paintings of John Singer Sargent. Like the Grand Hotels, they were very European Americans and, ultimately, possibly very American Europeans. The US–Europe connection created the Grand Hotels.

### Gilded Age Hoteliers and Hotels

All the main cities that featured in the late 19th century globalisation featured grand hotels but the greatest concentration was in New York, London and Paris. The creative enterprise of making a hotel something greater than just a temporary abode has always depended on a relatively small number of inspired individuals. Arguably the most prominent among the great hoteliers was Cesar Ritz (1850–1918); after all how many people have an eponymous adjective (as in “ritzzy”)? Of humble origin, he began his career as an assistant waiter in Brig and was fired from that first job. His then boss, less than prophetically, was alleged to have told Ritz that “You’ll never make anything of yourself in the hotel business. It takes a special knack, a special flair, and it’s only right that I tell you the truth—you haven’t got it.” Moving to Paris, he became an experienced *maitre d’hôtel* and experienced first-hand the commercial potential and high hospitality expectations of the rich American clientele.

The theatrical impresario D’Oyly Carte, upon launching his very grand Savoy Hotel in 1889, hired Ritz to manage it. The Savoy set new standards, including being the first European hotel with a bathroom in every room and a 4:1 staff-guest ratio. Consider that the contemporary Victoria Hotel had just four bathrooms against a capacity of 500 guests. In turn, Ritz recruited Escoffier as *chef de cuisine*. Of Auguste Escoffier it was written that he, “within a single lifetime, revitalized the entire existing

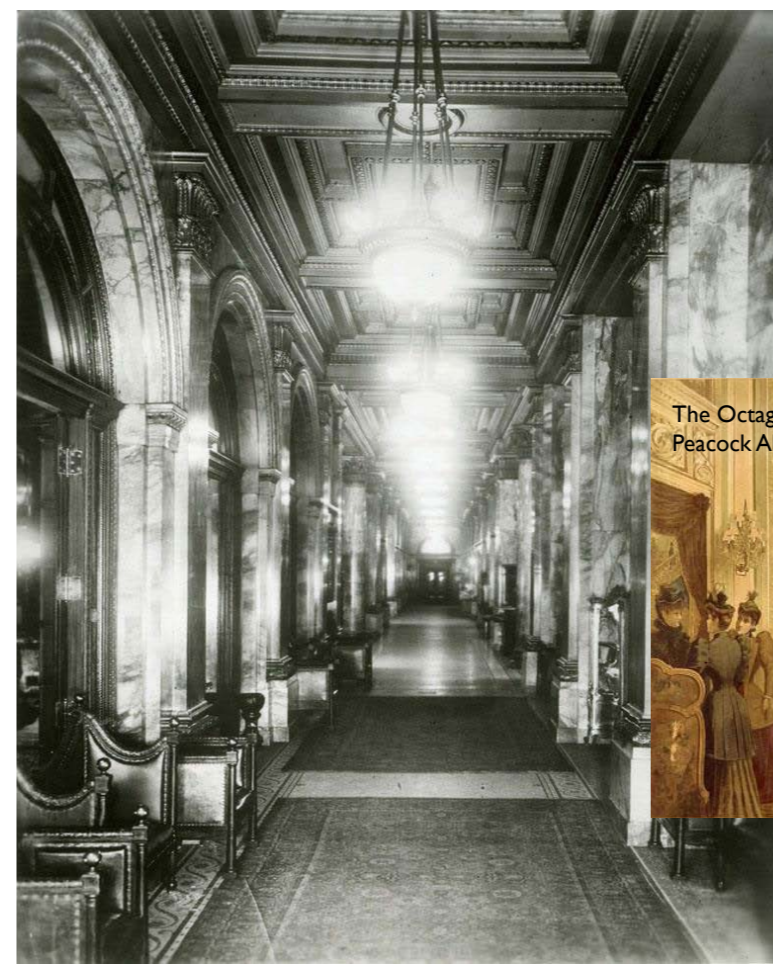
tradition of French gastronomy,” so that by the end of the century others opined that “the best chefs of France are in the kitchens of London”. When D’Oyly Carte and Ritz fell out, the latter went off to found the Ritz Hotel in Paris; duly followed by Escoffier and many patrons. Lady Grey, among others, declared that, “Where Ritz goes, I go.” By the time Cesar Ritz died, one could travel to most of the world’s great cities and stay “at the Ritz”.

### Grand Hotel Themes

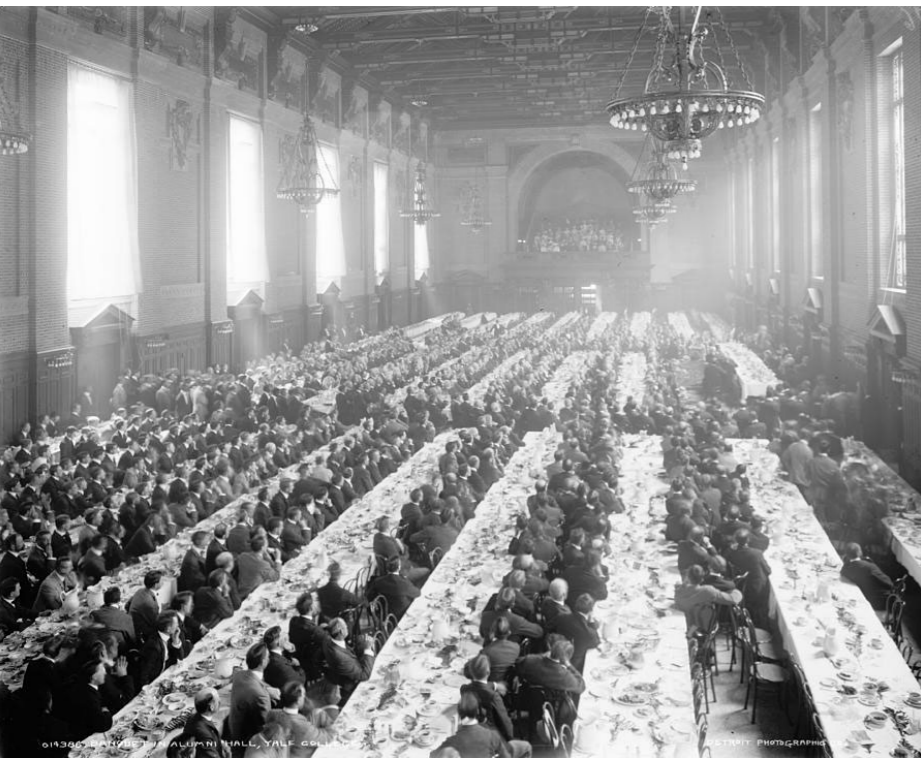
If the combination of mass wealth expansion (especially, but not only, American), steam technology and access to European sensibilities created the demand for and supply of Grand Hotels, a number of other factors and themes can also be associated with this era. At a broader level, it should be noted that the 1880–1914 period that saw the rise of Grand Hotels was economically and culturally particularly cosmopolitan. The degree to which the upper middle class referenced global aspirations, fashions and economic circuits by the early 20th century was reversed by the appalling destruction of two World Wars and, arguably, the unorthodox economic policies pursued following each conflict. It was only in the 1990s–2000s that the degree of internationalism returned to that seen in the era of the Grand Hotels.

A less material aspect of this era was the role of Grand Hotels in providing the upper middle class with places in which to socialise, to display their wealth, to mix with more established aristocracy, make business and personal connections, etc. The Grand Hotels thus served the aggregative purpose, for a much larger cohort, that royal courts had served for the nobility up to the mid-19th century. I like to say that grand hotels were the Versailles of the *haute bourgeoisie*. It is probably not accidental that Grand Hotel decorative themes were largely inspired by 18th-century French style through much of that era. Society swells and ladies had, in these hotels, an enclosed, privatised, safe space where they could interact. “Peacock alley”, a grand, mirrored hallway in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, was used as a promenade, safe from inclement New York weather but also from “common people”. In late-Victorian and Edwardian society, the semi-private, semi-public nature of such spaces was particularly important for women, who were still subject to many behavioural limitations, by custom, when in public (smoking, using public toilets, even stopping to speak to an acquaintance, etc.).

One particular form of social interaction that required large function rooms, besides balls, was banquets. Late Victorians and Edwardians had a great liking of banquets with huge numbers of guests. These forms of pre-modern display of conspicuous consumption appear to have been more about presence and selection than the quality of the food, by contemporary accounts. Indeed the craze for large banquets with guests of honour and forms of public recognition was such that London, among other cities, saw the rise of a cottage industry of more or less fictitious banquets/award dinners with commercially-oriented guest lists, spurious (or



The Octagon Lounge and (left) Peacock Alley in the Waldorf Astoria



(Above) the Golden Age of banqueting; (below) with the advent of the Jet Age measured opulence was replaced by...this



non-attending) celebrities and dubious victuals. The comic novel *Diary of a Nobody* contains a very humorous episode along those lines.

As an example, Society columnist Elsa Maxwell was a self-declared “hotel pilgrim” and for many years lived permanently in New York’s Waldorf-Astoria. She annually threw a sumptuous party and the increasing

sophistication of the arrangements became an unspoken competition between Maxwell and the head of the Waldorf-Astoria’s banqueting department. In 1935 she decided to give a farmyard party and barn dance in the Waldorf’s Jade Ballroom with “...real trees with real apples on them...huge chandeliers covered with hayricks...a beer well...stalls with sheep, real cows, donkeys, geese...” Maxwell was nonplussed when the manager, rather than balking at her request simply replied: “Yes, Miss Maxwell, certainly.” Maxwell was taken aback. The Waldorf organised felt shoes for the animals, a room where the animals could be rested and “cleaned”, taking turns with others. The real apples were pinned to real trees. The Ballroom itself featured Molly the Moët Cow—from which Champagne could be milked on one side and whiskey and soda on the other...

### The Grand Hotel as an Idea

Because of the social/cultural and aspirational role that Grand Hotels came to fill in society during their era, it is fair to say that as much as physical places they became ideal/idealised places. They became a sort of archetype of luxury and sophistication, like the ocean liners of the period. In *Delirious New York*, architectural theoretician Rem Koolhaas speaks of “Grand Hotels in baroque style, often occupying or replacing actual private mansions...houses haunted by their own past...the production of vicarious respectability...the new presented in the false light of familiarity...they pull society...to what becomes in effect a colossal collective salon for exhibiting and introducing new urban manners”. Society commentator Lucius Beebe, who wrote books about the Savoy and the Ritz, thought that Grand Hotels provided “...public entertainment in a manner until a century ago reserved only for the private palaces and chateaux of Europe...made public dining for the titled and financial aristocracy not only acceptable but de rigueur... From waiters to house managers...to restaurateurs, hair-dressers and hotel executives, the label ‘Formerly of the Ritz’ often applied as a guarantee of quality

service.” Beebe also wrote that, “Hotel men probably know more about human beings by the time they are junior receptionists than the most learned psychologists in Vienna when they are at the top of the professoring business. Everything happens in hotels.”

Examples of mass culture artefacts that reference Grand Hotels include much of the work of writer Joseph Roth, whose books include the 1924 novel *Hotel Savoy*, set in the Hotel Savoy in Łódź, where “lonely war veterans, variety dancers and others dream of better places”. He depicted such establishments as innately cosmopolitan and fascinating; Grand Hotels as special places, glamorous places but also problematic places. The theme of glamour placed against alienation is also present in the 1932 film *Grand Hotel*, which focuses on the whirl of high life but also the hard-working employees. It starred Greta Garbo as a jaded actress among others and was loosely based on the Adlon Hotel in Berlin.

### End of the Era

Eventually, the factors that contributed to making Grand Hotels such a resplendent and crucial feature of society in the first half of the 20th century came to an end. Two changes in particular stand out. The advent of the Jet Age and civilian application of Second World War technologies went hand-in-hand with a faster pace of life, so that long-distance travel became more utilitarian (and more democratic). Society (high and low) moved away from the emphasis on class and style and more towards informality and intimacy; less grand, less deferential. The redistributive revolution in political economies saw to that. Naturally, the hospitality industry adapted to new conditions.

Some might quibble that with an ever-increasing number of “5-star” hotels around the world (there are about 70 in London alone), surely Grand Hotels are still with us? There are certainly luxury hotels, but they do not

capture the collective unconscious nor define our aspirations and social habits like Grand Hotels did in their era. The modern equivalent, I would argue, is the very refined boutique hotel or perhaps high-end tropical resort hotels. They meet society’s aspiration for casual comfort, discreet luxury and a sense of “authenticity”.

### Golden Era Survivors...and New-Borns

Although the era of the Grand Hotels is past, London boasts probably the largest collection of authentic survivors. Additionally, the growing interest in past standards of elegance and grandeur as a reaction to the insipid veneer of modernist “stealth” sophistication has led to a number of interesting new establishments (or adaptation of period buildings) that can stand comparison with the old stalwarts. Examples of excellently maintained public spaces from the golden era of Grand Hotels, in London, include the Beaufort Bar, ballroom and lobby at the Savoy, the ballroom at the Park Lane Hotel,



A survivor: the Palm Court at the Ritz

the Palm Court at the Ritz, the main bar at the Connaught, the Fumoir and lobby at Claridge’s. Among the more successful contemporary offerings that obtain a similar level of excellence, I would number the bar at China Tang (Dorchester) and the bar at the Beaumont. A fellow Sheridanite pointed to the Corinthian in similar terms. Pip, pip!

# 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.



## Stewart Lister Vickers

"Have as good a time as possible."

### Name or preferred name?

Stewart Lister Vickers, alias Vick Hellfire

### Why that nickname or nom de plume?

To shroud nocturnal endeavours from Google while befitting both idioms of 1890s Paris and the more likely London rock scenes. The resemblance to my

own surname means I can still lay claim to the better anecdotes.

### Where do you hail from?

Reading but now fortunately residing in Camden.

### Favourite Cocktail?

Corpse Reviver

### Most Chappist skill?

Considering dining out, or at least cooking to a reasonable standard, only to weigh up the cost against pints and articles of clothing and end up with a £1 egg and cress sandwich and a cupboard of noodles.

### Most Chappist possession?

My great-grandfather's binoculars from the First World War.

### Personal Motto?

Not so much a motto as a broader concept: Epicureanism. Have as good a time as you possibly can all the time while minimising future risk.

### Favourite Quote?

"I must have some booze...I demand to have some booze!" —Withnail, *Withnail and I*

"Well, everyone likes cheese and onion." — Eddie, *Bottom*

"Are you goth or trans?" — said to me by a bystander at the Reading Purple Turtle.

### Not a lot of people know



At the Gala Nocturna

### this about me, but...

I quite like a musical quartet called The Darkness. [Actually everyone knows this about him —Ed]

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

I met a few coves at my first Olympiad in 2012 and finally joined in 2014.

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

The gazebo was a hint, as well as the Ironing Board Surfing team. It was finally mentioned by Albion at which point my curiosity could take it no more and I asked for further details and he introduced me to Mr Marlowe and Mr Hartley.

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

Vagabond wine bar in Charlotte Street, just up from the clubhouse. You pay a balance on a card that can then be used to sample wines from their ample collection ranging from around £1.15 to £3.50 for a small sample, or whole glasses at standard pub prices. It's a booze Pick 'n' Mix.

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

Dante Gabrielle Rossetti for his unique vision as conveyed by his writing and paintings. Gavin Kavanagh from *The Boat that Rocked*, a more recent take on the "dandy" archetype. Oscar Wilde—need I say more?

### Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?

Artemis Scarheart.

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

While a talk topic still escapes me I did lead a select band to Henley-on-Thames with the intention of staging a coup and declaring myself The Most Gracious General For Life, Lord Hellfire of the independent State of Henley. Unfortunately, we got held up in the Flower Pot at Aston, what I call the



At the Tweed Run

country pub of all country pubs with taxidermy, game pies and livestock. This was followed by tea at Upstairs & Downstairs teahouse, my former place of work. Finally, my offer of the Wetherspoons was rejected and Mr Gidman requested "somewhere that's at least 500 years old, with a fire" resulting in a short walk to the Angel where we were made very welcome by the locals.

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.



At the Chap Olympics with George Davies and Isabella Feretti

# ... And play the game, Pt 2

Following last month's picture essay, herewith the official report of the 12th annual Tashes Trophy final cricket match

**O**N A WARM SUMMER'S DAY, reminiscent of Delhi under Mountbatten, the Hirsute Gentlemen and the Clean-Shaven Players once again gathered in the fields of Greenwich to battle it out for the magnificent Tashes trophy. The trophy was bigger than ever this year, perhaps an acknowledgement that with the series standing at six victories to five in favour of the Clean-Shaven Players there was even more than usual to play for.

As is customary, the match began with the toss, from a coin supplied by the lovely Lady Hayes-Ballantyne, after much emptying of pockets by the assembled troops saw an unfortunate dearth of silver. The toss was carefully monitored to ensure fair play and was called incorrectly by Sir Reginald Hayes-Ballantyne and so Watermere elected to bowl at the Clean-Shaven Players, fancying chasing down a target. With the excitement of the crowd ringing in their ears, Hayes-Ballantyne and Essex strode to the crease purposefully in their familiar position as openers to be faced by the demon bowling of Nicholas. Some tidy bowling from the young man and some alert fielding prevented the Clean-Shaven Players getting any kind of momentum to begin their innings. As the pressure built, Essex threw caution to the wind and went for a big hit off some tight bowling from Watermere (who even managed to bowl a maiden later in the innings). Unfortunately for Essex, he only succeeded in scooping the ball to Jack who was lurking at mid-on to take a smart catch. Essex was out for 1. Next up was Hallamshire-Smythe; he and his captain formed a solid partnership, watchful when facing some disciplined bowling, and seeking to dispatch

By Sir Reginald Hayes-Ballantyne

the looser balls to the boundary. Between them they eased the pressure with a flurry of boundaries as the Hirsute bowlers started to tire in the sun. Even Geoffrey Nippetweed, who had been Hayes-Ballantyne's nemesis on more than one previous occasion was unable to stem the tide of runs.

Things were moving along well for the Clean-Shaven Players as they approached the 50 run mark. Just when they started to feel comfortable, however, the Hirsute Gentlemen hit back when Hallamshire-Smythe, on 10, fell to a sharp catch by Jack (once again) after some penetrating bowling from Stewart. Next up was Cassidy, whose North American style was reminiscent of the baseball greats of the forties but enabled him to register some powerful hits. Cassidy and Sir Reginald looked to steady the ship but, having added a few more runs to the total, Cassidy was clean bowled on 4 by Jack when going for a huge heave out of the park. While the stumps resolutely refused to budge, in the spirit of fair play, the umpire ruled that he was out (although the Hirsute Gentlemen did not appeal).

The Clean-Shaven innings continued with Culpepper, a man on a mission to score some quick runs, but initially lacking awareness of who should be calling for runs when he did hit the ball. This, coupled with a couple of dodgy calls from Hayes-Ballantyne, could have spelt disaster for the Clean-Shaven Players as the score moved past 60. Thankfully, they got back into an easy rhythm and looked set to see out the overs. Keen to break up the partnership, Watermere brought himself back into the attack and a spell of aggressive bowling got its reward when he

bowled a peach of a delivery to beat the Clean-Shaven captain (on 32) with a ball that clipped the top of his leg stump.

Due to the lopsided nature of the teams, Essex was called back to bat for a second time for the team and proceeded

to roll back the years as he and Culpepper ground out some crucial late-innings runs. There were a few close run-out chances but the final Clean-Shaven partnership survived the remaining overs and posted a formidable score of 93 for 4 after 20 overs. Culpepper ended the innings on 18 not out and Essex on 12 not out.

The teams left the field for a well-earned lunch break and to discuss tactics for the afternoon session. When play resumed, Watermere and Nicholas strode out to bat well fed and watered. The Clean-Shaven Players felt they needed an early wicket or two to prevent the Hirsute Gentlemen from gaining any momentum to mount a successful run chase.

After a maiden over from Hallamshire-Smythe, the pressure was already building when Hayes-Ballantyne roared in to take out the middle stump of his opposite number, Watermere, for a duck and with just 1 run on the board. Next in was Scarheart, once again hedging his bets as to which side to play for, with what appeared to be facial hair. After staying around to support Nicholas, Scarheart was undone by a straight one from Hallamshire-Smythe which splattered his stumps. He too was out for a duck and the Hirsute Gentlemen had not yet reached double figures.

Hayes-Ballantyne effectively shuffled the bowling pack and Essex took two quick wickets to leave the Hirsutes with a mountain to climb. Firstly, in a truly historic moment that will never be forgotten by anybody who was there, and will be passed down in hushed tones from generation to generation, Nicholas was caught on 7 by none other than Scarheart, the Clean-Shavens went crazy—never in the history of the Tashes had Scarheart successfully taken a catch, despite



Essex lobs the pill

regularly inviting batsmen to hit the ball to him during Tashes matches. Thankfully he had previously upheld a long-running tradition by dropping an easier catch earlier on.

As the Hirsute innings slowly subsided, Hayes-Ballantyne caught Jack off the bowling of Essex for 6 and it appeared that the end was in sight. The Hirsutes were more than 70 runs behind with one wicket in hand. Indeed, the Clean-Shavens were celebrating the "win" a few balls later when Hayes-Ballantyne bowled Stewart. However, the stumps had not moved and the umpire (who incidentally happened to be the Hirsute captain) said Hayes-Ballantyne's follow-through had impeded his view of the action and so it could not be given. This reprieve appeared to galvanise the Hirsute Gentlemen and deflate the Clean-Shaven side as they started to labour in the field. Stewart and Nippetweed continued to frustrate the Clean-Shaven bowlers with some resolute defence. However, as the overs ticked by they realised they needed to up their scoring rate. Firstly, they started to run tight singles and managed to avoid a run out attempt by Hayes-Ballantyne. However, the end of the match came when Nippetweed went for a big shot off a poor ball from Hayes-Ballantyne and only succeeded in lofting it to Culpepper, whose simple catch ended the contest. Nippetweed was caught on 11, leaving Stewart not out on 2. The Hirsutes were all out for 37.

The teams left the field to cheers, the crowd having been thoroughly entertained by the afternoon's events. Once the trophy was handed over to the Clean-Shaven players and all the photos had been taken all that was left was to head off to a nearby pub for some well earned refreshments.



Culpepper takes a swipe

# A DAYTRIP IN GREENLAND

Ever the traveller, I visited Greenland in June 2013. What follows is an account of a daytrip I took to the town of Aasiaat from the tourist hub of Ilulissat.

I had explained to my homestay hostess that I was leaving early that morning to catch a ferry and so there was no need to prepare breakfast for me. Nevertheless, at 5.30am I heard coffee brewing and I left the house with a pleasingly full stomach less than half an hour later. Dust blew around me as I walked along the quiet, empty streets to the tourist boat tender. Here I noticed a boxy grey building that bore the name Halibut Greenland and is one of Greenland's many fish processing plants. When I clambered into the boat I found that it had seats for about 20 passengers.

As we departed I went outside and stood at the stern so that I could better admire the icebergs as we navigated through them. At one point the boat needed to back up to find a passage. The experience was almost as good as the boat tour I had taken the day before. When we had cleared the icefjord the boat sped up and

By Dr Tim Eyre

With illustrations by Samara Leibner

added a stiff wind to the thrill of the experience. I was joined by a Danish man who had stood on the foredeck to watch the icebergs but moved to the back when we started travelling at full speed. He told me that he was in Greenland as part of his work on an examination board. Chilly though it was to stand outside, the cloudless sky, calm reflecting sea and occasional drifting iceberg made the endurance well worthwhile.

At one point another passenger came outside for a smoke. He was bearded and travelling with his wife and small child. He told me that he had been working in Greenland for a year and commented that he had seen less of the country than I had in just over a week. Such is the nature of working in a place; it is all too easy to see little of where one is based.

Two hours or so of sailing brought us to Qasigiannuit, which means "Small Spotted Seals" in Greenlandic. This town of 1,171 people was founded in 1734 as Christianshåb. The harbour was crowded with fishing boats and the dockside was crammed with refrigerated shipping containers. Both the people I had chatted with alighted here, leaving me to enjoy the icebergs alone. To reach Qasigiannuit we had sailed south from Ilulissat. Now the journey to Aasiaat was taking us west, in the

direction of Canada's Baffin Island. It took another hour and a half to reach our destination.

Aasiaat means "The Spiders" in Greenlandic and the town's coat of arms depicts a spider's web, although the spiders that do manage to survive here actually live in burrows. With a population of 3,142 Aasiaat is Greenland's fourth biggest town after Nuuk, Sisimiut and Ilulissat. As a local mountain guide had related to me, Aasiaat is decidedly flat by Greenlandic standards but is nonetheless attractive, especially with the surrounding archipelago of similarly flat islands.

I alighted at the town's broad quay and set out to explore. I passed Aasiaat's colonial old town and a little further on I came to a large supermarket. Locals were selling household knick-knacks outside, forming a small flea market. The objects on sale were of the sort one might find at any flea market: there were no harpoons or walrus tusks on offer. Even though the day was Sunday the supermarket was open

but had few customers. Indeed the whole town seemed rather quiet, perhaps because of the day of the week.

The longest road on the island followed the coast out to the airport. I followed it, luxuriating in the sunshine and cool air. The airport was closed, so when I reached it I wandered into the tundra and sat down to eat my packed lunch by a frozen lake surrounded by rock and rust-coloured bog plants. Nearby stood a wooden structure called an *inussuk*. This is a traditional Inuit construction that is seen throughout the Arctic. In Arctic Canada they are called *inuksuit*, or  $\Delta \circ^b \prime \Delta^c$  in aboriginal script; one even appears on the flag of the Canadian province of Nunavut. They are used as a sort of waymark



An *inussuk*, the traditional Inuit equivalent of a cairn

The author on the ferry to Aasiaat. Even tweed doesn't cut the mustard in this chilly environment.



The jawbone of a whale outside Aasiaat's church



(Left) The former residence of an 18th-century whaling station commander; (above) a traditional turf hut of the kind that Greenlanders lived in until the 1950s

to say “you are on the right route”, which is important in a landscape that is often devoid of natural landmarks. They are also used as markers to mean “people were here”, to identify sacred spots and hunting grounds. They are normally made of stone but this example was made of wood and stood about three metres high.

I wandered back into the town, taking the inland road and passing a relatively large cemetery located in a boggy depression that was clearly unsuitable for building. It was filled with modest white wooden crosses and was delimited by the customary white picket fence. I climbed up to a ridge that overlooked the town and admired the view. I could see rows of two-storey apartment buildings and in front of them a children’s playground and an upmarket clothes shop.

I returned to the clutch of quaint colonial buildings in the old town to explore more thoroughly. My first stop was the museum so that I could view it while it was still open. The museum was housed fittingly in one of the historical buildings, specifically the residence of the former colonial administrator. A row of three old cannon stood outside in the garden. The exhibits were interesting and well-presented. Unusually for a museum visit, I was not alone; some locals were also looking around the exhibition space.

Back outside I looked at the colonial houses more closely. They were all wooden clapboard constructions, in an excellent state of repair and painted the same red-brown colour as most of Greenland’s Danish colonial buildings. My favourite was the house of a whaling station commander, built on the nearby island of Kronprinsens Ejlande in 1778 and moved to Aasiaat in 1826. This building was unusual in having two storeys and being built around a small courtyard. The whaling theme continued in the form of a harpoon gun that stood on display by the house. While the competition between a whale and an Inuit hunter armed with handmade weapons may be a fair one, this murderous device looked as though it would spell doom for any hapless cetacean that came within its range.

A large wooden church stood nearby, elevated on a rocky outcrop. The jawbone of a whale had been erected outside to form



A harpoon gun on display in the colonial district of Aasiaat

an arch marking the entrance to the surrounding area of tundra that formed the churchyard. A separate wooden campanile held two bells. In front of the church there stood a traditional turf hut. The overall effect of the colonial area was quite charming and it gave me a better feel for the days of Danish colonialism even than the older buildings that stood in Ilulissat.

The colonial name for Aasiaat was Egedesminde, in honour of Hans Egede; the name literally means “Memory of Egede”. Hans Egede was a Lutheran missionary who travelled to Greenland in 1721 to save the souls of the descendants of the Norse colonists who had settled in Greenland several hundred years earlier.

He was concerned that the colonists would not have heard of the Reformation and so would have retained Catholicism instead of converting to Lutheranism. Of even greater concern to Egede was the possibility that the colonists might have abandoned Christianity altogether. Despite a thorough search, he found no Norse-Greenlanders and so preached to the Inuit instead. This posed some cross-cultural challenges: for example, Egede found that the

Inuit had no concept of bread so his translation of the Lord’s Prayer into Greenlandic used the phrase “Give us this day our daily seal”. Egede went on to found the city now known as Nuuk and is still highly revered in Greenland.

I continued my perambulations by following a street along the coast. I passed several rows of basic apartment blocks. The side of each block bore a mural depicting scenes from traditional Inuit life. The idyllic paintings of rainbows,



A Greenlandic garden



Inuit children play on a swing



Modern prefabricated houses along the coast



(Above and below) crossing the icefjord as the ferry approaches Ilulissat

seals, seabirds, whales, kayaks and igloos stood in stark contrast to the utilitarian concrete of the social housing that acted as a canvas. Beyond these blocks I came to a large wooden building, its clapboards freshly painted in the same deep red as the Danish colonial buildings near the harbour. It seemed to be some sort of community centre but the only sign of activity was a pair of local women sitting in the sun nearby.

A wooden pedestrian bridge took me over a swampy gap in the bedrock. Beyond it I found a clutch of prefabricated houses and a group

of small children playing on a swing. I soon found myself back on Aasiaat's main road. All of a sudden the town came to life as I watched dozens of people walking along the road towards me. They appeared to be on their way back from some sort of event, although it was too late for church so I could only guess at what it might have been. The flurry of activity ended quickly and I was soon alone again.

I had not yet explored the western end of the town, so I headed in that direction. The area proved to be something of a disappointment because it was dominated by the island's rubbish



dump. Household refuse, white goods and discarded items of machinery were strewn around the ground, providing a sharp contrast to the beauty of the steep-banked strait that separated the island of Aasiaat from its rocky and uninhabited neighbour.

As I headed back to the quayside I noticed a house with a sort of garden. Three bones that I took to be whale ribs had been erected to form a sort of tripod and a few sculptures made of bone and wood stood around it. There was even a plant-pot and a green garden swing hanging from the balcony. For better or for worse, there is no private land at all in Greenland; all Greenlanders rent their homes from the government.

The time had come for me to take the ferry back to Ilulissat. On the way I stopped at a convenience store and bought a bottle of low-alcohol beer. Perhaps because of the problems Greenland suffers with alcoholism, licensing laws are strict. However, it is legal to buy low-alcohol beer even on Sundays when stronger brews must remain on the shelves.

When I arrived at the pier I found the ferry that was to take me away from Aasiaat was much larger and ship-like than the smaller vessel that had brought me here. Before boarding I chatted with a couple of locals for a while. One gave me his address and asked me to send him a postcard of Big Ben, a promise I fulfilled on my return home. I also met a man who told me he was a musician; music is important in both traditional and modern Greenlandic life, with the country's inhabitants releasing 10–15 CDs a year between them. While this number is small in absolute terms, it is the highest in the world per head of population.

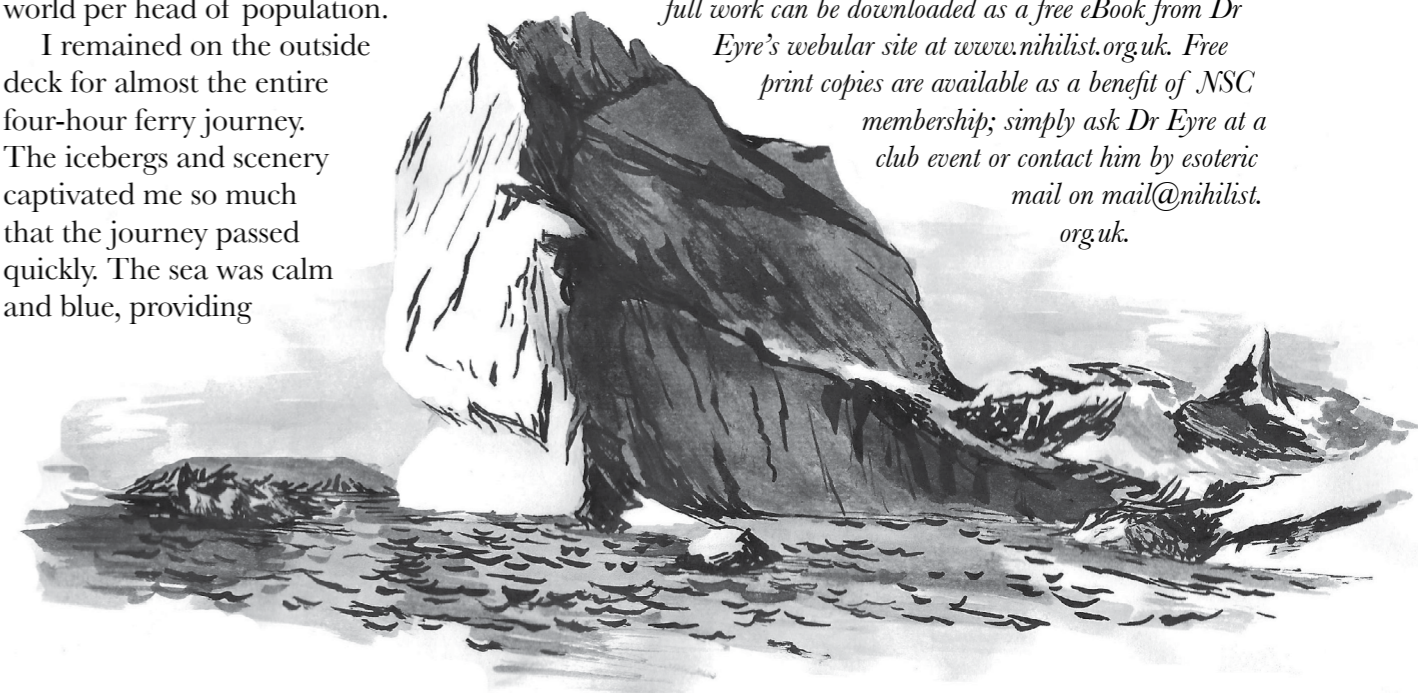
I remained on the outside deck for almost the entire four-hour ferry journey. The icebergs and scenery captivated me so much that the journey passed quickly. The sea was calm and blue, providing

a serene backdrop for the vast hunks of ice. The temperature dropped once we were out at sea so I was forced to spend about 40 minutes inside warming up. The density of icebergs reached its peak just as we crossed the icefjord on the final approach to Ilulissat. By this time the sun was low in the sky, casting an especially rich light over the floating formations.

It was 10.30pm when we docked. As I walked up through Ilulissat I passed a group of teenage boys sitting on a bench. They greeted me with a round of applause. They had been doing this for all passers-by as a youthful prank. I greeted them in Danish. I should have liked to have understood how they felt about living in such a remote part of the world when television made it so easy for them to see the lifestyles available elsewhere. Did they envy those who lived in big cities in lower latitudes or pity them? Did the warm beaches of the Caribbean look like a paradise or a torment?

I stopped off at a Spar convenience store to stock up on food. The young woman working as a cashier danced gently to the music playing in the shop as she sold sweets to the pair of similarly young women ahead of me in the queue. Despite the daylight it was now bedtime but the light on the icefjord was simply too beguiling to ignore. I climbed up to a vantage point and munched on some biscuits while staring at the icebergs reflected in the millpond-still blue water with the yellow sun grazing Disko Island on the horizon. Would I ever see anything as beautiful as this again?

*This is an extract from Dr Eyre's most recent travelogue Crucible of Ice: Two Weeks in Greenland. The full work can be downloaded as a free eBook from Dr Eyre's webular site at [www.nihilist.org.uk](http://www.nihilist.org.uk). Free print copies are available as a benefit of NSC membership; simply ask Dr Eyre at a club event or contact him by esoteric mail on [mail@nihilist.org.uk](mailto:mail@nihilist.org.uk).*





## CLUB NOTES

### Priya's Letter-Writing Project

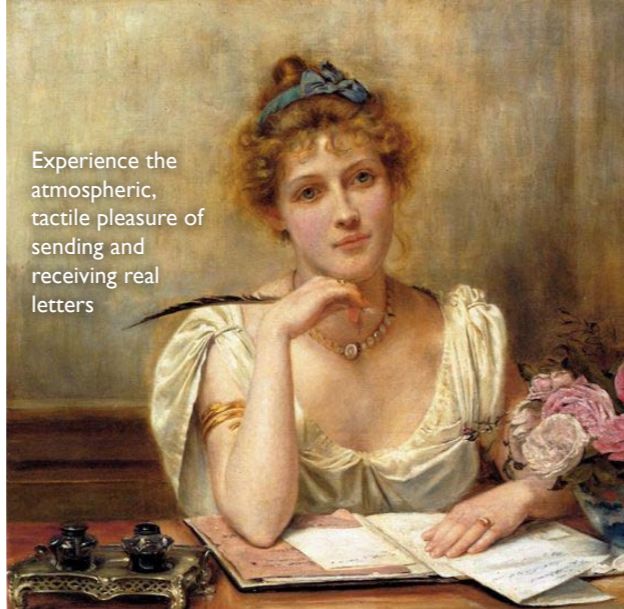
PRIYA KALI WRITES: "Good evening, dearest Chaps and Chapettes of the Sheridan fold. You may have followed some of my discussions in the past [mostly on Facebook] about various letter-writing groups which I have tried and found either desperately lacking, full of poor desperates, or particularly unsuitable for the vintage-loving temperament of Milady.

"For what better than to receive a beautiful, hand-written letter in the post? On proper thick, classic water-marked paper, written by fountain pen, subtly fragranced (or not), inscribed by the light of a lone burning candle, stylish lampshade, or, for the most romantic effect, by the pale summer moonlight?"

"Such long-wearing thoughts have inspired this Lady to start a new community for letter-writers, entitled Milady Sweet Pea's Postal Service (PPS). All you need to do is write to miladysweetpps@gmail.com with your name and address, and you will be suitably matched in a short space of time. You are all welcome to join at no cost.

"There is an accompanying blog with some more information, so please do stop by for a quick read while visiting the Old Hinternet: <https://miladysweetpps.wordpress.com>.

Please note that this is not a dating service.



Experience the atmospheric, tactile pleasure of sending and receiving real letters

### Summer Picnic Redux

AFTER THE SUCCESS of our Club picnic in June, the Glorious Committee decided it was worth squeezing another in, which duly took place on 20th August. We were only teased by one spattering of rain—and again we avoided a dousing by ducking under the boughs of a waterproof tree—but it was noticeably windy, which was both a hazard for hats and a source of undesirable leaf matter in the food. Highlight must have been the small bottle of salted caramel liqueur produced by Scarheart. It was pleasant enough, but at the same time intense and sickly. Richard D'Astardly peeled away and staggered home, later revealing that he spent the evening in the foetal position and blaming everything on the liqueur. The rest of us made it to the Grenadier pub where the gaffer kindly let us use a reserved room until it was needed.



It took a knife and several corkscrews to access the sweet, salty nectar. Some wished we hadn't



Sheridanite picnickers battle the breeze in Hyde Park



Settled in the back room of the Grenadier we do look a bit like a political meeting

### Club Tie Corner

NO ACTUAL TIES this time, though we do have this NSC bangle spotted in a vintage shop in Edinburgh, this image of Australian Broadcasting Corporation sports presenter Shannon Byrne wearing what appears to be a NSC top, courtesy of Antipodean Member Keith Petersen, and this photo of musician Syd Barrett (an outtake from the Madcap Laughs session by Mick Rock, London, 1969) under an NSC blanket.

### New Member



HEARTY CONGRATS to David Wright (right) from Ipswich, who has joined the ranks of the righteous this month.



COMMANDER David Wright



Shannon Byrne



Syd Barrett



Xan Fielding (at the bottom, no shirt) with guerrillas in the White Mountains in Crete

### Small Ads

RICHARD D'ASTARDLY writes to inform us that ex-SOE operative Xan Fielding placed this advertisement in *The Times*, 31st July 1950: "Tough yet sensitive ex-classical scholar, ex-secret agent, ex-guerrilla leader, 31, recently reduced to penury through incompatibility with the post-war world: Mediterranean lover, gambler and general dabbler: fluent French and Greek speaker, inevitable Italian: would do anything unreasonable and unexpected if sufficiently rewarding and legitimate."





## Forthcoming Events



**BOTH OFFICIAL NSC JAUNTS (AND) 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 7th September

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.

### **Swing Time**

Saturday 10th September

7.45–midnight

Kensington Business College, Main Hall, 4 Wild Court, London, WC2B 4AU

Admission: £12 in advance ([www.swingdanceuk.com](http://www.swingdanceuk.com)), £15 on the door

Dress: Bring out your 20s flapper dress, your 30s Trilby, your 40s two-tone shoes, your 50s petticoat or simply something stylish

Swingdance UK's monthly party, this time with Kai Hoffman & Her Kombo, led by American chanteuse Kai who knows how to fill a floor, plus resident DJ Simon "Mr Kicks" Selmon who will keep you dancing to more great vintage tunes collected over his 30 years of playing for dancers. A-one, a-two, not sure what to do? Learn the moves with Beginners and Intermediate Lindy Hop classes from 7.45 till 8.30. Lots of space to swing your thing on a large wood dance floor, plus a pop-up bar.

### **Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair:**

#### **The Vintage Collections**

Sunday 11th September

11am–5pm (trade from 10.30am)

The Old Finsbury Town Hall, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4RP

Admission: £4 (2-for-1 entry with pre-booked tickets)

Winner of the 2015 Time Out Love London Awards, this perennial offers some 50 stalls offering vintage clothes, shoes, handbags, hats, gloves, textiles and jewellery from the 1900s to the 1990s. There is also a tea room, alterations booth plus sometimes live entertainment too. More details at [www.clerkenwellvintage.com](http://www.clerkenwellvintage.com)



Check out the Vintage Collections Fair on 11th September

[fashionfair.co.uk](http://fashionfair.co.uk).

On 11th September, Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair hosts the biannual fair for those looking to inject their wardrobe with original fashion items that inspire the design houses today. From pieces that tap into AW16's key trends (velvet dresses, mac coats, 80s ruffles and capes) to timeless garments and accessories that you'll wear this season and forever.

### **Patcham Swing Dance**

Saturday 17th September

7.30–11pm

Patcham Memorial Hall, Old London Road, Brighton  
Admission: Unclear but presumably pay on the door

Swing dance night, playing music from the 1930s and 1940s, with guest DJ Slick Nick. For more details contact Rick or Sara on 07828 811262.

### **Black Tie Ballroom Club**

Friday 23rd September

7.30–11.30pm

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

Admission: £5 (earlybird) or 10 in advance  
Dress code: Strictly black tie, evening dress or vintage

Vintage ballroom dancing at the Tea House Theatre with operatic baritone Alistair Sutherland who will perform two half-hour

Swingdance UK's monthly party

# Swing Time

with Kai Hoffman & her Kombo

**Saturday 10 September**

7.45 Lindy Hop class Beginners & Intermediates  
8.30 Dancing till 12am Swing, RnB, Rock'n'Roll  
£12 in advance (see website) - £15 on the door

**KBC, 4 Wild Court, Holborn WC2B 4AU**  
[www.swingdanceuk.com](http://www.swingdanceuk.com) • 01895 613 703 • [mail@swingdanceuk.com](mailto:mail@swingdanceuk.com)

sets singing through the voice trumpet, 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](http://wegottickets.com). Facebook: [www.facebook.com/BlackTieBallroomClub](http://www.facebook.com/BlackTieBallroomClub).

### Distinguished Gentlemen's Ride

Sunday 25th September

All over the world

A bit like the Tweed Run for vintage motorcycles instead of bicycles, the DGR will take place on 25th September simultaneously in 500 cities around the world, with the aim of raising money for the Movember Foundation. For more details see their website at [www.gentlemansride.com](http://www.gentlemansride.com).



A taste of the Distinguished Gentleman's Ride from last year

The Dixie Ticklers present

### Golden Grinde

Friday 30th September

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](http://www.goldengrinde.com)

Live New Orleans jazz aboard the Golden Hinde historic ship in dry dock with DJing till late, plus cocktails (which you can sip in Sir Francis Drake's private cabin) and hearty food menu by Porky's BBQ

### The New Sheridan Club's

### 10th Anniversary Party

#### DECADEnt

Saturday 1st October

7pm-1am

Ground floor events room, Cecil's, 8 Holyrood St, London SE1 2EL

Admission: Free for Members, £5 for guests and strangers (refundable if you join the Club on the night)

Dress: Decadent, or revive your favourite costume from the previous 18 parties

See page 13.



Happy Birthday, Candlelight Club. Love from Vinnie and the boys

### The Candlelight Club's 6th Birthday Party

Friday 7th and Saturday 8th October

7pm-12am

A secret London location

Admission: £20 in advance (Saturday sold out)

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.

Believe it or not, it's been six years since we first started doling out the hooch and blowing a mean horn. To celebrate we'll have live music from cheeky Frenchman Benoit Viellefon and his Quintet, plus vintage vinylism from the NSC's own DJ Auntie Maureen spinning shellac. And keeping everyone in order with a song, a slap and a tickle will be that Lord of Cabaret Misrule, Champagne Charlie.

There may even be cake.

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](http://www.thecandlelightclub.com). See the video.



Benoit Viellefon at his last Candlelight Club appearance

Dr Blah at ease with nature, snapped at the recent wedding of Members Oliver Lane and Ella Armstrong Lach (picture by Suzanne Coles)



## CONTACTING US

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[mrscarheart@newsheridanclub.co.uk](mailto:mrscarheart@newsheridanclub.co.uk)

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).