

The New Sheridan Club

Newsletter

XV

The Editor writes...

A Happy New Year to all the illustrious Members of the New Sheridan Club. The Committee hopes that the year ahead will be a prosperous and happy one for the Membership with perhaps a small drink taken now and then for medicinal reasons.

As usual, for the latest information on what the Club is up to and has done, have a gander at www.newsheridanclub.co.uk. For those of a more technological bent, you can also help spread the word by becoming a “friend” of the NSC in its “myspace” incarnation at www.myspace.com/newsheridanclub. There is also a “facebook” page but how you get there I have no idea.

We dare not vouch for those who link to our “myspace” and “facebook” pages but most of them seem to be good eggs.

The Next Meeting

The next Meeting of the New Sheridan Club will take place on Wednesday 6th February 8pm–11pm, upstairs at The

Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB.

I am reasonably confident that The Turn this month will be Miss Emelyne Godfrey who will educate us on *Victorian Martial Arts*, a subject upon which she is currently finishing her PhD.

The December Meeting

Back in the cold and non-snowy days of December, a light was lit in the darkness by Mr Russell Newlove, who claims he earns his crust as a sound engineer for the BBC World Service. Given the fact that many broadcasters, including the venerable BBC, have been recently outed for telling lies perhaps he does not work as a sound engineer at all. Perhaps he is Head of Light Entertainment? There is simply no way to know.

RN delivered a lecture on the history of said organisation, a tear-jerking tale of noble values and ever-dwindling budgets. He was aided by some apposite recordings, including the extraordinary message sent by Reith several times on



The New Sheridan Club traditionally meets in the upstairs room of the Wheatsheaf pub 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 here and, legend has it, he was known to flash at women in here 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 here, as did Aleister Crowley, Wilfred Owen, Rupert Brooke and Katherine Mansfield.

the first day of broadcasting, apologising to listeners for the fact that many of the programmes were “neither very interesting nor very good”.

A truly splendid Turn indeed and a fine ending to the year.

The January Meeting

With a mighty roar to blast away the remnants of the Yuletide period, the first Club Night of 2008 saw the Baron of Bermondsey deliver an impassioned and thorough examination of the history of tartan and the kilt—from its earliest beginnings through to modern-day myths and conventions.

Not only did he have various outfits on display but he was attired in tartan himself. In fact he even split his talk around an interval so that he could effect a costume change for the second half. I think he was wearing Black Watch to start with, changing to Royal Gordon later.

We're not sure where his obsession

with the fabric comes from, as he admits he is a Yorkshireman and not remotely Scots. But, as he pointed out, the whole idea of specific “clan tartans” was a fairly late invention and there are plenty of designs that are widely accepted as wearable by anyone.

The military influence on the development of the kilt and tartan was also examined as all tough men like to look good when they have their legs out.

Due to the nature of tartan and the “governing bodies” (many, if not all, of whom seem to be self appointed), the possibility of a New Sheridan Club tartan is being looked into. When a pattern is decided upon the style will be put to consideration and—who knows?—by the next party there could be Members proudly wearing their Club Tartan, with as much right to do so as anyone else.

ESSAYS OF NOTE AND WORTH

Obituary Euphemisms

The following are euphemisms habitually used in English newspapers, in particular *The Daily Telegraph*. Which NSC Members do you think will have which euphemisms attached to their name after they shuffle off this mortal smoking jacket?

Convivial Habitually drunk

Did not suffer fools gladly Monstrously foul-tempered

Gave colourful accounts of his exploits A liar

A man of simple tastes A complete vulgarian

A powerful negotiator A bully

Relished the cadences of the English language A crashing bore

A lively conversationalist A crashing bore

Relished physical contact A sado-masochist

An uncompromisingly direct ladies' man
A flasher

A confirmed bachelor Homosexual

He never married A misogynist

She left no close relatives A lesbian

Lived life to the full Drunk

Not always an easy man to live with A wife-beater

A free-spirit Couldn't hold down a job to save himself

Always had a twinkle in his eye A drooling pervert

Colourful Criminal

Misunderstood A git

A man of large appetites Obese

An original thinker Insane

Marched to the beat of a different drum Heard voices

Lived a quiet life Had no friends

Active in the community A busy-body

Uncomplicated Stupid as a bag of hammers

A Letter From The Colonies

This section of the Newsletter is written by Dr Leavingssoon. He introduces himself thus...

Good Ladies and fellow Gentlemen,
Allow me to introduce myself: Dr William B. Leavingssoon of the Crown's Dominion, New Zealand, and all her territories.

It is my very great pleasure to provide you with stirring tales of adventure, danger, wild beasts and folly from this remotest corner of the British Empire. If you look at your feet in the general direction of Spain...you'll see a lot of dirt in between, but beyond all that is the extent of Britain's Glory. It is nearing Summer. The temperatures are close to the mid twenties to the thirties Celsius. But this land is not always so gentle, for this year we recorded a chill of minus seventeen. Oddly, we have every form of

terrain there is on the planet, from sandy wastes to impenetrable rain forests, volcanoes and tectonic earthquakes, savannah to the Southern Alps, but we only have a population of four million, so there's plenty to go around. It is in this setting that I offer your senses and imagination a place to kick a hobbit out of the way and listen to some experiences of mine.

After receiving his NSC Club Rig and Club Tie, Dr Leavingsome writes most enthusiastically...

Dear Sir,

It was with utter and riotous joy that I received a parcel today with the stamp of the Royal Mail!

INSTANTLY I sped to the charge of the gramophone and applied Mr Eric Coates *Dam Busters March*. I was lucky enough to have as witness, the Gentleman in charge of a punting operation down our beloved Avon River.

As the forthright music commenced in its upbeat manner I allowed myself the grandeur of my 1887 Victoria Jubilee Print and the seven Union Jacks that parade it to accompany my intrigue, floor to ceiling. As the floral scent of the opening bars receded to that grandiose and most martial theme I opened the splendid package by means of the thoughtful and most convenient red stripe and smelt the aroma of green fields, country lanes and fine ales; for England escaped into its farthest-flung colony in that one miraculous moment.

I sensed the Albert Hall, bless Victoria's loyalty, and knew the tramp of bowler-hatted gentlemen in Trafalgar Square. Whatever lay inside, after such an arrival, was mere garnish; yet what garnish!! Wesley, the gentleman in question, writhed in agony of the

greenest hue!!! Here is a Man that wears a boater hat, vest and fob chain for a living... Bless him. I start work with him whenever he needs me...

In an instant I was home. Whence forebears came a hundred and a score years ago, to brave the fever ships and hoist a banner each Queen's Birthday above the scrub and mosqui-to-infested swampland that was to become my inheritance; Christchurch. From this very heartland, this plain of despair that stretched before the English arrivals like the hand of fate itself I received a postage from Home like a man remembering his trench mates or a chap opening a wardrobe long over-looked.

The music returned to the opening theme and I allowed myself the emotion to smile most broadly, yet checked myself should the neighbours be watching. Here was my birthright, my calling, my country of origin. Those fortunate enough to be born where they aught will never know the alien detachment of severe geographical displacement that occurs to the genetically born gentleman. To feel the pull of England. To know the tears that flow of Britannia, Jerusalem or Mad Dogs and Englishmen... How freely flow the heartbreaks of the loyal abroad? More readily than those of better birth, I assure you. No finer mark than that of Britain, Empire and Crown.

Remember Canada, whose blood assured you Italy. Remember Australia, whose mettle made you Tunisia, Remember New Zealand who created the SAS and the LRDG. Without us? Who would have saved the Israelis....

My dearest fellows, I wear your tie and lapel badge with the most extreme honour; the first piece of classical music to be performed with your logo was Tchaikovsky's 2nd Piano Concerto with Chen—a most remarkable pianist of

international fame. I wore it with pride and safari kit, for I was commissioned to preside as Lieutenant over the proceedings of a chum's Wedding today. Seven hours is a long time to wear a Sam Browne in WW1 Boer War Kit, but goodness was it worth it... Whisky is a fine currency.

I'm rambling...

As the return of the favoured reprise hit the echoing hills (I was NOT remiss in announcing this arrival) I adjusted my accoutrements, scuffed the brass in my uniform and thought of those abroad unable to taste the favours of home.

Her Majesty, bless those in duties of our Crown abroad and upholding the name of our Flag upright.

Whether nor not we approve... they are Britons in Her Uniform being that which makes Britain admirable: professional, respectable and forthright.

G*d [Jewish] Bless our troops and flag; in the name of of our Sovereign, Ah-mein.

The Adelphi Theatre Murder

(Originally given as part of Torquil Arbuthnot's "murder walk" prior to the "Murder, Mystery and Mince Pies at Sheridan Towers" New Sheridan Club Party.)

William Terriss first made a name for himself as an actor in Sir Henry Irving's company at the Lyceum Theatre. But he became the popular idol of his day when he started playing the romantic lead in somewhat overblown Victorian melodramas at the Adelphi Theatre on the Strand. A fellow actor in the Adelphi's company, only ever given small walk-on parts, was one Richard A.

Prince. Mr Prince was described by contemporaries as, "a strange, twisted, tormented young man with a heavy waxed moustache, a squint, a strong Scots accent, and a decidedly inflated opinion of himself both as an actor and a dramatist". The fact that he was staggeringly unsuccessful and incompetent both as an actor and a dramatist preyed on his mind and he became a victim of persecution mania. He was also an inveterate letter writer, both to theatrical managers (letters of abuse) and to royalty (letters of condolence or congratulation, usually in doggerel). His fellow-actors knew him as "Mad Archie".

Terriss eventually dismissed him from the Adelphi company after putting up with his insults and general lunacy with admirable patience, and refused to see him any more. On 13th December 1897 Prince tried to get a complimentary ticket for the Vaudeville Theatre adjoining the Adelphi (and under the same management). He was refused and created a disturbance at the box office, before returning to his lodgings near Victoria railway station. There he brooded for a few days.

Terriss was at the time appearing in a fustian drama by William Gillette called *Secret Service*. As was his wont, he spent the early evening of 16th December before the performance playing poker in the Green Room Club, and then took a Hansom cab to the theatre, where he had a private entrance in Maiden Lane. In the dim gaslight he probably never noticed the dark figure lurking in the shadows opposite, near Rule's restaurant. As Terriss unlocked the stage door, Prince ran up to him, drew a knife, and stabbed him several times. Terriss died almost immediately, while Prince made no attempt to escape but hung about until he was arrested. Prince was

taken to Bow Street police station and charged with murder. When told to empty his pockets they were full of pawn tickets, and when asked if he had anything to say he requested something to eat. He made no defence, and was convicted of murder but found insane and committed to Broadmoor. Apparently he ran the Broadmoor amateur dramatic society for many years, conducting concerts and directing plays and, according to witnesses, “enjoying himself to the full”.



CLUB NOTES

The Burlesque Brunch

Sunday 2nd December (cast your mind back) saw the first of what should become a monthly event from February of this year—the Burlesque Brunch. Organised by Miss Tenacity Flux, herself a burlesque performer, the day began with a full English breakfast (or kedgeree or potato cake if you so chose), leading into a series of table-to-table fashion shows featuring the clothes of Miss Sophie Jonas modelled by the delightful Miss Cherrylicious and Miss Ella Emerald. On top of that there were three burlesque acts: first the spirited Li'l Miss Chievous, then Stella Plumes as Jugsy Malone, a gangster's moll accused of murdering her man and who'll use her charms to persuade the world of her innocence. Finally Miss Crimson Skye appeared as the Urban Fox—complete with fox-tail pasties. Much mopping of brows with giant florid 'kerchiefs was seen on the NSC table but the Committee Members wives present were assured this was due to the heat. Ahem.

Our hosts also treated us to an unusual pub quiz with some quite frankly baffling questions. The tie for first place was broken by a bout of Orange Battle, a strange game where each contestant must hold an orange in a spoon while using another spoon to knock his or her opponent's orange on to the floor. It caught on, but then this sort of thing is all fun and games until someone loses an eye.

An absolutely splendid time was had by all at this first saucy brunch. I'm told that the venue had to send out for more Champagne and brandy, which gives a good impression of just how heartily we quaffed. We thoroughly recommend that you scud along to the next one, which is the first Sunday in February.

Murder, Mystery and Mince Pies at Sheridan Towers

The Club's Christmas party took place on Saturday 15th December and a fine time was had by all or at least by all who lived to tell the tale. Because, after all, the theme was murder most foul and who knew who would end up slumped over a desk with an obsidian dagger in their back next?

Entertainment-wise, the New Sheridan Barbershop Quartet amused us all with songs the lyrics of which has been altered to fit the murder theme of the party—*Someone to Watch Over Me* reinterpreted as being about a stalker, or Hoagy Carmichael's "Skylark, have you anything to say to me?" transformed to "Sherlock have you clues to give to me?" for example.

Newcomer Mr B the Gentleman Rhymer was a splendid foot-stomping discovery and evidently enjoyed himself and his new Membership enough to purchase a Club Tie too. An encore was demanded after his "set" from the very

discerning NSC audience and I believe that he managed to sell several “see-dees” of his music to an appreciative crowd.

Niall Spooner-Harvey, the Club poet, delighted us with a pleasantly gritty and hard-boiled specially-commissioned poem about Christmas (or specifically about the trouble he had writing such a poem).

Meanwhile, there were competitions and prizes galore—it seemed hardly anyone went home without something, and special mention must go to Mr Palmer-Lewis who went home carrying a deck chair in December at midnight and Miss Minna (other half of Club Chairman Torquil Arbuthnot) who won the axe.

There was also a tournament of Pin the Moustache on Poirot, a quiz to identify police mugshots of famous people, another quiz to work out which five murder’s faces went into a composite image and of course the main Murder Mystery that ran through the night.

If you could not attend the Party or would like to review the clues again, then point your peepers to the NSC webbed site. Photographs of the nights revels have been added to the Club “flickr” page as well. If you have some you would like to add please get in touch.

Here are some answers to the main mystery of the eve—who killed Dr Black—gleaned from some peoples workings...

Artemis—I questioned him and he snapped like a dry twig.

Dr Black killed himself—No esteemed Member of the NSC would ever be so dastardly. Huumph!

Hartley—He looks guilty. I’ve never seen a man look more guilty than he.

Youssef—All the others are esteemed Committee Members. I’m quite sure I spotted a hooded Youssef in Whitechapel the other day! Highly suspicious. Always the butler...

Committee Member To Venture To Abroad To Photograph Stout Young Britishers In The Colonies—Visions Of Mr Kurtz Abound in Portents

Committee Member Mr Horatio Scotney-Le Cheyne has been chosen to head off into the wilds of Borneo as official photographer with a project organised by Raleigh International, a bunch of coves who take groups of impressionable youngsters and expose them to the character-building horrors of colonial exploration in the green hells of Abroad.

The bad news is that Mr Scotney-Le Cheyne needs to raise £1,900 sharpish—by January 19th, to be precise. His wife provided a kissing booth at the last Club Party and raised £80 (shows the calibre of the Members) but more is still needed.

If you would like to sponsor this stout endeavour with wha tever you can afford, then please hop over to www.justgiving.com/marklerner to make a donation. I would point out that if Mr Scotney-Le Cheyne disappears in the jungle a position on the Committee may become available—so that’s surely a reason to send him off if you are ambitious.

Events Happening Soon

The Lucky 7 Club

Saturday 26th January

10pm

Volupte, 7–9 Norwich Street, London EC4A

Admission: £10 before 11 pm, £12

Dress: 1950s–60s and louche

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Club night run by the same people as Black Cotton, but with more of a 50s/60s vibe—“hip jazzin’ R&B with a snake bone” to be precise. They won the MOB Best Club of the Year Award last year, apparently.

Hendricks’ Cocktail Party: Egon Schiele, The Pornographer of Vienna

Monday 28th January
6.30–9.30pm
Bistro the que, 23–27 Wadeson Street,
London E2.
Tickets £10 in advance (from
Ticketweb, plus fees) or perhaps on the
door

A Viktor Wynd joint. Ticket price includes “cocktails and canapés” and the jazzy emanations of the Alan Weekes Quartet. Doors open at 6.30 and from 7.30 is the main event, Lewis Crofts recounting how Schiele was persecuted by his family, imprisoned by the Habsburg authorities and forced into poverty by an unappreciative art world. Schiele finally found acclaim with those who had earlier shunned him, before dying tragically a few days short of the end of the Great War. This talk inspired by Schiele’s twisted and perverse life charts the ascent and demise of Austria’s most decadent and most misunderstood painter. Lewis Crofts is at work on his second novel which might feature beards.

The Lady Luck Club

Thursday 31st January
8pm
Raymond’s Revue Bar, 2 Walkers
Court, Soho, London W1
Admission: £10 before 11pm, £14
Dress: Retro with a burlesque twist, I’ll
warrant

Run by the same people as Black Cotton and Lucky Seven.; this one is a 1930s–1960s “true vintage fetish night” featuring Craig Shaw and the Illuminators live on stage

The Golden Secret

Saturday 2nd February
Time: TBA
Location: Desperately secret
Admission: In money terms, negligible.
In the cost to your soul and self-respect,
intolerable.

Our own Treasurer, Mr Artemis Scarheart, leads you on a hard-boiled treasure hunt through the mean streets of London. Those who took part in his famous pirate-themed treasure hunt will know the insane attention to detail that Mr Scarheart (he doesn’t work full time, you know) will doubtless put into this jaunt. Details of how to sign up will appear nearer the time, assuming the preparations haven’t driven Artemis insane by then.

The Burlesque Brunch

Sunday 3rd February
11am–11pm
The Punch Tavern, 99 Fleet Street,
London EC4Y 1DE
Tickets: £26 for a full day including
brunch, or £13 for a half day from 2pm
on (no brunch), only in advance from
www.sophiejonasdesigns.co.uk (in the
Cornucopia section)

**Special offer for NSC Members:
Champagne only £21 a bottle
(normally £27)**

Dress: Something retro, perhaps a little
louche, or just what you’re still wearing
from the night before

After the rip-snorting success of the
Burlesque Brunch in December, the
tenacious Miss Tenacity Flux, burlesque

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performer, baker and designer of ladythings, is holding what is expected to become a monthly event. Your ticket buys you a 12-hour assault on your senses, sanity and self-control: the day begins with a hearty brunch from 12pm to 2pm (included in the ticket price).

During brunch there will be a table-to-table fashion show of vintage-style lingerie designed by Miss Flux's alter ego Miss Sophie Jonas and, I'll wager, much dabbing at fevered brows with spotted handkerchiefs. During the afternoon there will be burlesque performers including Diva Hollywood, Red Sarah and Ruby Rose, as well as another fashion show, this time of corsetry and jewellery. The day will also feature the

"Not Cricket" pub quiz, the Bruncherette, with her tray of delights and a DJ into the evening.



IF YOU HAVE any ideas or suggestions for Club events or articles for this Newsletter, then do get in touch with Mr Scarheart. We are always keen to hear from the Members, whether it is information on interesting events and nights or suggestions for this Newsletter.

Remember that the NSC is happy to promote events that you yourself are involved with.



Until next time, Chumrades.

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