



## SPECTRE DETECTOR

The Earl of Essex considers the case of Borley Rectory, 'The Most Haunted House in England'

### Don't tell him, Pike!

Ryan Pike bares all in the Brogues Gallery

### Anchors away!

Sign on for the Club's annual punting voyage

# RESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • No. 150 • APRIL 2019



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 3rd April in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm, when Pandora Harrison will deliver a talk on her recent trip to Egypt, part of a specialised tour in which everyone dresses in 1920s costume.

### The Last Meeting

Our speaker last month was the prolific Earl of Essex, who must have delivered more lectures to us than any other Member, and his subject was Borley Rectory, on the Essex-Suffolk border, in its day known as the most haunted house in England. Yes, for once no Nazis featured whatsoever (though Essex could not resist beginning with a bogus feint about jackboots in the Sudetenland). The

rectory was built by the new Revd Henry Bull in 1862, but it was on the site of the previous rectory, and there were already stories about a



ghostly nun—buried alive for conducting an affair with a groom—and a phantom coach driver. Sightings (and hearings) continued and what perhaps made the hauntings so notorious was the frenzy of the media and the attentions of various psychical investigators attempting to bring the modern gaze of Science to bear on the matter. The main figure was Harry Price, whose findings were controversial to say the least. Eventually the place was destroyed by fire in the mid-20th century, but today Borley is still a place of pilgrimage for ghost hunters, whose attentions now focus on the nearby church.

An essay version of the talk begins on page 4.



(Clockwise from top left) Essex begins; the mob chuckles at some Nazi-themed banter; Linda Laubscher and Jasper Jones; Darcy Sullivan and Stuart Mitchell; Robert Beckwith and Matthew Howard; Philip Hancock and Helen Cashin; a friend of Sam Marde turned up without a tie so was issued one from the Punishment Bag; Frances Mitchell models a pith helmet she was borrowing for her daughter's school musical; Ian White asks a question; Essex with a photo of the rectory





# THE MOST HAUNTED HOUSE IN ENGLAND

## **The Earl of Essex** considers the celebrity ghosts of Borley Rectory and the man who claimed to investigate them using Science

IT IS PERHAPS appropriate that the origins of the haunting of Borley Rectory are lost in the mists of time. The Reverend Henry Dawson Ellis Bull certainly knew about the legend of a ghostly nun and stories of a phantom coach when he became rector of Borley in 1862 and set about building a suitable residence for himself and family on the site of the Georgian Herringham Rectory, constructed by the previous rector, the remains of which were demolished.

Borley village is situated on the Essex–Suffolk border, on the River Stour, approximately 1.9 miles northwest of Sudbury in Suffolk. The name is compounded of the Saxon words *bar* and *lea*, meaning “boar’s pasture”. A fine church was built in the village in the 12th century on

the instructions of the wealthy Waldegrave family, who owned Borley Manor.

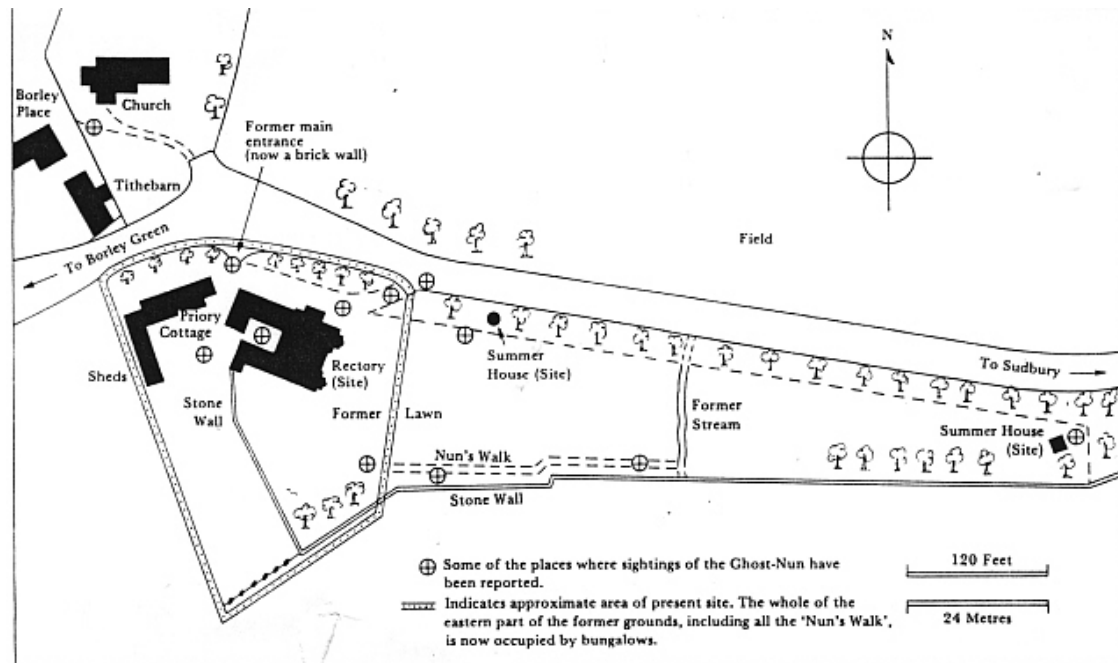
The Revd Henry Bull came from a well-to-do family who had lived in or near the village continuously for over 300 years. Bull was a tall, heavily-built man who had been a good amateur boxer in his youth. His hobbies were those of a typical country squire—hunting and fishing. He held the living of Borley for 30 years from 1862 until his death aged 59 in 1892. He had ample private means, on top of his rector’s stipend, to be able to construct a new rectory for his growing family: his wife Caroline would eventually bear him 14 children, 12 of whom survived—five sons and seven daughters—but locally it was believed that he had fathered several illegitimate children too.

The previous rectory had been partly destroyed by fire in 1841 and Bull planned to demolish the remains and hire an architect to build a new house in the Gothic style from local red brick and stone. The new rectory was L-shaped with two storeys, and was completed in 1863. But as the Bull family grew various extensions were added over the years until it almost completely surrounded the courtyard and had 23 rooms.

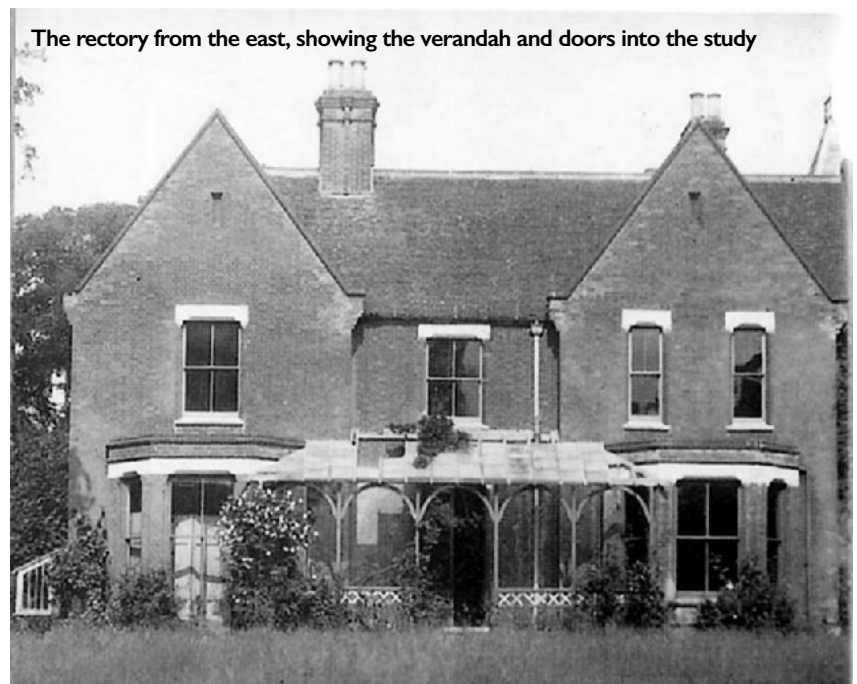
There was a main stairway in the hall leading to the upper floor, plus some back stairs off the kitchen leading up to bedrooms on the north side of the house, from where access could be gained to the rest of the first-floor rooms—some ten bedrooms, a dressing room, a bathroom, a lavatory and later a chapel.

The ground floor consisted of a drawing room, a dining room, a library, sewing room, kitchen, pantry, scullery, dairy, larder and various store rooms. Lighting was provided by candles and oil lamps, with heating by open fires. Water had to be pumped in from a deep well in the courtyard.

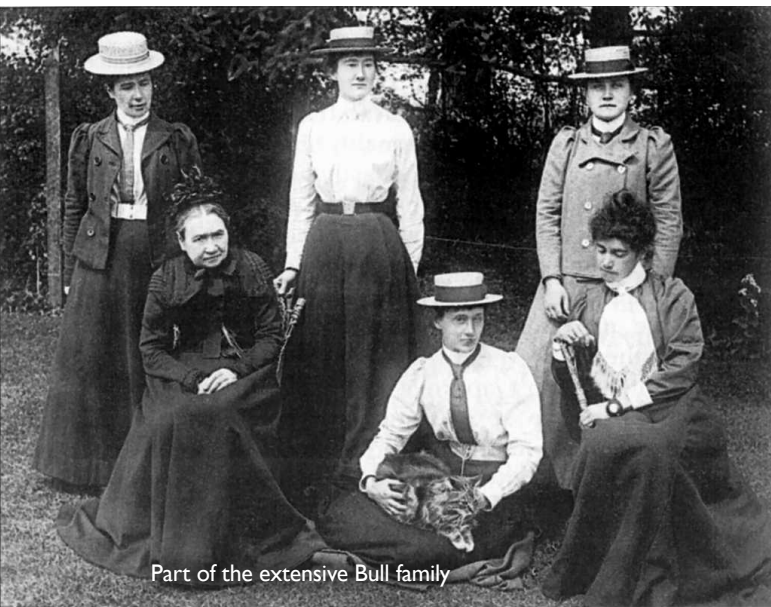
It was a long-established legend that the place was haunted by a nun from a nearby convent who had intended to elope with a groom from the monastery that had previously stood on the site of the rectory—the couple had been caught, the groom beheaded and the nun buried alive. The



The rectory from the lane, showing the front door



The rectory from the east, showing the verandah and doors into the study



Revd Henry  
Dawson  
Ellis Bull



ghostly apparition of the nun had been sighted as early as 1836, and there were also reports of seeing or hearing the groom's coach and horses approaching.

Bull had a large octagonal summer house built in the rectory garden, which backed on to the lane and faced a path on the far side of the lawn where the phantom nun had apparently been seen walking or gliding on many occasions. It had even become known as The Nun's Walk. Bull spent many hours in the summer house with his son Harry (who would eventually succeed him as rector), watching for the nun. Harry later claimed to have seen her many times.

There was also a smaller Gothic-style summer house built by Bull at the extreme south-east of the rectory garden, where he would spend much time in the early part of the morning "communing with the spirits". He was also known to lie on the drawing room floor and pot rabbits at the bottom of the garden with a rook rifle. Bull was certainly not afraid of ghosts and was described as a typical "squarson"—half well-to-do squire, half parson.

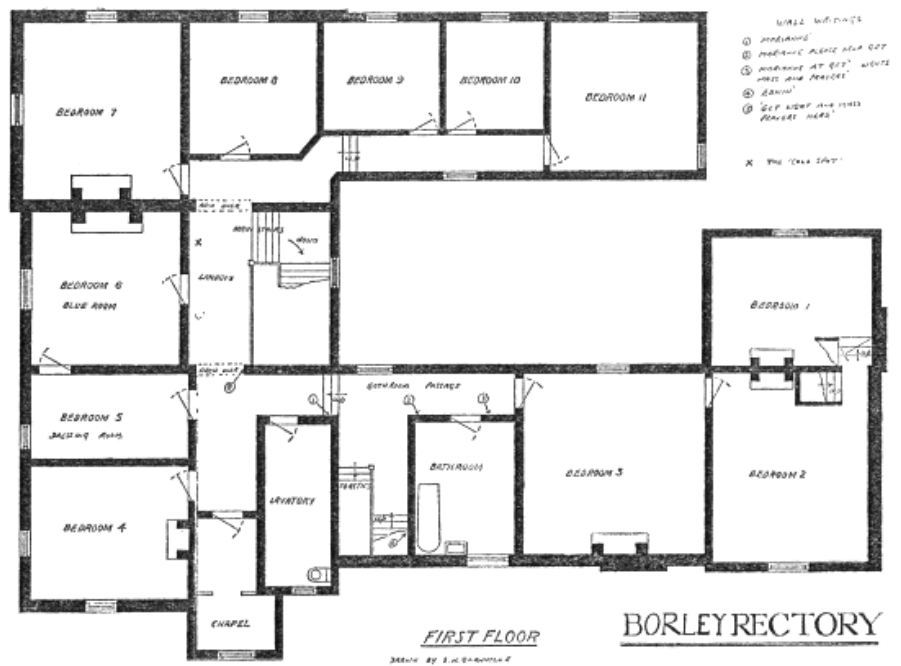
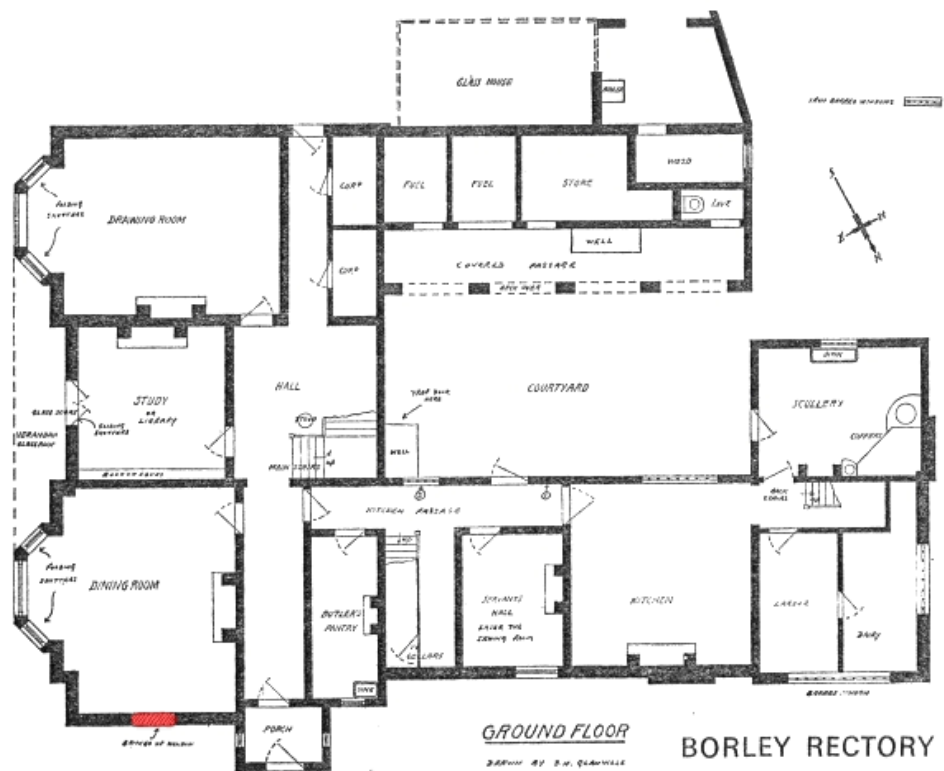
In 1892 Bull died and was succeeded by his son, the Revd Henry Foyster Bull, generally known as Harry. Aged 29 when he became rector, Harry was more than a little eccentric. Known in the district for his jovial, light-hearted and ebullient approach to everything—including his duties as rector—he liked running between the rectory and the church, some 150 yards away, on sermon days. He was also in the habit

of falling profoundly asleep almost anywhere; members of the family would regularly be sent to find him when he failed to appear for meals, usually discovering him in one of the summer houses.

At one time Harry owned more than 30 cats, which were in the habit of following him as he walked around the house and garden. He later established a well-populated pet cemetery in a corner of the rectory garden.

On 28th July 1900 three of the Bull daughters, Ethel, Freda and Mabel, were returning from a local party. As they passed through the drive gate and began to approach the house they all saw the figure of a nun dressed in black and with head bowed, walking or gliding along the Nun's Walk. The girls were scared and ran into the house, fetching their older sister Caroline, who hurried towards the nun, thinking she was a local Sister of Mercy on an errand. But when she got within a couple of yards of the figure it vanished.

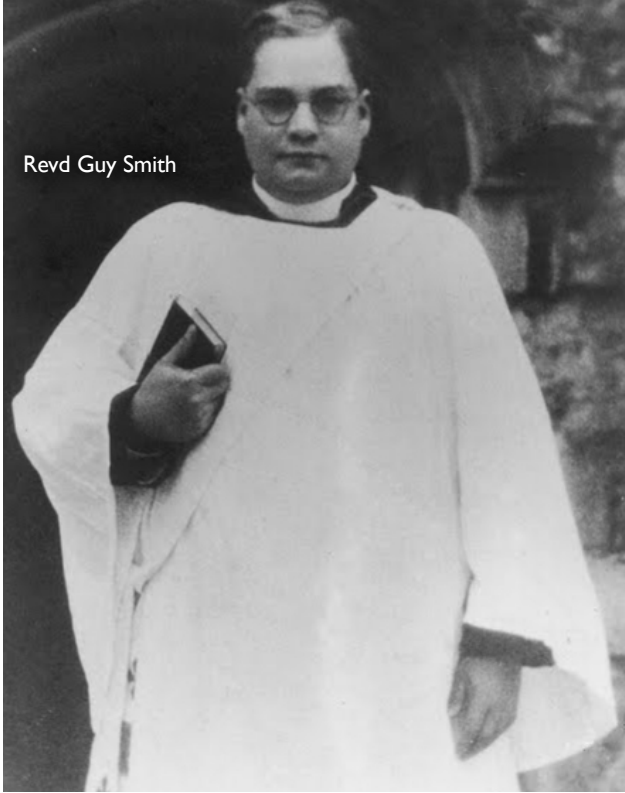
In 1911 Harry married Ivy Brackenbury and the couple moved to nearby Borley Place, the ancestral home of the Bull family. His sisters remained living at the rectory, finally moving out in 1920, upon which Harry, Ivy and her daughter from a previous marriage moved in.



The couple had no children themselves, and Harry succumbed to cancer in June 1927, aged 64, passing away in the "Blue Room" at the rectory, where his father had also died.

After Harry's death the position of Rector of Borley was offered to 12 clergymen, all of whom refused; the story of the haunted rectory was beginning to spread.

The living was eventually accepted by Revd Guy Eric Smith in 1928. He was a plump,



Revd Guy Smith



Allegedly a photo of the ghostly nun

affable Eurasian born in Calcutta, who did not believe in ghosts. He and his English wife Mabel had travelled to England from India, where she had suffered a serious illness. He had been ordained in 1926 and had held a curacy at Clacton in Essex from then until his move to Borley.

Soon after their arrival the Smiths heard disturbing whispering sounds inside the rectory. The servant bells rang seemingly spontaneously, and slow, deliberate steps were heard passing through the upper passages and some of the rooms. Two successive maidservants said they saw apparitions, including the nun walking along the Nun's

Walk, and heard the coach and horses.

The Smiths were genuinely puzzled by the curious happenings, and the reverend wrote to the *Daily Mirror* seeking advice. Unsurprisingly the *Mirror* sent their correspondent Vernon Wall and a photographer to investigate and provide some lurid copy.

Wall and the photographer took up a position overnight to watch the rectory, and spied a light coming from inside. But when they went to investigate no light could be found—even though it was still visible from outside. Wall wrote a sensational article, “Ghost Visits to a Rectory”, which was published on 10th June 1929, followed by a series of front-page items.



Revd Smith with Vernon Wall by the summer house



On 11th June the  
psychical researcher  
Harry Price read Wall's  
first two reports and  
decided to investigate  
himself. The most  
famous era in the  
rectory's haunted  
history had begun.

Price was born in  
Holborn in central  
London in January  
1881. He had many  
interests, including  
coin collecting,  
archaeology and  
magic—he became  
an expert amateur  
conjurer and joined  
the Magic Circle in  
1922. He joined the  
Society for Psychical  
Research in 1920 and,  
through his knowledge  
of conjuring, was able  
to expose fraudulent  
mediums.

One of his most  
famous exposés was of  
the medium George  
Valentine. In a seance  
Valentine claimed to have  
contacted the spirit of  
the Italian composer  
Luigi Arditi. Price wrote  
down every word that  
was attributed to  
Arditi and found that  
they were word-for-  
word matches lifted  
from an Italian phrase  
book.

Price formed his own  
organisation in 1926,  
the National Laboratory  
of Psychical Research,  
as a direct rival to the  
Society, with whom he  
disagreed principally  
over the use of  
mediums. Price would  
pay mediums to test  
work but the Society  
was against this in  
principle, and would  
later attempt to  
debunk Price's  
research at Borley.

Price continued to  
expose fraudulent  
mediums but was  
happy to work with  
those he thought to  
be genuine (and in  
the process became  
friends with Harry  
Houdini). He was  
also involved in the  
formation of the  
National Film Library  
(later the British  
Film Institute),  
becoming its first  
chairman, and was  
also a founding  
member of the



**NO. 1 GHOST HUNTER** is Harry Price, shown here in his office surrounded by tools of his trade: soft slippers, brandy, automatic, first-aid kit, movie cameras, microscope, intercom equipment, magnifying glass, flash equipment and candles. Stethoscope around his neck is used to listen to vibrations in walls.

Shakespeare Film Society.

His most famous case, though, was Borley Rectory. On his first visit he asked a passer-by for directions and was answered, "Oh, you mean the most haunted house in England?" The phrase stuck with Price and he would later use it as a title for his book on the case.

Price's first vigil at the rectory was eventful. During a long evening in the large summerhouse watching with Vernon Wall he thought he could discern a shadowy figure gliding towards the end of the garden along the Nun's Walk. On his return to the house a half-brick, seemingly propelled from nowhere, crashed through the glazed verandah roof.

Price and Wall hurried upstairs to ascertain that no one else was in the house, and as they descended the main stairs another crash was heard: a glass candlestick that had been standing on the mantelpiece of one of the bedrooms came hurtling down the stairs, struck an iron stove and

disintegrated into fragments on the hall floor.

The two men rushed upstairs again but found nothing. They returned downstairs and turned out all the lamps. Within moments they heard something rattling down the stairs. Relighting the lamps they saw pebbles and a piece of slate tumbling down the stairway. Soon the servant bells rang of their own accord and keys

from two doors fell from their locks.

Price returned to the rectory several times during the next few weeks and on each occasion there were similar phenomena, which were duly featured in the *Daily Mirror*. Within days of the first report Revd Smith and his wife were besieged by sightseers arriving from London in coach parties. After enduring the invasion for five weeks they moved out to lodgings in nearby Long Melford and ran the parish from there, right up until Smith took another living in Norfolk the following year.

After the departure of the Smiths, Borley Rectory stood empty for six months. The Bull

Harry Price in the summer house



Friday, June 14, 1929

## WEIRD NIGHT IN "HAUNTED" HOUSE

### Shape That Moved on Lawn of Borley Rectory

## STRANGE RAPPINGS

### Articles Flying Through Air Seen by Watchers

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LONG MELFORD, Thursday.

There can no longer be any doubt that Borley Rectory, near here, is the scene of some remarkable incidents.

Last night Mr. Harry Price, director of the National Laboratory for Psychological Research, his secretary, Miss Lucy Kaye, the Rev. G. E. Smith, Rector of Borley, Mrs. Smith and myself were witnesses to a series of remarkable happenings.

All these things occurred without the assistance of any medium or any kind of apparatus, and Mr. Price, who is a research expert only and not a spiritualist, expressed himself puzzled and astonished at the results.

To give the phenomena a thorough test, however, he is arranging for a seance to be held in the rectory with the aid of a prominent London medium.

The first remarkable happening was the dark figure I saw in the garden.

"We were standing in the summer-house at dusk watching the lawn, when I saw the 'apparition' which so many claim to have seen, but owing to the deep shadows it was impossible for one to discern any definite shape or attire.

### FALLING GLASS

But something certainly moved along the path on the other side of the lawn, and although I immediately ran across to investigate, it had vanished when I reached the gate. Then, as we strolled towards the rectory discussing the figure, there came a terrific crash, and a pane of glass from the roof of the porch hurtled to the ground.

We ran inside and upstairs to inspect the rooms immediately over the porch, but found nobody.

A few seconds later we were descending the stairs, Miss Kaye leading and Mr. Price behind me, when something flew past my head, hit an iron stove in the hall, and shattered the glass.

With our flashlamps we inspected the broken pieces and found them to be sections of a red vase which, with its companion, had been standing on the mantelpiece of what is known as the blue room and which we had just searched.

Mr. Price was the only person behind me and he could not have thrown the vase at such an angle to pass my head and hit the stove below.

### RAPS ON MIRROR

We sat on the stairs in darkness for a few minutes and just as I turned to Mr. Price to ask him whether we had waited long enough something hit my hand.

This turned out to be a common mothball, and had dropped from apparently the same place as the vase.

I laughed at the idea of a spirit throwing mothballs about, but Mr. Price said that such methods of attracting attention were not unfamiliar to investigators.

Finally came the most astonishing event of the night.

From one o'clock until nearly four this morning all of us, including the rector and his wife, actually questioned the spirit or whatever it was and received at times the most emphatic answers.

A cake of soap on the washstand was lifted and thrown heavily on to a china jug standing on the floor with such force that the soap was deeply marked.

All of us were at the other side of the room when this happened.

Our questions which we asked out loud, were answered by raps apparently made on the back of a mirror in the room, and it must be remembered that no medium or spiritualist was present.



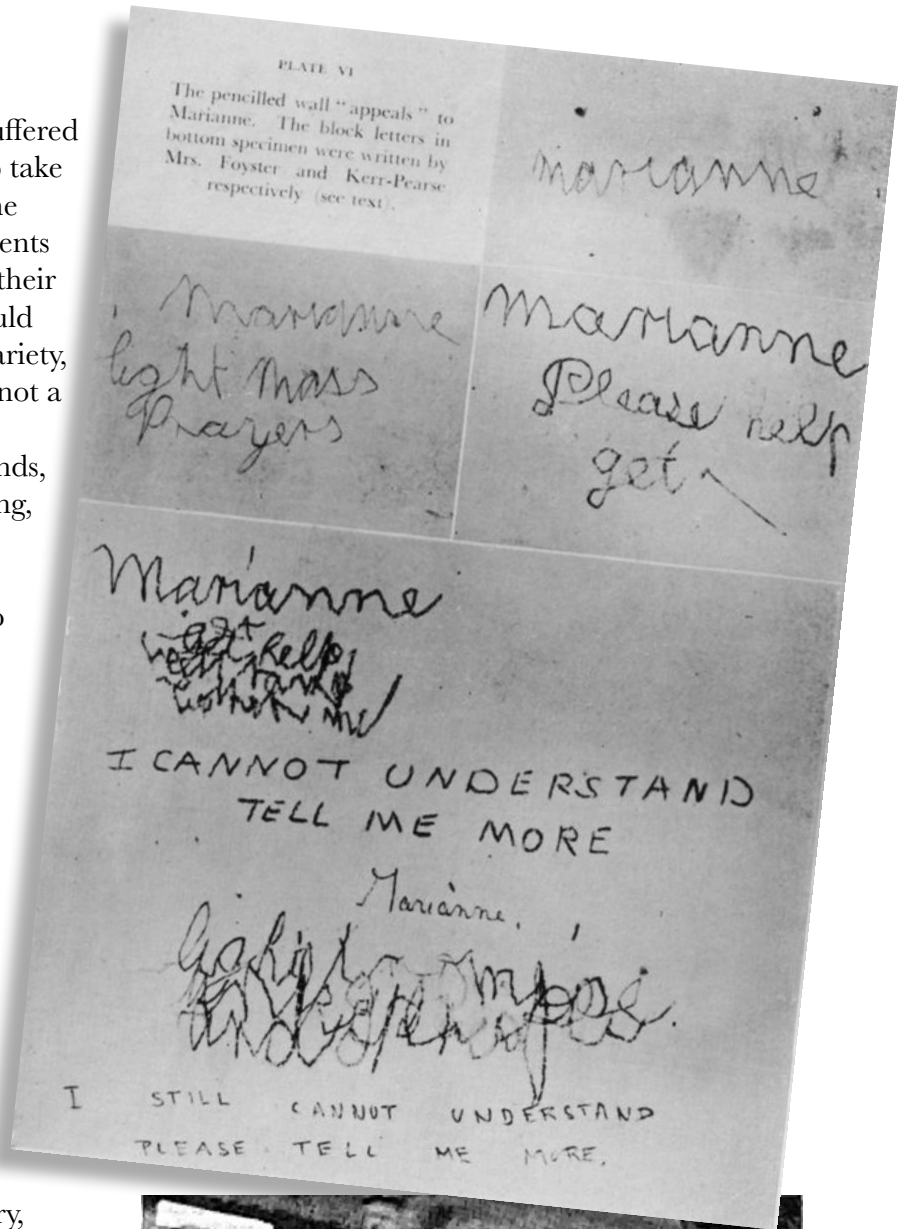
One of Price's observers takes a break

Because of Lionel's ill health (he suffered from arthritis), the Foysters decided to take up the living at Borley in 1930, and the reverend kept a detailed journal of events and happenings. During the years of their residence the paranormal activity would reach an unparalleled intensity and variety, attracting considerable attention and not a little criticism.

Phenomena included crashing sounds, footsteps, bottles smashing, bells ringing, voices, doors locking, apparitions and the disappearance and reappearance of household articles. There were also mysterious fires and messages written on walls and scraps of paper, and Marianne even reported a physical assault.

In October 1931, Harry Price returned to Borley and, over the course of two days, witnessed several "phenomena"—but Price considered that much of what he saw was simply trickery and he suspected Marianne of being responsible. Price informed the rector of his suspicions but Foyster would not hear a bad word said against his wife and he and Price parted on bad terms.

Despite Price's accusations of fakery,



Revd Lionel Foyster with Marianne and Adelaide

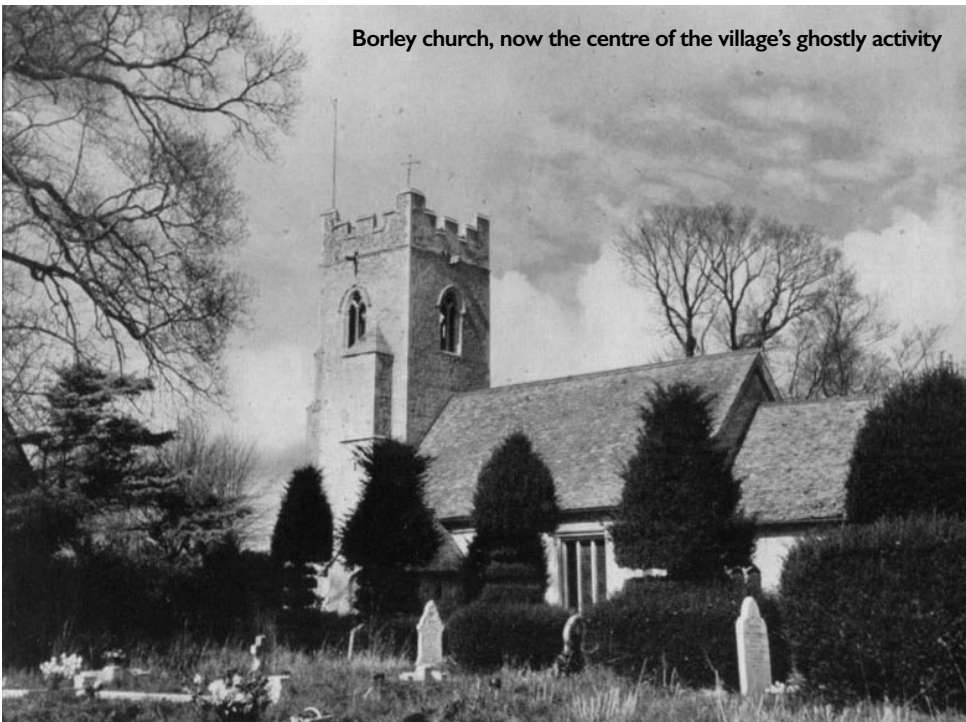


Marianne Foyster and (above) some of the wall writing. Was she responsible for faking the phenomena?

The rectory after it was gutted by fire



Borley church, now the centre of the village's ghostly activity



mysterious happenings continued to take place at the rectory. Exorcisms were carried out and mediums in spiritualist groups also tried to placate the supernatural, but all to no avail.

Lionel's health continued to deteriorate and his increasingly severe arthritis forced him and his wife to leave the rectory in October 1935. It would never be lived in again. The Revd Alfred Clifford Henning took the living of Borley in 1936 when the parish was combined with that

of the neighbouring village of Liston, and he and his wife found it more convenient to move into the much smaller rectory there.

The Bishop of Chelmsford advised Henning to sell Borley Rectory, but before he could do so Harry Price got word and wrote to Henning in May 1937 to ask whether he could carry out further investigations. Henning agreed and Price rented the rectory for the next 12 months.

During this period Price carried out an exhaustive investigation of the paranormal activity at Borley and recruited observers by placing an advertisement in *The Times* on 25th May 1937:

**HAUNTED HOUSE.** Responsible persons of leisure and intelligence, intrepid, critical and unbiased, are invited to join a rota of observers in a year's day-and-night investigation of alleged haunted house.

Price sought to have reliable, completely impartial witnesses to any activity, and he received some 200 replies. From these he picked 48.

Price set up a room in the rectory as a centre of operations for his observers and, accompanied by an Oxford undergraduate friend, Ellic Howe, he made a complete inventory of every moveable object, ringing them with chalk.

During a night-time vigil, Price and Howe heard a series of short, sharp raps in quick succession emanating from a nearby passageway, but found nothing to account for the noises. Later they were disturbed by two large thumps followed by the sound of an upstairs door slamming. In both cases all the windows and doors were found to be as they had left them and nothing had been moved or disturbed. Years later Howe gave written and verbal assurances that the incident could not have been engendered by Price.

The rectory and its grounds were eventually purchased in December 1938 by Captain William Hart Gregson, an architect who had plans to turn the rectory into a money-making tourist attraction. Both he and his sons claimed to experience several strange phenomena while moving in, although nothing as strange as the incident that occurred around midnight on 27th February 1939, when an oil lamp was upset in the hall, causing the rectory to be gutted by fire. Borley locals, including a police constable, claimed to see figures walking in the flames.

In 1943 Gregson sold the remains of the house to a local company for demolition and in 1944 it was completely destroyed, with all usable building materials salvaged for use elsewhere (bricks being in short supply during wartime). The site was levelled.

However, while the gutted rectory remained unoccupied, paranormal activity continued to be reported. A nun was seen in the upstairs window of the Blue Room. Army officers using the site claimed they had stones thrown at them from within the



remains and they generally felt uneasy there.

In 1940 Price's book about his investigations, *The Most Haunted House in England*, was published.

In 1943 fragments of a human skull were found during digging beneath the rectory cellar floor. A dental surgeon, Leslie J. Godden, made a detailed study and X-ray examination of the jaw bone and determined the remains to be those of a young woman, probably under 30, with a bad infection in the bone.

The bones were eventually buried by Revd Henning in Liston churchyard on 29th May 1945, in the presence of Harry Price.

Price died in March 1948, aged 67, and with him any concerted investigation into paranormal activity at Borley—although sightings of the nun along the Nun's Walk, the sound of mysterious footsteps, the appearance of strange lights and the sight or sound of the groom's coach and horses continued to be reported.

In recent decades ghostly activity has shifted to nearby Borley church, such as the sound of footsteps inside, or the organ being played, when the church is empty. But thereby hangs another tale.



Revd Henning and Harry Price at the burial of the bones in May 1945

# 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.*



## Ryan Pike

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

I like to keep things simple and just go for plain, old "Ryan".

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

I have too many nicknames, and they vary tremendously between social circles. They range from "Susan" to "The Bishop" and many obscenities in between.

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

I was born in the city of Salisbury, spent most of my early life in South Somerset but now live near Oxford.

### **Favourite cocktail?**

Negroni, although more than one always gives me a terrible headache (that seldom stops me though).

### **Most Chappist skill?**

I have been known to deliver a lay funeral service with a certain degree of aplomb, usually when someone has decided to shave off their moustache at The Handlebar Club. Admittedly, "The Reverend Handlebar" has not appeared for a few years now so I may be a little rusty, but I still have the dog collar willing and able to go, should the need arise (favourable rates to NSC members...).

### **Most Chappist possession?**

I think my original press photograph of Colonel A.D. Wintle which sits on my desk at work, with which I regularly converse in times of desperation. If that does not qualify, my prized MG BGT.

### **Personal Motto?**

*Multa turdi evolaverunt rubi*, which serves no purpose other than it was the favourite of a Latin teacher I once knew, and then became the source of hysterical derision when we all got drunk later in life. [Translates as "Many thrushes flew out of the bush," which doesn't help much, I admit. —Ed]

### **Favourite Quotes?**

"The other £20 note is from the man who shat in my pants." [The punchline to a joke—Google it. —Ed]

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

...but a sound recording of me was once part of a Tate Modern exhibition. I have also appeared in several films, including the latest *Fantastic*

*Beasts* movie, as a blurred, unrecognisable figure shuffling along in the background.

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

I believe it is about six years, subject to confirmation from the Honourable Secretary. *[Actually it's eight years and two weeks. —Ed]*

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

I think I was drunk, confused or possibly even taken advantage of in either or both of the aforementioned states.

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

I seem to have survived not going to the club for the entire period of my membership remarkably well, although I would not recommend this as the club would then fizzle out. Anything relating to alcohol, with the exception of pubs with live football on or Sky vans parked outside, is always a good thing.

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

I am sorely tempted to come out with the usual insipid blend of Ghandi, Mother Teresa and anyone who is a font of "world peace" but simply can't bring myself to do it.

As his picture is on my desk at work, Lt. Colonel Alfred Daniel Wintle—and you only have



to read a brief summary of his life online to see why. However, I doubt very much if he would be compatible with any other guest which is another good reason to invite him.

I spent some time in Brazil a few years back and everyone was idolising the works of Paulo Leminski. On researching it further, I became a little bit absorbed by some of his literary output and the fact that despite being a polyglot and the owner of ridiculous facial hair, he drank himself to death by the age of 44, which was quite an achievement. Locking up the best stuff prior to his arriving, I would be interested to see if his haikus, poems, etc., got better or worse after imbibing vast quantities of sauce. (I would keep the worst ones and claim them as my own, of course.)

Finally, Johann Strauss II, as not only have I always been a devotee of his music, but I'd love to hear what he really had to say about Andre Rieu and the classical "cheese-fest" he seems to pump out ad infinitum on every known television channel.

**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?**

Certainly not. I have never visited the club premises and plan to maintain my unbroken record for the foreseeable future, if not all eternity.

*Thank you for allowing yourself to be interviewed in the palatial surroundings of the NSC Club House. On behalf of the Members may I respectfully ask you to resign.*





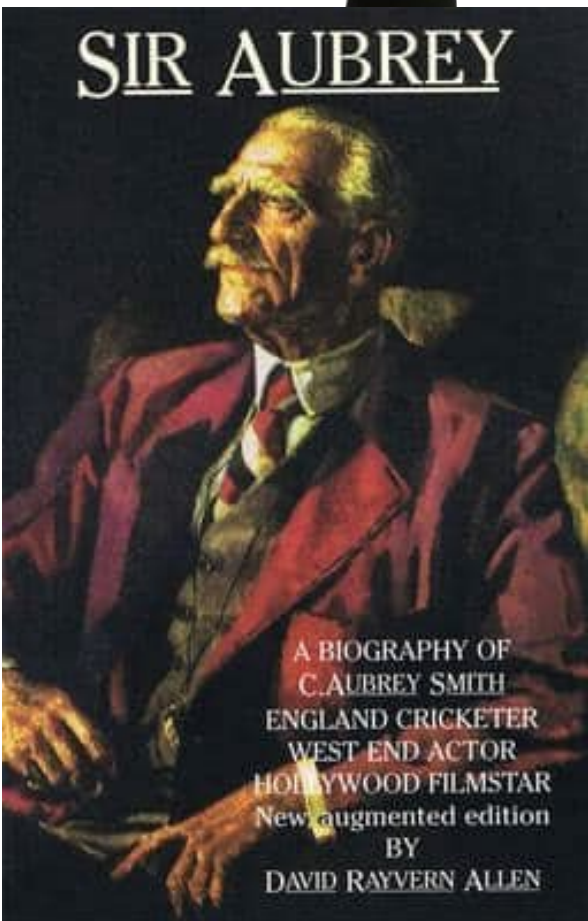
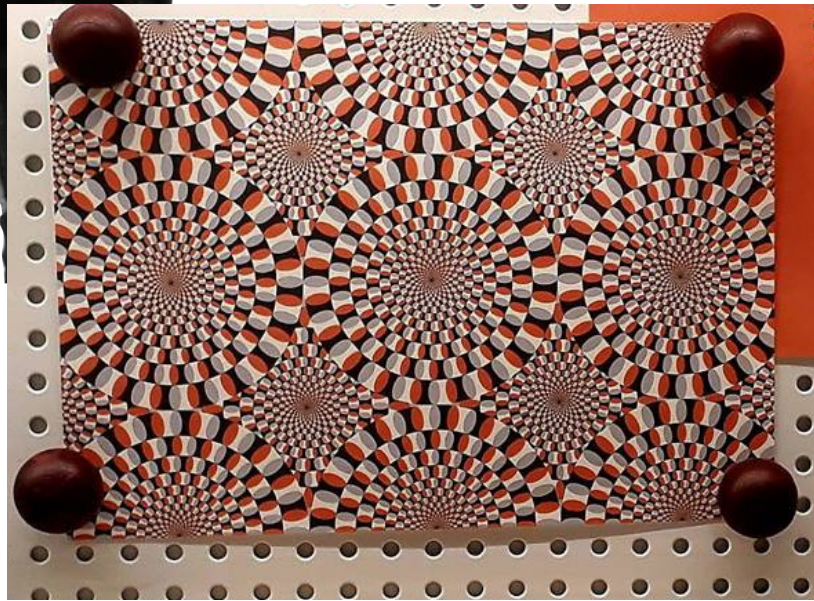
## CLUB NOTES

### Club Tie Corner

WHILE REASSURINGLY REPLETE with several actual ties, our round-up begins this time with an alarming splurge of urban/sports apparel (this page clockwise from right): camo jacket from Craigho; wristbands from Ivan Debono; training shoes from Col. Cyrus Choke; artwork spotted by Craigho in a French junk shop; finally a tie, around the neck of Jim Broadbent (thanks to Ellin Belton). Opposite page (clockwise from top left): Debono is on fire this month (or possibly on mescaline), as he offers first this NSC bullfinch, then this...I don't know what you call this garment; meanwhile Gordon Anthony Cave-Wallace noticed this Club tie in a 1968 episode of *The Avengers*; Debono again, this time tripping out on some Club psychedelia, then stumbling upon a mineral sample of purest Sheridanite; we have John D. Slocum to thank for this cover image of an autobiography of cricketer and actor C. Aubrey Smith (undoubtedly a man who would have been in the NSC had it been around in his day); finally, Floyd Toussaint has realised that the opening credits for 1970s TV series *The Six Million Dollar Man* features a worried-looking Richard Anderson in a Club tie.







# Annual NSC Punt, Picnic 'n' Plunge

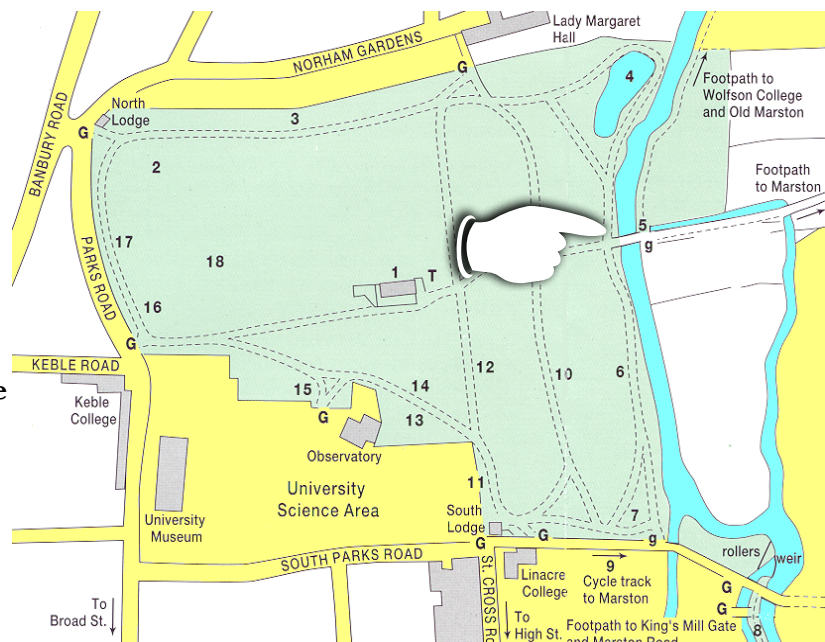
**Saturday 4th May, from 11am**  
**Meeting at the Bear Inn, embarking at the**  
**Magdalen Bridge Boathouse 12pm**

“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 Punt, Picnic '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 a good 14 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.

There is also an on-off tradition of gathering for a black tie dinner at a restaurant on the Friday before. This year it is happening, kindly organised by Frances Mitchell. The venue is the Cherwell Boathouse at 50 Bardwell Road, Oxford OX2 6ST and we meet at 7.30 for 8pm. There is a separate Facebook event for this, and if you would like to attend do signal this to Frances: she is currently holding ten places and has eight souls confirmed.





## 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 3rd April  
7pm–11pm (lecture around 8pm)  
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.

### **“World Garden” Hat Exhibition and Pop-Up Shop**

Wednesday 3rd–Friday 12th April  
11am–6pm (late opening till 8.30pm on  
Thursdays, closed Sundays)  
Menier Gallery, 51 Southwark Street, London  
SE1 1RU  
Admission: £10 (£7.50 concs, £85 for group of  
ten); advance tickets, valid for any date, available  
from [www.xterrace.com/hat19](http://www.xterrace.com/hat19).

The official exhibition of London Hat Week  
(see below), featuring 200 hats by 150 milliners  
from 30 countries. In keeping with the “World  
Garden” theme, the hats are all inspired by  
nature. There will also be a pop-up shop with  
over 100 hats for sale.

### **London Hat Week**

Thursday 4th–Wednesday 10th April  
Various venues in London

An annual collection of hat-related events  
run by individuals and organisations across  
London, celebrating the art of hats in the city  
that is home to some of the most talented  
hat designers in the world. Events range from  
millinery classes and mentoring, to exhibitions  
of work, tours of collections, social events and



Hat block maker Owen Morse-Brown will share his secrets as part of London Hat Week

the famous supplier fair. Much of it concerns ladies' hats but there is a talk on making classic gents' hats from a hat block maker. See a list of all events, plus links to book tickets, at [www.londonhatweek.com/events](http://www.londonhatweek.com/events).

### **A Cabaret of Titanic Proportions**

Thursday 4th April

8pm–10.30pm

Mirth, Marvel & Maud, 186 Hoe Street, Walthamstow, London E17 4QH

Cabaret troupe Not My Circus present a show based on the film Titanic, featuring burlesque, mime, tap-dancing and more. No idea how that's going to play out, but the venue is the 1930s-built Granada Cinema, now converted into a general art space, restaurant and cocktail bar.

### **London Hat Walk**

Sunday 7th April

2pm–3.30pm

Meet at the Tate Modern

A light-hearted stroll for the sole purpose of showing off one's love of hats. It costs nothing—and frankly you don't get much in return, other than some good company (note three NSC

Members in the official photo below), top tiffers and the opportunity to be photographed a lot. Earlier routes centred around the West End, but the 2019 route will, like last year, be along the Thames from the Tate Modern, past the Globe Theatre to the Scoop by City Hall (conveniently located to shoo walkers on into the supplier fair nearby).

### **Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair**

Sunday 7th April

11am–5pm

Freemasons Hall, 60 Great Queen Street, London, WC2B 5AZ

Admission: £5

Some 45 stalls offering vintage clothes, shoes, handbags, hats, gloves, textiles and jewellery from the 1800s to the 1980s. There is also a tea room, alterations booth plus sometimes live entertainment too. More details at [www.clerkenwellvintagefashionfair.co.uk](http://www.clerkenwellvintagefashionfair.co.uk).

### **Black Tie Ballroom Club**

Friday 12th April (***NB this will be the last Black Tie Ballroom Club event***)

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

Denizens of the NSC at last year's London Hat Walk



The Indian YMCA,  
41 Fitzroy Square,  
London W1T 6AQ  
(02073870411)  
Admission: £15  
earlybird from  
Design My Night,  
£20 standard or £25  
on the door  
Dress code: Strictly  
black tie, evening  
dress or smart  
vintage attire

Dance the waltz,  
quickstep, foxtrot,  
tango, jive, rumba  
and Charleston to  
live music from the  
Art Deco Orchestra  
and a selection of  
pre-war records.

If you can't yet dance, there's a free ballroom  
dance lesson for absolute beginners from 7pm  
to 7.30 pm. Or if you prefer you can just watch.  
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,  
sparkling water and Coca Cola are provided,  
and guests may smuggle in their own drinks if  
they are discreet. Indian vegetarian snacks are  
also provided for all our guests at no additional  
charge.

There is a large wooden dance floor and the  
venue is located in Fitzroy Square, London W1.  
Dress code is strictly black tie and evening dress  
only, and the event usually sells out. Activities  
include a quickstep bus stop, a snowball waltz  
and a Paul Jones. There are photos and videos  
on the facebook page, website and ticket link.  
Any questions, please phone George Tudor-Hart  
on 020 8542 1490.

**The Lucky Dog Picture House: *The  
Freshman* (1925)**

Friday 19th April  
7.45pm  
Wilton's Music Hall, Graces Alley, London E1  
8JB  
Admission: £10.50 (£8.50 concs) from wiltons.  
org.uk



Catch *The Freshman* with  
live accompaniment at the  
Lucky Dog Picture House

Purveyors of silent cinema with live musical  
accompaniment, the Lucky Dog Picture House  
return to the atmospheric Wilton's Music Hall  
to screen Harold Lloyd's varsity-themed romp.  
The new student on campus, Harold dreams  
of being the most popular man in college but  
instead becomes the butt of the joke when he  
attempts to join the football team. *The Freshman*  
showcases Lloyd's faculty for physical comedy  
as well as his trademark charm, cementing his  
place alongside Keaton and Chaplin as a PhD  
of silent comedy. The film will be accompanied  
by a new original score created by the Lucky  
Dog in-house band.

**London Easter Parade**

Sunday 21st April  
11am  
Covent Garden  
Admission: Free

The brainchild of Tom Carradine, who  
explains: "Inspired by the NYC Easter Parade I  
thought it would be fun to arrange an informal  
Easter Sunday meet-up. Just an excuse to put  
on your finery (and perhaps a beautiful hat) and  
catch up with old friends and make some new  
ones. This is very much still in the planning  
stage and I'm wary about making it a formal  
event. Exact location TBC. Plan is to meet up at  
a central London location (weather depending)  
to parade our finery and then repair to a pub



(or pubs). Wet weather plan TBC.” If that sounds like your dish of tea, keep an eye on the Facebook event.

### **Christathon XII**

Sunday 21st April

1.45–11pm

Starts at the Trinity on Borough High Street

Admission: Small donation to charity

Dress: Biblical

A biblical alternative to the typical toga party, Christathon is a unique twist to a pub crawl especially for Easter. The happening/flash mob event involves donning a Jesus costume, or anything vaguely Biblical (in previous years they have had a Centurion, the Rock of Christ, and even a dalmation onesie—the Son of Dog), casually strolling around London with a fold-out musical Crucifix on wheels (now with added fairy lights) and stopping at a number of biblically named pubs for a tippie along the way. Aiming to astound, not offend, the event is all for a good cause as all participants are asked to make a small donation for charity. Starting at The Trinity, on Borough High Street, the 12th crawl will take the “Jesi” (which they claim is the plural of Jesus, and others (via the dark realms of the Northern Line) through Trafalgar Square to finish at Whitehall’s Silver Cross. Regulars include our own Stewart Lister Vickers and Farhan Rasheed. For more details see the Christathon Facebook page.

### **Caldonia’s**

Monday 22nd April

2–4pm

Hoxley and Porter, 153 Upper Street, Islington, London N1 1RA

Admission: £5 on the door

A night of dancing to music from the 1940s and 1950s—rhythm and blues, jump jive, doo-wop from DJs Voodoo Doll and Mr Jinx.

### **The Candlelight Club: Paris in the Spring**

Saturday 27th April

7pm–12am

A secret central London location

Admission: £25 in advance

Dress: Prohibition dandies, swells, gangsters and molls, degenerate aristos and decadent aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know

London’s award-winning immersive 1920s-themed speakeasy party, with live jazz, cabaret and cocktails in a secret London venue filled with candles.

This month features the triumphant return of Gallic crooner Benoit Viellefon and his band, one of the longest-serving stars in the Candlelight Club firmament. Benoit will be unveiling his new show with an extra injection of roof-raising speakeasy fun and irresistibly foot-tapping tunes.

To celebrate we’ll be tipping our hat to 1920s Paris, sipping the cocktails created at ex-pat

bars like Harry's Bar, serving classic French bistro cuisine and quaffing absinthe. And to mark the city's artistic tradition we may even see the return of our famous tablecloth painting competition.

Leading the cabaret charge will be our regular host with the most, Champagne Charlie, while spinning vintage vinyl will be DJ Holly of the Bee's Knees.

Ticket-holders receive an email two days before, revealing the secret location. More at [www.thecandlelightclub.com](http://www.thecandlelightclub.com).

"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*

### **Costume Visit to Osterley Park**

Sunday 28th April

12–5pm

Osterley Park and House, Jersey Rd, Isleworth,



Let Benoit Viellefon guide you through 1920s Paris at the Candlelight Club

Middlesex TW7 4RB

Admission: £12

Dress: Historical (1940s or earlier)

A visit to a National Trust property on the Piccadilly line. The front fields are free entry, ideal for those who wish to keep to a tight budget, while the £12 entry ticket gives access to the house and garden (free for National Trust members). The idea is a gathering of people who love historical dress, so do come along in your glad rags. Keep an eye on the Facebook event in case there is a change of date due to poor weather. See [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley-park-and-house](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley-park-and-house).



Mr Von Gregory engaged in the sacred act of signing the Signing-In Book at our March meeting. One day that book will be cherished by the British Library, pored over by scholars and probably feature in a murder trial

