

DESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE M... IE 126 APRIL 2017

Write On

Priya Kali on the history of letter-writing and Richard D'Astardly on how to become an old-school gentleman of letters

Tie one

Tim Eyre offers a chap's guide to Taiwan

A-punting we will go

The annual Oxford Punt, Picnic 'n' Plunge is here again

Hancock's half-hour

A peek into the world of Professor Philip Hancock



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 5th April in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm. With 2017 the 50th anniversary of the Sexual Offences Act of 1967, Auntie Maureen will talk to us about the perils and pleasures of the queer nightlife scene in early 20th-century London. "Nightclubs and underground bars mushroomed in Soho from the early 20th century," she explains. "Located next to the fashionable West End, London shopping districts and Theatreland, Soho was also a district of migrants. The growth of jazz clubs, bottle parties, queer clubs and dining clubs meant the area flourished as a cosmopolitan and bohemian destination. Not always a welcome addition to the neighbourhood, these hidden dives were spaces where musicians, artists, undesirables, sexual perverts and criminals challenged social conventions by mixing up their social as well as sexual behaviour."



The Last Meeting

At a particularly packed meeting, our speaker this time was Priya Kali, on the subject of *The Lost Art of Letter Writing*. Pri took us on a canter through the origins and history of the written letter, the role played by letters in Shakespeare's plays, the importance of letters between soldiers and their loved ones during wartime and the efforts made to ensure a postal service that could cope, crazy concepts like "V-Mail" where your letter

was photographed on to microfilm for transport by plane across the Atlantic before being printed out again on the other side, and finally to the era of email. Discussions were had within the room on the relative merits of email versus the written letter, and the indeed the relative merits of different types of pen.

Finally Priya reminded us that last summer she launched Lady Sweetpea's Postal Service, which aims to match people with pen pals to keep alive the tradition of exchanging written letters.

An essay from the talk begins on page 4, followed by Richard D'Astardly's practical guide to being an old-school letter writer.



(Above and below) Priya begins her talk to a packed house (right)



(Right) Stewart and George look on while Scarheart barks commands; (left) William Cole (r) and Lucky Henry



(Left) Priya elaborates on her thesis to Tim Eyre (l) and Stuart Mitchell; (below) who can tell what fiendish thoughts are passing through Scarheart's Sontaran head as he nods politely to Gabriel Blaze?



(Below) Despite appearances, Harrison was not actually about to give Eugenie a slap; (below right) a life-affirming scene outside in Smokers' Alley



The Lost Art of

“**T**HE ROMANCE OF the mail and the news it brings, the transformative possibilities of the post—only the landing of a letter beckons us with ever-renewable faith.”

—W.H. Auden

“We lay aside letters never to read them again, and at last we destroy them out of discretion, and so disappears the most beautiful, the most immediate breath of life, irrecoverable for ourselves and for others.” —Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Do you remember the last time that you received a letter, or wrote one? It could be so far in the past that you cannot remember, or indeed this might be something that our younger members have not experienced in their lifetimes! A pen pal, a sweetheart, a grandparent, letters from them with stories, photos, drawings,

perfume, or details of normal daily humdrum affairs. But handwritten (perhaps typed on an old typewriter) and signed, with or without the “X”s and “O”s so much in common parlance. (Today we might even “XO” a colleague or stranger with no negative repercussions!)

Different inks, different pens, with handwriting as someone’s individual signature, their mark. The tactile pleasure of fine paper between your fingers and the visual pleasure of beautiful ink and writing waiting to be read, rather than short, stilted, inexpressive and unemotional bursts via Intelligent Telephones that we are all now so used to.

But what is the history behind letter-writing, and what are the elements that make it a truly expressive and beautiful art form?

Letter-writing most likely began when ancient cultures expanded their political and economic stretch, around 4000 BC, before which trade and administration had relied solely on memory. From then on writing became a dependable method of recording, sending and presenting transactions in a permanent form. Letters were used to transmit information, maintain financial accounts and keep historical records.

Indeed, the word “letter” comes from the old French *lettre*, which in turns is derived from the Latin *littera*, meaning letter of the alphabet. *Littera* can also mean writing, a document or record, and in its plural form

News from My Lad (1858–9) by James Campbell, capitalising on public interest in the fate of troops engaged in putting down the Indian Mutiny. It shows an old locksmith who has just received a letter from his soldier son, reading, “Lucknow March 1858. My dear old Daddy, I dare say you will read this in the old shop and here am I under the burning sun of India.”



Letter Writing

By **Milady Sweet Pea**

litterae, an epistle. The first recorded usage of this sense is in the early 13th century. Therefore an epistle is a letter, especially a formal one—a literary composition in the form of a letter.

In both Mesoamerica and Ancient Egypt writing may have evolved through calendrics, historical and environmental events that needed to be recorded. Key religious texts such as the Bible were also recorded in “letters”. There are 21 letters in the New Testament, half of which were signed by Paul, one of the first leaders of the Christian church. However only seven letters (with consensus dates) are considered genuine by most scholars (First Thessalonians, Galatians, First and Second Corinthians, Philippians, Philemon, and Romans).



Shakespeare's letters as a dramatic device

Shakespeare could be said to be a letter aficionado, but he just used the important media

of the day to help tell his stories, including some critical letters to dramatic effect. A letter might introduce a character by proxy, who might never actually have physically appeared in the play itself. Letters appear on stage in all but five of Shakespeare's dramas, 111 letters in all. These echoed norms of the Elizabethan era, a time when writers made their own pen and ink, letter-writing protocols were strict and missives were dispatched by personal messengers or carriers, and often received and read in public.

Sailor: "There's a letter for you, sir; it comes from the ambassador that was bound for



Horatio. [Reads.] Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king: they have letters for him. Act IV. Scene VI.

England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.” (Hamlet, IV, vi)

Letters for Enlightenment

In the 17th and 18th centuries letters were an art form that was also used to self-educate, and to practice anything from critical reading, both self-expressive and polemical writing, and exchanging ideas with like-minded individuals. For some in particular, letters were a written performance, while for others it was also seen as a way of communication and a method of feedback.

There was also a lot of trust in the importance of letters and ensuring that they reached their destination, through the evolution of the postal system. Moving along to the 19th century the great writer Oscar Wilde would write a letter at his Chelsea home in Tite Street, would attach stamp and throw the letter out of the window. He would be as certain as he could be that someone passing would see the letter, assume it had been dropped by accident, and put it into the nearest letterbox! But how did this postal system develop, and what were the historical pressures that brought it into being?

The Royal Mail

In 1632, King Charles I appointed Thomas Witherings as the Postmaster of foreign mails.

The iconic Penny Black, the world's first adhesive stamp in a public postal system, when it was issued in May 1840. Prior to that postage was paid by the recipient based on size and distance but the new stamp allowed proof of pre-payment by the sender, at a flat rate regardless of distance

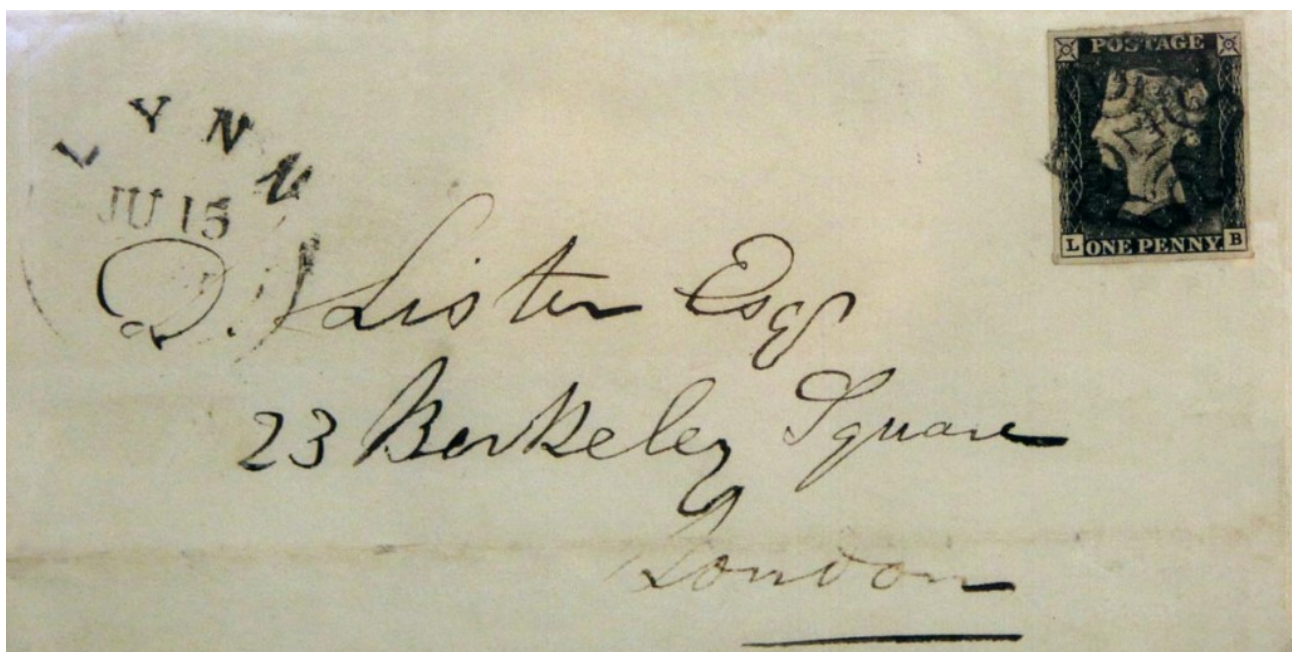
Three years later Witherings proposed to Charles's Council to “settle a pacquet post between London and all parts of His Majesty's dominions, for the carrying and recarrying of his subjects letters”.

In order to justify the expenditure, Witherings suggested that, “anie fight at sea, anie distress of His Majestie's ships (which God forbid), anie wrong offered by anie nation to anie of ye coastes of England or anie of His Majestie's forts...the newes will come sooner than thought”. This implied that the reason for this innovation was to provide better defence of the realm. Within two years a state letter monopoly and the public institution of the Post Office had been created.

During the English Civil wars (1642–1651) both the Royalist and Parliamentarians maintained their own postal systems, and a little known fact is that the Parliamentarian New Model Army employed its musicians as messengers.

Bishopmarks

The growth of the Royal Mail continued and in 1660, Colonel Sir Henry Bishop was appointed Postmaster General. He had served as a Royalist officer during the Civil War and was given the “farming” patent of the Post Office as a reward. Bishop ensured that a metal stamp was “put upon every letter showing the day of the month that every letter comes to the office, so that no Letter Carryer may dare to detain a letter from post to post, which before was usual”. And so





the Bishopmark, or date stamp, was created.

The US Post Office

Only a few decades after Witherings had set up the Royal Mail under Charles I, on the other side of the Atlantic in the North American colonies such as Boston, the need to send letters home to England, or between colonies, led to the establishment of a Boston to New York service set up in 1672. As the monarchs changed and decades moved on, in 1691, a grant of letters patent from the joint sovereigns, William and Mary, empowered the recipient “to erect, settle, and establish within the chief parts of their majesties’ colonies and plantations in America, an office or offices for receiving and dispatching letters and pacquets, and to receive, send, and deliver the same under such rates and sums of money as the planters shall agree to give, and to hold and enjoy the same for the term of twenty-one years”.

By 1710, the English postal system had extended to the colonies, leading up to the overthrow of the Imperial postal service in 1774–5. Until this time, the majority of post moved between the colonies and counting houses and government in London. The American Revolution (1765–83) increased post between colonies, and features explicitly in the US Constitution which authorises the US postal system. The first American Postmaster General was Benjamin Franklin in 1775, and in 1792, the Post Office Department was created from his operation. Over time the Department evolved, and in 1872 it was made a Cabinet-

level department, leading to its current status as an official agency of the US government that is legally obliged to serve all Americans regardless of geography, at uniform price and quality.

Letters in Wartime: The Great War

During the Great War (1914–18), there was an expectation among soldiers to stay in touch with those at home, founded on the postal service during the Boer War of 1899. Unfortunately, the logistics of doing so in WW1 provided a challenge on an unprecedented scale. Brave British soldiers fought on the front lines in poorly defended trenches, and following their heroic battles and gruelling campaigns many remain there, buried in their graves. Given the death and loss constantly endured by these soldiers, the most effective weapon became neither shell, rifle nor tank, but morale. And letters here played a crucial role, with up to 12 million letters a week being delivered to the men along with invaluable hope and a reminder of home comforts and loved ones, along with motivating propaganda.

The Second World War

As Britain moved towards the Second World War, the Home Postal Depot (HPD) RE was first established in London in the late summer of



1939. It was then moved to GPO Reading shortly after war broke out. Relocated to GPO premises in Bournemouth to be nearer to the Continent, this provided more efficient service to the troops of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in France and Belgium. Sadly, during the war the number of battlefield casualties produced large quantities of undeliverable mail. This was checked against unit records and disposed of if required.

Interestingly, the generation of engineers trained by the GPO for telecoms operations were critical to British developments in radar and code breaking. The Colossus computers at Bletchley Park built by GPO engineer Tommy Flowers with the team at Post Office Research Station, Dollis Hill, as many will know, broke the Lorenz cipher. This was of course followed by Alan Turing's electromechanical Bombe, which broke the Enigma code that helped the Allies win the War.

V-Mail

"There must be millions of people all over the world who

never get any love letters...I could be their leader." —Charlie Brown

Meanwhile, in the US, V-Mail was inspired by the British model "airgraph", invented in the 1930s by the Eastman Kodak Company in conjunction with Imperial Airways (now BA) and Pan-American Airways. V-Mail was virtual mail, where letters were photographed and transported on microfilm rather than as individual sheets of paper. Once the microfilms reached America these were then reproduced as physical letters and sent to their destinations. The savings in weight and volume for the planes transporting microfilms were significant, with one reel of 16mm microfilm containing up to 18,000 letters, and taking up only a fraction of the space.



The Telegraph

The word "telegraph" originates from the Greek *τῆλε* (*têle*) which means "at a distance," combined with *γράφειν* (*gráphein*), "to write" and was first coined by the French inventor of the Semaphore line in 1792, Claude Chappe. However the electrical telegraph, as it eventually came to be, was preceded

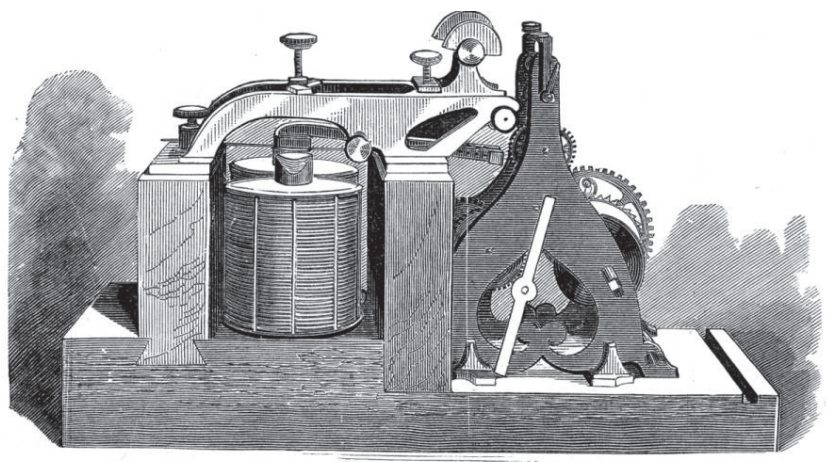
by other kinds of long-distance communication including smoke signals, beacons, reflected light signals, and flag semaphore signals.

The first working telegraph was built by English inventor Francis Ronalds in 1816 and used static electricity. Based at his family home on Hammersmith Mall, a complete subterranean system in a 175-yard long trench as well as an eight-mile-long overhead cable. Later on, Carl Friedrich Gauss and Wilhelm Weber built the first electromagnetic telegraph for regular communication in 1833 in Göttingen, connecting Göttingen Observatory

and the Institute of Physics at a distance of 0.62 miles (1 kilometre).

Electrical telegraphy was independently developed and patented in the United States in 1837 by Samuel Morse. It was his assistant, Alfred Vail, who developed the famous code signalling the alphabet with Morse. The first telegram in the United States was sent by Morse on 11th January 1838, across two miles of wire at Speedwell Ironworks near Morristown, New Jersey. It was a few years later, in 1844, that the famous message, "What hath God wrought!" (from the Bible's Book of Numbers) was successfully transmitted from the Capitol in Washington, DC, to Baltimore, Maryland, and signalled the arrival of a new era in telecommunications—and perhaps the slow but eventual death of letter-writing as a common form of communication. Electrical telegraphy was then superseded by the arrival of radio in the early 20th century, which led to radiotelegraphy and other forms of wireless telegraphy.

Fancy a bit of letter-writing to a fellow Club



MORSE TELEGRAPH RECEIVER OF 1844—THE FIRST INSTRUMENT RECORDING THE MORSE CODE.

Albert Einstein
Old Grove Rd.
Nassau Point
Peconic, Long Island

August 2nd, 1939

F.D. Roosevelt,
President of the United States,
White House
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Some recent work by E. Fermi and L. Szilard, which has been communicated to me in manuscript, leads me to expect that the element uranium may be turned into a new and important source of energy in the immediate future. Certain aspects of the situation which has arisen seem to call for watchfulness and, if necessary, quick action on the part of the Administration. I believe therefore that it is my duty to bring to your attention the following facts and recommendations:

In the course of the last four months it has been made probable - through the work of Joliot in France as well as Fermi and Szilard in America - that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium, by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new radium-like elements would be generated. Now it appears almost certain that this could be achieved in the immediate future.

This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable - though much less certain - that extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed. A single bomb of this type, carried by boat and exploded in a port, might very well destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding territory. However, such bombs might very well prove to be too heavy for transportation by air.

member?

Join Milady Sweet Pea's Postal Service!

If interested please see <https://miladysweetpps.wordpress.com> for more information or send an esoteric mail to miladysweetpps@gmail.com.

Fancy learning more about Bletchley Park? Stuart Mitchell and Milady Sweet Pea will be hosting a Club outing to the site, now a museum, on Saturday 3rd June, coinciding with the institution's 1940s weekend. Please see further details on the Events page of the NSC website and, in due course, the Events section of *Resign!* for more information and details of how to join our merry band of aspiring war historians.

HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S DIPLOMATIC MAIL

Sir Richard D'Astardly on how to become a chap of letters

PART ONE

Writing paper
The search for suitable writing paper can be eased by dividing your correspondence into first class, second class and third class. You may not always see the point in sending a letter written on expensive writing paper to someone who is going to bin the letter after they have read it. You can therefore use something as simple as photocopier paper and business envelopes for your third class correspondence. Furthermore, you can manufacture a basic “headed paper” by arranging images and text in a word processor, which can then be printed through a laser printer. Cheap, simple and an easy way of prototyping ideas for your first class headed writing paper and envelopes. If you write to the same parties repeatedly, you can add append “pro forma” to your letter-heading, such as when writing to your MP, which you should do regularly. The Royal Navy officers’ manual for 1944 specifies the format for junior officers to write to senior officers as:

FROM:
TO:
SUBMITTED:

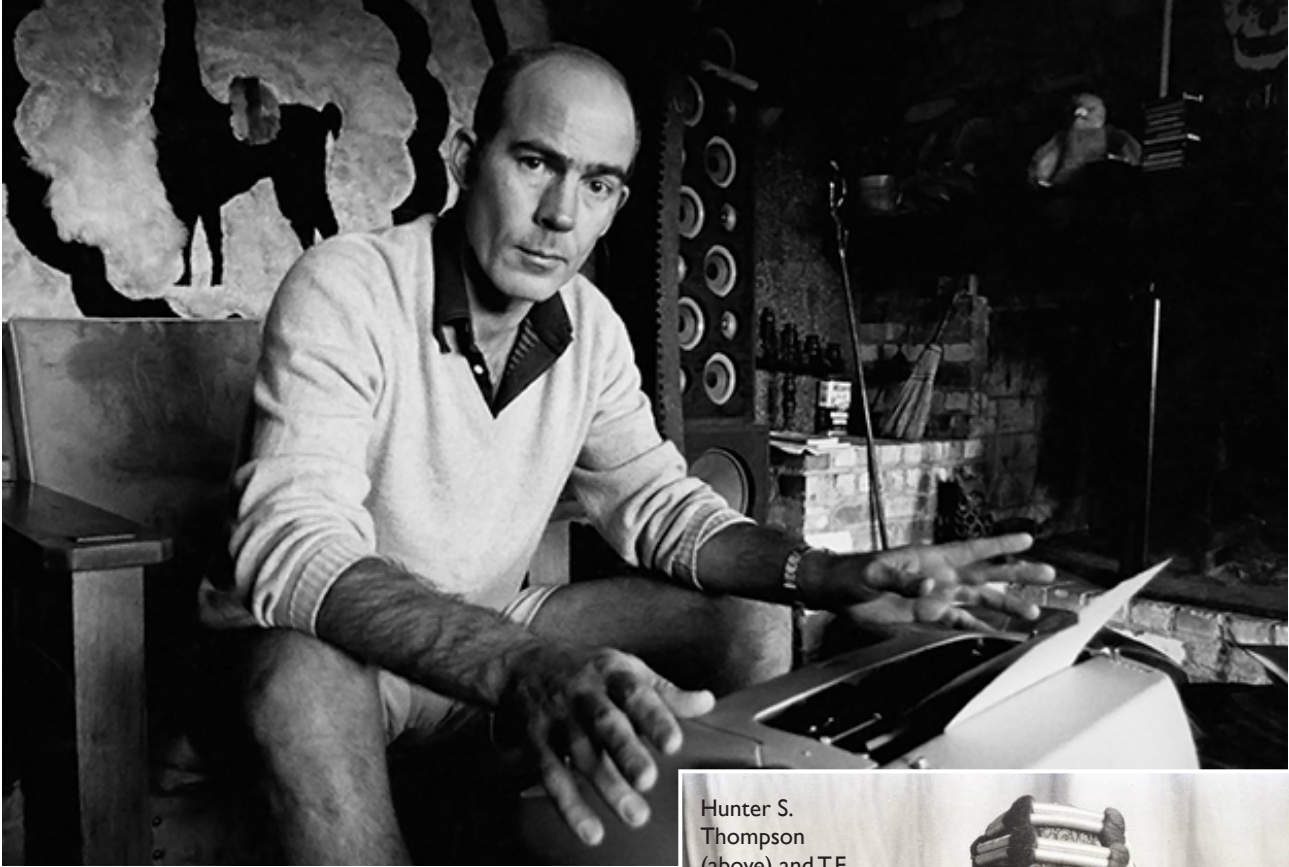
This reduces the quantity of “by your leave to remain” which would clog channels of communications in the Navy and may be profitably emulated when writing to officialdom. However, when writing to persons who receive a great volume of mail, a recognisable symbol on your letter heading (and envelope) will enable your recipient to recognise your letters and remember their sender. The brain is much better adapted to dealing with images than it is at dealing with second-order derivatives such as symbolic logic (the written word), which it has to process before absorbing.

In the unlikely event that the other Sheridanite to whom you are writing does not have an entry in *Almanack de Gotha*, *Debrett's Peerage & Baronetage* or *Who's Who* then you can refer to *Debrett's Etiquette & Modern Manners* in order to select the correct form of address for the heading of your letter. *Debrett's Etiquette* will give all formal requirements for beginning and ending a letter but study of letters from previous centuries will reveal all manner of signing off used in personal correspondence: “Yours in Apollo”.

Satisfactory writing paper may be obtained from ordinary high street stationers for “second class” duty. For first class duty you need one of the big names like Smythson, Crown Mill, Clairefontaine or Crane, to name a few. There are little enclaves of enthusiasts to be found on the internet who spend much time discussing the merits of different papers and paper manufacturers, such as www.fountainpennetwork.com.

It is always a good idea to test the paper you intend to use with the exact pen and ink you will use when writing. Some papers will bleed with some types of ink rendering the paper difficult to use. The early Moleskine notebooks used to bleed when used with fountain pens and I had to use their cartridge paper notebooks instead. Moleskine have since remedied this oversight on their part.

Paper from the luxury makers can be expensive but many fine writing papers are available from makers who are not a luxury brand and who do not have to spend a fortune on filling the coffers of the Grosvenor Estate in order to break even. Falkiners fine papers (<http://store.falkiners.com>) on Southampton Row (Between Holborn tube and the British Museum) stock paper from many of the ancient manufacturers who for some reason appeared to be based in Kent. Make sure you ask for writing papers because many of the papers are for



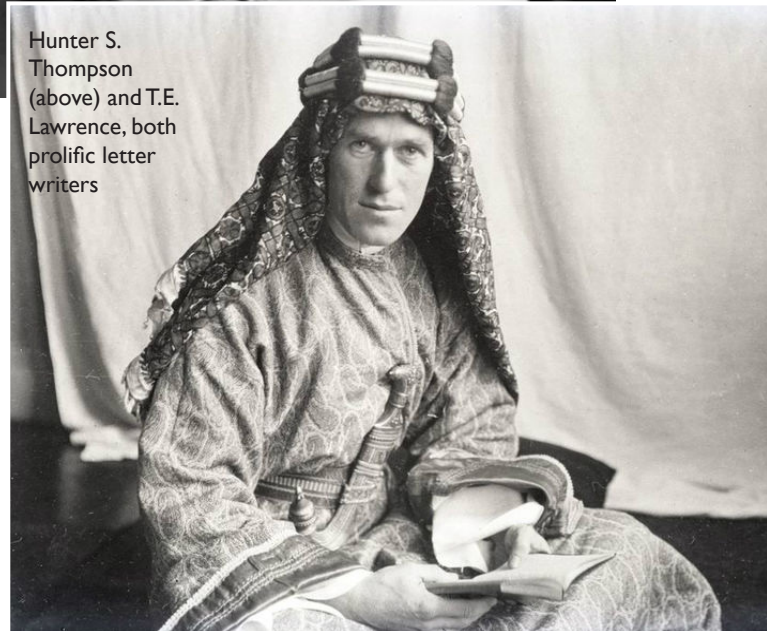
Hunter S. Thompson (above) and T.E. Lawrence, both prolific letter writers

book-binding and are like an old blanket when you try and write on them with an ink pen. *[It looks as if Falkiners merged with Shepherd's bookbinders and have moved to Pimlico; 76 Southampton Row now seems to be a Gregg's —Ed]*

It was through Falkiners that I discovered the magnificent "Archive Text" paper. It was A4 in size and a very light buff colour, so light that you had to hold a sheet of white photocopier paper next to it in order to be able to tell. The paper was the same weight as photocopier paper, and inexpensive, so it was perfect for using as diary paper.

Sadly, the last recession was not kind to paper manufacturers and the company which made Archive Text went out of business. Fortunately I had about ten years supply in stock, for one of my biggest fears was that World War Three would break out and there would be a paper shortage. Since the function, indeed the entire point, of having a war is so that poets can write letters to each other about it and semi-divine scribes like T.E. Lawrence can write Homeric epics, then it is vital to keep in stock enough paper to see you through the war. "That which is not written down might never have happened."

The historical record is well served by the age of letter writing because many seemed to preserve their letters, which has meant that definitive biographies of famous figures may be assembled from the literary estates of all parties.



Arabic. I don't think it is worth you
while puzzling yourself over Moslem
services. It is a religion of the
Desert, incomprehensible outside it.
May I implore you not to put
my autograph close to that of Mr.
G. K. Chesterton.
Yrs. sincerely
T.E. Lawrence

new Parker "51"

and only new Parker "51" has the remarkable
Aero-metric Ink System!

writes dry with wet ink!

Look inside for the silvery sheath

AERO-METRIC—FINEST INK SYSTEM EVER DEvised

Water-resistant Ink • Flexible Nib • Superior Writing • Patented Paper Point • Special Telephone Answering System • Silvery Inlay • Patented Paper Point

THE PARKER 51

THE PARKER 51 WHICH MOST WRITERS OWN

● Like the famous "51" had nothing to equal it! The Aero-metric Ink System is a wholly new method of drawing ink, strong, self-cleaning and self-erasing ink. It erases the way writing you perform ever known. You fill the pen as easily as breathing thanks to Super Tip. The instant starting. Patches out by some a few as smooth as a white sheet. And the ink flow is always uniform. But see—by the new "51". 7 colors and black. Lustrous in gold, blue, green. Pen sleek. \$35.75. Others, \$25.00. For most small sets, \$24.75. "51" Plus, \$30. The Parker Pen Company, Jenkintown, N.Y. U. S. A.; Toronto, Can.

Advert for the Parker 51 fountain pen from 1950

Author Hunter S. Thompson was a letter-writer of the first rank and typed all his letters using carbon paper which meant that, unusually, his own archives contained all of his letters.

The age of the telephone produced a "Permian Extinction" in letter writing. There are far fewer major-league letter writers after this period. To my knowledge, Leonard Bernstein wrote some 60,000 (that's something like three per day), T.E. Lawrence wrote some 20,000 (often long), Janáček wrote some thousand letters to just one *inamorata*. Nine-hundred letters of Charlotte Bronte's survive but at least five times that number are missing. Carbon paper or the photocopier are the remedy for this, in that you can take a copy of your output and place it in your archive.

There are French, German, American and Italian manufacturers of paper, which in these times may be accessed across the internet, but if you are abroad, keep your eyes peeled for stationers because they may stock papers which you have never encountered.

An important quality of a paper is its acidity. There are various grades of acidity in paper which denote its longevity. Something like brown parcel paper would be the most acidic and would disintegrate over a century. Most modern papers like photocopier paper contain so much chalk that they have a negligible acidity. If you aim to have your biographers pawing over your every full stop and comma in 300 years time then it is essential that your paper has a low acidity.

The size of your writing paper is a matter of personal choice. I use DIN A4 because my diary papers are DIN A4. In days of yore, lengthy letters (tens of thousands of words) I used to type on a typewriter but the covering letter would be on writing paper written by hand in ink. If the writing paper is A4

it means that it can be bound on top of the texts which it accompanies. Hence the advantage in A4 writing paper.

Other common sizes are US Letter, which is almost the same size as A4 but not. There are peculiar sizes which you find in government departments and court papers. Someone who works in Whitehall might be able to enlighten us on the nature of these sizes.

Some papers are not made from wood pulp but from cotton. The low acidity of cotton-based paper means that some historic documents have survived by this accident. Cotton papers were made from cotton shirts which had reached the end of their lives but with the invention of nylon by Du Pont in 1949 and the decline of shirt-wearing in general,

alternative sources have to be used.

The pre-war white cotton five pound notes were made from cotton paper which was produced from ex Royal Mail delivery sacks. The Nazi counterfeiting programme produced counterfeit five pound notes that were so accurate as to be indistinguishable from originals. However, they could never get the paper exactly right. They even tried obtaining Turkish cotton, in order to match the cotton used by the British. They did not find out until after the war the secret of the Bank of England's source of cotton: it had been digested in the guts of the Royal Mail for 20 years before it was processed into paper. It will not have escaped your notice that the decline in the size, elegance and value of the five pound note parallels exactly the decline of Realm & Empire.

At the end of the day, mere paper is still for *hoi polloi* because the royalty of writing materials is vellum. The Laws of England have been recorded on vellum for a thousand years. Vellum is made from the intestines of sheep. Falkiners stock vellum off-cuts if you just want to experience writing on vellum without great expense. I treated myself to some vellum for my 30th birthday diary entry.

Fountain Pens

There are two kind of fountain pen: those that write well and those that do not. You require the former.

The situation with pens is similar to the situation with wristwatches in that expensive wrist-watches have become jewellery. You do not need an expensive wristwatch to tell to you the time. The cheapest quartz wrist-watch is ten times more accurate than the most expensive mechanical wristwatch.

I have purchased expensive name-brand ink pens and been disappointed with their performance. The nibs were satisfactory (I tested them in the shop) but sometimes ink flow was erratic, starting out at too higher rate then

tailing off until the ink began to look translucent on the page.

Antique ink pens were fine as jewellery and look flashy in your top pocket if you whip one out to sign a Coutts cheque but they are too fragile to use in front-line service. In my collection the finest of these I inherited from my father: a Parker 51. As he handed it to me he told me, "Son, during the winter of the Korean war, the ink use to freeze in that pen."

I used this Parker 51 all through school but it is now on the "retired list". I suppose I might use it to sign an important document, such as the unconditional surrender of the King's Enemies. Although at this stage I think it is more likely I'll be using it to sign my confession to counter-revolutionary bourgeois revanchism.

If you wish to view luxury pens then Penfriend in the Burlington Arcade have a good selection. You must sit down to write because

the angle of the pen on the paper will be different if you stand up as if at the bar. The lady in Penfriend could see from the manner in which I held and wrote with the fountain pen what kind of nib would suit me.

The ink pens I use in everyday service are from the Hero pen company in Shanghai. Many Chinese goods cannot be purchased

in England because they do not meet British Standards but I think you can purchase them over the internet. Stationery shops in the former Empire can be like stepping into the 1950s, with items which have not been readily available for 40 years, like sealing wax and legal ribbon, there on the shelf. It was on one of these trips I stumbled across the Hero pens. I liked them so much I bought them by the box. They have the best nib I have ever written with and they write for a long time without need for a refill.

I used to use Rotring's fountain pens which are cheap enough that you may buy a selection with different nibs, but they are fed by ink cartridges which I have always found annoying.

Contemporary Hero 329 fountain pen





Overseas stationery shops can be a source of hard-to-find items such as sealing wax and legal ribbon

The problem with cartridge pens is that your choice of ink is limited to the (sometimes proprietary) cartridges. I keep a cartridge fountain pen plus cartridges in my wash kit in case I fail to pack a fountain pen in my suit pocket. Packing a bottle of ink would add too much to volume and weight but ink cartridges are well suited to travel by air. In a more civilised age one would travel via train and liner with a luggage train that included a dispatch box (made by Barrow, Gale & Hepburn) which contained stationery, ink and pens. There was simply no question of running out of ink.

In general duty, I keep a fountain pen inside an aluminium cigar tube, which protects the pen from wear and tear and stops sartorial disasters if it leaks, which fountain pens are prone to when taken onboard aircraft, which have a pressured atmosphere equivalent to 6,000 feet of altitude, compared to sea-level air pressure inside your pen.

The Hero pens are nearly ideal but I have always wanted to design and make a “campaign” model of ink pen for use overseas. It would be made from something strong like engine-turned 316L stainless steel, with a huge barrel and large ink capacity that is filled by pouring in the ink. This would be strong enough

to survive the rough and tumble of life in the field and with an ink capacity which reduced the need for topping-up to an minimum.

Ink

There is ink for fountain pens and ink for dipping pens. Ink for dipping pens dries to a crust and will destroy any fountain pen. Unless you are sure the ink is for fountain pens, do not use it. The nibs on dipping pens become crusty and have to be washed and cleaned after only a few hours use in order to remove this crust.

As with pens, there are little enclaves of enthusiasts to be found on the internet who spend much time discussing the merits of different inks (www.fountainpennetwork.com). As well as hundreds of different shades of colour, there are inks for signing cheques, anti-freeze inks for use in the polar regions, inks for use by left-handed people, etc. The manufacturers of fountain pens know that they can put a hefty mark-up on their ink by adding their own brand. In the same way the difference in the price of ladies’ make-up is determined by the cost of the packaging, the name-brand ink comes in an expensive bottle.

My complaint is that all of the bottles they retail their ink within are tiny. I can remember a quart bottle of ink which we used at school but it was owned by a master who had come off the Ark (in fact it was the Ark Royal, for he had been on Fairy Swordfish during the war). There was a quart bottle of ink in the Law Library at Oxford but I have never seen them for sale. In the art supply world there are manufacturers who will mix ink to your specifications and I am told that the royalty of ink manufacturers, Diamine, will supply large volumes of ink (www.diamineinks.co.uk). Obviously, HRH Prince Charles uses a fountain pen, but for fear of giving an endorsement, does not divulge the name of the company which makes the ink. I am certain it will be British-made and by deduction that ink must be Diamine.

It will come as no surprise to you that I have a lot of ink but it would be ironic if I had enough paper to get through the next war but ran out of ink shortly after the French surrendered, again. Hence my ambition of filling the wine cellar with quart bottles of ink.

Desperate poets pinned down under enemy fire have been reduced to using the chewed-

off end of a rifle cartridge to scribble in their notebooks, after running out of ink. War is Hell. Especially if you run out of ink. Do not let it happen to you.

Sealing wax

Sealing your envelope with wax takes a bit of practice. The main problem is a source of heat. I have used cigar lighters, candles, small Bunsen burners, one of those tins of gel alcohol which caterers use to keep warm salvers of food, and even the gas ring on the cooker. You should practice on a newspaper several times before you attempt to seal your first letter. The main problem is that while you are melting the wax on to the paper, the heat build-up can set the paper on fire. In theory you can heat the wax on a spoon then pour it onto the paper, which should cool the wax before it hits the paper, but I have not found this method easy to complete. In some cases you will be able to add a layer of white card on the inside of the envelope to protect the letter. I experimented with aluminium foil.

To prevent your stamp from sticking to the wax, breathe on it before you use it to add a mist of condensation. Personally I wait for five seconds for the wax to cool and solidify. Different waxes require a different amount of time.

Cornellisons (www.cornelissen.com), just west of the British Museum, stock most of the different colours of sealing wax. Keep your eyes peeled when overseas because you can find brands and sizes of wax unavailable in the UK. Cornellisons is the royalty of artist's supply shops and just a visit to its magnificent Victorian premises is an aesthetic experience in itself.

Suppliers such as Smythson will make a brass sealing wax stamp to your specifications. However, a cheap and easy way of stamping the wax seal is to visit a numismatist or rummage in junk stalls at antiques markets for old foreign coins. You can find coins with symbols upon them such as imperial eagles or Oriental characters which will add a personalised highlight to the wax seal for the expenditure of only a few pounds or even pence. The

impression in the wax is not always clear so the ambiguity is in your favour. If asked about the nature of your wax seal you can always say that you are distantly related to Fu Man Chu on your mother's side.

Part two next issue: designing your letterhead and the joy of rubber stamps



Old foreign coins make cheap and exotic stamps for sealing wax



太 LETTER FROM TAIPEI

"I'M NOT ANTI-TAIWANESE! I don't even know where Taiwan is!" says veteran comedian Stewart Lee in one of his routines. This month my travels have taken me to Taipei, the capital city of Taiwan. Best known as a geo-political flashpoint, Taiwan nevertheless has plenty of interest to members of the New Sheridan Club.

Taiwan is situated about 110 miles off the south-eastern coast of mainland China. The predominant culture is Han Chinese but since 1895 Taiwan has only spent five years under the governance of mainland China. As such, it escaped the destruction of Communist China's Cultural Revolution and much traditional Chinese culture persists. There are five experiences I'd like to share with my fellow New Sheridanites.

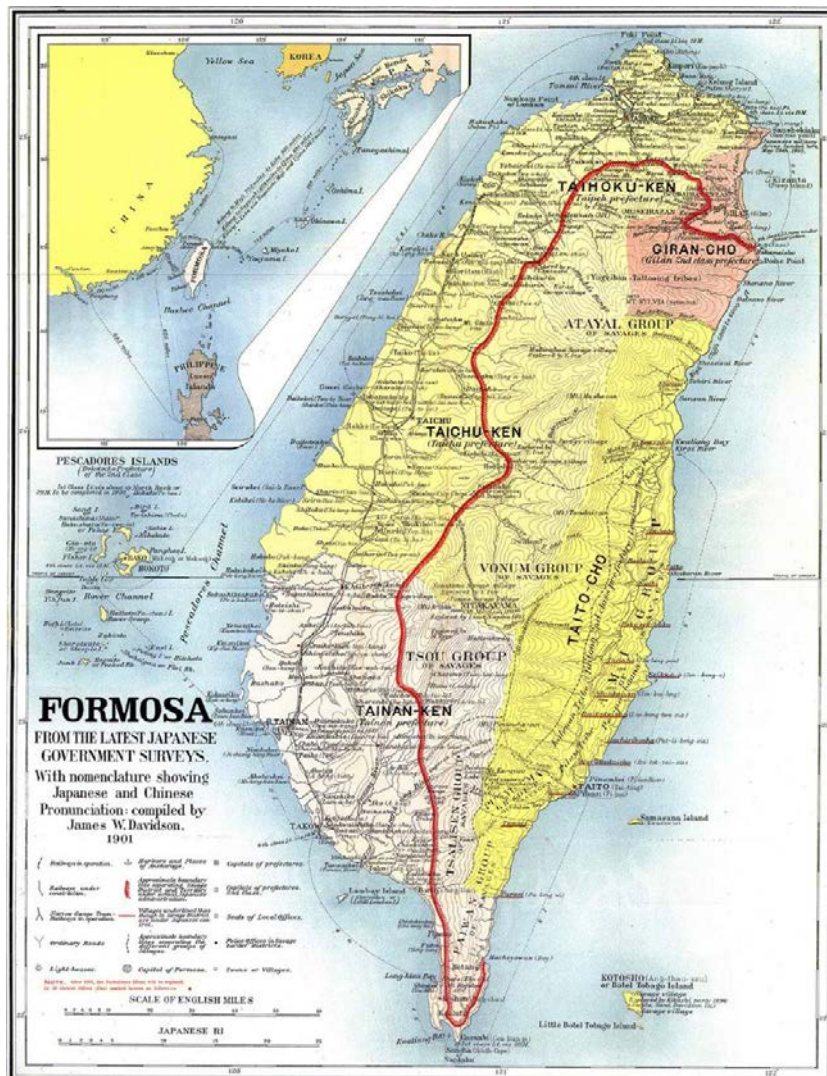
The Formosa Vintage Café Museum
Portuguese sailors spotted Taiwan in 1544 and called it *Ilha Formosa*, meaning "Beautiful



Statuettes in the Formosa Vintage Café Museum

Tim Eyre offer's a gentleman's guide to Taiwan's capital

Island". The name Formosa is still in occasional use, especially in a historical context. The name certainly deserves to be attached to this remarkable café-museum. On the third floor of an ordinary concrete high-rise building in the busy centre of Taipei a visitor enters a different



world. A Taiwanese dentist by the name of Lin Yi-fang has amassed over 10,000 *objets d'art*, mostly related to historical Taiwan. Rather than hoard them out of view, he has generously chosen to put them on display in this space that is ostensibly a café.

Every nook and cranny is crammed full of statuettes, posters, old toys, books and even architectural details from buildings scheduled for demolition. Objects are grouped into broad categories but there are no labels; this haphazard presentation is part of the charm. Mr Lin's collection is so large that objects are periodically rotated into and out of display.

I spent an interesting hour or so admiring the exhibits before settling down with a drink on a carved wood chair to contemplate the spectacle in a more relaxed fashion. Members of the New Sheridan Club who enjoy collecting curios can perhaps take inspiration from this place. With a similar undertaking your burgeoning stash of vintage knick-knacks could become a source of joy for the general public.

The Miniatures Museum of Taiwan

This more conventional and less haphazard museum exhibits miniature models of reality. The two main classes of exhibit are dolls' houses and room boxes—a dolls' house is a model of a complete house whereas a room box is a cut-away model of the interior of a single room.

I was interested to find that some of the exhibits had been created by academic architectural and art historians as a vehicle for their research. An especially notable piece was a reproduction of a long-demolished Los Angeles house called Rose Mansion. This masterwork was created over a period of five years by a Dr Reginald Twigg as part of his doctoral thesis.

Dr Twigg was sponsored in this endeavour



(Above) the interior of the Café Museum is crammed with *objets d'art*; (below) the library room inside the scale model of the lavish Rose Mansion, a now demolished architectural masterpiece in Los Angeles





A miniature version of the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles; (below) the exterior of the Rose Mansion model

by a Mr Lin Wen-jen. Mr Lin was formerly the president of a Taiwanese lightbulb company. He and his wife started collecting miniatures while travelling to the USA and Europe. Such was their enthusiasm for miniatures that in his retirement Mr Lin founded Asia's only miniatures museum. The museum is held in high esteem by guidebooks and attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors a year.

The room boxes are, if anything, even more detailed than the doll's houses. Each one is set into the wall of the museum behind a window. Visitors peer into the room in a sort of peep-show property porn. Some of the room boxes capture a moment in time, such as a return from a trip to the opera. Others depict a whimsical vision of an ideal space; notable for chaps is the "Gentleman's retreat", complete with 1cm-high bottles filled with real brandy.

Some models depict whole streets: one depicts a Japanese funfair, another an English medieval street scene. There are also some rather mawkish models, such as one of a raccoon house. Indeed, my overall impression of the museum was that it combined tweeness with academic rigour and



This miniature bedroom even has its own miniature miniature room boxes built in



(Above) A “gentleman’s retreat” room box

immense skill. If you are ever in Taipei then this museum should be high on your list.

A Religious Parade

The day after I arrived in Taipei I visited a district called Shenkeng, famed for a dish called “stinky tofu” (ordinary tofu not being hipster enough for the likes of me). Here I was fortunate enough to encounter a religious parade. It was led by a man waving a long bamboo pole with some leaves tied to the end; this may have played a role akin to mistletoe. He was followed by a drummer pounding out a rhythm on a large *tanggu*.

Next came the focal point of the parade: a portable shrine being carried by a group of men. The shrine was designed to bounce vigorously as it was carried and flags attached to the back of the shrine emphasised the bouncing effect. This portable shrine was lit so brightly that a chap followed behind the shrine carrying a portable diesel generator to power the arc lamps.

Behind the shrine came a group of women playing a loud and hypnotic melody on horns. They were wearing smart uniforms of the sort one might expect an usher at a theatre to wear. Behind the horn players came the most memorable sight of all: a parade of giant puppets, each around four metres tall and operated by a man concealed in the bottom part

of the structure. They wore bright robes and some depicted demons while others depicted wise old men. The puppets sported operational swinging arms and one of them even had eyes that swivelled disconcertingly.

The noise from the drums and the horns was loud enough to make me cover my ears but the sonic assault reached its peak when the parade arrived at its destination temple. Here was detonated an arsenal of firecrackers, the pyrotechnics being so impressive that ash rained down on the crowd.

The firecrackers heralded the start of the second part of the ritual. As far as I could tell the idea was to present various spectacles to the deities enshrined in the temple. There was a remarkable display of acrobatics with a pair of Chinese dragons. A bare-chested man put on an especially macho sword display. The bouncing shrine and a few other portable shrines that had appeared were each presented with a series of complex to-and-fro dance-like movements. Each of the giants put on a display too. All the while the seven horn players stood at one side playing a loud and eerie tune.

I have no idea what religion this parade adhered to, but I am confident that it was not one that frowns upon polytheism, graven images or fun.



Giant puppets on parade in Shenkeng

Paul's Tailor

In the past I have engaged tailors in Hong Kong and Bangkok. On learning of my trip to Taipei, a couple of my club friends encouraged me to seek out a tailor here. A little interwebular research revealed that Taipei does have some tailors, although not in the numbers found in Bangkok. Frankly this was a relief: choice is not always a good thing.

As it happened, serendipity brought me to my Taiwanese tailor. One evening I lost my bearings while walking back to my hotel from a restaurant and found myself in the vicinity of the Imperial Hotel. Through the large windows of a shop called Paul's Custom Tailor I could see numerous bolts of cloth neatly displayed on wooden shelves. I had blundered over Taipei's tailoring district.

Paul greeted me warmly and I started looking through his swatches of fabric. It quickly became apparent that Paul's primary market was people looking for smart business suits rather than more flamboyant raiments. Almost all the cloths were greys and blues and there was precious little in the way of tweed. I was about to leave when Paul pulled out a final sample book from the bottom of a drawer. I opened it to find row upon row of bold, retina-searing colours. Paul explained that they were intended for golfing trousers, golf being

popular with the predominantly Japanese clientele of the neighbouring hotel.

I was quite ready to have two three-piece suits made: one in bright blue and one in bright orange. However, I managed to reign in my impulses and consulted my wife before placing the order. She sensibly suggested that I should have just waistcoats made in those colours. This I did at a cost equivalent to US\$100 per waistcoat.

I only received one fitting, so while the service was technically bespoke it was in practice only a notch or two above made-to-measure. Nevertheless, Paul faithfully executed my special requests:

notched lapels, a cloth back (rather than just lining material), a deep breast pocket to hold a smartphone or pocket square and a vertical buttonhole for my watch fob. He was a little surprised that I had such a clear ideas of what I wanted. Such are the skills we develop in the New Sheridan Club.

Paul's Custom Tailor has been in existence since 1961 and Paul runs his business in conjunction with his daughter Anita. The shop has even featured on Taiwanese television. If you find yourself in Taipei for some reason then this is a reasonable option to have some tailoring done. Bespoke two-piece suits range from US\$500 to US\$1000 depending on the cloth. Paul also accepts mail order; in particular it is possible to send him a well-fitting but worn out garment and have it copied. Indeed, most tailors in the Far East will do this.

Tea Houses

Tea is a serious business in Taiwan, even more so than in Blighty. For a start, Taiwan is the birthplace of a beverage called "bubble tea", where sweet milky tea is served hot or iced with balls of tapioca at the bottom. It is typically drunk through a wide-bore straw; the extra width being necessary to allow the passage of the tapioca balls. However, I must admit that this newfangled concoction is not especially to my taste.

How do you travel to take tea? The gondola to the tea-growing and tea house district of Maokong



More traditional is the tea house. These venerable establishments are an important part of Taiwanese culture. Customers do not order tea by the pot. Instead, a visiting group purchases a small packet of tea leaves from the large range on offer. They then pay a fee for the hot water and while away the hours sipping endless cuppas.

The district of Maokong to the south of Taipei is famous for its tea houses and for tea cultivation. Visitors arrive by means of a four-kilometre gondola (cable car) ride and can choose from a wide range of tea houses. The scenery is steeply mountainous and so most of the tea houses offer dramatic views over the city below. The local tea is an oolong called Tieguanyin, oolong being the most popular type of tea in Taiwan. On my visit I knowingly saw tea bushes for the first time.

The Jiufen Teahouse in the mountain town of the same name is thought to have inspired the bathhouse in Hayao Miyazaki's classic

animation *Spirited Away* (2001). Although Miyazaki himself denies this, it is clear that fans of the film would also enjoy the sight of this 100-year old building. Indeed, the whole of Jiufen has an other-worldly feel to it.

Taipei as a whole, however, has its feet firmly planted in reality. It is a thoroughly modern city with excellent infrastructure and readily accessible traditional Chinese culture. Nevertheless, it is visited by fewer than 100,000 European tourists a year, thus adding the cachet of the unusual to its attractions. Taiwan may not be an obvious destination for those of a chappish nature, but the heady combination of tea, tailors and antiques is unlikely to disappoint.

The famous Jiufen Teahouse is a tourist destination in its own right





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.



When out and about, a Singapore Sling. When at home, a Ding Dong (the absinthe-based concoction from *Drinking for Chaps*). [Rum, lime juice, ginger beer, bitters and absinthe – Ed]

Most Chappist skill?
Indolence – but only when I can be arsed.

Most Chappist possession?
My deceased stepfather’s pipes and pipe box.

Personal Motto?
It’s all been a terrible mistake.

Favourite Quote?
“Hell is other people.” – Jean-Paul Sartre

“Not every problem someone has with his girlfriend is necessarily due to the capitalist mode of production.” – Herbert Marcuse

“I don’t want to belong to any club that would

Philip Hancock

“It’s all been a terrible mistake.”

Name or preferred name?
Philip Hancock or, on occasions, Melissa.

Why that nickname or nom de plume?
It’s complicated, although I’m always in the market for something more befitting.

Where do you hail from?
The kerbside usually, when in need of a cab.

Favourite Cocktail?



have me as a member.” – Groucho Marx

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

I'm a qualified Santa Claus.

How long have you been involved with the NSC?

A couple of years, although up until the last six months or so I had only marveled from afar.

How did you hear about the Club to begin with?

I was doing some research for an academic paper on Chappism and I stumbled across the club website. Alas, I never got around to writing the paper.

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

Driving a husky team across a frozen lake in the arctic twilight.

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

Simone de Beauvoir for her intellect and the gossip.

Dirk Bogarde for the glamour.

My grandfather, William, just because I could.

Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee? *Artemis Scarheart*. It would

appear my hands are tied – and normally I have to pay good money for that.

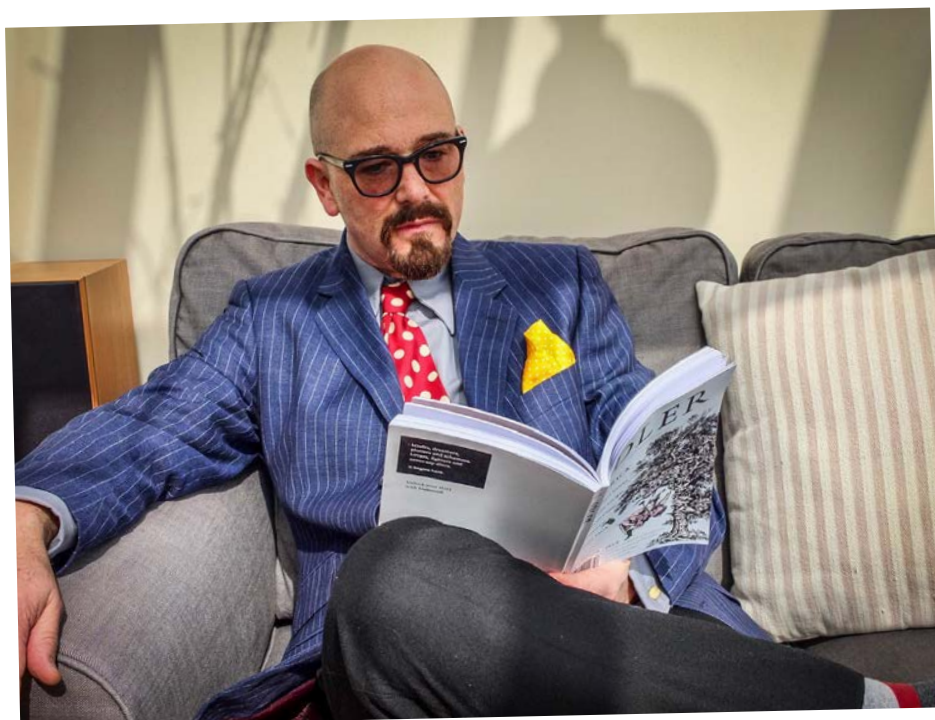
Have you done a Turn yet? If so what was it on, if not what are you planning to do?

I shall be speaking in



December on the topic of Santa Claus and his somewhat naughtier, if not indeed nefarious, activities.

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.



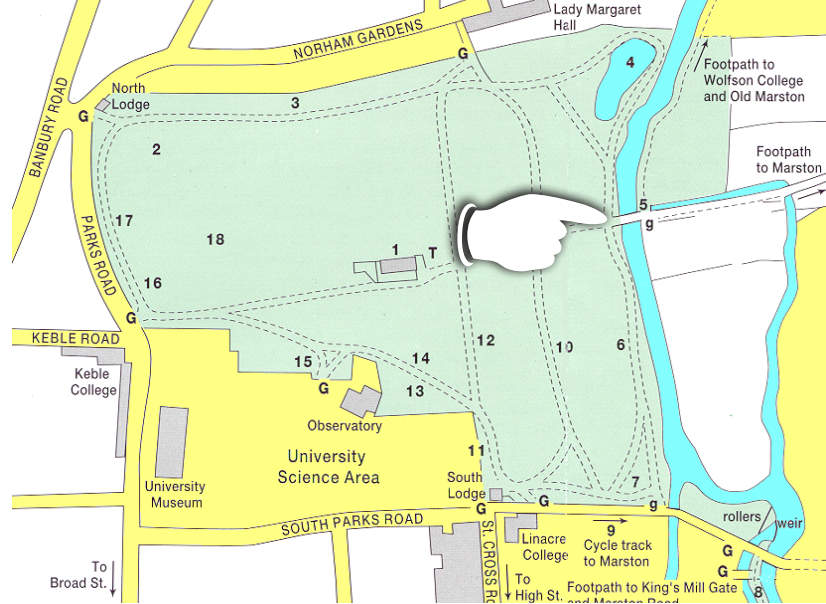


CLUB NOTES

Annual NSC Punt, Picnic 'n' Plunge

ONE OF THE oldest Sheridan traditions is the punting trip to Oxford, held on a Saturday near to St George's Day, 23rd April—this year the date is Saturday 22nd. The main event is frequently preceded by a black tie dinner on the Friday night at some obliging restaurant. On the day, we traditionally gather in the Turf Tavern from around 11am for a sharpener (perhaps having raided the market for picnic-grade comestibles)—however, owing to the rudeness of the incumbent manager last year we will be heading to the Bear Inn instead. The aim will be to hit the Magdalen Bridge Boathouse at midday where we pick up the punts.

Punting then takes place (for more on this art see Robert Beckwith's article in issue 114 of this organ) until the traditional picnic spot is reached by the High Bridge (a.k.a. the Rainbow Bridge) in the University Parks (no. 5 on the map above). After a picnic lunch the party punts back—with someone traditionally going overboard. In fact



Scarheart nowadays runs a slick sweepstake on who will fall in each year. After that we repair to a hostelry.

As the event is not necessarily organised by the Committee (indeed the first punt was held a year before the NSC was formed) I suggest you keep an eye on the Facebook event, but I'll endeavour to keep the NSC website Events page updated with details as well.



New Member Derek Matravers, wondering if that lawn fertiliser was really worth the money



New Members

A THUNDEROUS ROUND of congratulatory applause for Derek Matravers from Cambridge, Brandi Amiss-Towler and Peter Benton, both from London, all of whom have joined the New Sheridan Club in the last month.

Club Tie Corner

Another bumper crop this month. On this page we hit the ground running (above right) with Joel McCrea as Johnny Jones in Hitchcock's 1940 thriller *Foreign Correspondent*, who, as Colonel Cyrus Choke points out, is clearly sporting a Club tie, despite being glimpsed here in black and white. And who knew that the Saracens rugby club had such close ties with us, as witnessed by this 1984-7 home shirt, courtesy of Adrian Prooth. Over the page we have (clockwise from top left) a jerkin from *Child of the Jago* (Stuart Turner); another fashion item (Stewart Lister-Vickers); the *Fantastic Mr Fox* (Stuart Mitchell); the Club tartan (Adrian again) and the Wetherton RUFC strip from episode 1 of *Dalziel and Pascoe* (Stephen Smith).







(Clockwise from above) An episode of *The Avengers* (her blouse, not his tie, spotted by Stuart Mitchell); Hawes and Curtis sale (Jack Defer); Peter Falk as Vince from the CIA in *The In-Laws* (1979, from Col. Choke again); Howard Moon's Club dressing gown in *The Mighty Boosh* (Jack Defer); and Miss Uranium showing off her healthy glow while modelling the new Club bikini, on the cover of French magazine *V*, launched in 1944 and also variously titled *Voir*, *Voilà* and a few other names.





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 5th April

7pm–11pm

Upstairs, The Wheatsheaf,

25 Rathbone

Place, London W1T 1JB

Members: Free

Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)

See page 2.

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.

Tiger Rag

Every Friday

Arcola Bar, Arcola Theatre, 24 Ashwin Street,
Dalston, London E8 3DL

10pm–2.30am

Admission: £5 on the door; dance lessons £10

The Vintage Arts Asylum and Ewan Bleach
of Passing Clouds' Cakewalk Cafe collaborate
on a new weekly event at The Arcola Theatre,
Dalston Junction, featuring live jazz, blues,
swing, calypso, Dixieland, ragtime, musette,
tango, etc. Try your hand at the beginner
lesson in swing, Lindy hop, shag, balboa
and Charleston dancing, with no partner or
prebooking required. Intermediate lessons

Immerse yourself in some vintage sleaze at the new Portobello Burlesque Club

8–9pm and beginner lessons 9–10pm.

Black Tie Ballroom Club

Friday 7th April

Beginners' class from 7pm, main dance from
7.30–11pm

The Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Square, London
W1T 6AQ (02073870411)

Admission: £10 in advance (from [wegottickets](http://wegottickets.com)),
£15 on the door

Dress code: Strictly black tie, evening dress or
vintage

Dance progressive partnered dancing to a
strict-tempo ten-piece orchestra and a selection
of pre war records of slow foxtrot, waltz,
quickstep, tango, rumba, jive and Charleston.
Free ballroom dance lesson for absolute
beginners from 7pm to 7.30pm. Candlelit tables
and chairs for all guests, a balcony area with
tables for those who don't choose to dance,
and four or five male and female taxi dancers
available free of charge for those who do.
The venue is dry, but free tea and Coca Cola
is provided, and guests may smuggle in their

own drinks if they are discreet. Tickets are £10 online through [wegottickets](#) under “black tie ballroom club” or £15 on the door. We have a large wooden dance floor and are located in beautiful Fitzroy Square, London W1. In the same building (the Indian YMCA) the excellent in-house canteen does a set vegetarian three-course meal for just £8 from 7pm to 9 pm. Dress code is strictly black tie and evening dress only, and we have

sold out for the past four dances. Activities include a quickstep bus stop and ten most glamorously dressed women able to get around the floor doing a slow waltz competition. Any questions please phone George Tudor-Hart on 020 8542 1490 For more details see the Facebook group.

At CineTrip this month it's all about Michael Powell who brought us classics like *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946) and *The Red Shoes* (1948) but whose 1960 chiller *Peeping Tom* (below) was so controversial it damaged his career

vintagedancing@gmail.com', 'To keep updated on future events & classes please follow us on our Vintage Dancing FB page here: bit.do/vintagedancingevent', and 'WWW.VINTAGE-DANCING.COM'."/>

Portobello Burlesque Club
Saturday 8th April
8pm–midnight
Mau Mau, 265
Portobello Road,
London W11 1 LR
Admission: £5–20
from Ticketweb

If burlesque is your thing, this new regular night, which will run on the second Saturday of the month, may be up your street, describing itself as “an immersive club night with retro DJs, go-go dancers and special guest burlesque artists”. The tone is very much evoking Soho of the 1960s, though the music is advertised as from 1940s to 1960s. Just 100 standing capacity.

**CineTrip: Michael Powell—
Matters of Art and Death**

Tuesday 11th April
7–10pm
Sanctum Soho VIP Cinema, Sanctum Soho
Hotel, 20 Warwick St, Soho, London W1B 5NF
Admission: £8 from Funzing

Using unseen footage and excerpts from many of his films, filmmaker and historian Tom Hamilton will illustrate the rise and subsequent fall of one of British cinema’s most inspiring directors, Michael Powell, the most creative filmmaker working in British cinema between 1940 and 1960. Teamed with Emeric Pressburger, Michael Powell attempted to take British cinema somewhere it had never been before—and has seldom been since. Powell was obsessed with a vision of “Total Cinema” and assembled a team



VINTAGE-DANCING.COM

ELYSIAN DEN


LAST SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH

FEB. 26TH | 26TH MARCH

30TH APRIL | 28TH MAY

25TH JUNE | 30TH JULY

£10 ENTRY
includes
£5 DRINK
VOUCHER

 bit.do/ElysianDen

BEGINNERS SWING DANCE CLASS AT 6PM

No Dress code but vintage attire suggested

DELUXE HOT JAZZ DJs | SPINNING TILL 10:30PM

COME EARLY FOR DELICIOUS SUNDAY ROAST MENU

THE BOSTON ROOM AT GEORGE IV
185 Chiswick High RD, London W4 2DR

DOORS OPEN
AT 5:30PM

of the best talents in the business. But did this cinematic Icarus fly too close to the sun?

Swing Dance Classes

Tuesdays 11th, 18th and 25th April

Beginners 7.30–8.30pm, intermediates 8.45–9.45pm

Chiswick Catholic Centre, 2 Dukes Avenue, London W4 2AE

Admission: £8 per class or £12 for both

A drop-in evening of swing dance tuition. The beginners' workshop is aimed at those who want to start from scratch, while the intermediate class assumes a good grasp of eight-count Lindy Hop and covers some

wicked spins, complex conceptual elements and work on tightening up moves. For more details see www.vintage-dancing.com.

NSC Annual Punt, Picnic 'n' Plunge

Friday 21st–Sunday 23rd April

See page 24.

The Candlelight Club

Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd April

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.

This time for your dancing pleasure we will have live music from special guests the Swing'It Dixieband, all the way from Norway, who have been delighting at swing dance events and jazz festivals all over Europe, even supporting Big Easy legend Dr John. Their goal is to bring the party music of 1920s New Orleans back to the people, in their own

playful style (to which end they have been producing a series of videos covering Disney songs with a Dixieland twist). Hosting will be Champagne Charlie, with vintage DJing from Auntie Maureen.

“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 on BBC2's *Hair!* More at www.thecandlelightclub.com. See the video.

Swingamajig Festival

Sunday 30th April (workshops on 29th April)
2pm–2am (afterparty till 6am)

The Digbeth Triangle, Birmingham, West Midlands

Admission: £25–30 for the festival, plus an extra £5 for the afterparty; Saturday classes £20–30 (which also allow a reduced festival ticket price of £15). See swingamajig.co.uk

Describing itself as a “vintage-inspired” festival, this event presents seven stages of live music, dance, circus, cabaret and burlesque performances, plus an associated vintage street market (on Lower Trinity Street, for which no ticket is required), art installations, roving performers, etc. NSC Members are warned that it seems pretty eclectic—in addition to swing bands there is rock ‘n’ roll, hip hop, jungle, Balkan folk-punk and—Brum-based member Lord Rupert informs me—lots of dubstep. There is no dress code, but the organisers describe the style as “from top hats to baseball caps” and you can get a measure of it from this video of last year’s event.

Elysian Den

Sunday 30th April

5.30–10.30pm

The Boston Room, The George IV, 185

Chiswick High Road, London W4 2DR

Admission: £10 including £5 drinks voucher

Vintage music night featuring a beginners’ swing dance class at 6pm followed by swing

DJing from Tim Hellzapoppin’. The pub’s Sunday roast comes highly recommended.

Carradine’s Cockney Singalong

Tuesday 2nd May

7.30–10pm

Hoxton Hall, 130 Hoxton Street, London N1 6SH

Admission: £10 from www.hoxtonhall.co.uk

Fancy a good old-fashioned knees-up in a genuine Victorian Music Hall? Join Mr Tom Carradine, on the Ol’ Joanna, as he presents an evening of timeless songs with audience participation. Let your host lead you in a traditional cockney singalong, with songs from the music hall era, the First and Second World Wars, the West End stage and popular tradition across the decades. For regulars to Tom’s events this, his second show at Hoxton Hall, will see him perform a number of new medleys and a few hidden gems from his archive of music hall and variety songs, alongside all the old favourites.

“Carradine’s Cockney Sing-a-long is a deceptively simple, winning formula, brilliantly executed. A terrific night out.” —*Cabaret Scenes*

“Tom Carradine really gets the atmosphere going. As well as an accomplished musician, Carradine is a good showman with a charming personality. The audience clearly love what he does.” —www.capitalcabaretsandshowscene.net



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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



The relaxed pace of the annual Oxford punting trip: for details of this year's jaunt see page 24