

# DESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW YORK DESIGN CLUB • ISSUE 137 • MARCH 2018

**Faiysal  
AliKhan**

Our man on the  
North-West Frontier

**NSC jaunts  
this spring**

A day on the beach or a  
life on the ocean wave

## DARKEST HOUR

...is the hour before closing time.

WWII shenanigans from Craigoh and  
the British spy known as the White  
Rabbit—but definitely *no Narzis*



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**

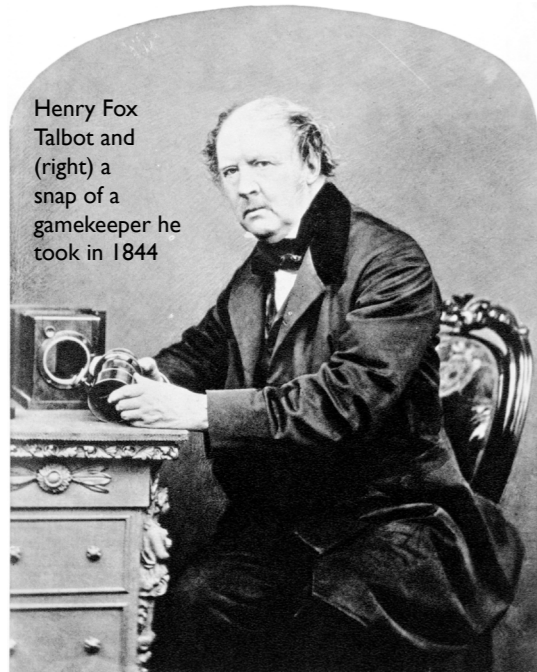
The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 7th March in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm. Stuart Mitchell will fill us in on *Fox Talbot and the Invention of Photography*. "In the mid 1800s Talbot laid the foundations of photography and photographic methods," Stuart explains. "His work is often eclipsed by the more famous Frenchman Louis Daguerre, and both have their place in history, but it was his pioneering work with negative photography for which Talbot is best known."

French—a fact which ultimately led to his employment by SEO as a spy in WWII. His ordeal really began after he was captured by the Gestapo and tortured to the point of having to be artificially resuscitated. He escaped several times, managed to pretend to be someone else when recaptured and even organised resistance in a prison camp. His codename was The White Rabbit and the Gestapo's respect for him can be gauged by the fact that they nicknamed female Kiwi agent Nancy Wake The White Mouse in turn.

An essay from the talk begins on page 4.

**The Last Meeting**

Our speaker last month was Craig Young, telling us about Wing Commander F.F.E. Yeo Thomas, an unassuming Englishman who had grown up partly in France and thus spoke impeccable



Henry Fox Talbot and (right) a snap of a gamekeeper he took in 1844



(Above) A lot of meaningful hand gestures going on—anyone would think we were in Italy; (above right) Craigho begins; (right) Mark and Lucky Henry look on



(Left) Eugenie Rhodes and Priya Kali; (right) Stephen Myhill and the Contessa di Campari; (below left) Curé Michael Silver looking suspiciously cheerful; (below) Henry and William Cole ornamenting the scene in Smoker's Alley; (bottom) the Earl of Essex working on his Churchill impression



(Above) No idea what is passing here between Prof. Hancock and Gabriel Blaze—suggested captions, please; (right) Mr Andrew Fish, also looking suspiciously cheerful



Craig Young on the elusive British WWII spy known as...

# THE WHITE RABBIT

I WAS DELIGHTED TO BE at the Wheatsheaf for our February meeting, following a number of years of active Club membership, giving my first, fully-fledged Talk.

After some years of observation, I do note that in the New Sheridan Club, we do seem to have two main varieties of Talks. Aside from three-hour epics on Corsets and Trams, the first variety of Talk principally consists of whimsical tales of English/British eccentricity, bloody mindedness, ingenuity and derring do...

And the second variety? You know what it is... Talks about "the Narzis".

For a club founded largely on the appreciation of the works of The Master—no, not Davros, rather, P.J. Wodehouse and his immortal creations, Jeeves and Wooster—we don't half bang-on (and on, and on) about "the Narzis" (as Churchill was wont to pronounce it).

Well, I am afraid tonight's talk is of the latter variety, although I trust it does have its lighter moments, as might befit Category 1 above.

Yes. Some time ago, I clumsily nominated Jessica Lakin to deliver a talk about the White Mouse, AKA Nancy Wake, the famous SOE agent, the most decorated woman of WWII, Kiwi Heroine and all-round good egg—and so, in her turn, having given an excellent talk, Jess felt it only right and proper to nominate me to

deliver a talk about the White Rabbit.

The White Rabbit? Who he? Well, I'm not talking about the tardy creature in a weskit with fob watch as imagined by Lewis Carroll. Nor am I talking about the song by Popular Beat Combo Jefferson Airplane. Nor am I referring to the café and photography studio in Shoreditch.

But I am talking about one of the bravest and most resourceful Allied officers and operatives of the Second World War. A man who was arguably Britain's best secret agent in occupied France, and who survived both the Gestapo and Buchenwald.

Yes. Wing Commander Forest Frederick Edward "Tommy" Yeo-Thomas, George Cross, Military Cross and Bar, Légion D'honneur, the Croix de Guerre and the Polish Cross of Merit.

Yeo-Thomas, Tommy to his friends, was a man

of extreme resilience, ingenuity, endurance, good humour and courage. As we shall see, he certainly needed all that. Unfortunately, as a mere armchair general and sedentary office worker, your humble correspondent will probably not do Yeo-Thomas justice, but nonetheless, I will try so to do. For make no mistake, the White Rabbit was—as one of his biographers dubbed him—the bravest of the brave.

On 17th June 1902, Yeo-Thomas was born,



Yeo-Thomas, eight hours before parachuting into France in 1943

as indeed we all must be, in a little town you just may have heard of; known as London.

With a handle like Forest Frederick Edward Yeo-Thomas, you will not be surprised to learn that the White Rabbit's parents were Welsh, but he actually grew up in Dieppe and gay Paree. He in fact came from an Anglo-French family of longstanding.

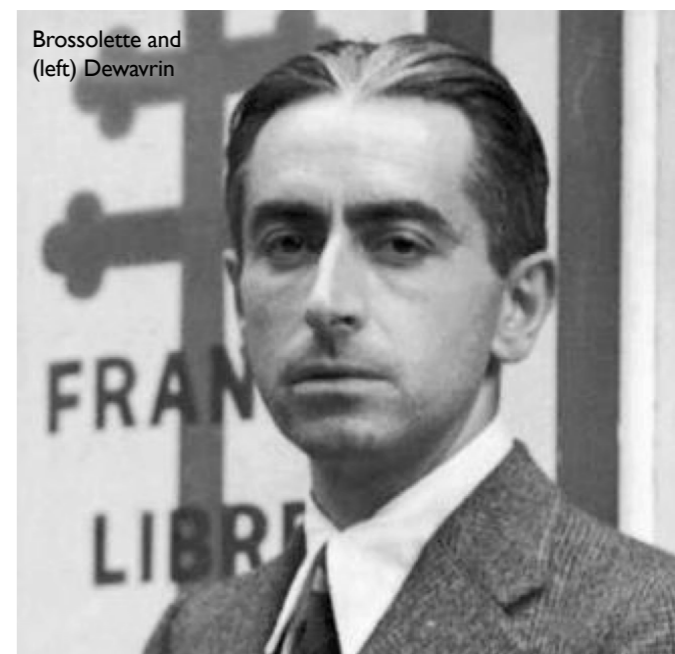
At the age of 16, Tommy did what many men did around 1918 (including my grandfather)—he lied about his age in order to join all the fun of the First World War. In fact, he joined the US Army, where he served as a despatch rider, and later, in an episode not much researched, at least not by your correspondent, he served with the Polish Army against the Soviets in 1920.

Yes, folks, you heard right. After the Great War, the fledgling state of Poland took on the might of the Soviet Empire—and won. Or at least, they didn't lose, so therefore they won. This war in itself is probably worthy of a New Sheridan Club talk, but I digress. Captured by the Red Army, and faced with execution the very next day, Tommy strangled his prison guard and managed to escape back to France.

In 1925 he married Lillian Walker, another Parisian with an Anglo background, and he spent time working for, variously; Rolls-Royce, and then a string of French banksters, before landing the rather plum job—but also rather unlikely role—of company secretary for the Molyneux fashion house in 1932.

Sadly, in 1936, family life came to an end for Yeo-Thomas when he separated from his wife, who steadfastly refused a divorce. People could in those days, especially in Catholic countries. But Tommy continued to see his two daughters, so I assume he wasn't a total cad in matters of the heart.

Now. All this takes our lad up to the outbreak of WWII. When the war finally broke out in 1939, Yeo-Thomas, after being rejected by the



Brossolette and (left) Dewavrin

British Army, and the French Foreign Legion, joined the RAF, though his applications to become an air gunner were all denied. He completed his Radar training, and as the Brits and French retreated in disarray against the might of the Nazi Blitzkrieg, Tommy took the chance to have a leisurely stroll around his beloved Paris; just in case it should prove to be his last chance to so do. He considered deserting and founding a resistance cell there and then; but in the end, he followed orders, and returned to England, swearing a personal oath to return to help liberate France.

He was on one of the very last boats out of the country before the fall. After three days in the Channel—yes, three days—they arrived at Milford Haven, to a traditionally warm welcome from the RAF Warrant Officer. "Make it slippery you fucking lot of slovenly bastards!", was apparently the delicate choice of phrasing used. How lovely to be back in Blighty again.

Because he was, by now, in his late 30s, Tommy was thought to be too old for active service, but he was now at least given an officer's commission, and was able to apply his talents as an interpreter, when he joined the RAF Intelligence Branch.

Eventually, Tommy was noticed by the SOE—the Special Operations Executive, the band of intelligence officers, clandestine operatives, and spies who had been charged by Churchill to "Set Europe Ablaze!"

Yeo-Thomas worked in co-operation with the SOE's RF Section, which in turn worked

in collaboration with the Free French intelligence service, founded by de Gaulle.

After many, many months of piloting a desk, Yeo-Thomas finally joined the SOE in February 1942. He was based in Baker Street and later Dorset Square. But Number 5, Queen's Court in Bloomsbury was Tommy's home from 1941 to 1946, and the place where he is remembered in London today with a blue plaque.

The apartment was his sanctuary throughout the course of his secret war and, after capture, it was the place to which he dreamed of returning to be with his partner, his beloved Barbara. Barbara? Who she? Tommy met Barbara while he was still an NCO during his interpreting stint near Stanmore. Barbara was described by one of Tommy's biographers as a slim, beautiful young WAAF, some 15 years his junior. It was one of her friends who nicknamed Tommy "The White Rabbit". Barbara was said by Tommy to be his "inspiration".

Eventually, following training in the arts of clandestine warfare, in February 1943 Tommy undertook his first secret mission to France. He was to accompany de Gaulle's intelligence



chief André Dewavrin (known as "Colonel Passy") and journalist and socialist leader Pierre Brossolette. Codenamed Seahorse, their mission was to visit the senior represen-

tatives of the various Resistance movements within Paris and around northern France. At this time, the diverse number of such movements were poorly co-ordinated, and they were being harried by the Germans and the Vichy French. If a unified fighting force was to be formed, there was a lot of work to do. Tommy was parachuted in, and he and his colleagues succeeded in organising the splintered French Resistance groups into one unified secret army. The mission was deemed a success and Tommy, Brossolette, and Colonel Passy flew safely back to England in a Lysander spy plane in April 1943, with Yeo-Thomas receiving the Military Cross and the Croix de Guerre with Palm.

So that's one secret mission successfully accomplished. On to Number 2. September 1943, and Tommy, together with Brossolette, returned to France for another SOE job, codenamed Marie Claire. (No, not the magazine.) The object was to assess the status of various Resistance groups following the arrest of de Gaulle's envoy, Jean Moulin. As Yeo-Thomas toured the countryside and encouraged Maquis groups desperate for Allied arms and supplies, tales of "The White Rabbit"—a codename that would soon become legendary—spread quickly throughout the land. But as much as Tommy's fame and visibility helped to raise morale, this new, higher profile also made him

a marked man. Soon after Tommy arrived, a number of Resistance operatives were arrested, and he himself narrowly escaped arrest some six times. He faced increasing dangers, but he out-foxed his opponents—including the infamous Klaus Barbie, more of whom anon—and managed to bring out British intelligence archives which he had secured from a house watched by the Gestapo. Tommy was safely picked up by a Lysander aircraft near Arras and returned to England on 15th November, while Brossolette stayed behind. As the BBC said on two occasions, "Le petit lapin blanc est rentré au clapier"—"The White Rabbit has gone back to his hutch". So both the Resistance and the Gestapo now knew that Tommy was back in Blighty.

So, yes; about Klaus Barbie. Imagine you're one of the most wanted men in occupied France. You board a train from Lyons to Paris to make it to your next meeting with fellow members of the underground and, as part of your cover, you've been showing nosey German guards your wallet with a picture of a naked woman, while pretending to be a vocal collaborateur, coming out with stuff like, "Germany is France's best friend." Some hours into a long, weary journey, you fancy a meal from the buffet car, and the waiter sits you next to Klaus Barbie of the Gestapo, also known as "The Butcher of Lyons". Yes. Well.

It is thought that at the time the Gestapo official had almost certainly heard of "The White Rabbit", and he very probably had his picture on file. What followed then was, for Tommy, a terrifying few minutes as they engaged in seemingly idle talk over dinner.

After being asked by Klaus Barbie where he had come from and whether he had far to go, Tommy sought safety in apparent danger, saying, "There seems to have been a bit of trouble here," referring to the fact that the Resistance had obviously sabotaged the parallel railway line. The Butcher of Lyons's response? "Sabotage is like the black market. It has so many heads that we cannot strike them all off at once." All this delivered slowly and deliberately, with meaningful, piercing looks. After that, Tommy and

the Gestapo man chatted over their buffet car meals until it was time to pay their bills. Tommy made himself scarce and stood for the rest of the journey, readying himself to jump and run if need be. When the train finally pulled into Paris's Gare de Lyon, he got off the wrong side of the train, left the station unobserved and caught a taxi to his safe house.

Back in Blighty after his second mission and so many close escapes, Tommy raged about the lack of essential supplies needed by, but not forthcoming to, the Resistance. His frequent letters and verbal complaints reached the state where they could no longer be ignored. Eventually this advocacy secured him an interview with the man at the top.

So, it came to pass, that at 1500 hours, on 1st February 1944, Tommy stood smartly to attention before Mr Churchill in his office at No. 10 Downing Street, and received an initial dressing down... "I'm a busy man and I have no time to waste. But when I get a letter from ole Luke (...) I know it is about something of interest. He says you know France better than any other Englishman. I doubt it. What have





The steps of Passy Metro station where Tommy was arrested



Gestapo headquarters at 84 Avenue Foch

you got to say? I can give you five minutes.”

Nervous before the great man, whom he admired enormously, Tommy knew he had the proper arguments but was terrified that in his haste he might omit the most convincing ones. We’ve all been there. But usually over whether we deserve a raise, not about matters of life and death before the PM. Tommy spoke of the secret army and the Maquis, and their severe lack of arms and equipment. He spoke of the brave men and women risking torture and death, carrying messages through crowded Paris streets, watched by Germans and their sympathisers, or waiting for lonely assignments in the windy French wilderness. Churchill warmed to Tommy and asked him to sit down. Eventually after nearly an hour, the Great Man made his pronouncement:

“You have chosen an unorthodox way of doing things and you have short-circuited official channels; it might mean trouble for you, but I shall see that no such thing happens.” Churchill further pronounced to a visiting official, “Squadron Leader Yeo-Thomas has been pleading on behalf of France, and I have been listening... I am going to increase

substantially the number of aircraft doing parachuting operations to the Resistance, and greater supplies and more armaments are going to be sent.”

According to his biographer, Tommy left the Prime Minister after 55 minutes, walking on air. He went back to SOE where he was congratulated by some very senior officers. Churchill was as good as his word. Within 48 hours, SOE RF Section was given dozens of aeroplanes at its disposal and the section began messaging Resistance cells and drawing up lists of needed supplies.

Some days after this triumph, Yeo-Thomas received a massive blow; news came through that Brossolette, whom Tommy loved like a brother, had been captured after attempting to escape by boat from the coast of Brittany. As RF Section’s second-in-command, Yeo-Thomas would pose a serious security risk if he returned to France. If he were captured and tortured—as many SOE agents were—he could potentially disclose his comrades’ names, details of their operations and all sorts of information of considerable interest to the Nazis.

But despite these risks, and absolutely

typically of Tommy, he was determined to rescue his friend. He planned his third, and almost fatal, clandestine mission to occupied France.

The mission was codenamed Asymptote, a geometry term describing a curve that approaches a line, but never quite meets it. As events were to prove, I think this was a somewhat apt codename.

Tommy parachuted back into France near Montluçon on 24th/25th February 1944 but sprained an ankle on landing. Nonetheless, he took the night train to Paris and began working on his mission at once. But Tommy’s plans to free Brossolette would never be carried out. The “White Rabbit” was now at the top of the Gestapo’s wanted list, and he was arrested on the steps of the Passy Metro station, on 21st March 1944. He was actually dobbed in—that is to say, betrayed—by a newly recruited sub-agent. Tragically, just a few hours later, Brossolette lay dead. Having fallen from the fifth floor of the Gestapo headquarters on Avenue Foch. Did Brossolette jump, to save his comrades, or was he pushed by his guards? I think the former, but we will never know for certain...

At this point, to give you an idea of the ordeal he went through, I think it fair to turn to Tommy’s George Cross citation published in *The London Gazette*:

Despite every security precaution, he was betrayed to the Gestapo in Paris on 21st March. While being taken by car to Gestapo Headquarters, he was badly “beaten up”. He then underwent four days continuous interrogation, interspersed with beatings and torture, including immersions, head downwards, in ice-cold water, with legs and arms chained. Interrogations later continued for two months and Wing Commander Yeo-Thomas was offered his freedom in return for information concerning the Head of a Resistance Secretariat. Owing to his wrist being cut by chains, he contracted blood-poisoning and nearly lost his left arm. He made two daring but unsuccessful attempts to escape. He was then confined in solitude in Fresnes prison for four months, including three weeks in a darkened cell with very little food. Throughout these months of almost

continuous torture, he steadfastly refused to disclose any information.

On 17th July, Wing Commander Yeo-Thomas was sent with a party to Compiègne prison, from which he twice attempted to escape. He and 36 others were transferred to Buchenwald.

On the way, they stopped at Saarbrücken, where they were beaten and kept in a tiny hut. They arrived at Buchenwald on 16th August and 16 of them were executed and cremated on 10th September. Wing Commander Yeo-Thomas had already commenced to organise resistance within the camp and remained undaunted by the prospect of a similar fate. He accepted an opportunity of changing his identity with that of a dead French prisoner, on condition that other officers would also be enabled to do so.

In this way, he was instrumental in saving the lives of two officers.

Wing Commander Yeo-Thomas was later transferred to a work kommando for Jews. In attempting to escape, he was picked up by a German patrol and, claiming French nationality, was transferred to a camp near Marienburg for French prisoners of war. On 16th April 1945, he led a party of 20 in a most gallant attempt to escape in broad daylight. Ten of them were killed by gunfire



Squadron Leader Lamason

from the guards. Those who reached cover split up into small groups. Wing Commander Yeo-Thomas became separated from his companions after three days without food. He continued alone for a week and was recaptured when only 800 yards from the American lines. A few days later, he escaped with a party of ten French prisoners of war, whom he led through German patrols to the American lines.

Wing Commander Yeo-Thomas thus turned his final mission into a success by his determined opposition to the enemy, his strenuous efforts to maintain the morale of his fellow prisoners and his brilliant escape activities. He endured brutal treatment and torture without flinching and showed the most amazing fortitude and devotion to duty throughout his service abroad, during which he was under the constant threat of death.

Just a few points of clarification: Tommy stubbornly stuck to his cover story of being Kenneth Dodkin, a downed RAF pilot, and he gave no agents away. His torture was extensive, went on for days, and he was repeatedly beaten and drowned and revived, while naked, often laughed at by a troupe of female onlookers. I

could go on in great detail, but I think you get the idea. Tommy and his resistance and SOE comrades were sent to Buchenwald, A mere fortnight before the liberation of Paris. At the camp, Tommy tried to keep discipline, and raise morale, while doing all he could to escape. One plan—worked out in co-ordination



Otto Skorzeny

with Squadron Leader Phil Lamason, a Kiwi in the RAF—centred on Tommy and nearly 200 British and US airmen, along with some Russian soldiers, overpowering the Buchenwald guards, making it to a small, poorly-guarded airport, some 12 miles away, and flying out to Allied lines. (Yes folks, you knew I had to get a Kiwi connection in there somewhere. And this one was too good to leave out.) Eventually, Lamason and Tommy managed to get a message out to a nearby Luftwaffe base, and the Allied airmen in Buchenwald were ultimately saved from execution and subsequently transferred to Stalag Luft II, and so they survived the war.

When the executions of his Resistance comrades began, The White Rabbit wrote his last despatches, to be smuggled out of Buchenwald. Fittingly, perhaps, he composed these in a disused rabbit hutch. He wrote to Barbara, and to his colonel, and also to Allied HQ, the following message in cipher:

Invaluable documents concerning latest research and discoveries bacteriological warfare, kept here at Buchenwald. STOP. All prepared to secure them, but can succeed only providing rapid assistance arrives just before or immediately upon German capitulation, as Camp officials will try destroy all. STOP.

Value of documents warrants every effort. STOP. Speedy arrival airborne or paratroops essential. Will find organised resistance within camp but I have no arms. STOP. Bearer this message trustworthy and knows everything. Will find organised assistance within camp. Acknowledge by IOFOFORM [the French service of the BBC]. Du moineau au lapin. STOP. Have everything under control and hope for early victory. STOP. Vingt Cinq Septembre. STOP. All love Barbara, Tommy. STOP. Cheerio Dizzy, Asymptote.”

When Yeo-Thomas finally hit on his desperate plan to get out of Buchenwald, he put his name at the bottom of the list, and he worked in collaboration with the SS doctor in charge of carrying out medical experiments on prisoners—a certain Herr Dr Ding-Schuler.

Tommy and two other agents were able to switch identities with three of Ding-Schuler’s subjects who had died from typhus. To boost their chances of survival, they were each sent out to satellite camps. Tommy ended up in Rehmsdorf, south of Leipzig, where he worked as a medical orderly in appalling conditions.

In April 1945, the camp’s prisoners were evacuated east towards Czechoslovakia by train. During a stop to bury dead prisoners, Tommy joined a small group and escaped into the woods. After sleeping rough for several days, he was recaptured just a few

hundred yards short of the Allied lines. But two days later he escaped yet again with a group of ten of his fellows. Despite being completely exhausted by dysentery and the cumulative effects of his ordeals, with the help of two of his comrades he crossed a minefield to reach the Americans. He arrived in Paris on 8th May and was reunited with Barbara later that month.

Tommy had hardly begun his recovery when he planned his next mission: the war in Europe may have been over, but there were plenty of Nazi war criminals evading justice. The new mission was codenamed Outhaul. Its purpose? To seek out concentration camp guards in hiding in Germany. And then? Well..?

Initially, SOE gave their approval. However, Tommy’s request for silenced Sten submachine guns and Welrod assassination pistols



Yeo-Thomas being demobbed

revealed his true intentions. Privately, Tommy referred to the plan as “Mission Thug”. His motivation was clearly one of serving up a dish of hot revenge against his former jailers. SOE Top Brass feared the mission might “degenerate into a romp which may have unpleasant repercussions”.

So instead of meting out rough (but to my mind thoroughly deserved) justice to Nazis, the SOE instead asked Yeo-Thomas to close down



Yeo-Thomas posing in later life with a white rabbit

his old network in France. If you go online you can find a series of photos taken while Tommy was being de-mobbed.

Now, I've listed his medals but, just to remind you, in addition to receiving a bar to his Military Cross, in 1946 Yeo-Thomas became one of just six SOE agents to be awarded the George Cross. He and Odette Sansom were the only ones to survive, the others receiving theirs posthumously, and Tommy was the first of his comrades to receive one.

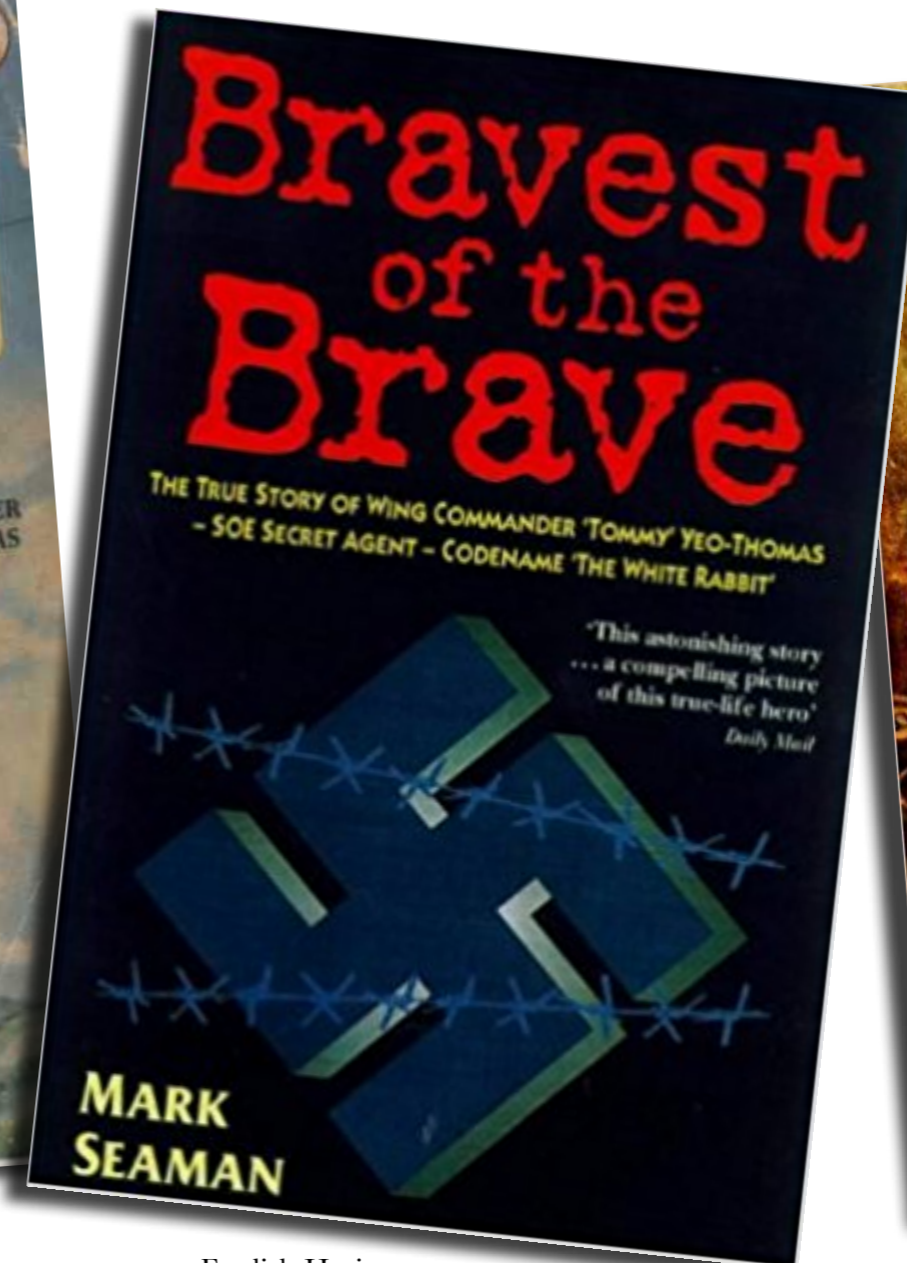
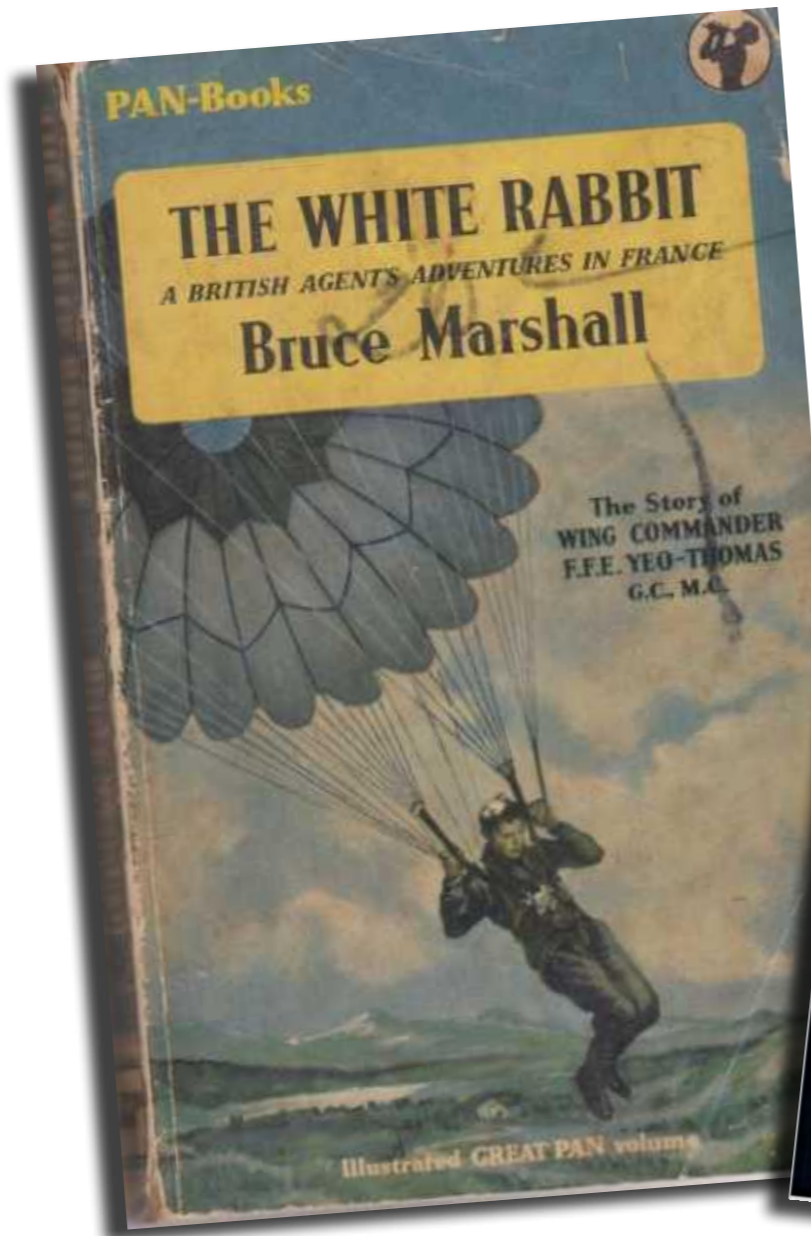
The following year he testified at the war crimes trials at Nuremberg, and he was an important witness in the prosecution of Buchenwald officials at the Buchenwald Trial held at Dachau Concentration Camp between April and August 1947. At this trial, 31 members of the Buchenwald staff were convicted of war crimes.

Somewhat surprisingly, he came to the defence of SS Commando, Obersturmbannführer Otto Skorzeny, the man who had freed Mussolini from captivity by the new Allied-aligned Italian Government in 1943. The Americans wanted to execute Skorzeny for clothing English-speaking German commandos in American uniforms and sending them to wreak havoc behind the allied lines in Belgium in 1944, during the Battle of the Bulge. An offence to the rules of war. But Tommy pointed out that his resistance operatives had dressed as Germans on some of their operations, and what was sauce for the Allied goose was good for the Axis gander.

After the war, in which he did oh-so-much-more-than just his bit—Tommy returned to work for the fashion house Molyneux in Paris. In 1950 he joined the Federation of British Industries, as their main representative in France, a post he held until he died.

In 1952 the publication of Bruce Marshall's biography *The White Rabbit* made Yeo-Thomas a public figure. Michael Caine played him in the 1958 film *Carve Her Name with Pride*, the biopic of SOE operative Violet Szabo. In 1967 the BBC adapted Marshall's book for television, with Kenneth More playing the lead; the reviews were positive, but due to ridiculously heavy copyright restrictions, all copies of the programmes were destroyed after broadcast.

Despite the medals and acclaim, the post-war years were not always happy ones for



Tommy. It is said that the significant physical and psychological scars of Tommy's torture and captivity began to badly affect his health, and he increasingly relied on the support of his partner Barbara.

In 1963 Yeo-Thomas received a final award, being made a Commandeur of the Légion d'honneur, before his death from a massive haemorrhage at the age of 61 in February 1964. His ashes were interred in the Glades of Remembrance at Brookwood cemetery, Surrey. In 1972, a street in Paris's 13th arrondissement was renamed rue Yeo-Thomas in his honour, and in 2001 a bust was installed in the mairie of the 16th arrondissement in Paris, the district where he lived after the war. A second biography, *Bravest of the Brave*, by Mark Seaman, was written with Barbara's help and published in 1997. As mentioned earlier, in 2010 an

English Heritage blue plaque was unveiled outside Yeo-Thomas's London home in Guilford Street, Bloomsbury.

And that would appear to be that, for my Talk on the White Rabbit. Except to say, why is Yeo-Thomas a Chap? Why venerate him here, now, in the resplendent halls of the New Sheridan Club today? Well, he was incredibly brave, as I hope my talk, and certainly his haul of medals and his fascinating biographies serve to attest. He was selfless in many ways, and it seems to me he simply oozed the best of British and Gallic style. Just look at the famous photo of him, taken hours before he left for France. Smoking his pipe, at one with the world, fighting the good fight. Yeo-Thomas was a fearsome operative, but he was also a dressmaker, turned officer and gentleman, turned dashing, daring

spy. He buoyed up resistance at a vital time in the war, his spirit was indomitable in defeat, and he is surely an outstanding example of fearlessness and action and a genuine hero.

Tommy was also one of many men said to be a possible inspiration for Ian Fleming's 007 James Bond—Fleming was said to have admired Tommy, especially for his defiant and moving last messages smuggled out from Buchenwald. Certainly, some of the torture Tommy endured served as "inspiration" for 007's travails in the recent film version of *Casino Royale*. A recent book by Sophie Jackson expounds on that theory at some length. But, that, as they say, is another story.

So charge your glass and drink to the memory of the much be-medalled, Wing Commander F.F.E. "Tommy" Yeo-Thomas, the White Rabbit, Bravest of the Brave.

# 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.



## Faiysal Ali Khan

"Walking from failure to failure"

**Name or preferred name?**

The Noble Savage

**Where do you hail from?**

Dera Ismail Khan, the southern most district in the Frontier province which borders on the restive tribal agency of South Waziristan.

**Favourite Cocktail?**

White Russian or The Bone [Rye whiskey, lime juice, sugar and tabasco —Ed].

**Most Chappist skill?**

An innate ability to carelessly combine tweed with the Kulla (turban).

**Most Chappist possession?**

- Tricker's calfskin opera pumps with silk Champagne-coloured socks
- A ram bone shepherd's crook
- A custom-made pink country umbrella.

**Personal Motto?**

"Success is walking from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm." (Originally said by W. Churchill.)

**Favourite Quotes?**

"Never trust a man with short legs—his brain is too near his bottom" —N. Coward

"Wit ought to be a glorious treat like caviar; never spread it about like marmalade." —N. Coward

"Punctuality is the virtue of the bored." —E. Waugh

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

The better part of a year but from afar.

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

At the Eccentric Club and also



Sporting the Leander Club colours at Henley

bumping into some of your members elsewhere.

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

- Joining the British Stickmakers Guild to preserve this great art.
- Venison burger at the Oxford Arms in Kirtlington
- Breakfast at the Milkshed in Weston-on-Green
- Investing in a custom-made Fox country/golf full-size umbrella
- A flat white and cinnamon bun at Blåbär in Putney.

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

1. Roman Triumvir Marcus Antonius for his ability to throw wild (literally) soirées while the republic collapsed about him.
2. Frank Sinatra for his flawless sense of style and taste and the ability to turn out meticulously at all times.
3. Grace Kelly, because we'd need a pretty face at the table [ahem, Princess Grace was also an Oscar- and Golden Globe-winning film

actress, noted philanthropist and patron of the arts —Ed].

**Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?**

Answer: Artemis Scarheart.

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

No, but I can talk about: "Inside the Mind of a Militant", "Governance in the Restive Tribal Areas", "Polo at 17,000 feet", "Kidnapping, Goats Eyes and Other Fun Anecdotes from the Hindu Kush", "The Mysterious World of the British Stickmakers Guild", to name a few. I'm also attempting to revive the Peshawar Vale Hunt (PVH) this year in Pakistan.

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.





Cally Callomon draws our attention to a "real life" article discovered in his researches, first published in the *Daily Mirror* in 1934...

# I am a young man with a sports car

I AM TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD and a bachelor. I earn £10 a week.

When I say "earn" that is only relatively true. I am paid £10 every week because I put up an appearance of working which is as good—if not slightly better—than that of most of the people who are employed with me.

Compared with the work done and money earned by the majority of people I meet, I am well paid.

For instance, my charlady. She keeps my hundred-pound-a-year flat clean and tidy. She washes my dishes, makes my bed, dusts, buys my shopping and lights my fires. She gets 10s. every Friday for this job, which takes her about fifteen hours a week.

Work to me is the amount of effort required to do the things I dislike doing. Few people can like washing other people's dishes and cleaning other people's fireplaces. For this my charlady gets 8d. an hour.

I suppose I spend about four hours a day doing work—a total of twenty-two hours a week. For this I get 9s. 2d. an hour. I must be lucky.

I am interested in money, cars and women—not necessarily in that order. I want to earn much more money than I do at present—how much I am not sure, for I have noticed that as my salary has increased from about one to ten pounds a week that I am still in the same position of having neither change in my pocket nor money in the bank.

I have recently kept a record of how I spend my money. Here is an actual budget for one week.

	£	s.	d.
Rent	2	0	0
Cleaning		10	0
Laundry		3	6
Dinners		15	0
Lunches		12	0
Drink	1	8	6
Food for flat (Breakfasts, etc.)		7	6

	£	s.	d.
Newspapers		2	3
Income Tax		16	0
Petrol and Oil for car		16	6
Total	7	11	3
Balance (from which must come Light, Gas, Clothes, Life Insurance)	2	8	9

There's not much to show for this. Food, drink and transport account for 40 per cent—a very high figure. There is no money left over for buying anything that will not be consumed immediately. It seems to be almost the ideal "hand-to-mouth" budget.

The figure for drink looks high. Do other people spend like this?

When I read the newspapers I see more and more war talk. War talk is intensely interesting because it involves me.

The idea of war is a familiar one. I was just old enough to remember the outbreak of the last war. I remember the food queues and the dried eggs you got. I remember the air raids and how they sang "God Save the King" when a Zeppelin came down in flames.

I have never fought, but I have been brought up reading war books, seeing war films, hearing war talk. If war is again declared and conscription is started I shall be one of the first to be embroiled.

I shan't like this much, because statesmen and military experts of unquestionable integrity have assured me that it is quite likely that I shall be shot, gassed, bombed, burnt, poisoned, infected with disease or shattered into a living wreck within a short space of time.

I like my country and I like my countrymen. I neither like nor dislike foreigners. They don't directly concern me.

I should hate to fight against them, because it would be dangerous to me and a gross waste of my time.

Women concern me a great deal. More than

*A Real-Life Confession Written for the "Daily Mirror" Under Seal of Secrecy*

I wish. But I rarely like them. They take too much for granted. I am continually extricating myself from circumstances which I have not created. Before I know where I am, I am involved. Curiosity more than anything else leads me on.

I take a girl out to lunch. All very fine. Next to a theatre, perhaps. Still all very fine. We make another date—out somewhere in the car. Bit of change this time; faint, but discernible—I am being discreetly watched. A few rapid calculations are being made—the skeleton of a plan is being formed. There's nothing cold-blooded about this—I find girls generally can't help doing this even when they aren't really interested.

Now for some technique. How well I know the symptoms. Often it's the possessive stuff. "We'll go there together" (the blazes we will!). Or the clinging method, "I simply can't go without you—you must come along" (oh, yeah?). Or the take-it-for-granted style, "Yes, I said you'd be along—I meant to tell you the other night" (nice of you!).

These are ominous signs. I feel I am being quietly invited by a sweet little girl to the top of a large flight of stairs that are in total darkness. The top stairs have been well greased. Half-way down three steps are missing. I am about to be gently pushed at the top stair... When I recover consciousness I shall be married.

It's not that I am unduly cautious. It's just the plain, simple fact



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*Women concern me a great deal. More than I wish... but I rarely like them.*

*I care for no one much... I cannot think of anybody who really cares more than a tinker's curse for me.*

*Don't let soap steal the sheen from your hair... use the SOAPLESS SHAMPOO that cleans, brightens and makes the hair healthier.*

*Give this young man a piece of your mind in thirty words, and send it on a postcard to Room 303, the "Daily Mirror", Geraldine House, Fetter Lane, E.C.4.*



CLUB NOTES

# Forthcoming NSC Jaunts

ADVANCE NOTICE OF some toothsome Club dos:

Adrian Prooth writes:

### The Only Way for a Sheridanite to Travel

Sunday 18th March, 2–6pm

The V&A Museum, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL

Have you ever wondered how the Glorious Committee travel? Was your interest piqued by

the talk Greg Taylor gave on the *Lusitania* a while back? Well the Victoria and Albert have put an exhibition on so we too can share in the opulence of the golden age of ocean going-liners.

I suggest a perusal round the museum on 18th of March to see the exhibits and perhaps some tea afterwards. See [www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/ocean-liners-speed-style](http://www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/ocean-liners-speed-style).

If there is enough interest I will arrange a group ticket (I think it is 10+).

And if you want the full experience the Candlelight Club are putting on an event on the same theme on Friday 9th March.

See the Facebook event.

Artemis Scarheart writes:

### The NSC Annual Punt, Picnic and Plunge

Saturday 21st April, from 11am

Meeting at the Bear Inn, embarking at the Magdalen Bridge Boathouse

“Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.”

The Glorious Committee invite you to join us for the annual Club Picnic, Punt and Plunge in Oxford. We will meet at the oldest pub in Oxford, The Bear Inn, for a sharpener and to admire their tie collection (sadly closed to new entrants) and then make our way to our old friends at the Magdalen Bridge Boathouse: we’ve been punting with them for over ten years now and they keep letting us come back.

We’ll punt upriver, stop off for a shared



The NSC children’s beach trip last year featured fossil hunting (left)



Bask in the opulence of the great ocean liners (without actually being on one)

picnic, listen to the complaints of those doing the punting and assure them we’d help out but with this back problem and you know what it’s like at this time of year for my knees and you’re doing such a good job and then punt back for a night of revels in Oxford.

There will of course be the Sweepstake. A pound to enter and you get a number as does everyone else in the game. If you have the number of the person who falls in you sweep the pot! No one knows anyone else’s number other than an incorruptible member of the Glorious Committee so you can’t push anyone in to get rich quick. Someone falls in each and every year so there’s everything to play for.

You’ll need to bring cash—there is no cash point near the Boat House and they take no cards—for punting which will be about £20 a head, tasty food and drink and some coins for

drinks in the pub.

See the Facebook event.

Ensign Polyethyl writes:

### Sheridan Children’s Weekend at The Beach

Friday 18th May–Sunday 20th May

New Romney Caravan Park

([www.newromneycaravanpark.co.uk](http://www.newromneycaravanpark.co.uk))

Please bring your tweed-clad children for a weekend by the seaside, enjoying British weather, ice cream, playing on Romney Sands, flying kites, toasting marshmallows over campfires, and jaunting on the Hythe-Dymchurch light railway ([www.rhdr.org.uk](http://www.rhdr.org.uk)).

**Please book your tent/caravan pitch or holiday cabin now**, as it is a small campsite and might book up. (Dogs welcome.)

See the Facebook event.



Idyllic scenes from last year’s punting trip

## New Members

HAVING TAKEN THE CLUB OATH, two new Members are skipping dizzily towards the clubhouse, blissfully unaware of the lifetime of grim commitment for which they have just solemnly signed up. Hailing from Newcastle upon Tyne, Simon Campbell claims expertise in both the philosophy of religion and the Korean War, and is active in the Letter Box Study Group. Michael Krogmann is a serving police sergeant in Texas, and considers whisky drinking and cigar smoking his main skills. He is building his own Victorian-style cigar lounge from an old garden shed. "As for the cigars, I infuse my own in whisky and age my whisky in a barrel for a few months before consumption!"



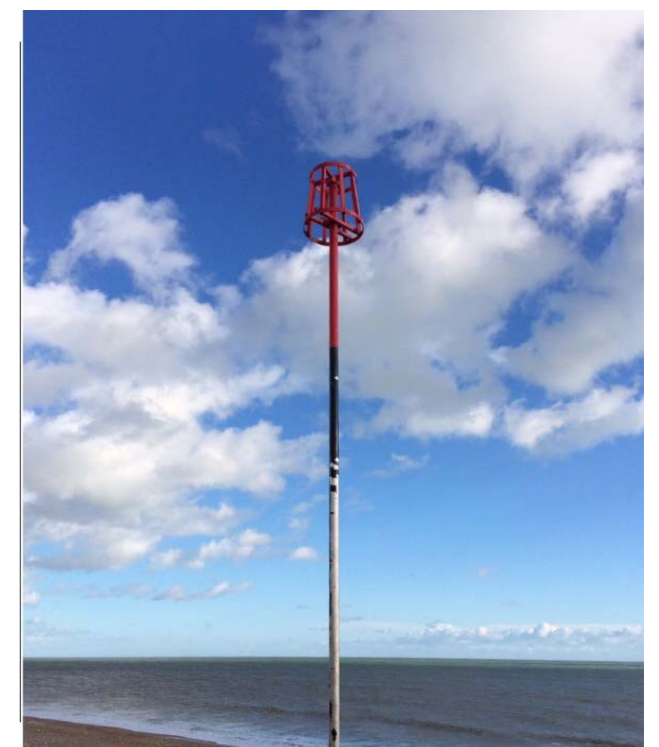
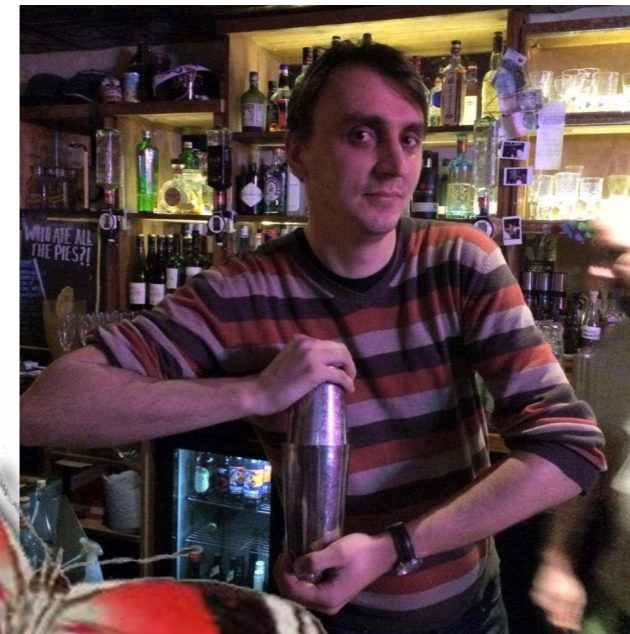
Michael Krogmann

## Club Tie Corner

COL. CYRUS CHOKE spotted Alec Guinness in *The Captain's Paradise* (1953, right) in a Club tie, while Ivan Debono noted Teresa May's coopting of the colours, reassuringly balanced by Richard "Stinker" Murdoch (below, from *Actuarius*). Facing page, clockwise from top left: Helen Swanston clocked Leslie Nielsen in *Columbo* ("Lady In Waiting"), but analysis (next pic) weakens the case—although research did throw up Donald Pleasance's extraordinary neckwear in the "Any Port in a Storm" episode; David Pittard noticed this Club, erm, pole at Aldwick Bay, while Matthew Howard's eyes were firmly on ladies' fashions (a snip at £381); and in Dave Hollander's local the barman wore this...



(Left) The 89 butterfly from darkest Peru (I'll leave you to guess how it gets its name)





## Forthcoming Events



**BOTH OFFICIAL NSC JAUNTS (🎩) AND  
THIRD-PARTY WHEEZES WE  
THINK YOU MIGHT ENJOY**

FOR THE LATEST developments, see the Events page at [www.newsheridanclub.co.uk](http://www.newsheridanclub.co.uk) plus our Facebook page and the web forum.

### 🎩 NSC Club Night

Wednesday 7th March

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 clarinetist Ewan Bleach with various guests.

### Tiger Rag

Every Friday

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

10pm–2.30am

Admission: £7 entry after 10pm; dance lessons £10

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 8–9pm and beginner lessons 9–10pm.

### Black Tie Ballroom Dance Classes

Every Friday (except, presumably, when the BTBC itself is taking place at the same venue)

6.30–8pm, followed by social dancing till 10.15pm

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

Admission: £15 for lesson and social dancing or £10 just for the social from Design My Night

From the makers of the Black Tie Ballroom Club (see below), the method of these beginners classes assumes new students have musicality or experience in other dance forms such as Lindy, places the emphasis on moving in time to the music, and aims for 80% of beginner students to confidently and gracefully get around the dancefloor with a partner after the first lesson, and be ready for the improvers class after two lessons.

### Rhythm & Reaction

Until 22nd April

10am–4.30pm

Two Temple Place, London WC2R 3BD (020 7836 3715)

Admission: Free

Exhibition marking the 100th anniversary of jazz music in this country, from the time when American bands like the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and the Southern Syncopated Orchestra started visting, influencing local musicians, inspiring local artists, and also altering British society by bringing black and white musicians and audiences closer together. The exhibition brings together paintings, prints, cartoons, textiles, ceramics, cinefilm, instruments and the all-important jazz sound. There are a host of events associated with this exhibition, including tours, talks, musical performances, workshops and more. See [twotempleplace.org/](http://twotempleplace.org/) whats-on for details.

### Bright Young Things

Friday 9th March

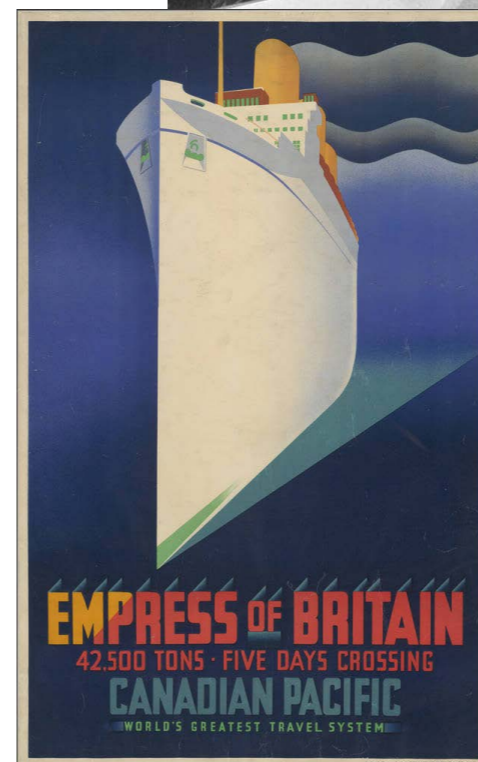
6.45–10pm

London Transport Museum, Covent Garden Piazza, London

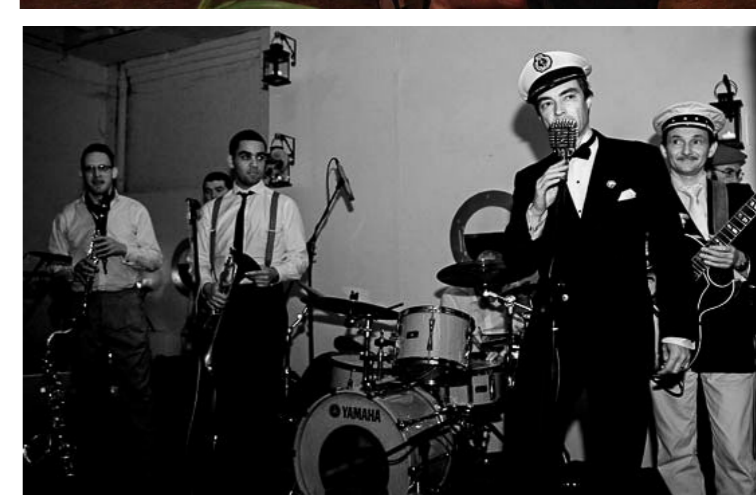
WC2E 7BB

Admission: £15 (concs £12)

Travel back to the Golden Age of the 1920s and 1930s, immerse yourself in how life felt in Britain and how the zeitgeist influenced women, art and design. Inspired by the LTM's Poster Girls exhibition, experience vintage girl power and iconic art movements through curated



Celebrate the Golden Age of Travel this month: the V&A Museum are having a big exhibition, and there is an organised NSC visit to it on Sunday 18th March; meanwhile the Candlelight Club are giving their March party a bit of an ocean liner theme too (with a chance to win tickets to the exhibition)



lectures, workshops and tours. Explore the exhibitions after hours, accompanied by the classic sounds of trio The Susie Qs.

### Wilde at Heart

Friday 9th March

7.30–9.30pm

The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL

Admission: £10 (book by phone on 020 7207 4585 or book online)

A dramatic look at the life, loves and above all at the works of one of the most celebrated literary figures of the 19th century; a man who, in the words of W.B. Yeats, was “the half-finished sketch of a great man”, destroyed by personal flaws and by a hypocritical society in one of its periodic fits of public morality.

The story of Wilde’s life is more dramatic than anything he could possibly have written—“I thought Life was going to be a brilliant comedy. I found it to be a revolting and repellent tragedy.”

“A delightful evening, beautifully compiled and thrillingly performed.” —Derek Jacobi

“This is the best show I have ever seen about Oscar Wilde.” —Fenella Fielding

### The Candlelight Club: the Golden Age of Travel

Friday 9th March (Saturday 10th sold out)

7pm–12am

A secret London location

Admission: £25 in advance

Dress: Prohibition dandies, swells, gangsters and molls, degenerate aristos and aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know—or dress for a turn about the sundeck, a game of deck quoits or dinner at the Captain’s table

A 1920s clandestine speakeasy party in a secret London venue completely lit by candles, with live jazz bands, cabaret and vintage vinylism, a cocktail bar, and kitchens serving bar food as well as a three-course bistro dinner menu. Guests receive an email a few days before the event revealing the secret location. See [www.thecandlelightclub.com](http://www.thecandlelightclub.com).

[thecandlelightclub.com](http://www.thecandlelightclub.com).

This time we evoke the era of luxury liners—the Art Deco dream of gleaming speed, the adventure of travel, the romance of shipboard life and the opulence of First Class, in an age when the journey itself, recreationally and socially, could be as important as the destination.

The birth of the ocean liner coincided with a rush of emigration across the Atlantic. Early efforts were more about speed than comfort, but soon wealthy shipping magnates competed to fit out their ships with grand staircases and Louis XVI furnishings. *Titanic* featured such innovations as refrigerators and electric lifts plus running water in every cabin, not to mention three dining rooms, an à la carte restaurant and a Parisian café. Germany’s *Imperator* even

hired Georges Escoffier—perhaps the most famous chef in the world at the time—to run the galley. But it was in the 1920s and 1930s that the opulence peaked.

By now the ships were aimed squarely at the wealthy—especially monied

Americans fleeing Prohibition for some drink-soaked fun in Europe. The *Normandie*

offered a swimming pool, gym, shooting gallery, nightclub, shopping mall, Byzantine chapel, children’s playroom complete with merry-go-round and a cinema showing films before general release. A passenger could have his own four-room apartment with dining room and servants’ quarters, furnished with tapestries and a grand piano. Passengers could even accessorise with an Hermès clutch bag in the shape of the ship (pictured). For the rich and famous it was the only way to travel. Every trip came with a printed passenger list so movers and shakers could see who else was on board, and the piers around the passenger terminals were lined with autograph hunters.

We can’t quite match the opulence of the dining room on the *Normandie*, but we’ll have Champagne and nautical cocktails and an optional three course dinner to pre-order. And no ship’s biscuits, honest. On board the good ship Candlelight there will be portholes,



deck chairs, quoits and dancing to live jazz from the ship’s buoyant band the Silver Ghosts, plus cabaret from Champagne Charlie and vintage vinyl spun by DJ Auntie Maureen.

One lucky guest will win a Best Dressed prize of a pair of tickets to the V&A Museum’s current exhibition *Ocean Liners: Speed and Style*.

“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*

### Sing-Along Piano Party

Saturday 10th March

7–10.30pm

The Actors’ Church (St Paul’s, Covent Garden), Bedford St, London WC2E 9ED

Admission: Free

A sing-along around the piano (for once not featuring Tom Carradine!) offering a very broad menu from Cockney standards to American Songbook to Disney, ABBA and film tunes—all lyrics provided. Featuring Luke Meredith on piano. For more info contact Russell Michaels at [pianosingalong@hotmail.com](mailto:pianosingalong@hotmail.com).

### A tour of the V&A’s exhibition *Ocean Liners: Speed and Style*

Sunday 18th March

2–6pm

The Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL

Admission: £18

See page 18.

### London Hat Week

Thursday 22nd–Wednesday 28th March

10am–10pm

Various locations

Admission: Varies from event to event



A collection of over 90 millinery workshops and hat-centred events run in various locations across London, celebrating the art of hats in the city that is home to some of the most talented hat designers in the world. It says here. For the full line-up of events see [www.londonhatweek.com/events](http://www.londonhatweek.com/events).

### Fourth London Hat Walk

Sunday 25th March

2pm–3.30pm

Outside Tate Modern, Bankside, London SE1 9TG

Admission: Free

Part of London Hat Week above, a light-hearted annual titter-centred mass saunter. Whether you make hats or just love wearing them this is your chance to promenade in style with likeminded individuals. As the London Landmarks Half Marathon is taking place this year the usual route is out, so we will be enjoying a new route along the River Thames. Meeting outside Tate Modern, we will start with a backdrop of St Paul’s Cathedral then walk along Bankside, past the Globe Theatre and Southwark Cathedral, finishing at the Scoop near City Hall, in the shadow of Tower Bridge. The walk should take no more than 30 minutes and afterwards you are invited to the nearby LHW Supplier Fair at Guy’s Hospital for some free refreshments (and shopping). No need to book—just come along wearing a hat. Check out a bevvie of NSC types in the video on the homepage: [www.londonhatweek.com](http://www.londonhatweek.com).

The room teeters on a knife-edge of excitement at the February meeting

