

A photograph of three people dressed in vintage, early 20th-century fashion. On the left, a man wears a grey bowler hat, a white shirt, a patterned tie, and a dark grey tweed jacket. In the center, a woman wears a large, ornate hat with a wide brim and a black coat with a white floral brooch. On the right, a man wears a dark fedora, a patterned scarf, a striped shirt, a dark vest, and a brown jacket. They are standing outdoors, possibly on a rooftop or balcony, with a cityscape and a street lamp visible in the background.

# DESIGN

LETTER OF THE NEW SH

ISSUE 138

## TITFER TAT

The Club raises the standard  
at the London Hat Walk

### Flash, bang, wallop

Stuart Mitchell on Henry Fox  
Talbot, the man who invented  
modern photography

### My art belongs to Dada

Linda Laubscher reports on the Royal  
Academy's surrealist extravaganza





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

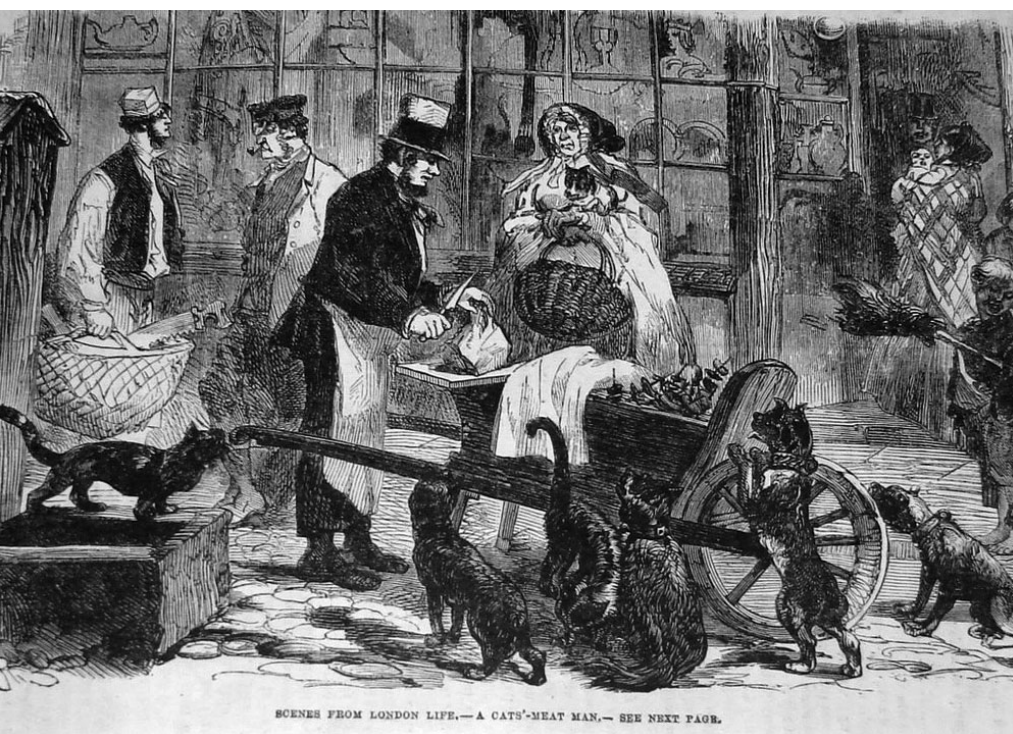
The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 4th April in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm. Frances Mitchell will be following up her husband's talk from March with a discourse entitled *Thomas Garred—Cats' Meat Man, & Other Obsolete Victorian Jobs*, inspired by a photo in the Museum of London featuring one of her ancestors. "Do you work in the City or its environs?" she asks. "Are you looking for work or just in need of a career

change? Then come to the NSC on Wednesday and see what exciting opportunities were available in the Victorian era, all within a few miles of Rathbone Place. Possession of nose pegs and strong stomachs an advantage!"

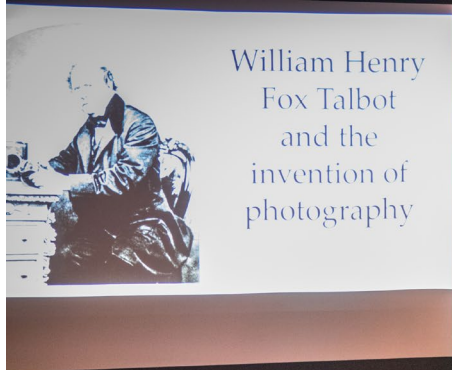
### The Last Meeting

Our speaker last month was Stuart Mitchell, who gave us an account of how Henry Fox Talbot, an amateur enthusiast, invented modern photography. Talbot's de facto rival, Frenchman Daguerre, somehow persuaded his government to buy the rights to his own Daguerreotype process in return for a lifetime stipend, after which he rather lost interest. Talbot's investigations were part of a gentlemanly dilettantism and until he realised he had a rival he had never thought to publicise or publish his work. But he did then go on to set up a workshop in Reading, and Stuart's interest was sparked by the fact that his own house overlooks the site: in fact his window appears in a publicity shot taken by Talbot at the time.

An essay from the talk begins on page 4.







William Henry Fox Talbot and the invention of photography



William Henry Fox Talbot and the invention of photography



(Above left) Torquil brings the meeting to order; (above) Stuart attacks his subject; (left) the rapt audience; (far left) Robert Beckwith and the Earl of Essex; (below) Tim Eyre and George Davies



(Far left) New member James Rigby; (left) Linda Laubscher and Mark Jones; (above) Craigho with Ed O'Callahan; (below left) Ed Marlowe expounds; (below) Eugenie Rhodes and Luca Jellinek; (below right) Mark Christopher road-tests his beard





# HENRY FOX TALBOT

## AND THE INVENTION OF MODERN PHOTOGRAPHY

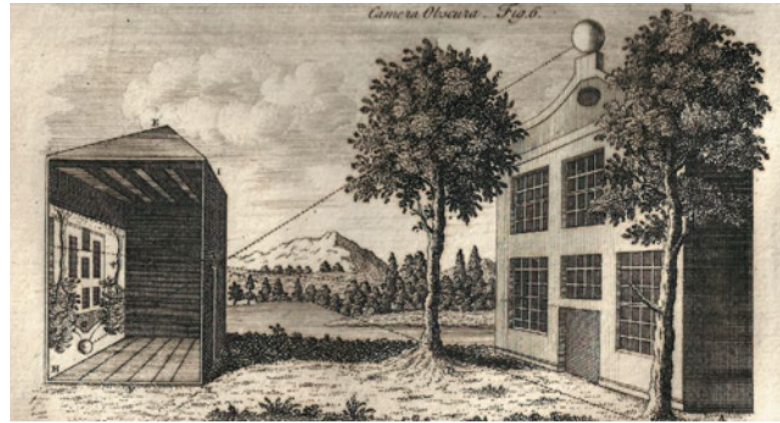
By Mr Stuart Mitchell

**T**HE PHENOMENON OF light being focused through a pinhole and creating an image was documented by Aristotle, but at that time the mechanism underpinning this phenomenon wasn't really understood. Between 1011 and 1021 AD the Arabic scientist Ibn al Haytham wrote *The Book of Optics*, in which he described the properties of light and human vision. He also described the *camera obscura*.

A camera obscura (Latin for "dark room") uses the principle that light passing through a pinhole can form a focused image on a flat surface. The image appears upside down and, because only a little light comes through the pinhole, the projection must be in a dark space to be visible; this could be a tent, but a portable tabletop version was also devised as a drawing aid for artists, creating a flat 2D version of a scene that could be copied. Another device, called a *camera lucida*, patented in 1806, used prisms or mirrors to enable the artist simultaneously to view the drawing surface and the subject, which would appear superimposed, creating an image that could be traced. The use of a camera lucida was to be critical in Talbot's discoveries and inventions.

It was also already known that some chemicals were sensitive to light, though this was seen more as a scientific curiosity than a useful property. In the early 1800s Thomas Wedgwood and Humphrey Davy had experimented with coating sheets of paper with silver nitrate or silver chloride, placing insect wings or plants on the sheets and exposing them to light, producing a silhouette print of the object. A long exposure was needed and the resulting images weren't "fixed", so further exposure to light made them eventually darken completely. The images thus had to be kept in a dark place and were only brought out to be viewed by moonlight or candlelight. Davy stopped pursuing these experiments when he couldn't find a way to make these images permanent.

The story of William Henry Fox Talbot



(Above) A camera obscura, showing how the image inverts;  
(below) a camera lucida in operation



(Below) Lacock Abbey





begins with the estate of Lacock Abbey in Wiltshire, which was owned by Captain William Davenport Talbot. William Talbot was headstrong, erratic and profligate with his money, racking up significant debts against the estate. He married Lady Elisabeth Strangeways and they had a son, William Henry Fox Talbot, but shortly afterwards William died suddenly leaving the 26-year-old Elisabeth a widow with a five-month-old son. They practically had no home of their own, as Lacock Abbey had been let to try to raise money; yet the infant Henry had now inherited the Lacock estate along with all its massive debts. In early April 1804 Elisabeth remarried Captain Charles Feilding.

Lady Elisabeth educated the young Henry for four years in various subjects, including languages and arithmetic. As his skills developed it was clear he needed more than she could offer and so he was sent to Rottingdean school at the age of eight. Here he excelled at all things academic, particularly Classics.

Talbot's story could not be told without including the Frenchman Louis-Jacques-Mande Daguerre. In 1800, the year of Henry's birth, Daguerre, then 13, was already contemplating employment. He had become an accomplished artist and his father committed him to three years' study of high-quality draughtsmanship, followed by an apprenticeship to a celebrated Italian stage designer and scene painter at the Paris Opéra.

After leaving Degotti's studio, Daguerre took a job as assistant to Pierre Prévost, a painter renowned for his panoramas, the newest form of entertainment in Paris.

Panoramas were enormous paintings—the largest then known being 360 feet long and 52 feet high—and were mounted on the wall of a circular room with a raised viewing platform in the middle, offering the viewer a 360-degree scene. The sheer scale of these paintings, with their depictions of great cities such as Rome or Jerusalem, was breath-taking.

In France around 1813 similar investigations to those of Davy had been undertaken by Nicéphore Niépce, trying to make images from a camera obscura permanent using silver chloride sensitized paper. He then tried using bitumen of Judea, which hardens rather than changes



(Above) Niépce's heliograph of the view out of his window, colour. After treatment with acid this could be used to create a lithographic plate from which prints could be made. This process was called "heliography", from the Greek *helios* for sun.

In 1826 Niépce took a sheet of pewter covered with bitumen and exposed it in a camera obscura for eight hours looking out of his window across the courtyard. The resulting image was quite crude by modern standards, but it was the first time an image had been permanently captured using light.

Meanwhile in April 1821 Louis Daguerre had entered into a new business venture, producing dioramas. The diorama was an improvement on the panorama, containing very large paintings, 72 by 46 feet across, executed on thin translucent fabric that was painted on both sides and illuminated to provide more realism.

Around 1824, after the financial success of the diorama, Daguerre equipped a laboratory in a basement room of his Diorama building with chemical apparatus and materials to perform his initial experiments in photography.

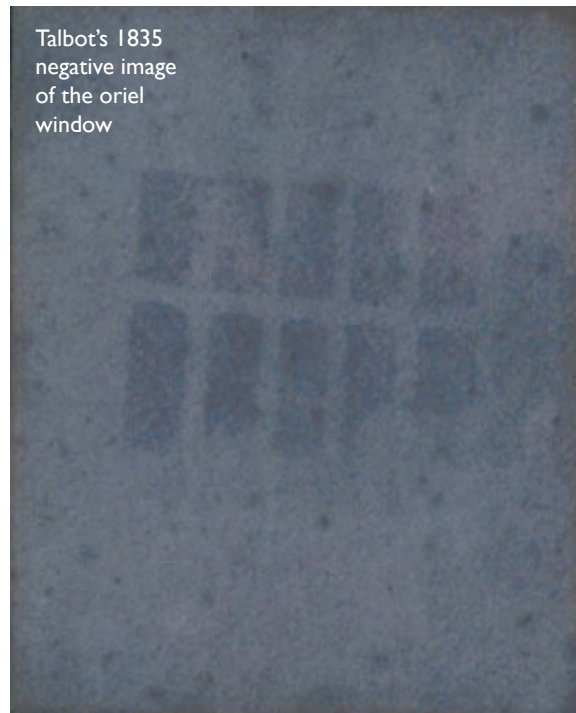
In the spring of 1821, after completing his four years at Cambridge and now reaching his majority, Henry Talbot received the keys to the Lacock estate. He found that the shrewd management of the estate by his stepfather had paid off all debts, and left him with an annual income of about £1,800 per year (c. £76,000 in today's values) and no need to pursue any occupation other than that of gentleman. So between 1821 and 1827 he travelled along the route of the old Grand Tour, visiting Vienna, Berlin, Geneva and Corfu.

On 21st June 1833 Henry and his wife Constance crossed the Channel to begin a six-month honeymoon. It was during these travels





Lake Como,  
photographed by  
Antonio Nessi  
(1834–1907)



Talbot's 1835  
negative image  
of the oriel  
window

in August 1833 on the shores of Lake Como in Italy that the young Henry would discover a critical skill (or rather a lack thereof). While trying to draw the natural beauty of the scenery using a camera lucida he was frustrated to find that he was not a skilled artist at all. It was at this time that he wondered if light itself could be used as a drawing instrument, to make a permanent record of the scene.

In August 1835, and with the sun outside providing the light needed, he finally found time to set up an experiment at Lacock that would attempt to do just that. Talbot created first a solution of sodium chloride, which he painted onto a piece of ordinary writing paper. When it was dry he took a solution of silver nitrate and painted that onto the same sheet of paper. The mixing of the two solutions on the surface of the paper created silver chloride, a silver compound much more light-sensitive than silver nitrate. To heighten the sensitivity further, he repeated the coatings several times on the sheet of paper. He positioned this piece of paper—not much bigger than a postage stamp—in the back of a small wooden box and placed a microscope eyepiece on the front of it to focus the image.

For this first experiment, he had set up his device on a shelf facing the central latticed window in the south gallery of the abbey.

After a short period of time Talbot removed the box, opened the back and carefully extracted the piece of paper. He found that he had created a ghostly but perfect image of the latticed window on the paper with such

accuracy that each tiny diamond-shaped pane of glass was visible through a magnifying glass—though all were reversed in tones. It was the world's first photographic negative, produced in a rural backwater. This one small piece of purple-tinged paper with its ghostlike image of a window would be the foundation stone on which photographic innovation would stand for the next 160 years.

As the archetypal gentleman amateur, he gave no thought at that stage either to historic significance or the potential value of his discovery. Although he took more, equally successful, images of the same window later that summer, as well as other views at Lacock Abbey, he was soon diverted from photographic experimentation back to his many other scientific and literary interests.

Had Talbot known of Daguerre and his work in Paris at this time it might have been a different story.

To a man of Talbot's arcane scientific training and knowledge, that first photographic negative probably seemed at the time merely another stage in the series of experiments that he had begun back in 1833 and whose ultimate objective was still uncertain. So, for the time being, he contented himself that he had achieved something that might be of interest to a few fellow scientists; perhaps at some point in the future he would get around to writing up his findings to share with them, but there seemed



no urgency to do so. Such was the isolation in which scientists—most of them amateurs rather than academics—worked at this time, that, in 1835, Henry Fox Talbot truly believed he was the sole originator of the idea of capturing the image of the camera obscura.

The years between Niépce's death in 1833 and the completion of Daguerre's eponymous process is a dark age in the history of photography in France.

One thing is certain: the daguerreotype process—as far as Daguerre was to take it—had been perfected by late 1837, at the identical point at which Henry Talbot in England had got as far as he could with his own process. But how Daguerre took the final steps necessary to make the process as practical as it is beautiful remain lost. In the most basic terms, the daguerreotype is an image made on a highly polished silver plate made sensitive to light by fuming it with the vapours of iodine. The sensitive plate is then exposed in the camera obscura and the latent image developed out over a pot of heated mercury.

The remaining, unexposed silver iodide is removed by fixing the plate in a bath of hot salt solution. Few plates remain of Daguerre's earliest work, and he published nothing other than an instruction manual to give any insight into his experiments or thinking during these seminal years.

It was the capturing of a latent image which could be developed chemically which was the innovation both Daguerre and Talbot discovered at the same time.

Talbot's early camera images were "printed out" (until the development of his calotype process of 1840), but with that exception all other camera photography from 1839 up to the digital age has used a short exposure time to capture just enough light energy to initiate the creation of an image. This hidden or latent image, whatever the process (be it Kodak, Polaroid or Tintype), is then brought out by chemical development.

On 7th January 1839, in a speech at a meeting of the Académie des Sciences, François Arago announced Louis Daguerre's creation of a process to capture and preserve the images seen in the camera obscura. The day before the *Gazette de France* had already made the announcement of Louis Daguerre's discovery.

This was reprinted verbatim by the British press over the next couple of weeks and quickly spread across the British scientific community.

Upon hearing this news, Talbot's embryonic idea that had been quietly gestating for the past four years was now to be thrust into the world, prematurely, in response to the shock of Daguerre's announcement. What mattered was his scientific integrity in the eyes of his peers and the urgent need to establish who had conducted the key experiments first—himself or Daguerre.

In a flurry of activity Talbot sent samples of his images to Michael Faraday at the Royal Institution and asked that they be displayed at the members' meeting to be held there on 25th January.

Talbot then wrote to the two scientists whom he knew best in Paris, the physicist Jean-Baptiste Biot and his old acquaintance François Arago.

At the least, Talbot wanted the French Academie to be aware that he had, quite independently, created his own images in the camera obscura—so that if his process and Daguerre's proved to be one and the same there could be no room for allegations that he had simply copied Daguerre's process. It was principle, not profit, that counted. The third phase of Talbot's response was to write a paper outlining his own process, which was presented on his behalf at the Royal Society meeting in London on 31st January.

Without pause for thought about profit or patent, Talbot hurried to publish complete details of his photogenic drawing process less than a month later, on 21st February 1839. Talbot's observation that a strong salt solution retarded the discoloration process was the inspiration behind his method for preserving the image. He hadn't removed the sensitive layer completely but had desensitized it to the point that it could be examined in light without an immediate and significant change occurring.

On the whole, Talbot's process was a great deal simpler than Daguerre's; so simple in fact that it could be accomplished by anyone with minimal chemical knowledge and skill.

Thus in most standard histories the year 1839 is generally looked upon as marking the birth of photography.

Meanwhile, and on a more profound, theological level, questions were already being asked about the morality of this new discovery.

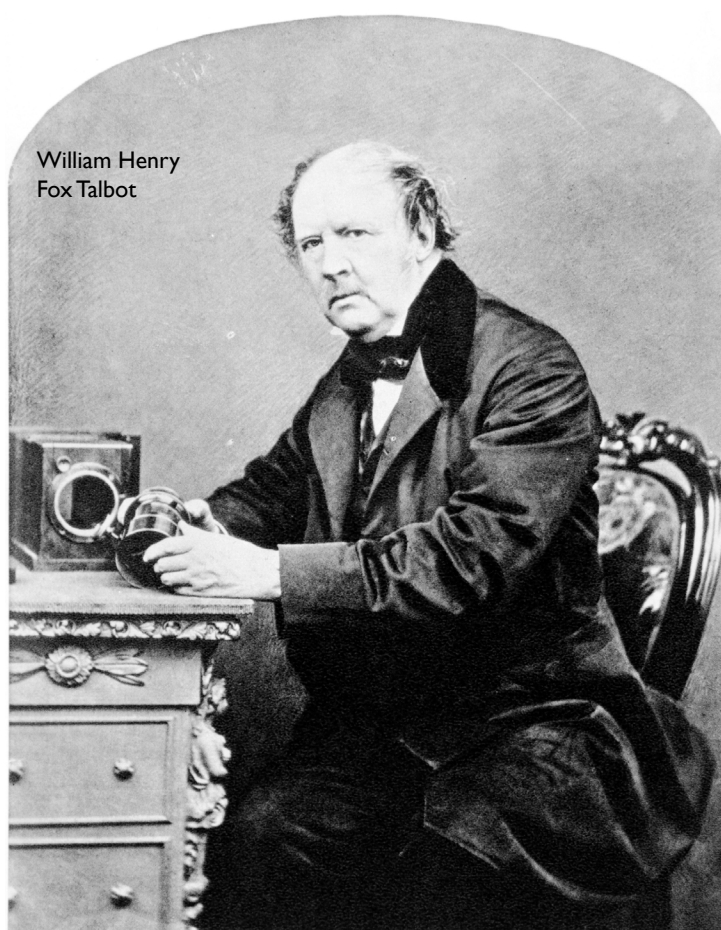


Was it God's will that man should seek to capture the most fleeting and temporal of his creations?

From Germany a dour and pious article in the *Leipziger Stadtanzeiger* asserted: "The wish to capture evanescent reflections, is not only impossible, as has been shown by thorough German Investigation, but the mere desire alone, the will to do so, is blasphemy. God created man in His own image, and no man-made machine may fix the image of God. Is it possible that God should have abandoned His eternal principles, and allowed a Frenchman in Paris to give to the world an invention of the Devil?"

Other British photographic experimenters were already trying to cash in on Talbot's invention. In late March an article appeared in the *Literary Gazette* stating that two English engravers, William Havell and James Wilmore, had already come up with a new use for photogenic drawing. Initially, Talbot had hoped to make his process free to all, but finding that rivals such as Havell and Wilmore were eager to hijack it for their own financial gain, he decided to oppose their applications.

Talbot experimented with ways of speeding up the sensitivity of



William Henry Fox Talbot

the paper, in the hope that portraits from life would soon become possible. This was the next big leap that photography would need, but at this early stage neither Talbot nor Daguerre had progressed beyond being able to depict inanimate objects such as buildings and still life.

Meanwhile, in Paris, after months of delay, Arago had worked hard to convince the government

to purchase the Daguerreotype process and then release it free to the world as a symbol of France's superiority in the arts and sciences.

Daguerre was portrayed as not just a genius and a national hero, he was also the victim of a terrible personal loss with the destruction of his dioramas and laboratory in a fire in 1839.

So ten days later, after examining the

daguerreotype process and evaluating its importance to the French nation, the committee reported back to Duchâtel: Daguerre would be required to turn over to the government not just a detailed description of the daguerreotype process but also full disclosure of the late Nicéphore Niépce's heliograph process and any improvements that Daguerre had made to it. The written description of these processes would be placed in a sealed



Louis Daguerre



envelope, certified by Arago to be correct. If the bill was passed, the processes would be published and Daguerre would be required to make a public demonstration.

In return for revealing his process, Daguerre would receive 6,000 francs per annum and Isidore Niépce, Nicéphore's son and heir, 4,000 per annum, with a reduced sum to their widows on their death.

The bill was signed by King Louis-Philippe on 1st August and the daguerreotype process was now the property of the French government.

The English were to learn very quickly, however, that although details of the process were available and cameras could be purchased along with the chemicals needed, they were not to have the same freedom to produce them as the rest of the world. For even as the French bill to give Daguerre and Niépce their rewards had been winding its slow way through governmental channels in Paris, Miles Berry had begun the procedures necessary to obtain a patent on the daguerreotype in England.

The certificate finally received its royal seal on 14th August. The daguerreotype was now legally protected, and public property in France. Talbot's photogenic drawing process had already been in the public domain for six months before the daguerreotype was finally revealed.

After the initial flush of excitement at the birth of photography had worn off, expectations of what the two processes might offer had begun to rise. The problem was that the reality of what Daguerre and Talbot could achieve at this stage could not keep up with public demand: the two inventors had progressed so far and then seem to have hit a wall. In truth, Daguerre had taken his own experiments as far as he could by late 1837, when he felt his process was good enough to market. The only improvement he had made since then was in the spring of 1839, when he had switched from using a salt solution to fix the plates and adopted Herschel's suggestion of hyposulphite of soda.

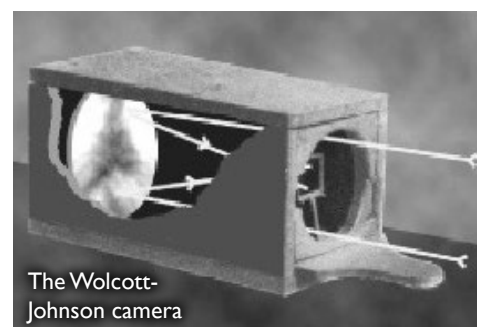
By the end of 1839, he had collected the first instalment of his pension and the insurance payout for the paintings lost in the Diorama fire, and was focusing his attention on buying a house with private grounds outside Paris. Daguerre was only 52 but he was already settling down to a comfortable retirement.

After the flurry of the Daguerre announcement and Talbot's rush to publish his still nascent process prematurely, Talbot had allowed his photographic experiments to languish. But he was yet to achieve the one thing that still eluded all practitioners at this point—a successful portrait of a live sitter.

But although portraiture was technically feasible, how to make it efficient and cost-effective was a different matter entirely. Both the daguerreotype and photogenic drawing processes were still inadequate, requiring an exposure of at least 10 to 15 minutes in direct sunlight.

Undeterred by the limitations of their first attempt at portraiture, over in the USA Alexander Wolcott and John Johnson came up with a completely new type of camera in October of 1839.

Instead of a lens on the front of his camera there was simply a hole about five inches in diameter that allowed light to fall onto a concave mirror at the back. This mirror in turn focused the image back onto a small daguerreotype plate positioned



between the hole and the mirror. This lens-less camera was a vast improvement and reduced exposure times to around five minutes.

Over in Europe, it was another year before portraiture was finally taken up commercially, when an enterprising businessman, Richard Beard, opened his first portrait studio in London on 23rd March 1841.

By the mid-1840s, chemists in both America and Europe had added the use of a second sensitising chemical, so all these photographic pioneers had, within a year, succeeded in reducing the exposure time from minutes to mere seconds.

While many photographers were already vigorously engaged in the lucrative possibilities of portraiture, what of Henry Fox Talbot and his own process, photogenic drawing?

In September 1840, Talbot hit on a distinct combination of chemicals that at last promised a significant step beyond photogenic drawing. The chemical was gallic acid, made from the galls



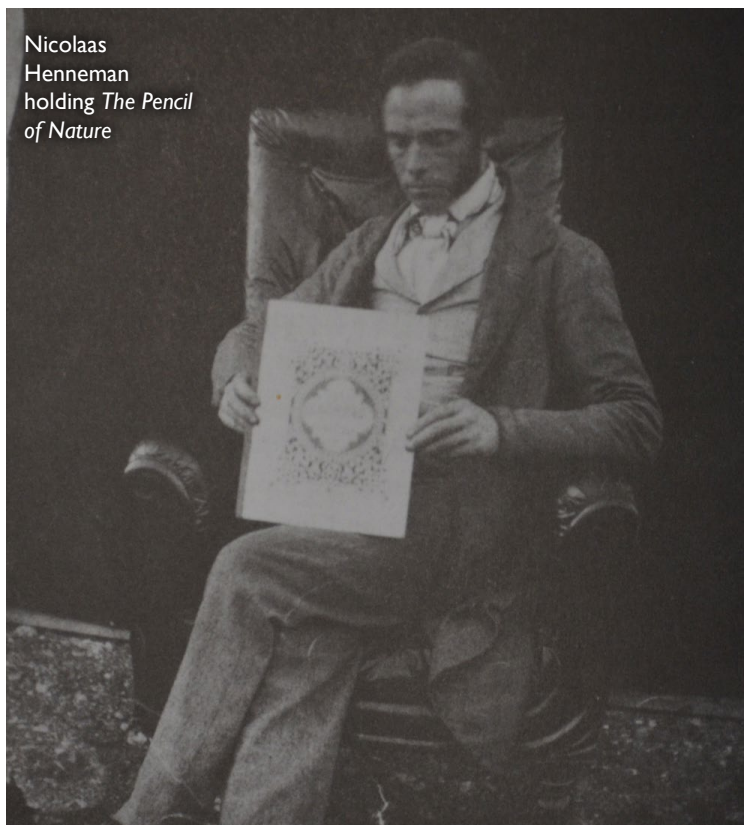
of oak trees. Talbot had found that by coating a piece of paper as he would for a regular photogenic drawing and then washing it over with gallic acid the paper became significantly more sensitive.

This was the process Talbot had been looking for. It required a short exposure in-camera—a few seconds in sunlight—and then the image was developed out by chemical action.

Thanks to the addition of gallic acid, these negatives, after fixing and washing, were much more stable than his earlier ones and less prone to fading. This was the great strength of his process over Daguerre's: using these far more robust negatives, the photographer would be able to make dozens, if not hundreds, of positive copies simply by using his regular photogenic drawing formula for the printing paper. Talbot named this new process the "calotype" from the Greek word *kalos*, meaning beautiful.

Soon after, Talbot added a further improvement which was to wax the negative after it was made. This made the paper more translucent and gave greater detail to the positive prints, as well as lessening the exposure time needed in the sun for making them.

In a move that surprised many of his contemporaries, and which angered those in the English photographic community already frustrated by the patent controls on the

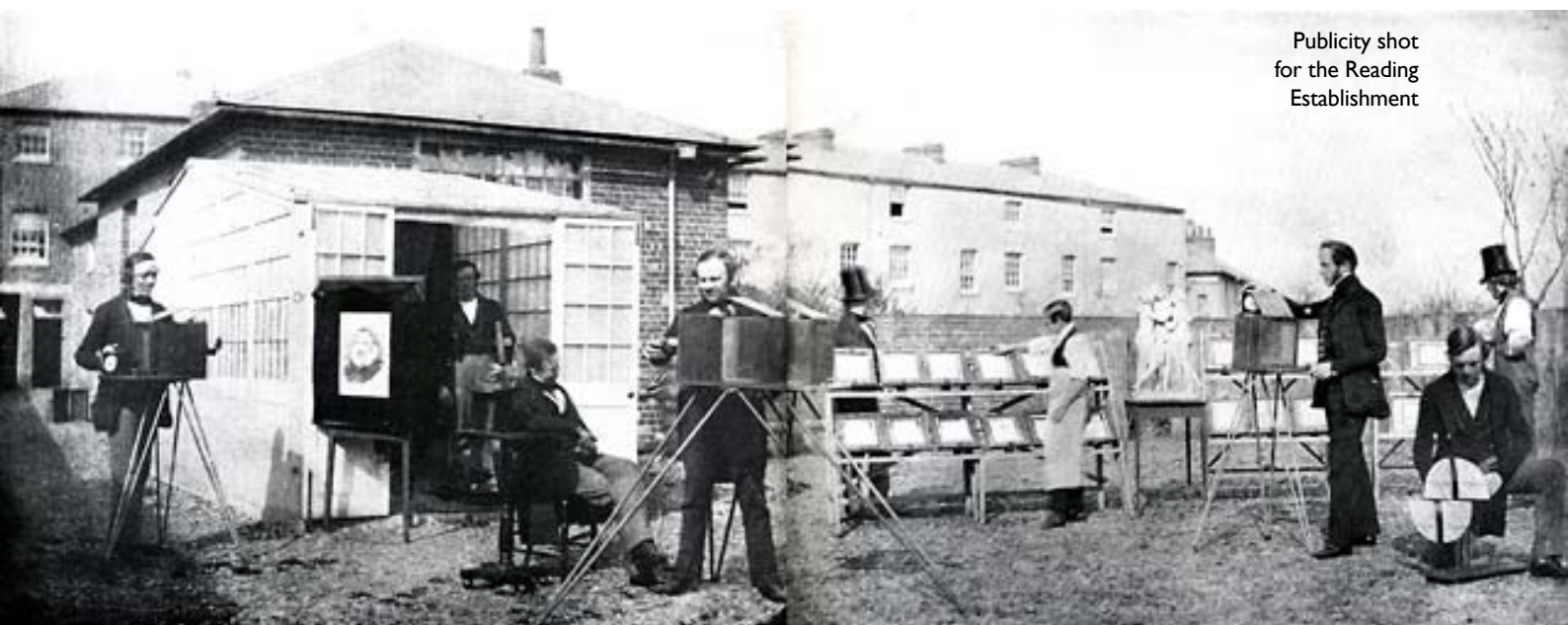


Nicolaas Henneman holding *The Pencil of Nature*

daguerreotype, Talbot decided to take out a patent on his new process and charge a fee to anyone who wished to make commercial use of it.

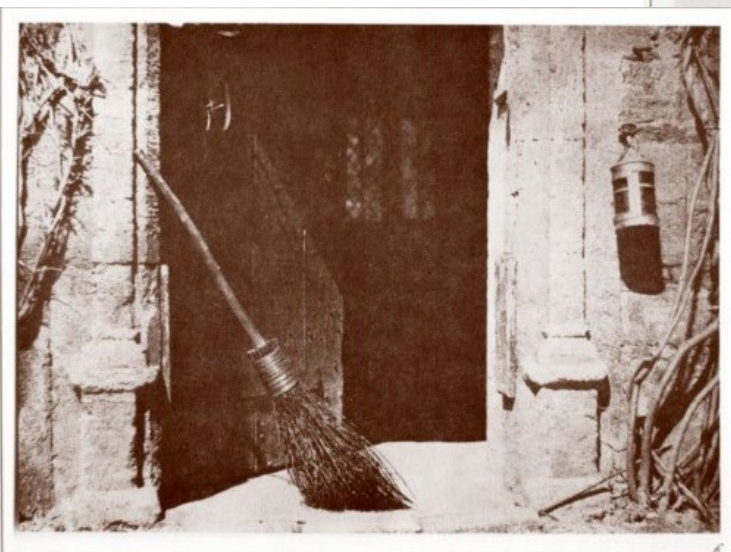
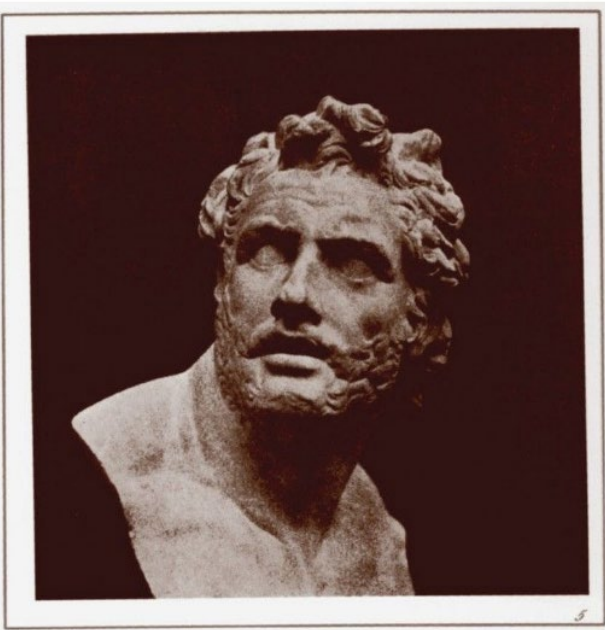
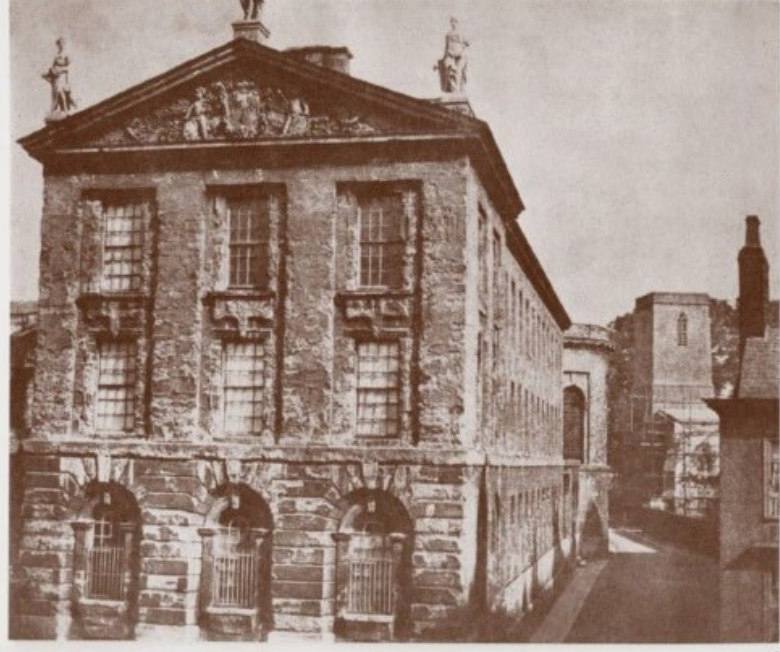
In developing the calotype, he had turned to photographing various locations in and around his home at Lacock and then, with the assistance of his Dutch valet Nicolaas Henneman, taking the process on the road and photographing the picturesque architecture of Oxford and Paris.

In 1844 he set to work on disseminating the details of the calotype process, by devising a



Publicity shot for the Reading Establishment





Five of the plates from *The Pencil of Nature*. Clockwise from the top: part of Queen's College, Oxford; articles of china; leaf of a plant; The Open Door; bust of Patroclus;

book containing actual photographic prints from his own calotype negatives. The series was called *The Pencil of Nature* and its purpose was twofold: to demonstrate the feasibility of using photographs directly in a publication, and secondly to illustrate the various possible applications of photography. But *not* portraiture, which he considered beneath the lofty scientific standards of photography. In order to provide the great quantity of



pictures that he intended to include in *The Pencil of Nature*, Talbot worked closely with Henneman. They set up a printing studio at Reading, about halfway between Lacock and London. Known as the Reading Establishment, it was able to turn out dozens, if not hundreds, of prints every day and had no problems producing the images needed for Talbot's book.

Overall *The Pencil of Nature* contained 24 Talbot calotypes, many of which are now iconic in the history of early photography.

Even though the Reading establishment was relatively short-lived, in use for just two years between 1844 and 1845, there were several calotypes taken around Reading itself showing points of local interest.

Talbot's own interest in making photographs seems to have ground to a halt in 1846, which coincided with the death of his mother. But despite Daguerre's retirement from the field in 1839 and Talbot's withdrawal seven years later, the two pioneers had nevertheless set in motion a process that by the mid-1840s was not only rapidly expanding but was now making the important transition from a hybrid of art and science to a new and important discipline.

The 1830s had brought us photography's birth, the 1840s its infancy; but it was in the 1850s that photography truly came into its own. By the mid-century, Daguerre's process was still cornering the market and had outstripped Talbot's calotype, not just in Britain, but also on the Continent and in America. The daguerreotype was by now synonymous with

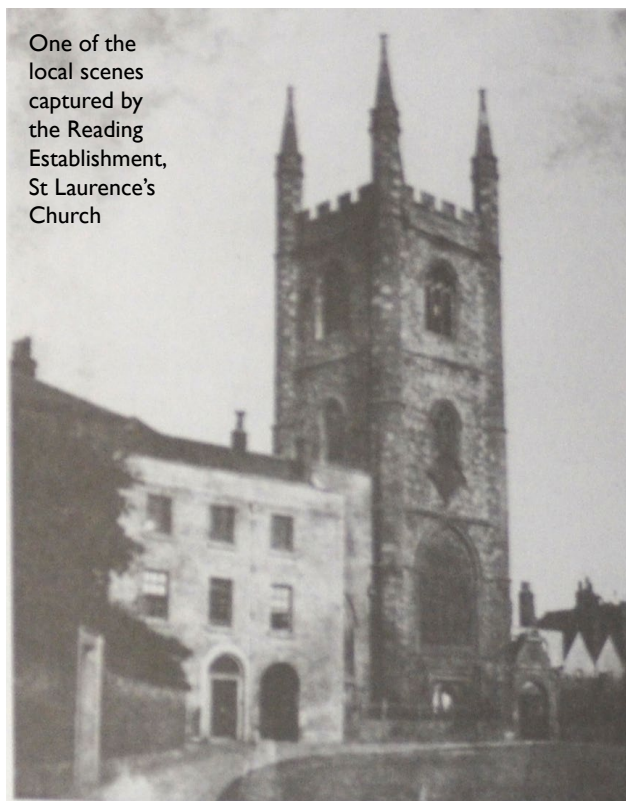
photographic portraiture.

Photographic practitioners freely admitted that the calotype's facility for almost unlimited reproduction was a great advantage, but the softness of the image produced—compared to the sharp, more lifelike quality of the daguerreotype—was still failing to raise public interest. Nevertheless, one thing was clear: if the quality of the negative-positive system of photography could be improved it had a very good chance of surpassing the daguerreotype and even of capturing the market.

A number of technical breakthroughs came in 1851, including the first truly instantaneous photograph, another innovation by Talbot. In an experiment carried out at the Royal Institution he mounted a page from a newspaper on a rotating disc in a darkened room and set the camera up in front of it. He then spun the disc as fast as it would go and set off a spark discharged from a battery. The negative, when processed, showed that the newspaper page had been frozen by the spark and captured in-camera, so that every word was readable.

Talbot was greatly cheered by the advent of the Great Exhibition, held in London's Hyde Park that same year, thanks in large part to the vigorous support of Prince Albert and Queen Victoria.

One of the first modifications to the calotype process was a new positive printing paper, introduced in 1850 by Louis Désiré Blanquart-Évrard. He devised a method whereby the paper was first coated with albumen (egg white),



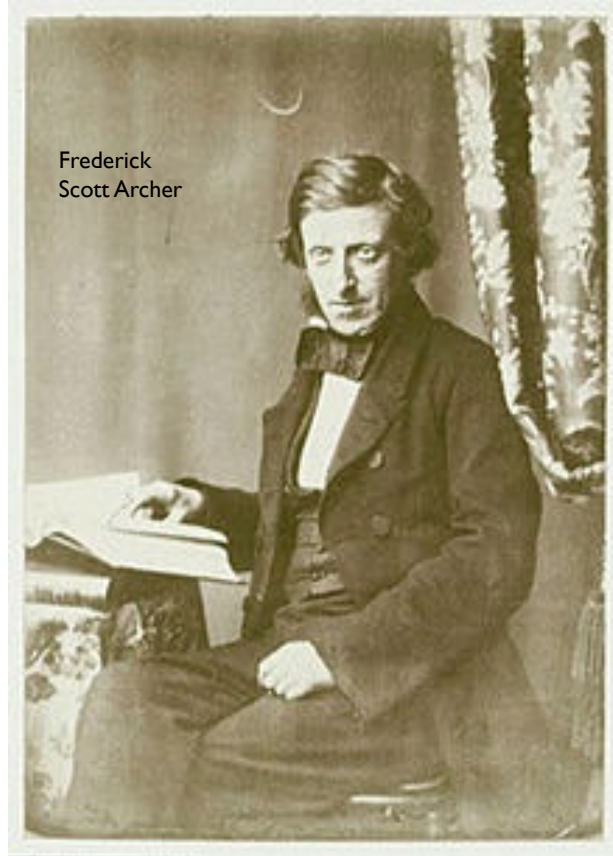
which when dry could be sensitized just like photogenic drawing paper. This simple coating lifted the sensitized surface up out of the paper fibres, giving a smoother surface and a slight gloss. Because the silver of the image sat above the paper layer, in the clear albumen, it gave a much sharper quality to the print. By 1855, albumen paper had almost completely supplanted ordinary photogenic drawing paper and factories

were set up to mass-produce it. Such was the growing demand for albumen paper that later in the century one factory alone was using around six million eggs a year in its manufacture.

London-based artist Frederick Scott Archer was one of the early adopters of photogenic techniques. The son of a country butcher in Hertford, and thus with none of the benefits of money or privilege, Archer had served an apprenticeship as a silversmith and bullion dealer.

The new process that Archer came up with was an artistic cross between the accuracy of the daguerreotype and the reproducible nature of the calotype, but its formulation and techniques were all his own. Archer's solution was to find a way of putting the negative on glass, rather than paper, which would provide the crispness of the daguerreotype and the reproducibility of the calotype. To do so, he used a new solution known as collodion, a syrupy liquid made from cotton dissolved in nitric acid, that was then mixed with ether and alcohol. Once it is poured onto the glass plate the ether and alcohol begin to evaporate and within a few minutes the collodion layer has dried.

The process is generally known now as wet-plate photography, but this highlights its one flaw. The photographer had to pour the collodion on the plate, sensitize it, make the exposure and then develop the plate – all before the collodion had dried, a process which had to



be completed usually within 15 minutes. This was not difficult to do in the studio, but if a photographer attempted to use this process in the field to make landscape views, he would have to take a portable darkroom and all of his chemistry with him.

Archer died in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, in 1857, six years after introducing the wet-collodion process, and having earned not a penny from his invention.

Daguerre's daily walks and his other projects appeared to be keeping him in robust good health, but during lunch with his family on 10th July 1851, he collapsed, probably due to a heart attack. He was just 62 years old.

By the end of the 1850s a few diehard daguerreotypists remained in business, but most professional photographers had converted to Archer's collodion process by then or gone out of business. Talbot's calotype had never found its feet in England beyond the advocacy of a few enthusiasts, but it was carried on in France as the preferred method of art photographers for a few years to come.

Frederick Scott Archer's collodion process would dominate photography for the next 30 years.

In the end, William Henry Fox Talbot outlived his more celebrated competitor by 26 years. Medals and awards continued to come his way in the scientific and academic worlds; the Société Française de Photographie, in a very generous act, acknowledged him as one of the inventors of photography in 1867, and the Photographic Society of London finally changed its rules (expanding eligibility to anyone resident in the UK) to make him an honorary member in 1873. On the morning of 17th September 1877, he finally collapsed and succumbed to the heart disease that he had suffered from for some time, in his study at Lacock. The obituaries, unlike those for Daguerre, were few and modest.



# Rose Selavy's DADA EXTRAVAGANZA

Reviewed by **Linda Laubscher**

The Royal Academy of Arts sure knows how to throw a party. Anything from a mod party in Manhattan to a masquerade in Venice transported to central London. Every three months the RA stages an evening of sensory delights under the “RA Lates” banner, each meticulous detail centred around their latest exhibition in-house.

A recent stellar example was their immersive night landscaped around Surrealism. Revellers, dandy dressers and art connoisseurs were invited to enter the worlds of Salvador Dalí and Marcel Duchamp for one unforgettable night in 1930s Paris.

So much was on the menu: a decadent surrealist ball, Dada karaoke, Dalí’s dreamscapes brought to life, optical illusions, *In Voluptas Mors* life drawing, “Exquisite Corpse” art-making games, a surrealist supper, film screenings, talks and discussions. Plus of course the main hero, a retrospective on Dalí and Duchamp.

Dalí and Duchamp were artistic giants: father of conceptual art Marcel Duchamp and larger-than-life Surrealist Salvador Dalí. This was the first exhibition to throw light on their surprising relationship and its influence on the work of both artists.



Apart from the main exhibition, the highlight of the evening was the Surrealist *Bal Onirique* with music by Alex Mendham and his Orchestra performing '30s jazz and swing tunes, recreating an infamous party of the mid-1930s, hosted by bohemian

socialite Caresse Crosby in honour of Salvador Dalí’s return to Europe from New York.

A memorable night indeed. Plus any excuse to dress up.

*For details of forthcoming RA Lates, see [royalacademy.org.uk](http://royalacademy.org.uk).*









# 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.*

## Ivan Debono

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

At the last Chap Olympiad I used the idiotically silly name "The Honourable Member For Quantumshire South".

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

Oh, I don't know. Spur of the moment thing. I couldn't jolly well use my real name. It would have sounded like a joke. Too Foreign.

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

The dreaded question. I was born in Malta, which is just inside or just outside Africa, depending on how you look at it, and well outside civilisation, whichever way you look at it. After a series of unfortunate events, I ended up in France. I'm still stuck there. So, a double foreigner.

### **Favourite Cocktail?**

My own creation. On New Year's Eve 2016 I was invited to a party in a rather chic neighbourhood hosted by, shall we say, a very chic acquaintance. The guest list was made up of impossibly beautiful models and actresses, artist and poet types, and the odd millionaire. I knew I had to work fast. So I equipped myself with a bottle of Pimm's, and Champagne. Half-way through the evening I commandeered the sound system and put on *Rhythm of the Night*. Anyone who has seen the ending of the otherwise insipid film *Beau Travail* will know the cathartic properties of this classic tune (which contains the grammatically incorrect sentence, "There'll be nothing left for me to



*Debono (left) with Howard and Torquil of the Glorious Committee*

yearn"). I was approached by one very enthusiastic guest, wearing a flamboyant outfit consisting of a blue velvet tailcoat with gold trim. It turned out he was the choreographer for Corona. I digress. That's two parts Champagne to one part Pimm's (I used No.1), straight up, no messing about. Or one to one. Or any other ratio, depending on the supply of Champagne and one's mood. The resulting cocktail was hitherto unknown to science, so I called it the Entente Cordiale. Most of the guests were surprisingly unfamiliar with Pimm's, which I suppose helped give the concoction a certain esoteric aura.

It saw me through to dawn, which is all a man can ask for in those circumstances. Then I stepped outside. It was snowing.

### **Most Chappist skill?**

I don't quite know what a "Chappist skill" is. Do fencing and pugilism count? Also, a smattering of languages from the Eastern Approaches. Enough to make passes, and not much else.



### **Most Chappist possession?**

Again, what counts as "Chappist"? Cigarette cases, vintage ties and clasp knives have been done to death, so here goes: a 1930s Watson & Sons microscope, "liberated" from the school laboratory.

### **Personal Motto?**

$S = k \log W$

### **Favourite Quotes?**

The entire script of *Withnail and I*. And of course the most immortal lines ever written:

"Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty, —that is all Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

### **Not a lot of people know this about me...**

...but I run an online fan club for a Ukrainian girl band called A.R.M.I.A. I cultivate rather an eclectic taste in music, and I set it up as a kind of experiment. It must have been the first time anyone had heard of them west of the Curzon Line, for in the space of a few weeks I was inundated with requests for membership. Within a few months, the girls themselves, their photographer, their costume designer, and their entire crew had joined. Then I got a letter from their manager, the gist being (it was in Russian) that I should cease and desist or face consequences. I wrote back with a powerful missive on rights, liberties, and Magna Carta. I also pointed out that I was doing *them* a favour. The manager meekly submitted, but would I please, if it's not too much bother, add a link to their official website? Always glad to do my bit. Do not scoff at pop music. *Kombinatiya* practically brought down the Iron Curtain single-handed. Perhaps a subject for my Turn?

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

Since February or March last year. That's when I made the (quantum) leap of faith.

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

The precise details are lost in the mists of time. Round about the turn of the century (after the t'Internet but before so-called social media), I stumbled upon *The Chap*, and immediately recognised a kindred spirit. So I took out a subscription. Much later, when some clever chap invented One's Book and *The Chap* got its page, I started to notice obscure references to "the

Club", and Sheridanites and such. Fast forward and here I am.

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

Clean underwear, for a start. Because one never knows. Any kind will do.

Cocktails: my own (*vide supra*). Also, the *yorsh* (pronounced "yersh") [*vodka mixed with beer — Ed*], but don't pour in the vodka. Serve it in a shot glass, then allow it to sink to the bottom of your pint glass. God that brings back memories.

Tailor: If money is no object, any of the houses on Savile Row. Otherwise, Henry Herbert in Camden, or G.D. Golding in St Albans.

Restaurant: Should you find yourselves in the barren wilderness that is Paris: L'Entente (le British Brasserie), where the forward-deployed NSC Continental Detachment (all two of us) holds its clandestine monthly meeting.

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

I had but two friends in the world. Both are dead. One was carried away by a vulgar little tumour, poor fellow. The other was assassinated. She was a journalist who uncovered a vast web of evil, the likes of which the world has never seen. Which makes her a historical figure. We never got round to having a proper dinner party, so this would be an atonement of sorts. The third guest would be Sherlock Holmes. He'd get along splendidly.

### **Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?**

*Artemis Scarheart* And I hereby declare that no waterboarding was involved in this interview. Will this do?

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

I'm afraid I haven't. However, I discovered that a shocking number of our members are scientists. During post-lecture drinks at one Lodge meeting we were bemoaning the dearth of Chaps in science. So I might do a comparative analysis of the famous 1927 Solvay Conference, and the geekoid shower that is modern academia (*pace* the late Stephen Hawking). Either that or something about Music, Revolution, and End of History (*vide supra*).





## CLUB NOTES

# Where Did You Get That Tile?

THE LAST WEEK OF MARCH was London Hat Week, organised by Georgina Abbott of Atelier Millinery and Becky Weaver of HATalk magazine, to celebrate the wearing and making of hats. In truth it is mostly aimed at milliners, with a big fair for dealers in millinery supplies and loads of courses, talks and workshops on hat-making techniques. But for those of us whose interest in hats stops enthusiastically but

definitively at putting them on our heads, there was the London Hat Walk.

Taking place this



Mad hatter Patricia Adler (centre) with some of her creations, all made from recycled drums and cymbals

year on Sunday 25th March, the Walk is not an arduous trek, lasting only about an hour (much of which is spent pausing to be photographed). A be-titfered mob simply assembles then ambles along a designated route while paparazzi snap and confused tourists drop their jaws.

The usual route involves meeting outside the Laird shop on New Row and mincing around Trafalgar Square, but owing to a marathon taking place in that area on this occasion, a new route was attempted this year, gathering by the Tate Modern and parading along the South Bank. In an address to us at the end Becky said it was the largest Walk yet, though most of the mob seemed to be the mysterious red-and-purple clad ladies of the Purple Pebbles of Teignmouth (a charity group, I believe).

Thanks to Darcy, Stewart, the Mitchells and the Shipwright's Arms for a post-walk pint.



Christopher Russenberger and chum, both mysteriously not yet in the NSC

Stewart ListerVickers (far left), Darcy Sullivan (far right) and Clayton Hartley (second from right) with some brightly-clad hat walkers. That mustard cap was my favourite hat of the event





# Annual NSC Punt, Picnic 'n' Plunge

*Saturday 21st April, from 11am*

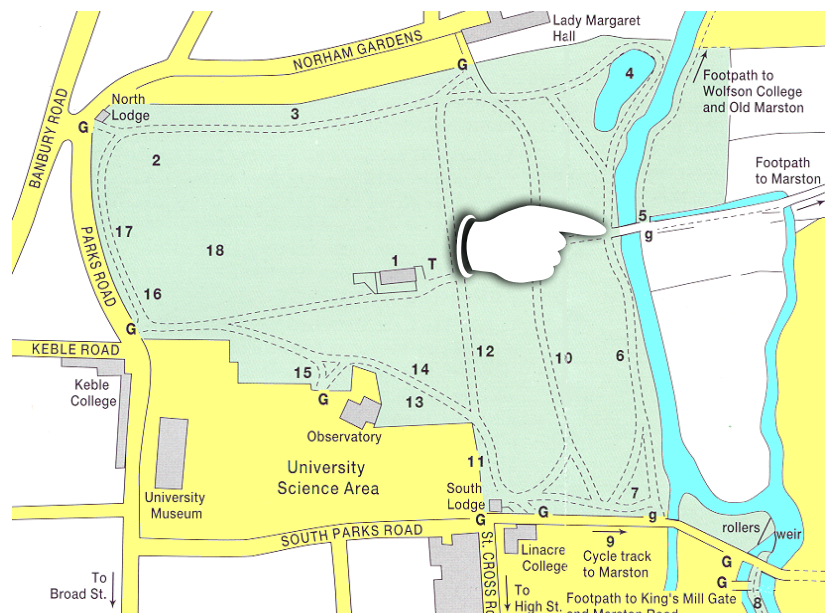
*Meeting at the Bear Inn, embarking at the Magdalen Bridge Boathouse 12pm*

“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 'n' 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 picnic by the Rainbow Bridge (see map), 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, 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.





## New Members

ANOTHER TWO NEWBIES have taken the plunge in the last month. James Rigby, from Royal Tunbridge Wells, did so emphatically in person at the March Club meeting (see his likeness on page 3). Jonas Ahnoff, on the other hand, joined from afar—all the way from Gothenburg in Sweden, to be precise. “My dear friend Johan Hector has been speaking of your club for years, and finally convinced me to join when we discussed it over a ‘few’ pints of Guinness the other night. Being a long time reader of *The Chap* I felt it was a good step to take.” Mr Ahnoff sent two splendid photos, which together prove his credentials beyond doubt. “The sign,” he explains, “used



to demonstrate against a Nazi march, reads: ‘Vintage fashion—yes please! Vintage politics—no thanks!’”

## Club Tie Corner

RELATIVELY FEW SPOTS this month. (Facing page, top) Col. Cyrus Choke observes, “Seems my late Uncle John was a Sheridanite. Based upon the width of the tie, a member since the early 60s!”

The irrepressible Ivan Debono (see pages 16–17) sends us this picture (bottom) of the late, great Stephen Hawking. Club colours aside, he points out that, in his velvet jacket and cravat, he was better dressed than most of the celebs at this 2015 black tie event.

Finally, this complex composition from Manny Manchester in Hawaii makes a useful touchstone given that, unusually, it does genuinely feature a Club tie.





## 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 4th 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: £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.

### **Hidden Figures: WW2**

Until Sunday 15th April  
Start time varies from 6.45 to 9.10  
Secret location

Admission: £22.50–30 depending on start time. A WWII-themed immersive entertainment: as far as I can tell you are assigned a character, who is a real but little-known SOE operative from history, and you must solve some sort of puzzle while discovering more about your character. The emphasis is on individuals who achieved great things but have perhaps been under-celebrated because they were gay, female or from an ethnic minority. There is a drinking element too. More details at partygeek.org. Tickets from Design My Night.

### **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 visiting, 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-

Early 1920s dancing shoes (Rhythm & Reaction)



important jazz sound. There are a host of events associated with this exhibition, including tours, talks, musical performances, workshops and more. See [twotempleplace.org/whats-on](http://twotempleplace.org/whats-on) for details.

### **Black Tie Ballroom Club**

Friday 6th April  
Beginners' class from 7pm, main dance from 7.30–11pm  
The Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 6AQ (02073870411)  
Admission: £10 earlybird from Design My Night, £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 7.30 pm. 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 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.

### **The Candlelight Club: Sakura in Old Tokyo**

Saturday 7th April  
7pm–12am

A secret London location  
Admission: £25 in advance  
Dress: Prohibition dandies, swells, gangsters and





Calling all mogas

molls, degenerate aristos and aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know—or perhaps a hint of Japanese fusion fashion...

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 dinner menu. Guests receive an email a few days before the event revealing the secret location. See [www.thecandlelightclub.com](http://www.thecandlelightclub.com).

This month there is an eastern twist: April is the festival of cherry blossom (*sakura*) in Japan, when people throw parties to appreciate the beauty of the trees. In the 1920s this love of nature and tradition collided with a huge social shift—women suddenly had more freedom and the urban young embraced Western fashion, Art Deco, jazz, drinking, smoking—to create a hybrid style, a distinctly Japanese Jazz Age.

For women the new look was the *moga* (short for *modan gaaru*, “modern girl”), a Japanese flapper. But this Western wardrobe coexisted happily with traditional dress and even blended with it. Along with the look went an enthusiasm for cocktails, so there will be a bespoke cocktail menu for the evening inspired by the Land of the Rising Sun.

At the party there will be cherry blossom and projections of Japanese gangster movies from the era. There will be dancing to live

music from the Waruli Otoko Swing Orchestra, and presiding over the revelry will be cabaret host Madame Ware. When the band aren't playing, vintage vinyl will be spun by DJ 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*

### For King and Country

Wednesday 18th April to Sunday 10th June

Variable start time

Secret Cabinet War Rooms, 84 Long Lane, London SE1 4AU

Admission: £29–35

Immersive theatre which imagines a version of the Second World War where Edward VIII is on the throne, Lord Halifax is Prime Minister and a Nazi invasion of Britain is about to become a reality. Customers play the roles of a small group of backbench MPs taken to a secret war room and given the task of saving the nation from jackbooted oblivion. More at [www.forkingandcountry.london](http://www.forkingandcountry.london).

### The Annual Punt, Picnic 'n' Plunge

Saturday 21st April

From 11am

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

Admission: About £20 contribution towards punt hire plus money for food and drink

See page 19.

### London Spring Cider Festival

Saturday 28th April

11am–8pm (or as long as stocks last)

Goldsmiths Students' Union, Dixon Road, New Cross, London SE14 6NW

Admission: £3 (£1 for CAMRA members)

Club Member Ian White (curator of the annual NSC pub crawl) is not only a CAMRA member but also a member of the righteous Campaign for Real Cider as well. At this festival, in which he has had a hand, there will be 30 ciders and perries, plus a real ale in case you can't stomach cider but want to uphold the spirit of the thing. There will be food available too, and the Union bar will be open as well for other drinks and refreshments. More at the website for the South East London chapter: [sel.camra.org.uk](http://sel.camra.org.uk).



The Earl of Essex, still in Churchillian mode after his triumph last month

