

# DESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • No.151 • MAY 2019

## UP THE NILE IN STYLE

Pandora Harrison  
on her voyage to  
1920s Egypt

### Where did you get that tile?

The Club is on the front line  
at the London Hat Walk

### The importance of being Ernest

Hallamshire-Smythe and the  
perils of drunken eBaying

### Power walk

Chaps take back London  
with Tom Carradine's  
inaugural Easter Parade





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 1st May in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm, when Giles Culpepper will break a long silence by delivering his maiden speech to the Club, *The City of Sheffield: Home of the Howards, Rulemaking and World-Famous People of Whom You've Never Heard*.

### The Last Meeting

Our speaker last month was Pandora Harrison, offering a report of a recent holiday of a lifetime that she and husband Andrew

went on to celebrate their wedding anniversary. Their destination was Egypt, but the twist was that the whole trip was 1920s-themed: guests all dressed—well, like Members of the NSC—and they were accompanied by real-life archaeologists and vintage enthusiasts Dr Colleen and Professor John Darnell. Part of the trip took place aboard the *Sudan*, a restored vintage paddle steamer that featured in two film versions of *Death on the Nile*. Pandora announced via Facebook that her talk would feature 661 holiday snaps—one might have thought this was an April Fool's joke (although I checked and it was 2nd April not the 1st), but I had just finished putting them all in

PowerPoint and I knew this figure was correct. Pandora's last opus, on corsets, had lasted over two hours (some say two hours 50 minutes) and had featured only 410 slides, but she was as good as her word—she said she'd be done in an hour and she was (well, an hour and five minutes).

Everyone agreed the talk was thoroughly enjoyable and I'm sure it has inspired others to consider taking the same trip (with Goodspeed & Bach, if you're tempted).

An essay version of the talk begins on page 4.





(Left) Chairman Torquil opens proceedings; (above) Pandora gallops through her slides; (right) relating the tale of a visit to a fez shop; (below) Tim Eyre resplendent in smoking attire (not that he smokes); (below left) Curé Michael Silver and Sam Marde Mehdiabad (below right) George Davies is tickled by the latest edition of *Resign!*



(Left) Torquil, Luca and Mark; (right) fezes are out in solidarity; (below left) George and Stewart

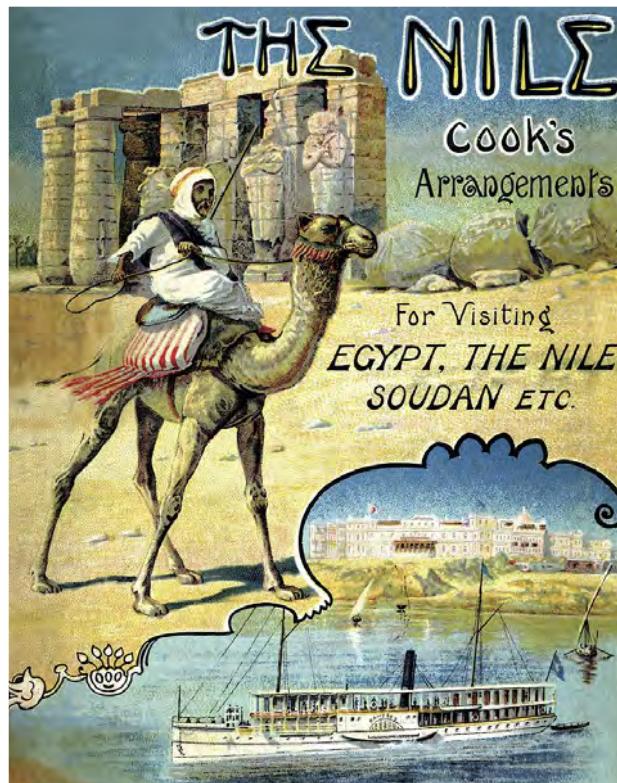


# AWAY WITH THE PHARAOHS

**Pandora Harrison** takes us on a journey through space and time

SOME OF YOU may have seen some images from my Vintage Egypt trip last year on Facebook or in a past issue of *The Chap*, but here I'd like to share an extended report with a selection of photos taken by me and my fellow travellers showing you the beauty of Egyptian antiquities and culture in what I can safely say was the trip of a lifetime.

We flew out of Heathrow direct to Cairo a day in advance of our designated meeting time with the rest of our tour group who were flying in from New York. We arranged for assistance upon our arrival in Cairo using the skills of a local "fixer" service known as "Meet & Assist" or as far as we were concerned our own personal Jeeves who was worth every penny. For the equivalent of about £20 we benefitted from his smooth and professional guidance through purchasing our visas (\$25 cash per traveller) and currency exchange. He also ensured we sailed through customs and immigration with barely a nod and were waived through security like VIPs. He kept us entertained while waiting at baggage collection and arranged transportation to our hotel. He even secured us an upgrade on our room to the "executive floor" at the hotel. He kindly gave us a tip on how to regain access to the arrivals lounge the following day to meet our tour group too. Top tip: I cannot recommend



this service enough, it can be arranged through your hotel and the amount you pay is what you think it is worth. I was more than happy to tip this chap heavily.

After a good night's sleep and buffet breakfast at the nearby airport hotel (which was quite good really and very popular with business travellers) we headed back to the airport on the free shuttle (I say free, yet everything involves a tip

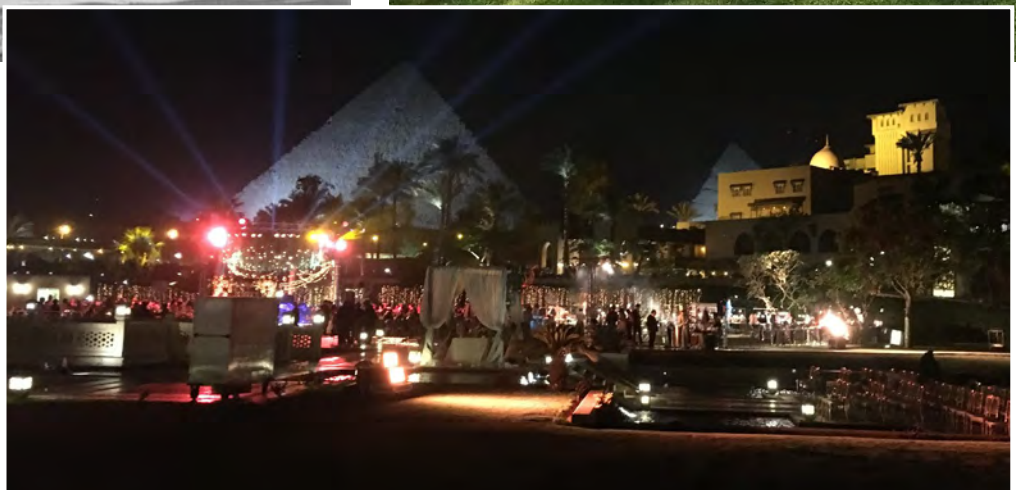


Pandora starting as she means to go on



The Mena House Hotel today and (left) back in the day. And (bottom) when being sonically defaced by Paloma Faith

of some sort so take a massive stack of single dollar bills as small denomination Egyptian pounds were hard to come by). Following our fixer's tip, we sneaked back into the arrivals lounge by way of the departures



lounge and a discreet lift journey down to the next level. Our journey was enhanced by the company of a machine gun toting member of the armed forces. We smiled, he smiled, and we scurried off to the duty-free shop as soon as the doors opened. Top tip: you have 48 hours from landing to use your duty-free allowance. We joined our tour group, all Americans bar us. A mix of ages and lifestyles, all very nice indeed and several of which I have maintained a lasting friendship with via Facebook and Instagram.

We took a coach across Cairo and the Nile to Giza where our adventure would begin

quite literally in the shadow of the pyramids at the historic Mena House Hotel. The hotel is a former hunting lodge built in 1869 and was converted to a hotel in 1886. Many of the great and good including Agatha Christie and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle have stayed here. The original plan was to stay in the main historical building of the hotel and have views of the pyramids from our rooms but regrettably the Marriott group took over running the hotel earlier in the year and had started renovation work not long before our trip was scheduled. This meant much of the historic part of the



The Darnells

## Day One

Our first experience of Ancient Egypt was a full day of sun, sand and pyramids. We started with a coach ride to Saqqara, an area south of Cairo, used as a necropolis by the inhabitants of Memphis, the ancient capital of Lower Egypt. It was designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1979. Saqqara features numerous pyramids, including the famous step pyramid of Djoser. The term “step pyramid” refers to the Step Tombs built using a rectangular base or *mastabas* (an Arabic word meaning “bench”). I believe you can go into one of the step pyramids, but this was closed at the time we were there.

We had with us a local guide who was marvellous—by law, an Egyptian guide must accompany us on our tours—but a USP of our particular trip was the additional in-depth



Saqqara

hotel complex was out of bounds, so the tour group ended up in the modern annex facing away from the pyramids with a view of the pool or in our case a suite facing Paloma Faith. We arranged to move our room the next morning after suffering a private concert outside our balcony till the wee hours (and the further promise of a wedding party planned for the next night). If you do stay at this hotel and are in the modern annex, top tip: get a room poolside facing Cairo—much quieter. Location-wise, Mena House will be a good choice in future, not only for the access to the Giza Plateau but also for the Grand Egyptian Museum, which will be moving into its new home on the Plateau from 2020.



Inside the Serapeum

The opportunity to ride a camel



commentary we received from the Vintage Egyptologist, Colleen Darnell and her husband Professor John Darnell of the Egyptology department at Yale. This very talented and dedicated couple accompanied us throughout our trip.

We also viewed the Serapeum of Saqqara. This is a massive underground tomb housing the sarcophagi of the mummified sacred Apis Bulls considered to be incarnations of the ancient Egyptian deity Ptah, the god of craftsmen and architects. It was believed that the bulls became immortal after death. The sarcophagi are made from unfeasibly large carved granite blocks.

After Saqqara we had a brief lunch back at base camp (Mena House). Andrew and I made a mad dash to our suite and hastily packed. We had to “bug out” to another room located on the other side of the hotel complex where we hoped the room would be quieter. We grabbed a quick bite to eat and then it was a jaunt across the street to the Pyramid Complex on the Giza Plateau. Here we could get up close and personal with one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The Great Pyramid of Khufu (also known as Cheops) and the pyramids of Khafre and Menkaure dominate the skyline dwarfing their guardian, the Sphinx. Also, nearby are the three smaller so-called “Queens Pyramids” lined up behind the pyramid of Menkaure.

First, we clambered about the pyramids (we did not venture inside). It is difficult to try to envisage how the pyramids must have looked

The Solar Boat Museum



with their polished limestone casing stones, shining white and reflecting the sun in the ancient desert. Those who dared, partook in camel rides. I understand it can be quite tricky to negotiate a good price as it seems to fluctuate depending upon whether you are in the saddle or not. I declined and reviewed the souvenir stalls instead. With so much to see and do before closing time we move swiftly on to the Solar Boat Museum. This is a more recent addition to the complex. The museum is a structure in which is housed a re-assembled Solar Boat of The Pharaoh. It was excavated in the 1960s at the foot of the pyramid of Khufu. The ship forms part of the funeral rites for the Pharaoh and an important part of his life in the hereafter, allowing him to “sail across the sky” akin to the sun. The museum is well designed to enable viewing of the boat from three different levels on all sides.

Although it is early May, the heat and intensity of the sun is incredible to the uninitiated. Top tip: natural fibres, straw hats, sun cream and sunglasses at all times.

Finally, and just before closing time, we had a very quick look at the partially restored remains of the Sphinx, a limestone statue of a reclining mythical creature with the body of a lion and the head of a human. Sometimes referred to as “The Terrifying One” and “Father of Dread”. Or is it? Here is the true riddle of the Sphinx: what the hell is it, or indeed who the hell is it? It is commonly thought to be the face of Pharaoh Khafre but that remains debatable as does its true age. Is it in fact older than the pyramids?

Back at Mena House and the evening is free



The reassuringly old-school Egyptian Museum of Antiquities



for us to relax after a very full-on day. Several of the tour group relax in the pool. I'm exhausted so I elect to sample my duty free on our new room's balcony overlooking my fellow travellers in the pool and order room service.

## Day 2

We check out from Mena House and head into Cairo in the delightfully air-conditioned coach. Our first stop is to an apartment in a faded glory turn-of-the-century building serving as a shop to buy authentic trinkets. The Nomad Shop specialises in genuine Nubian crafts and everyone manages to find something to buy for friends and family back home.

Next is the icing on the cake, The Egyptian Museum of Antiquities to see Tut's Treasure. The boy king, Tutankhamun, died in 1323 BC aged about 18. His hastily built tomb in the Valley of the Kings remained hidden and undisturbed, they now believe, due to the occasional depositing of fresh rocks and silt over the entrance each time heavy rain caused water to pour down into the valley.

The Grand Egyptian Museum (like Mena House) is a bit of a building site in places as they are slowly transferring the contents to a new site

on the other side of town at the Giza Plateau. I, however, am overjoyed to have had the chance to view the antiquities in the purpose-built 1902 building as opposed to the new steel and glass structure under construction. It is not expected to open till 2020 but I wouldn't hold my breath. The old building feels as ancient as the pyramids with its solid stone structure, high ceilings and sombre gloom. To my knowledge the building is to be taken over by a University eventually. Yes, the Tut Treasures are impressive to say the least when viewing them in person. I could have stared at their beauty and craftsmanship mesmerised for hours.

We move through several halls to another area of the Museum where The Darnells give us a talk on the revolutionary art of the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV more popularly known as Akhenaten. The Amarna style dates from the 18th Dynasty during the New Kingdom period. Colleen is an expert and teaches Egyptian Art History back home. Akhenaten's innovations were centred upon a new religion based on the worship of Aten, a solar deity or the sun's disk. He is responsible (and was hated and opposed) for abandoning traditional Egyptian polytheism and introducing worship centred on the Aten.





In the souk

It is exceptionally bustling due to the looming religious festival of Ramadan. We do our best to keep up with the guide and feel very safe with our own armed bodyguard following us everywhere but always at a discreet distance. It would be easy to get lost so we are all on our toes and pay attention to where the guide is going. But, oh my goodness, the distractions of the amazing boutiques and shops and the desperation to stop and take a look. The historic buildings of this vast labyrinth are a delight to behold. We are however only sampling a small piece of the souk which covers several city blocks, each area dedicated to specific trades or produce. I could spend a week or more exploring the textiles market alone.

That evening we are scheduled to take the overnight sleeper train from Cairo to Luxor where we will join our steam ship the *Sudan*. After about a half an hour on the coach heading to the other side of town and the Ramesses train station we debate if we have time to find the last remaining fez shop in Cairo. Having but a couple of hours before our train, we set ourselves a quest and the clock starts ticking.

Luckily the Darnells are also keen, so with hope in our hearts the four of us tell the rest of the tour group we will meet them at the station and venture out in a taxi, in the heat and smog of Cairo, with little idea of

Figures are less muscular in appearance. They are fluid, natural, slender and swaying, with exaggerated extremities. Akhenaten and his queen Nefertiti are often depicted in casual, family-orientated scenes or scenes of worship. Art that people could more easily relate to.

It is however a bit of a breeze through the rest of building and off to lunch at Naguib Mahfouz restaurant in the Khan a few streets away that is popular with tourists (in fact a group from Mexico was next to us). The food is excellent Egyptian street food.

Next, we are off to explore the Khan el Kalili souk consisting of several markets merged together dating back to medieval times.



The dying art of tarboosh-making



The SS Sudan, now and then



where the shop actually is apart from a street name. We are on a paper chase through the heavy traffic. Our driver asks other taxi drivers and locals where the street address is as we crawl along in the traffic. Time is running out as Colleen keeps reminding John, who remains unperturbed and determined. His response is we can fly to Luxor or take one of his Land Rovers and drive overnight if we miss the train. Andrew and I are along for the ride which to us is quite exciting. Google maps is consulted, and phone batteries are dying adding to the urgency. Finally, we discover the street and get out of the cab. Andrew, upon seeing the grand mosque over the road, realises we are only across the street from the very spot where we boarded our tour coach over an hour ago! A mad dash down the crowded market street to the shop ensues. A wonderful antique sign points us to the small hole-in-the-wall shop. The proprietor is gracious and measures John and Andrew. We bag two custom-made fezzes, made on the spot by an apprentice under the watchful eye of the owner. He uses an ornate antique gas “Aga Rangemaster” style heat source with

brass moulds and presses to form and shape the fezzes. The shop is clearly old with glass-door cabinets lining the walls and photos of famous customers. There is even a large fez shaped lamp shade hanging from the ceiling and off-cuts litter the floor. John is particular about the fit of his fez and the boy re-fits it several times before he is satisfied. The clock is still ticking as Colleen keeps reminding him.

We also grab a few off the peg fezzes too for the boys back on the bus. It’s now a race against time to the station. We make it with about 15 min to spare—it is a tarboosh triumph! Special thanks go to the Chairman for setting me this quest. I’m pleased to say that as a result of this adventure, a visit to the tarboosh shop is now on the itinerary for Vintage Egypt 2019.

Once we arrived in the main hall of the station and passed through security, we called the tour organiser to come and fetch us to where they were waiting for the train. This turned out to be one of the small cafes in the station where the group was quite literally corralled by the Cairo tourist police who were on guard and looked after us before boarding the train.

## Night Train to Luxor

A little bit of chaos goes a long way. We are hustled on to the train and compartments (broom cupboards) are assigned on board as we mill about in the narrow corridor. Cases are wedged into the compartments by porters. Yes, of course a few bits of luggage have strayed, most alarmingly a case containing insulin for an elderly diabetic passenger, but it does turn up by morning having been in another tour member's possession all the time. The cabins are compact and a wee bit grubby (sanitiser gel is never out of reach), but the bed linen is clean. As was recommended by our tour leader, I had previously ensured everything I needed for the next 24 hours was packed in my hand luggage as it would be impossible to access our large cases in the tiny cabin. Dinner is served fairly quickly once we are moving. Our lukewarm meal, unceremoniously served in our compartment, is a vaguely edible chicken of some sort. I sit perched on a blanket on the bench seat that will become a bed shortly trying to avoid contact with the suspect upholstery. We do venture out briefly to find the "bar" only to discover it is just a smoking lounge full of Egyptian men puffing away. Early to bed for me after such an adventurous day. A swift night cap, having mixed our duty free with the soft drinks from dinner, and so to bed. I'm in the top bunk. The journey is juddery, swaying and noisy. Deep into the journey, the diesel fumes fill the compartment and are intoxicating. I spend a sleepless night listening to Stephen Fry's explanation of Greek myths in audiobook form, previously saved to my phone. We are knocked up at five for breakfast and arrival in Luxor, formerly the ancient city of Thebes, at 5.45am. Everyone looks a bit worse for wear but fuelled by the excitement of boarding the Steam Ship *Sudan* soon.

## Day 3

Our floating palace for the next five nights is the SS *Sudan* which is docked just a short drive away. We arrive on board as the previous guests are departing having journeyed down the Nile from Aswan. Many are French, as is the company that now sails the *Sudan*. For one couple it is their seventh time on the vessel. We will be taking the ship back up the Nile towards Aswan getting ever hotter along the way. It is



It's a hard life on board the *Sudan*



quite close to the end of the season when the ship will go into dry dock for maintenance over the summer. The crew and their proud manager, Amir, are the best and take an early influx of guests at 7am in their stride. They kindly offered us refreshing and much needed omelettes for breakfast and tea while we waited for the cabins to be serviced. After breakfast the group agree to wander off down to the local shops where there is a recommended and superb book shop, the Libreria Aboudi Bookstore, famous for stocking the greatest variety of Egypt-related publications (and souvenir fridge magnets). I picked up a couple of matted prints for framing back home and a copy of *On the Nile*, which goes into great detail on the history of the Thomas Cook tours and the ships used, of which the *Sudan* is highly featured. She's an Edwardian first-class tourist paddle steamer commissioned in 1914 but not delivered until after the Great War, which inconveniently got in the way. It can be seen early in its renovation in the 1978 Peter Ustinov *Death on the Nile* film (renamed the *Karnak* as per the book). Only the exterior of the ship is used at this point. It can also be seen in the 2004 Poirot TV movie, and by this time the renovations were complete and the interior of the ship is used too. This version of Christie's book was shown on shipboard one evening in the guest lounge as entertainment. Thankfully there are no organised games, fancy dress or belly dancing on this cruise. We are spoilt rotten by the French chef throughout our voyage and every need was seen to with expertise by the charming staff.

Our suite (Queen Victoria) is at the stern. It was a later modification by the current owners, who converted an open deck area into two suites with a wide expanse of windows for excellent views. We leave the curtains open over night so that we could wake up to dawn on the banks of the Nile. Each suite/room/cabin has been fitted out with genuine antique French furniture and is named after a famous historical personage linked to Egypt and the history of the ship. Even the antique phone in our suite worked to call passengers in other rooms.

On our way back to the ship, after the book shop, we quickly took a peek in the Winter Palace Hotel which opened in 1907 as a collaboration between Upper Egypt Hotels Co. and Thomas Cook. Guests were offered

picnic lunches in The Valley of the Kings as an excursion. This is where Howard Carter announced the discovery of Tut's tomb in 1922. Agatha Christie and Lord Carnarvon also stayed here. Its Edwardian elegance is undeniable: no matter how well you are dressed you will feel scruffy in there. Sadly, we did not have a chance to stay there for a night or have tea on the terrace although the 2019 tour will. Next time we will for sure.

After an early lunch on board the *Sudan*, we had a chance to unpack, freshen up and change, and then we were off on a river taxi to take in the Temple of Karnak, the religious centre of ancient Thebes and dedicated to the deities Amun Re (The Hidden One, father and king of the gods), Mut his consort (the mother and earth goddess) and Khonsu their son and a moon god. Together they are The Theban Triad or trinity to which most of the temple is dedicated. They are similar to the more commonly known nuclear family trinity of Osiris, Isis and Horus. The complex at Karnak is the largest religious building ever constructed and its scale and beauty have to be seen to be believed. The complex comprises a vast mix of decayed temples, chapels, pylons, and other buildings. It is part of the monumental city of Thebes, the great capital of (Upper) Egypt.

The Hypostyle Hall is the most famous part of the complex with an area of 4,600 square metres with 134 massive columns arranged in 16 rows; 122 of these columns are 10 metres tall, and the other 12 are 21 metres tall with a diameter of over three metres. The forest of carved pillars with the finest examples of original painted decoration are stunning in their scale and need to be savoured despite the risk of a crick in your neck with all the looking up going on.

We then head back to the ship by way of the nearby Luxor temple sitting almost upon the East bank of The Nile. Originally graced by two major obelisks standing at the entrance to the temple, one is now in the place de la Concorde in Paris.

Returning to the ship in the evening everyone was encouraged to dress for dinner with cocktails beforehand on deck as the sun sets. During our meal the paddle steamer's engines start up and we began to cruise down the Nile to Qena. An early night however as I'm still



The Hypostyle Hall at Karnak

trying to recover from the sleeper train experience. That is for me one of the most difficult aspects of the trip, the early starts which mean early nights especially as I wanted to spend time on deck viewing the stars and socialising.

#### Day 4

After the usual early but delicious breakfast (perfect omelettes and a bread roll selection that is fabulous, served with home-made sweet and savoury spreads and fresh fruit) we have a lengthy coach trip to Abydos situated deep in the heart of the West bank of the Nile. Each time we leave the sanctuary of the *Sudan* we are supplied with chilled bottled water which is vital when viewing the sites in such a dry heat.

Abydos is located on the West side of the Nile, home to the Kingdom of the Dead. It is the gateway to the underworld and dedicated to Osiris, Lord of Abydos, God of the Dead. It was believed to be the place where Osiris was buried, thus Abydos is an important centre for the cult of Osiris. Here is where the ritual re-enactment of Osiris' death and resurrection once attracted pilgrims from all over Egypt. The journey took us through very rural areas with small towns and villages where life has not changed much over the centuries.

We explored the mortuary (or memorial) Temple dedicated to Pharaoh Seti I of The New Kingdom. The main attraction here is the Abydos King List, which was found carved on a wall of the temple. The Abydos King List contains the names of 76 kings of ancient Egypt, predecessors whom Seti acknowledged to be legitimate pharaohs, (as opposed to the ones he did not, like Hatshepsut and Akhenaten).

Next, we move on to Dendara, at the edge of the Egyptian desert, to view the Temple of Hathor, goddess of love, joy and motherhood. Later conquering empires not keen on pagan iconography have defaced Hathor's



The Temple of Hathor



image in the temple but a few intact examples were visible atop the vast columns. The ceiling of the temple had previously suffered from centuries of wood fire smoke and was blackened and charred when first discovered buried in deep sand. Now cleaned of centuries of soot it revealed spectacularly colourful paintings. It is hard to believe and visualise that once Egypt was abundant with such buildings and many just as colourfully painted on the outside as in. On the rear of the temple exterior is a carving of Cleopatra and her son, Caesarion, fathered by Julius Caesar.

We returned to the ship for lunch and it feels like we've put in a full day already. Each time we return to the Ship we are greeted by the staff with warm moist towels to refresh hands and faces and a hibiscus or aniseed cordial. We are delighted to be granted the reward of lounging about the ship for the afternoon. After lunch we laze about the sun deck to admire the changing backdrop along the Nile and get to know our fellow passengers. All tea, coffee and soft drinks are free, and we are assured the ice is safe to

have in our drinks. Such a joy to be on this elegant relaxing ship.

After dinner, the evening was highlighted by the mock wedding of engaged couple Don Spiro (New York based editor of vintage lifestyle magazine, *Zelda*) and his partner Rachael on the sundeck at dusk. Our fearless tour organiser Matt Moran officiated using the powers vested in him only while upon the sacred Nile. A champagne toast to the couple is given as we paddled elegantly back up the Nile to Luxor.

### Day 5

We woke to the sight of hot-air balloons rising up in the dawn light. What a delight! After breakfast it was a short water taxi ride to the west bank of the Nile. The Darnells maintain two Series 3 Land Rovers in Egypt for use when they are working there. They had them brought to Luxor for our use and a few of us were able to pile in for the journey to the Theban Necropolis, commonly known as the Valley of the Kings. Travelling in vintage style! En route we passed the Colossi of Memnon, two massive





The Valley of the Kings

stone statues of the Pharaoh Amenhotep III. They have long since been damaged by earthquakes. The original function of the Colossi was to stand guard at the entrance to Amenhotep's memorial temple which is now lost to the ravages of time. The ancient legend of the "Vocal Memnon" claims that the statues sing and to hear their song brings luck. Some sort of wind whistling effect apparently.

For 500 years during the New Kingdom period (approximately 1539 BC to 1075 BC) the Valley of the Kings received the mortal remains of pharaohs and other powerful nobles in rock-cut tombs. The valley is known to contain about 65 tombs and chambers and the area has been the focus of archaeological exploration since the end of the 18th century. It is one of the most famous archaeological sites in the world and in 1979 became a World Heritage Site.

As at an amusement park we were to be transported a short distance to the location of the tombs by a little train-like vehicle. One of the tires blew out, startling the security, so we continued on the more dignified shank's pony to the tomb entrances. We are allowed to visit up to three tombs in the Valley of the Kings in the time we have on site. It is truly hard to imagine these magnificent tombs hidden beneath the barren rocky desert. We viewed the beautifully decorated tomb of Seti I (KV17) which puts all others to shame. It is the longest and deepest tomb in all the Theban necropolis. It was first discovered by Giovanni Belzoni in 1817. When he first entered the tomb, he found the wall paintings in excellent condition with the paint on the walls still looking fresh and some of the artists paints and brushes still on the floor. The sarcophagus was removed in 1824 and has since been in residence at the Sir John Soane's Museum in London. I chose not to view Tut's tomb as I had heard it's not that impressive but in reality, I was trying to avoid the curse cast upon any person who disturbs a Pharaoh's tomb





which allegedly can cause bad luck, illness and even death.

For each temple or tomb we visited on our trip we had an entrance ticket which are great to keep as souvenirs. Some locations have more souvenir sellers than others and much of what they are selling is made in China. There is little on offer that is made by local craftsmen which is a great shame. Top Tip: to avoid the unwanted attention of hawkers, wear your sunglasses so they cannot see where you are looking, you can feel more aloof too. Never look interested in anything they are selling and don't stop moving, keep walking past. If they are persistent be polite and say "la shukran" (no thanks).

As we depart the Valley of the Kings Andrew and Matt are allowed to take the wheel of the Landys. Andrew drives us to the nearby Mortuary Temple of Rameses III at Medinet Habu, an important New Kingdom period structure in the West Bank. Like so many temples you will see a lot of vanity driven carvings of "Pharaoh smiting the enemy" depicted on the walls. Quite often the enemy is in the traditional pose of prisoners being dangled by the hair while being smitten with a club by the Pharaoh. Reliefs and inscriptions on the front of this temple record the military victories of Rameses III—over the Libyans and Asians. The vastness of this structure is impressive by any standard.

Back on the *Sudan* for lunch. By dinner, we weighed anchor and headed up the Nile, paddling carefully through the narrow Esna lock in the dark.

## Day 6

We woke in Edfu, docked and ready for the day. The Vintage Egypt trip was designed for the traveller to experience Egypt as would have been done by a Thomas Cook Nile Cruise

passenger in the golden age of travel. Having experienced a train journey, Land Rovers, water taxi and of course the steam ship, this time we partook of a horse and carriage ride to a temple dedicated to the god Horus. The temple became buried to a depth of 12 metres in sand and river silt deposited by the Nile over the centuries. Not knowing what lay beneath them, the local inhabitants eventually built their town on top of it. Excavations of the temple began in 1860. They say only about 30% of ancient Egypt has been uncovered so far.

The afternoon is spent lazing on the upper deck of the *Sudan* and each day at 4pm tea, locally made cakes, biscuits and fruit are



The Mortuary Temple of Rameses III

served on the upper deck which is a delightful consideration. Andrew and I also took the opportunity to explore the ship's kitchen, engine room and paddle wheel, all of which the staff are happy to show you for a small tip. Everything is clean and tidy.

By dusk we are docked at Kom Ombo. That night we are to have a formal meal and we are all encouraged to dress appropriately but before dinner we are able to make a quick visit to a floodlit temple located on the banks of the Nile. The building is unique because its "double" design meant that there were courts, halls, sanctuaries and rooms duplicated for two



The Temple of Horus at Edfu

sets of gods. The southern half of the temple was dedicated to the crocodile god Sobek, god of fertility and creator of the world with Hathor and Khonsu. Meanwhile, the northern part of the temple was dedicated to the falcon god Horace and Hathor. The dramatically lit temple served as the perfect backdrop for many a Film Noir inspired photo opportunity. Seeing a temple in the dark like this was quite different from a daytime trip, the shadows giving a whole new perspective. We had a very quick look round the crocodile mummy museum where a select few of the more than 300 crocodile mummies discovered in the vicinity are displayed. Apparently today you will only find crocodiles in the Nile south of Aswan. Then it was back to the ship where on the upper deck Andrew and I celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary with a vow renewal ceremony

officiated over again by Matt and a champagne toast.

### Day 7

Our last day on board the *Sudan* and I had suggested the night before that we have a decadent breakfast in our pyjamas knowing full well that a few of us have packed stylish nightwear. And so we did and why the hell not?

The *Sudan* paddled onwards to Aswan on the edge of Nubia, the southernmost point and end of our voyage. The Mausoleum of the Aga Khan, who died in 1957, came into view upon a west bank hill and is built out of pink limestone. It is said a red rose is laid on the tomb every day—a practice first started by the Aga Khan's wife.

Our next vintage form of transport was to sail on a traditional wooden Nile boat, called a *felucca*, to Philae's temple of Isis. This temple was partially submerged in the late 1920s when the height of the old dam (built

in 1902) was increased. By the 1960s when the Aswan High Dam was planned the temple was relocated to Angelika, an island in the reservoir of the old dam, as part of the UNESCO project to save ancient buildings being lost forever under Lake Nasser. The temple complex contains several small temples, one of which is dedicated to Isis, Hathor, and a wide range of deities related to midwifery. There was a wonderful abundance of ancient graffiti carved on the temple much of which is mid to late Victorian. It is interesting to find Christian iconography on the walls of the temples of Egypt proving that Christians used the temples as places of worship. Hence the defacing of the pagan Egyptian gods in most of them.

The afternoon and evening were free to enjoy our last few hours onboard the ship and prepare to check out in the morning.

## Day 8

We said goodbye to the magnificent *Sudan* just before lunch and moved to the palatial Old Cataract Hotel in Aswan but before this was planned a crack-of-dawn jaunt by boat taxi to the west bank to see the Necropolis of Aswan, Qubbet el-Hawa, with ancient tombs dating mainly from the Old Kingdom. Also, a visit to a nearby island to view ancient inscriptions on granite that the Darnells have studied in depth. Aswan is a trifle warm at a baking 44 degrees Celsius, so I opt to give this a miss and enjoy my last moments on the *Sudan*. I have tea in the

wood panelled parlour and catch up on emails and social media.

We are whisked away from our floating palace by water taxi and head down the Nile to The Old Cataract Hotel. This is a British colonial era structure from 1899 built by Thomas Cook for Nile tours. All the great and the good have stayed here, notably Tsar Nicholas II, Winston Churchill, Howard Carter and Princess Diana. The most important for us is Agatha Christie. It is here that Ms Christie is said to have penned *Death on the Nile* (whether this is true or not matters not, for it is fun to



Photographic larks at the floodlit temple at Kom Ombo





more budget conscious rooms and expanding the hotel complex. When I wasn't in the hotel gift shop drooling over jewellery I was ensconced in our magnificent air-conditioned suite putting a further dent in the duty free before we had to depart for home.

That evening we dined in formal style in the historic 1902 restaurant which thankfully operates a strict dress code. Food is not the best, but the room was stunning with high ceilings, Arabic décor and wonderful ethnic lamps. Our tour group were the only people dining but I could imagine how splendid it must be at the height of the season packed with guests.

### Day 9

This is the earliest start of the trip so far with a 4am wake up call for our 6am tourist flight to Abu Simbel to view the famous temples of Pharaoh Rameses II and his Queen Nefertari. The temples were

originally carved out of a mountainside on the border with the conquered lands of Nubia. Created, at least in part, to celebrate Rameses' victory over the Hittites at the Battle of Kadesh in 1274 BC. Originally the temple was buried in sand up to the necks of the colossal statues of Ramesses II who guard the entrance. It was the explorer Giovanni Belzoni who uncovered and first excavated the site known as Abu Simbel in 1817. Like Philae's temple of Isis, the structures were relocated in their entirety in 1968 and protected as a world heritage site. An incredible undertaking with a multi-national team of archaeologists and enthusiastic support from The Kennedys in



think so). There is a suite dedicated to her. The hotel has been extensively renovated and updated of course but several original features remain. The original cage elevator is still in situ but was not working when we were there and Christie's desk and chair are on display in the foyer with a few items of ephemera.

Our suite was located just two doors down from the Christie suite and overlooked picturesque sail boats on the Nile. It had a small balcony upon which you dare not go for fear of spontaneous human combustion. In the 1960s a modern tower block known as The New Cataract Hotel was added offering

The Whitehouse. Jackie Kennedy had opened the King Tut exhibition in 1961 at the National Museum of Art Washington DC and took a great personal interest in the project. At a cost of over 40 million US dollars, great care was taken to orient both temples in exactly the same direction as before and a man-made mountain was erected to give the impression of the temples cut into the rock cliff.

We flew back to Aswan and were back before lunch. I'm going through chip withdrawal so manage to find some on the hotel restaurant menu and proceed to enjoy my lunch in airconditioned surroundings. We venture outside briefly to view the grounds of the hotel but manage less than ten minutes in the intense sunlight and heat.

A visit to an archaeological site on Elephantine Island was planned but again the heat defeats me, and I decline this excursion and hide in the hotel soaking up the views of the Nile and the remaining duty free. In the evening we had cocktails in the main bar of the hotel and said farewell to our fellow adventurers as we all must depart in the morning. Some head back to the 1902 Restaurant but I'm still stuffed from lunch so it's back to the room for a night cap.

### Day 10

After breakfast, we are set to fly back to Cairo from Aswan and then on to London. I indulged in a last bit of souvenir shopping at Aswan airport before departure, which is actually quite good and bag some fun silver pieces like a necklace of mummy cases. The

journey home is unremarkable, and I have much laundry to do.

To this day we are still on a high having had such a wonderful adventure.

I'd like to thank my fellow adventurers, The Vintage Egyptologist (Colleen Darnell), Professor John Darnell and Matt from Goodspeed and Bach, for a unique experience of a wonderful timeless place. For details on Vintage Egypt 2019, go online to [GoodspeedandBach.com](http://GoodspeedandBach.com), and tell them I sent you.





# Photos from the 2019 London Hat Walk

A CELEBRATION OF headwear, this amble was organised as part of London Hat Week. For the second year our route took us from the Tate Modern along the river to the Scoop by City Hall, not far from the LHW supplier fair. (Our band of NSC types, however, repaired instead to the pub: tragically the Shipwright's Arms, where we went last year, had closed down so we wound up at the Mug House, a Davy's pub in the arches under London Bridge.) Not much really happens other than some good-natured promenading and the opportunity to be photographed by all and sundry—so quite a good fit for the NSC. See you next year?



Club Members (l-r) Gary Grønnestad, George Davies and Stewart Lister Vickers, plus ladies from the Red Hat Society, who swell the numbers every year





The couple above were filming an ad for Argos—it's airing at the moment if you're curious



(Above, l-r) Darcy Sullivan, Stuart and Frances Mitchell and Lord Hare join the march; (right) organiser Liz Waldy poses with Bob, the NSC Lobster



# 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.*



## Ernest Hallamshire-Smythe

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

Ernest Hallamshire-Smythe.

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

Irish playwrights and pretension. The first born is called Oscar, and I have a secret predilection for handbags. I also had a schoolchum whose parents hyphenated the constituency in which they lived together with their perfectly serviceable surname to make a wonderful piece of performance art and the naffest name in the known world.

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

All over the place, I suppose. Raised among the Edam-eaters; time spent in Ireland, Belgium and the West Country; currently holed up in St Mary Bourne, Hampshire, expecting to get murdered by Miss Marple. Short answer: Yorkshire

### **Favourite cocktail?**

Is it terribly unsophisticated to say whisky and water, without the water? I'll take a Whisky Mac if I'm ill, or a Martini occasionally, a Rusty Nail if I'm at the family seat and m' father's drinking Grants, but I'd rather not adulterate a good spirit.

### **Most Chappist skill?**

Don't know if it's a skill per se, but I've got a decent knowledge of Edward Lear and Flanders and Swann. The small people in the house can just about get through *The Gasman Cometh* and *The Gnu* without assistance.

### **Most Chappist possession?**

I have a collection of oddments collected during a period of drunken eBaying, including a cornet and a snuff box the size of a rugby ball with an engraving of Cologne Cathedral on it. Of course it isn't a snuff box, it's not air tight, and so utterly useless for that porpoise, but the vendor was a cunning chap, and who can be bothered to return such trinkets?

### **Personal Motto?**

*Per pollo ad astra.*

### **Favourite Quotes?**

Oh, probably that one about Lady Astor and the



poisonous tea or possibly a thank-you letter to an aunt for the gift of a jar of apricots pickled in brandy:

*Dear Aunt, many thanks for your gift, not so much for the fruit itself, but for the spirit in which it was sent.*

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

A sizeable number of Poles have learned English by copying my voice.

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

You'll have to ask my bank manager. Scarheart cut out a section of my soul when I was in my cups, and he holds it against the possibility of me ever cancelling my subscription.

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

Lured into the Chappist scene by an ad in *Private Eye*, and encouraged by Mr Mosley and the esoteric Chap Room, I met the Glorious Committee and by then it was too late.

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

Petersons Connoisseur's Choice pipe tobacco and Timothy Taylor Landlord Ale. My grandfather lived to 193 and never touched either.

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

Reginald Iolanthe Perrin—the sanest man ever to grace our literature, and if he's too busy being Sir Wensley Amhurst to attend, I'll accept David Nobbs, the chap who invented him



Boudicca—clearly mad as a bag of cats, and bound to get on famously with Perrin.

Norma Major—Oh Norma, oh my dear Norma.

**Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?**

~~Answer: Artemis Scarheart~~

Groucho Marx. Top tips for winning ale in pub quizzes: if you don't know the answer, it's usually Groucho Marx.

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

Without any clearly identifiable skills or particular knowledge, I shall probably have to learn to play a cittern or similar little-known instrument, very badly, until asked to stop.

*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.*



THE HAPPIEST  
MUSICAL EVER MADE  
IS

Tom Carradine's

# EASTER PARADE

COLOR BY  
TECHNICOLOR



(Above) Gary Grønnestad strikes out down Piccadilly;  
(below) Mr Carradine himself, crossing Trafalgar Square;  
(right) Champagne Charlie, Dolores Jung and Gary  
advance through Burlington Arcade; (top right) making  
the final push into Soho





THE BRAINCHILD OF Tom Carradine, the Easter Parade was simply an opportunity to put on your glad rags and process around the West End being gawped at by tourists. I did wonder whether morning wear would be the order of the day (à la *Easter Parade*, the 1948 movie) but on the day it was rather too warm for that sort of rig and most of the men went down the linen-and-boater route. The crew gathered in Covent Garden before processing down the Strand to Trafalgar Square then up Haymarket to Piccadilly Circus. Then it was up Piccadilly, through Burlington Arcade, and back across Regent's Street for a brief stop at Zedel's for refreshment and a chance to dally in the perfect spot for flaneurie. Finally, it was on into Soho, where we ended up at the Coach and Horses, haunt of many a louche literary lush. It was an ideal route (and, in my opinion, more satisfactory than the London Hat Walk route—see pages 22–3) and the whole wheeze a resounding success. Next year's parade is already being planned and Champagne Charlie's expectation is that within three years they'll be closing roads for us. Many thanks to Tom and Charlie for organising the jaunt.



(Top) Pausing for a group shot in Trafalgar Square; (middle) paying homage to Cording's of Piccadilly; (bottom) returning from Burlington Arcade down Vigo Street towards Soho



Pausing to  
slake thirsts  
at Brasserie  
Zédel





Not a cigar but a zepelin-shaped pipe—apparently quite a thing for a while in the 1920s



We reach the Coach and Horses, where Tom leads a songsong, the Hokey Cokey is done and ale is consumed in the sun



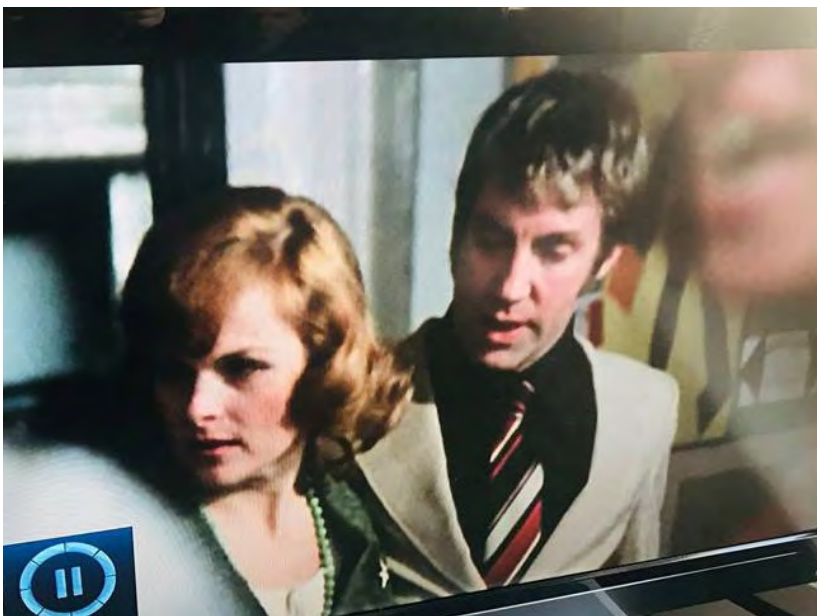


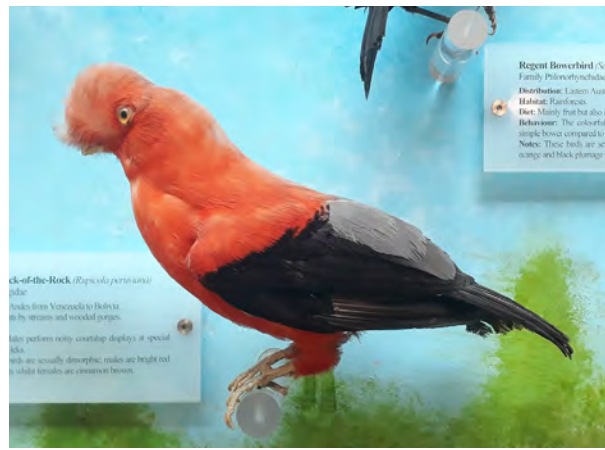
## CLUB NOTES

### Club Tie Corner

JUST FOR A CHANGE we're going to start with a selection of actual ties (don't worry, more weirdness overleaf). This page, clockwise from right: Benjamin Negroto realised that the cover of Alan Flusser's *Clothes and the Man*, naturally features an NSC tie; Culpepper sends us this snap of Martin "Chariots" Offiah sporting Club silk; the Earl of Essex spotted that Dalton Trumbo (as played by Bryan Cranston) is a Club man; evidence of Club infiltration around the neck of Ray Milland in the second ever episode of *Columbo*, "Death Lends a Hand", from Frances Mitchell. Opposite page, clockwise from top: Frances has lovingly created this doll's house scenario: a respectable mother comes home to find a drunken derelict has crawled into her house and passed out, but her heart softens when she sees his Club tie and reading material; Craigoh invites you to the Games Room; Ellin Belton has availed herself of a special iron for ironing all the Club clothing that passes through these pages; Ivan Debono asks, is Israel's Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan wearing the 1970s issue? No—Andy Webb retorts that *this*, around the neck of a *Sweeney* villain, is the 1970s version.







Clockwise from top left: Lir Mac Carthaigh observes that “the burghers of Wicklow Town in Ireland were so keen to celebrate the club’s Punt, Picnic ‘n’ Plunge that they broke out the NSC bunting a little too early” (and even some of the buildings have Club paint jobs); ornithologist Ivan Debono now specialises in birds that have evolved Club colours to raise themselves in the pecking order; Benjamin Negroto notices that Jacobite heroine Flora MacDonald had Club sympathies; Essex spots the heavy-handed Club sponsorship of the musical *Till the Clouds Roll By* (let no one say we are not shrewd in how we invest Club funds); Debono has been busy and has also discovered the lost 11th Commandment about always wearing Club colours; finally, Col. Cyrus Choke has found a Club blanket. (Hang on, is that young man wearing a 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 1st May  
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.

### 🍷 NSC Annual Punt, Picnic ‘n’ Plunge

Saturday 4th May  
11am–11pm

Oxford, picnicking by the High Bridge  
Admission: Expect to contribute about £22 to the hire of the punts

The Annual NSC Tradition of messing about on boats—which predates the NSC—hoves into sight once more to entice you aboard with its siren song. Come ye lads and lasses, take the Glorious Committee’s shilling and join us for a day on the river. The day offers the opportunity [*interesting choice of word—Ed*] to learn how to punt, to sit back and scud along the quiet waterways of England’s green and pleasant land, to enjoy a communal picnic and the ever popular “Who Will Fall In?” Sweepstake.

There is a black tie dinner in Oxford the night before: this is being organised by Frances Mitchell who has a separate Facebook event for it: [www.facebook.com/events/1238431436304071](http://www.facebook.com/events/1238431436304071). On the day we typically meet at the Bear Inn from about 11am then hit the Magdalen Bridge Boathouse at midday to pick up the punts and head off.



### Verulam Wicker Man Burning

Monday 6th May  
Midday–midnight  
The Verulam Arms, 41 Lower Dagnall Street, St Albans AL3 4QE

If you’re in the St Albans area and you fancy a bit of paganism over the weekend, this pub will be celebrating the onset of spring with feasting, fun and special beer flavoured with foraged woodruff (a traditional May delicacy in Germanic cultures). There will be a visit from the Green Man (the personification of greenery returning to the fields and forests) and taking

Burning sun, hungry sea and merciless horizon—the fun never stops at the Sheridan Children's Beach Weekend



California's Burning Man Festival back to its English historical roots, the ceremonial burning of a wicker man. It's an annual event that was apparently given the seal of approval by the late Robin Hardy, director of *The Wicker Man* film. There'll also be music from medieval troubadours The Princes in the Tower, who will be playing their first set at 6pm, then accompanying the lighting of the wicker man at 6.30.

### **Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair**

Sunday 12th May

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).

### **Sheridan Children's Weekend at the Beach**

Friday 17th May–Sunday 19th May

Normans Bay Camping and Caravanning Club Site, Normans Bay, Pevensey, East Sussex BN24 6PR (01323 761190)

Please bring your tweed-clad children for a weekend by the seaside, enjoying British weather, ice cream, playing on Normans Bay Beach, where evil Normans invaded our glorious country one thousand years ago. There we can fly kites, Re-enact the Norman

Invasion, toast marshmallows over campfires, visit Pevensey Castle, Herstmonceux Castle, Martello Towers and ride on the Eastbourne Miniature Steam Railway. Please book your tent/glamping-pod. Dogs welcome. See [www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/campsites/uk/eastsussex/pevensey/normansbay](http://www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/campsites/uk/eastsussex/pevensey/normansbay).

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

Friday 24th and Saturday 25th May

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.

Since the bank holiday weather will doubtless be glorious and the Chelsea Flower Show will be in full swing, we're giving our May event a Jazz Age garden party theme. Think country house weekends and "Anyone for tennis?"

There will be bunting and deck chairs, Pimm's and cucumber sandwiches, a special Gin Garden offering 15 gins to help you find your perfect G&T, live music from those boater-toting funsters the Swing'It Dixieband, and hosting from Champagne Charlie—always up for an assignation in the summer house. When the band aren't playing there'll be vintage vinylism from DJs the Bee's Knees.

If in doubt, ask yourself: *What would Bertie Wooster do?*

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



All aboard  
Whittington's Tea Barge



Experience a  
Wodehousian Jazz  
Age garden party  
without leaving the  
safety of London at the  
Candlelight Club

unique ambience, fuelled by hundreds of candles, is truly a scene to behold.” —*Time Out*

### Afternoon Tea Cruise

Monday 27th May  
2.30–4.30pm

Whittington’s Tea Barge, River Thames, Hill’s Meadows, George Street, Reading RG4 8DH

Frances Mitchell is organising this river jaunt on a boat that serves cream tea while you travel. She writes: “After showing the owners pictures of the NSC, and emphasising the publicity potential, I have managed to arrange for us to have exclusive use of the boat. While we eat the boat will cruise, river conditions permitting, upstream to Mapledurham (Toad Hall in *The Wind in the Willows*). The food is more country cottage than 5 star hotel tea. The produce is locally sourced and all dietary requirements can

be catered for (advance notice required). We can bring our own alcohol and there will be a pay bar on board too (limited selection). The barge owner is a descendent of Dick Whittington and I am hoping to persuade him to give us a talk on the connection.

“The boat is moored about 5 minutes walk from Reading Station. There is an expensive car park right next to the mooring site (Hill’s Meadow) on Reading Bridge. There is free parking at Caversham Bridge (Thameside Promenade), a very pleasant 15 minute walk along the river bank. Alternatively people can leave their cars at our house (a 20 minute walk). Let us know if you plan to do this so we can give you a permit.

“The cost of the trip is £27 per person. Normally full payment upfront is required but I have negotiated special arrangements so non-refundable deposit of £10 per person is all that is needed. Places are limit so payment is required to secure one. Payments should be made to me via Paypal, bank transfer, cash or cheque.” You can contact Frances at francesmycroft@googlemail.com.

Tarbooshes ahoy at last month's Club Night

