

DESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • No.154 • AUGUST 2019

Devils in Skirts

Action Man reveals all at our Carry On themed summer party



Monsters of the deep

Dorian Loveday on the wonders of prehistoric sea creatures

Walking without purpose

Stuart Turner on the *Chap* magazine's Grand Flaneur Walk

Temples of dosh

Luca Jellinek on why we should cherish the Square Mile's classical architecture

The New Sheridan 7

Jack Calloway has named his 1930s dance band after our own Club

Jeweller, brickie, sommelier, chap

Meet Francis Giordanella, a man with a chequered past



The New Sheridan Club traditionally meets in the upstairs room of The Wheatsheaf, just off Oxford Street. The Wheatsheaf is one of Fitzrovia's historic pubs, a one-time haunt of Dylan Thomas, George Orwell, Augustus John and Julian Maclaren-Ross. In fact Thomas met his wife Caitlin in The Wheatsheaf and, legend has it, he was known to flash at women there as well. Fitzrovia's associations with literature go back to the eighteenth century. In the twentieth century both Woolf and Shaw lived in Fitzroy Square; Pound and Lewis launched *Blast!* at the Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel in Percy Street. John Buchan lived in Portland Place and in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* Richard Hannay has a flat there. Both Lawrences (D.H. and T.E.) took rooms there, as did Aleister Crowley, Wilfred Owen, Rupert Brooke and Katherine Mansfield.

The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 7th August in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm, when Samuel Marde Mehdiabad will enlighten us regarding *Art of the Ancient Silk Road*. "Although the ancient architectural monuments of Palmyra and Petra adorn about as many travel journals as the contemporary efforts of Egypt, Greece, or Rome, the statuary and crafts of the region seem somewhat overlooked," he elaborates. "This is not surprising: defying categorization, the artistic styles of these border regions of the Roman and Parthian (Persian) empires often appear a riotous mishmash of Greco-Roman and Oriental techniques. Is this hybrid art merely a symptom of geopolitics, or is there something more interesting afoot? Why can we observe motifs that look suspiciously like elephants and Hindu goddesses on pieces found as far from India as Antioch and Pompeii? How in the name of the prize llama of a small Incan village near the Machu Picchu did I manage to make a specialization out of this rubbish? Allow the gin-sodden brain of SS Marde Mehdiabad FSCO BA (Hons) to take you on a ravishing journey along obscure ancient trade routes as



you examine a small collection of grave markers and old pots, and he proves how it is categorically impossible to fail a degree at a modern university—all without once, even once, mentioning anything even vaguely related to anything at all to do with the Nazis. Ever."

The Last Meeting

Our speaker last month was Dorian Loveday and his mission was to enthuse us about prehistoric sea creatures. Inspired by fossils as a lad, he has clearly harboured a lifelong interest—in fact I discovered that he is shortly to begin a Masters in paleoarchaeology. He did a good job of helping us visualise just how mind-bendingly long ago these beasts lived, how one era followed another (helped by a couple of mass extinctions) and how scientists stumbled to their current understanding of them, not helped by some petty rivalries and the chauvinistic suppression of the contribution of fossil hunter and expert Mary Anning, the poor daughter of a cabinet-maker who was responsible for discovering some landmark fossilised skeletons but, as a woman, did not always receive the credit due her. Dorian even brought in some fossils for us to handle, including a tooth and a vertebra disc.

An essay of the talk begins on page 4.



(Left) Chairman Torquil gushingly introduces our speaker; (above and below) Dorian attacks his subject with gusto



(Below) Dorian passes a number of fossils that he brought in round the room; (left) Mark Christopher examines a vertebra disc; (below right) new member Francis Giordanela with Eugenie Rhodes



(Left) The looming presence of Tim Eyre; (far left) Ed Marlowe cheerfully clashes with the wallpaper



THE GREAT SEA DRAGONS



Dorian Loveday introduces the marine monsters of the Mesozoic

PREPARE YOURSELVES FOR a journey back in time. Nothing unusual about that for a write-up of an NSC lecture, you might think; after all, we're members of this august body precisely because we're interested in matters historical, archaeological and anthropological as well as sartorial, cultural, and so on. But I am going to take you further back in time than I believe has ever before been attempted in one of our newsletters. I'm going to be elucidating matters palaeontological—back in the mists of our planet's dim and distant past, to a time even before dinosaurs ruled the earth.

And I'm not going to be writing about dinosaurs, either—instead, you'll be reading about very different animals that, while their more famous cousins may have ruled the land, instead held sway over the oceans. I hope you are all sitting comfortably because the journey on which you are about to embark will look deep into the dizzying abyss of geological time, and will feature astounding discoveries, astonished men—and women—of science, seething personal vendettas and skulduggery, and the very latest research. But most of all, it will

introduce you to fearsome creatures that, it was once thought, belonged firmly in the realm of the fantastical and the phantasmagorical.

However, our story begins (as may be somewhat customary for this particular topic) far more innocently—it begins with a childhood rhyme, a tongue-twister in fact, with which I'm sure you're all familiar:

She sells sea shells on the sea shore,
The sea shells that she sells are sea shells, I'm sure.

Now this particular tongue-twister appeared first in print at the end of the 19th century, but it may well have been inspired by an actual person, a most extraordinary woman who lived at the beginning of that century. And if you have ever visited the little Dorset seaside town of Lyme Regis, which is where she lived, you will probably have heard of her. Her name was Mary Anning.

Mary was born in 1799, and was the daughter of Richard Anning, a cabinet-maker. The family was fairly poor so one of the things she used to do to supplement the family income

was to go with her father along the beach at Lyme and look for fossils, which she would then sell on a little table outside the family home and shop to the steady trickle of tourists to the town.

One of the things she regularly found, which you've probably seen before, is called an ammonite. In life, this was an animal related to the modern-day nautilus (which has itself been around for a very long time) and had a very similar lifestyle, and therefore is also related to octopus and squid (and by extension, the garden snail). However, these could grow very large—the largest was the size of a tractor wheel. Mary found remains of other animals too, such as fish, squid pens and shark teeth.

Now, you'll probably have noticed that these are all marine animals, and there's a very good reason for this: the rocks in which these fossils were laid down were deposited at the bottom of the ocean. At the time, the Earth looked very different—the land-mass that would become the UK lay near the equator at the bottom of a tropical sea and the continents were clustered into two large land-masses. But how long ago was this?

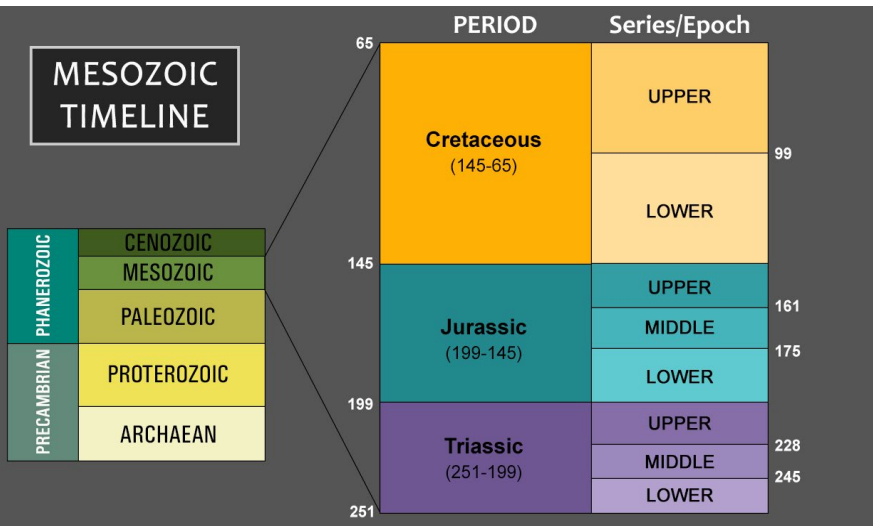
Geology was very much a science in the ascendant in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries—although the word “scientist” would not be coined until 1834—and it was already beginning to be realised by Mary Anning's time that the Earth was very much older than had been previously supposed. Certainly much older than had been calculated by the Irish Bishop James Ussher in 1650, who after adding up the various chronologies in the Bible confidently asserted that the world had been created late in the evening of the 22nd October, 4004 BCE. However, the vast majority of people at the time of course believed that this timescale was by and large correct, and that the world and everything living on it had been created by God, and was therefore immutable.

Nowadays, through modern radiometric dating techniques, we know with a great degree of accuracy how old those rocks are. And the consensus is that they were laid down approximately 200 million years ago. Now obviously this is really quite a stupendous length of time to get one's head round, so I'm going to attempt to make it a bit more manageable by asking you to imagine, in true Victorian sci-fi style, that you've invented a time machine that

is able to fly backwards in history at the rate of one year per second. At that speed, it would take you just over three minutes to reach Mary Anning's time, and you'd get to the building of Stonehenge and the Pyramids of Giza in an hour and a quarter. However, to get back to the age of the rocks that Mary Anning was finding would take just over six years. So hopefully that gives a bit of an idea as to the sheer vastness of geologic time.

Now this is right in the middle of a period





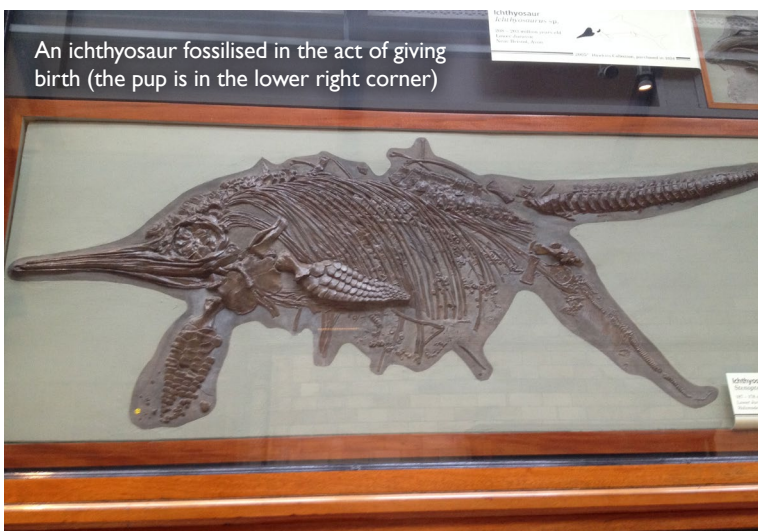
of Earth's history that is known as the Mesozoic, which means "middle life". It's divided into three time periods: the Triassic (251–201 million years ago), the Jurassic (201–145 million years ago), and the Cretaceous (145–66 million years ago). So the fossils that Mary Anning was finding come from the beginning of the Jurassic. (As an aside, you've probably heard of the Jurassic thanks to the "Jurassic coast" in the UK but more likely as a result of the Jurassic Park films and novel. The irony is that most of the animals featured in them actually lived in the Cretaceous—Hollywood showing its customary respect for accuracy).

But back in the early 1800s, these time periods had yet to be recognised, calibrated and named, and the Anning family was in dire straits. Mary's father, Richard, died in 1810, leaving the family destitute, so it became even more important to sell fossils. But Mary's life—and the history of the world—was about to change dramatically.

In 1811, when Mary was still only 12 years old, her elder brother Joseph found something extraordinary in the cliffs of Lyme Regis. It was a four-foot-long skull, but not just any skull—this was the skull of an animal unlike anything alive on Earth. And you can still see the exact specimen today in the Natural History Museum.

Mary found the rest of the skeleton over the following year. It was bought by the local lord of the manor and eventually sold on to the British Museum in London.

The discovery astonished the scientific community. The first person to examine it was Sir Everard Home, an anatomist at the Royal College of Surgeons. Home was a bit of a bluffer and a blunderer, and owed his position to plagiarising the work of others. So it's no surprise that he was baffled by this extraordinary creature. Its skeleton was clearly that of a reptile, an air-breathing animal, but a huge



one. And what's more, it was clear from its limbs, which had been modified into fins, and other features that it lived wholly in the sea. Later exceptionally preserved fossils found in Germany and elsewhere showed that it had a fish-like tail and dorsal fin.

This caused consternation to Home as he found it impossible to place in the "great chain of being"—the ordained hierarchy of living creatures, into which it was believed the natural world was organised. The concept of extinction was a recent and controversial one—why, after all, would a benevolent god let a species perish? And it should be remembered that the word "dinosaur" would not be coined for another 30 years, and Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* would not be published for another four decades.

So over a number of years Home prevaricated and kept changing his mind about the fossil, first thinking it was some sort of link between fishes and crocodiles, or even some sort of salamander. But Charles Koenig of the British Museum realised it was a different type of creature altogether, with a mixture of fish-like and reptile-like characteristics, and in 1817 he was the first to give it a name—a fish-lizard, or ichthyosaur. And that is the name by which these creatures are known today.

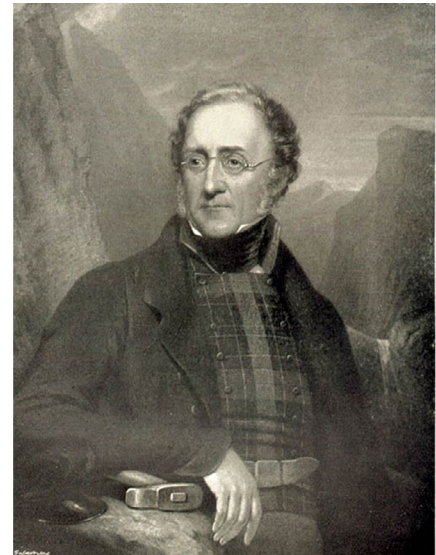
So, what are ichthyosaurs? They are indeed aquatic reptiles, but unlike marine reptiles of today—such as turtles, sea snakes and marine iguanas, which need to return to land to lay their eggs—they were fully aquatic, spending their entire lives at sea. It's often wrongly assumed that they're a type of dinosaur, but dinosaurs were purely land-dwelling animals, whereas ichthyosaurs split off from the same lineage before dinosaurs even evolved—making them distant cousins at best.

This makes them fascinating creatures in and of themselves, but an additional factor that makes them interesting is a term you may be already aware of but which you'll be reading again and again over the following pages, and that is "convergent evolution". What that basically means is that natural selection often comes up with the same or a similar solution to the same evolutionary problem in very

distantly related animals. And in the case of the ichthyosaur, it's easy to see—they've converged with animals such as sharks and dolphins on a hydrodynamic body shape that lets them swim swiftly through the water, even though these groups are separated by millions of years (dolphins didn't evolve until almost 50 million years after the ichthyosaurs became extinct).

And the similarities with other creatures don't end there. Ichthyosaurs have a long, thin snout, which is perfect for minimising water resistance if you want to snap quickly at fast-moving fish—much like the modern-day gharial crocodile, which pursues the same prey.

But even more exciting are some recent discoveries. Generally, when an animal is fossilised, only the hard parts are preserved—the soft parts are normally eaten by scavengers



Conybeare (left) and de la Beche

or bacteria. But occasionally, under certain conditions—for example, if there's little oxygen present or the animal is covered quickly by sediments—the impressions of some of the soft parts, such as skin, are preserved. And if that skin is looked at under an electron microscope, it's possible to identify components of individual cells called melanosomes, which are just a millionth of a metre across. These are the cell structures that contain pigment in living animals, and by comparing the fossil examples with modern ones we can now identify roughly what colour an extinct animal was—a feat that until recently was regarded as impossible.

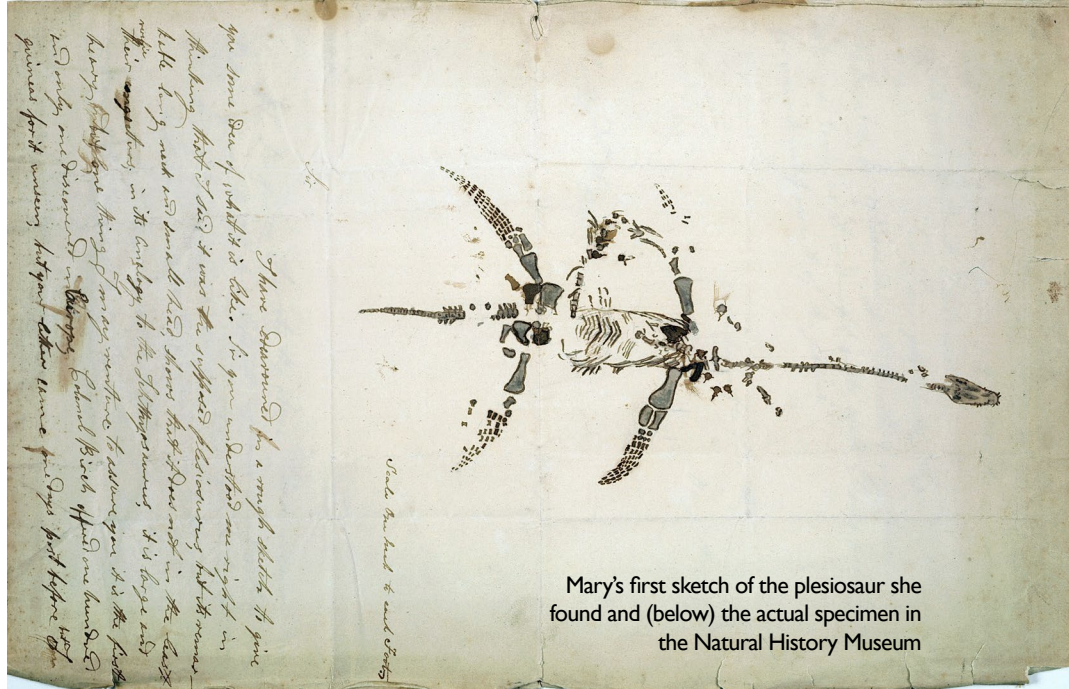
In the case of the ichthyosaur being studied, it now appears that it had a greater number of dark melanosomes on its upper side, and

few on its underside—a phenomenon known as countershading, which we can see in many different kinds of animals today. So, just like them, ichthyosaurs had camouflage.

But of course, ichthyosaurs didn't start out like this. Just like dolphins, their ancestors were land-living animals—though of course in the ichthyosaurs' case, they were reptiles rather than mammals. So what did ichthyosaurs evolve from?

To answer that question, we need to go further back in time by another 50 million years—another year and a half in our time machine—to the beginning of the Triassic age, and the aftermath of the single most catastrophic event in the history of life on this planet: a time known as “the Great Dying”. There are periods in Earth's history known as mass extinctions—times when the environmental conditions change so rapidly or so radically that huge numbers of species can't cope and die off simultaneously. One such example was the event that killed off the dinosaurs and many other species at the end of the Cretaceous. But the Great Dying was far more severe—in fact, it's perhaps the closest life on this planet has come to being wiped out altogether. It's estimated that at this time, 250 million years ago, around 90% of all species on Earth became extinct. And it took the earth 30 million years before it recovered its previous diversity.

But the silver lining to events like these is that they act like a huge evolutionary reset button, clearing the way for some species to expand into new niches and evolve very rapidly. And this is just what happened with the ichthyosaurs. For a long time, we didn't know what their ancestor looked like. But in 2014, a fossil was discovered in rocks dating to just four million years after the



Mary's first sketch of the plesiosaur she found and (below) the actual specimen in the Natural History Museum



Great Dying that looks like a clear contender—a small animal called *Cartorynchus* that was only about half a metre long. But the structure of its flippers shows that it was equally at home on the land and in the water.

Once they got into the sea, ichthyosaurs diversified, gradually becoming more and more suited to an aquatic lifestyle, and increased in size quickly. By the end of the Triassic, the largest were over 20 metres long—the length of a railway carriage. And we know a lot about the lifestyle of ichthyosaurs. For example, their huge eyes—up to 20cm in diameter in some species, the largest of any vertebrate—would have enabled them to see clearly in depths of up to 500 metres, and we know that some of them made deep dives as their bones show evidence of avascular necrosis—the same sort of pitting that can be caused by repeated instances of decompression sickness, or “the bends”.

Early ichthyosaurs swam in an undulating, eel-like motion. But this is quite an inefficient and slow way of swimming, and as we've seen, the later forms evolved to become much

more skilled at moving through the water. They stiffened their bodies so that they would remain straight, which is more hydrodynamic, while their tails beat quickly, acting just like the propellor on the end of a torpedo.

So there's no doubt that ichthyosaurs were energetic swimmers. But how were they able to maintain this? After all, they were reptiles. Well, for one thing the climate was much warmer in the Mesozoic—there were no polar ice caps for much of it. But another clue lies in their anatomy. The inner structure of their bones reveals a pattern much like that of warm-blooded animals, so much like some species of shark and other fish today, it's likely that they had a degree of endothermy—some way of generating a measure of their own body heat. One recent study even suggests they had blubber (like the modern-day leatherback turtle). But an even bigger clue lies in how they reproduced. Unlike a modern turtle, for example, there's no way an ichthyosaur could have come back to land to lay its eggs. So, like some species of snake today, they gave birth to live young. Fossils have been found with the embryos preserved inside the mother, but even more amazing still, we even have fossils of mothers who died in childbirth. Many of these have been found in the same areas, which suggests that ichthyosaurs may even have returned to the same breeding grounds to give birth, which is a fascinating clue to their behaviour.

While many ichthyosaurs ate fish and squid, others ate other ichthyosaurs. The first that Mary and her brother found was a species later known as *Temnodontosaurus*: in its day, the ocean's top predator. It grew to up to 10 metres long—the length of a double-decker bus, or the animal's modern-day equivalent, the killer whale. It was the undisputed ruler of the oceans for 30 million years before it disappeared from the fossil record. Why did its reign end? We're not sure—but it might have had something to do with the fact that another, different type of reptile had taken to the water by this time.

In 1821, two geologists—William Conybeare, and Henry

de la Beche (who grew up in Lyme Regis and had been a childhood friend of Mary Anning; his surname is pronounced “beach”)—had written the definitive scientific account of the ichthyosaur discovery. However, from other fragmentary remains they realised that a different kind of animal altogether was hidden in the rocks. The remains looked more like traditional reptiles than ichthyosaurs did, so the pair tentatively called it a plesiosaur—which means “near reptile”. So the hunt was on to find the first complete plesiosaur skeleton. And once again, in 1823 it was Mary Anning who found it.

Mary was by now a young woman and an experienced fossil hunter, running her own shop to sell her finds. She was also highly knowledgeable, teaching herself by voraciously reading every scientific paper she could get her hands on, often hand-copying them. Lady Harriet Silvester, the widow of the former Recorder of the City of London, visited Lyme in 1824 and described Mary as follows:

The extraordinary thing in this young woman is that she has made herself so thoroughly acquainted with the science that the moment she finds any bones she knows to what tribe [i.e. species] they belong. She fixes the bones on a frame with cement and then makes drawings and has them engraved...By reading and application she has arrived to that degree of knowledge as to be in the habit of writing and talking with professors and other clever men on the subject, and they all acknowledge that she understands more of the science than anyone else in this kingdom.



In fact, Mary was friends with many of the leading geologists of the day, who corresponded with her. And yet again, Mary astonished the scientific community by finding something quite unlike anything alive today. Just like the ichthyosaur, the actual specimen is on display in the Natural History Museum today. In fact, it was so bizarre that the great French anatomist Baron Georges Cuvier—the man who had introduced the concept of extinction only 25 years previously—even thought it was a fake. But after examining the fossil he changed his mind and admitted his mistake, and after that Mary’s scientific reputation was assured.

But it’s easy to see why he was initially mystified. Plesiosaurs evolved a completely different solution to the problem of an aquatic lifestyle than their fellow reptiles the ichthyosaurs. Instead of developing a body shape like a fish or a dolphin, they used a different approach—they evolved flippers to propel themselves through the water. These weren’t simple paddles—they were in fact stiff, sophisticated hydrofoils that enabled them to ‘fly’ underwater in a similar manner to penguins and turtles. But unlike penguins and turtles, which only use their front flippers for propulsion, plesiosaurs used their hind flippers as well.

A new study—using a set of robot plesiosaur flippers—suggests this made them incredibly efficient swimmers.

The other thing that one notices immediately is their extremely long necks. While it used to be thought that plesiosaurs could tie their necks in snake-like knots, or held their heads above the waves in a swan-like fashion while they cruised through the water, it’s now thought that

their necks were much stiffer and held out in front of them as they swam. The longest had over 70 vertebrae compared with just seven for most mammals, including ourselves—its neck was seven metres long, more than half the total length of the animal.

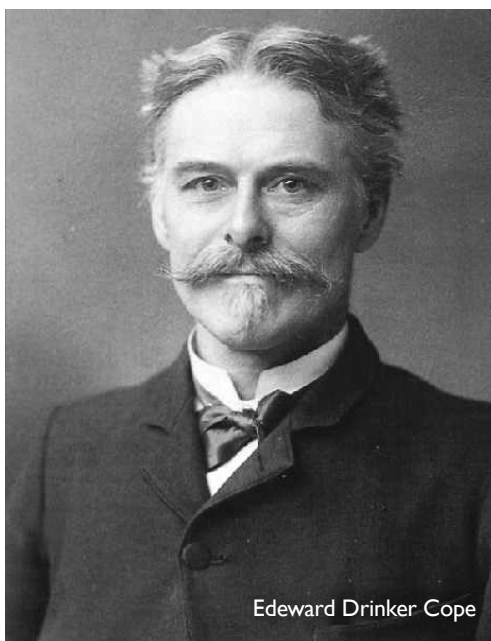
In fact, their necks were so seemingly unfeasibly long that a plesiosaur sparked the most famous feud in the history of palaeontology. It was between two men—Othniel Charles Marsh and Edward Drinker Cope. Both were Americans—Marsh was head of the Peabody Museum at Yale (which was built for him by a rich uncle) while Cope was at the smaller Haverford college in Pennsylvania. The two men first met in 1864 and were initially good friends, but their friendship soured after an infamous incident. Cope had initially reconstructed the fossil of the plesiosaur *Elasmosaurus* as having a short neck and a long tail, and was showing the specimen to Marsh. Cope said he’d discovered a new type of reptile in which—amazingly!—all the vertebrae appeared to be the wrong way round. Marsh then pointed out that perhaps the simpler interpretation was that Cope had got the ends mixed up. A vehement disagreement then followed, after which the pair asked

fellow palaeontologist Joseph Leidy, who was also present, to adjudicate. According to legend, Leidy solemnly and wordlessly took the skull from one end and carried it to the opposite end, where it fitted perfectly.

Cope was furious as he’d just published a paper featuring the incorrect reconstruction and so frantically tried to recall and destroy all the copies to correct it, but Marsh found the



Othniel Charles Marsh



Edward Drinker Cope

incident hilarious and never let Cope forget his mistake. Thereafter from the early 1870s the two men were sworn enemies, and this led to what's known as the "Bone Wars", or the Great Dinosaur Rush. This was figuratively and literally the Wild West days of palaeontology, as teams led by both scientists headed out into the vast expanse of new territory that was being created as the American frontier was pushed inland. While the two men kept up a bitter war of words in print, desperately trying to outdo each other in the number of fossil species they discovered, the diggers on the ground resorted to bribery, spying, stealing specimens and even dynamiting quarries and destroying fossils so that they wouldn't fall into the other's hands. No subterfuge or scurrilous skulduggery was beneath them. But it would be their undoing.

After 20 years, both men had bankrupted themselves in the attempt to outstrip each other. But science was the ultimate winner—whereas just seven species of dinosaur were known from North America before the pair started exploring, 136 were known by the time they had finished, including many of those most familiar to us today. (And Cope may have had the last laugh—while he may have got the head on the wrong end of *Elasmosaurus*, Marsh ended up putting the wrong head on a completely different dinosaur from a quarry miles away, which is why we can't use the name *Brontosaurus* anymore, as that's what he called it.)

But back to plesiosaurs. Again, they didn't just spring into life fully formed. Instead, they are thought to have evolved from animals called nothosaurs in the middle-to-late Triassic period, which had webbed feet and lived a semi-aquatic seal-like lifestyle. These branched off once again from the same lineage that led to dinosaurs, modern reptiles and birds, but on a separate lineage from ichthyosaurs. But once again,

plesiosaurs rapidly adapted to a fully aquatic lifestyle. We now know that plesiosaurs would not have been able to haul themselves up on land, unlike some earlier reconstructions, and therefore were fully aquatic. This means they also gave birth to live young and were therefore endothermic, just like ichthyosaurs. We only have one fossil that shows a mother just after having given birth, but this is interesting as it shows that plesiosaurs gave birth to only a single large pup rather than the three or four common with ichthyosaurs. Having fewer, larger young is common in animals that tend to look after their offspring for longer, so it could be the case that plesiosaurs lived in groups.

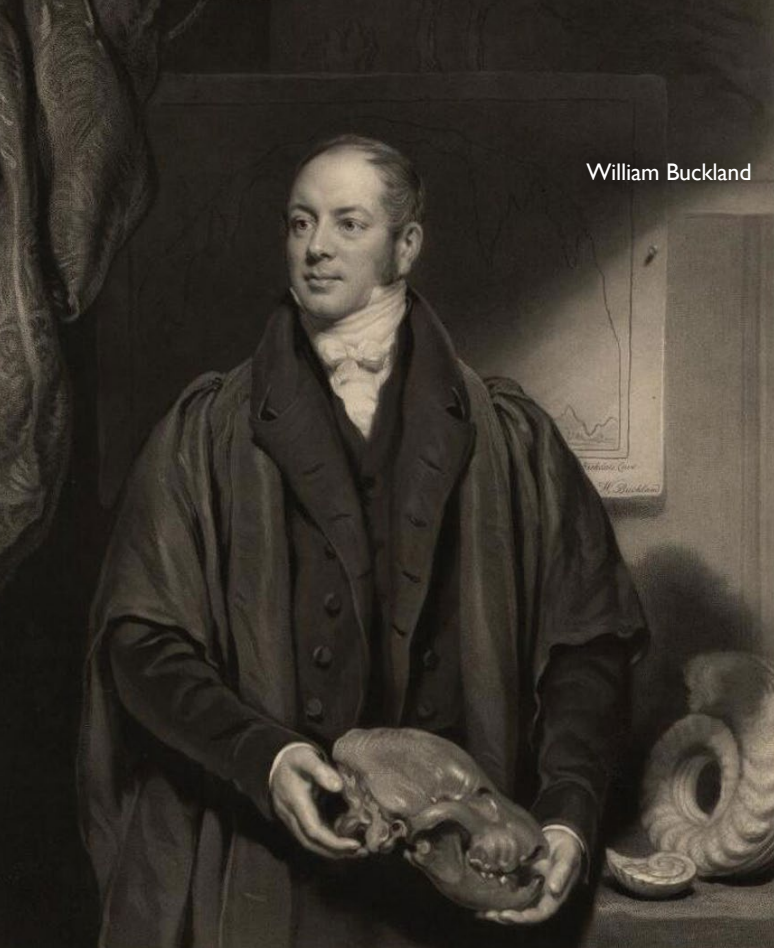
So, why did their necks grow so long? The answer is: we don't know! It could possibly be that they used them to dart within shoals of fish

and squid which, as with ichthyosaurs, with which they coexisted, formed the majority of their diet. We can tell this not only from their dentition and fossilised stomach contents, which show the presence of fish bones and scales, as well as squid hooks, but also because we have examples of their fossilised dung.



These are known as coprolites—a discovery that was made by Mary Anning, although the term was coined by her friend, the geologist William Buckland.

Buckland deserves a mention here as he was such a wonderfully eccentric character. A founder member of the Geological Society and the first Professor of Geology at Oxford—a position that was created especially for him—he was full of irrepressible, ebullient enthusiasm and energy. His home was a ramshackle arrangement of fossils and animal remains as well as living creatures (one visitor describes his pet jackal munching a guinea pig under the sofa). But his main eccentricity was his attempt to eat his way through the entire animal kingdom—known as zoophagy. Mole



William Buckland

and bluebottle were supposed to be the most distasteful, and John Ruskin, for example, was once late for an engagement with Buckland and missed out on a delicate toast of mice. At times, however, this habit seemed to get a little out of hand, as related by the famous raconteur Augustus Hare:

Talk of strange relics led to mention of the heart of a French King preserved at Nuneham in a silver casket. Dr. Buckland, whilst looking at it, exclaimed, 'I have eaten many strange things, but have never eaten the heart of a king before,' and, before anyone could hinder him, he had gobbled it up, and the precious relic was lost for ever.

Buckland would go on to name the first species of dinosaur.

But from Buckland's diet, back to that of plesiosaurs. Not all plesiosaurs ate small prey, nor did all of them have long necks. Many of them evolved short necks and large heads, enabling them to eat much larger prey—including other plesiosaurs. These forms were known

as pliosaurs, and once again they became the dominant predators of the Jurassic and early Cretaceous seas. The largest was up to 12 metres long. Palaeontologists nowadays can get a good idea of the effectiveness of these giant predators by subjecting them to what's called finite element analysis. This is the same process used in engineering and architecture to test the structural strength of various components. And if you take the skull of a pliosaur and put it through a CT scanner, you can make a three-dimensional model of the jaws that, alongside estimates of muscle mass and the known properties of bone, can be used to measure the stresses on the skeleton and subsequently its bite force—the pressure it was able to exert with its jaws.

And what comes out is that pliosaurs had one of the strongest bites ever seen in the animal kingdom. For comparison, humans can exert a maximum bite force of around 200 psi. Lions can achieve about 1,000 psi, crocodiles about 4,000 psi. A pliosaur however could bite with a force of around 10,000 psi—the weight of ten grand pianos, at least as great as *Tyrannosaurus Rex*, which would not evolve until many millions of years later in the late Cretaceous.

But the reign of the pliosaurs and other plesiosaurs would also come to an end. And before you ask—they do not live in Loch Ness. The loch formed only 10,000 years ago, whereas plesiosaurs went extinct at the same time as the dinosaurs, with the pliosaurs becoming extinct some time before. What would take their place as the rulers of the primordial ocean? The



A pliosaur attacks a plesiosaur

answer would lie in an animal that had actually been discovered before Mary Anning had even been born—but the significance of which was only realised later.

Around the year 1774, workers in a chalk quarry near Maastricht discovered a large fossil skull. It was initially examined by a local doctor, Johann Hoffman, who led the excavation, but the local landowner decided to keep it as a showpiece for his house, and it languished there for the next 20 years. However, when the French invaded in 1794 the skull was “liberated” even though it had been hidden (its location was apparently betrayed in return for 600 bottles of fine vintage wine) and taken back to Paris. Here Georges Cuvier examined it. Cuvier was said to be able to identify and reconstruct an animal from a single piece of bone (which sounds an extraordinary feat, though it’s actually not too uncommon among today’s palaeontologists). He surmised it was related to monitor lizards, but neglected to give it a name. It was finally named in 1822 by William Conybeare—who had named Mary’s plesiosaur—and he named it after the Meuse river, which flows near where it was found: in latin, a mosasaur. Oh, and Hoffman got the last laugh—the species he found is now known as *Mosasaurus hoffmani*.

Mosasaurus were the johnny-come-latelies of marine reptiles, but they were perhaps the most fearsome creatures ever to have roamed the oceans. They evolved in the mid-Cretaceous about 100 million years ago, just about the time when the ichthyosaurs were going extinct. And Cuvier was right about their affinities—it appears that mosasaurus evolved from the same lineage as monitor lizards and snakes, again from a slightly different lineage from that of the other reptiles we’ve looked at. By this time, the position of the continents had further drifted, and were starting to assume positions not too dissimilar to those of today. However, the climate was still warm and there were lots of shallow ocean habitats that the mosasaurus made



full use of. Like ichthyosaurs and plesiosaurs, they rapidly spread around the globe. They also diversified and evolved larger in size very quickly. The smallest known was only about 1 metre long; the largest topped 17 metres in length.

It’s thought that they were ambush predators—lurking in the depths and suddenly attacking their prey from below rather than chasing after it—and this tactic may have made them very quickly the top of the food chain in the Cretaceous period. But perhaps an even greater factor was the way their jaws were structured. Like snakes, their jaws were able to expand to help them swallow large prey. But also like snakes, they had a second row of teeth on their palate in the back of their mouths, known as the pterygoid teeth. These functioned just like the spikes on a meat carving tray, holding the prey in place while the double-hinged jaws ratcheted around it. Which basically means once a mosasaur got hold of you, there was little you could do about it. And this meant they basically ate anything that they came across—the only thing they had to fear was another, bigger mosasaur.

Once again, we know that mosasaurus gave birth to live young and that they were countershaded. But the recent and most surprising discovery concerns their tails. It was previously thought that mosasaurus had straight tails in much the same way that ichthyosaurs originally were, and were reconstructed as such. It was presumed that their tails had an eel-like crest along them, and that they swam in a similar manner. But in 2010, a truly exceptional



But there were many others. For example, there were fossil turtles, much larger than those of today. There were strange shellfish-munching creatures called placodonts in the Triassic, some of which convergently evolved to look like turtles even though they're unrelated. And there were fully marine crocodiles, which, again, independently evolved the same crescent-shaped tail as ichthyosaurs and mosasaurs. Incidentally, one of the best places to discover a new extinct

species is not to go digging one up but to look in a museum. This is because some old specimens might have been mislabelled or just never even looked at properly. This was the case with a recent example of marine crocodile, which was determined to be a new species in 2017. The researchers named it after the late Ian Kilminster—better known as Lemmy from Motörhead—as they thought he would appreciate having a vicious marine predator named after him.

fossil was discovered that preserved not only skin impressions, but traces of the internal organs such as the heart, lungs, kidneys and even what might be the retina of the eye. But what this fossil also showed was that, just like ichthyosaurs, the mosasaurs had evolved a crescent-shaped tail to power them through the water—convergent evolution in action once again.

So we've now seen the three main types of marine reptile during the Mesozoic period.

But sadly—or perhaps fortunately for us—the 30-million-year reign of the mosasaurs and indeed all the marine reptiles was coming to an end. Roughly 66 million years ago, an asteroid about seven miles wide (the size of Mount Everest) smashed into the Earth with a force more than a billion times that of the atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It hit near what is now the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico and punched a crater 110 miles wide.

As you can imagine, the effect was catastrophic, causing tsunamis, wildfires, earthquakes, and a nuclear winter and acid rain for many years afterwards. It wiped out the marine reptiles (though the ichthyosaurs were already extinct) and the ammonites too, as well as the dinosaurs on land. For 150 million years, the reptiles had ruled the waves as well as the land. But now the stage was set for the mammals to take over.

Back in the 1840s, Mary Anning's career was also coming to an end. She was always short of money—the fossil game was a tough, poorly-paid and dangerous one (at one point her pet dog was killed by a landslide that only just missed her). What was worse, she rarely received the credit in scientific publications for any of her discoveries—this was a time at which women were not even permitted to attend meetings of the Geological Society, let alone join as members. A friend of hers wrote: “She says the world has used her ill...these men of learning have sucked her brains, and made a great deal of publishing works, of which she furnished the contents, while she derived none of the advantages.” Now however she is rightly celebrated as one of the foremost pioneers of science of any gender—just as she should be.

Mary died of breast cancer in 1847 at the age of 47. Thanks to the efforts of William Buckland, in her later years she received a civil list pension in recognition of her discoveries. Her childhood friend Henry de la Beche also helped, by drawing a picture that he sold as prints to raise money for her. It's called *Duria Antiquior*—“A more ancient Dorset”—and I find it really amazing. The reason for this is that this represents the first ever attempt to recreate a prehistoric ecosystem pictorially, which nowadays is known as “palaeoart”.

And I think it illustrates even more why the study of ancient creatures is so

important, let alone fascinating. Mary Anning's discoveries and those of others were some of the most significant geological discoveries of all time, being some of the first of their kind and providing central evidence that led to the theory of evolution. And by studying long-lost worlds, we can learn about past extinctions and changing climates, and learn how to deal with these events in our own time. Palaeontology is currently going through a golden age, partly thanks to some of the new methods I've talked about tonight. For example, of all the roughly 1,200 species of dinosaur known, fully half have been described in the past three decades, and a new species is now being named at the rate of about one per week.

But another equally compelling reason is that the study of fossils is quite literally awesome—it inspires a sense of wonder and fascination about the universe and our place in it. The story of life on our planet, is, after all, the greatest story ever told. And I can think of no better words to illustrate this and to finish on than those of Buckland himself:

When we see the body of an ichthyosaurus, still containing the food it had eaten just before its death, and its ribs still surrounding the remains of fishes that were swallowed ten thousand or more than ten times ten thousand years ago, all these vast intervals seem annihilated, time altogether disappears, and we are almost brought into as immediate contact with events of immeasurably distant periods as with the affairs of yesterday.



De la Beche's print *Duria Antiquior*

CARRY ON, CHAPS!

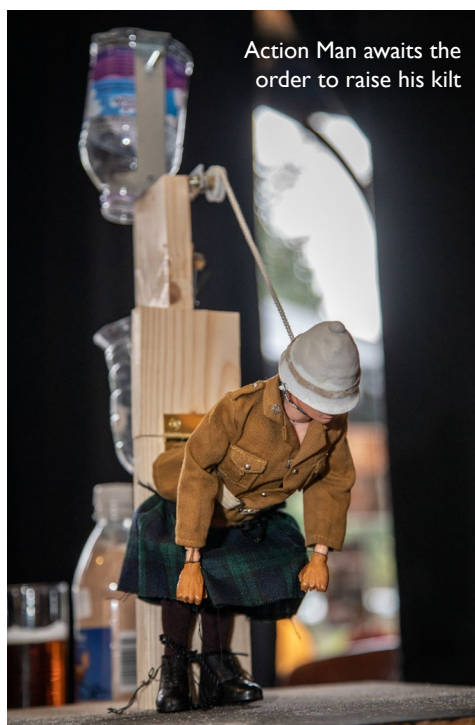
The New Sheridan Club's summer party

OUR SUMMER PARTY this year took its theme from the 50th anniversary of the release of *Carry On, Sergeant*—a British comedy film that would go on to spawn a franchise of 31 “Carry On...” movies. (True to the chaotic tone of the films, the 50th anniversary in question was actually last year.)

These movies are much-loved as quintessentially British—and what could be more British than loving them despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that most of them aren't really very good? Their stock in trade is seaside-postcard smut, crude double entendre and casual sexism, while championing the little man and undermining the bureaucratic tyrant. They essentially feature the same cast of regulars transplanted into a series of milieux: after *Sergeant* (about the British experience of National Service), they started with other obvious institutions (*Teacher, Nurse, Constable*), then branched out into trade unions (*Carry On at Your Convenience*, set in a toilet factory), the British holiday experience of the time (*Camping and Abroad*) as well as historical subjects (anything from the French revolution, to Henry VIII and the much-loved *Carry On Up the Khyber*), filmic genres such as horror and westerns and lampoons of specific films, such as *Carry On Cleo* (*Cleopatra*) and *Carry On Spying* (James Bond).



Playing doctors and nurses: (l-r) “Chuckles” Younghusband, Miss Minna, Ivan Debono and Andrew



Action Man awaits the order to raise his kilt

Our party saw a good number of doctors (and a ward sister), a couple of Cleos, two sets of characters from *Carry On Screaming*, a couple from *Carry On Up the Jungle*—and the Mitchells came as Pepe and Floella from *Hotel Elsbels*.

We didn't have any live entertainment this time, as frankly we couldn't think of anything particularly relevant to the theme, but we had a range of games. The traditional shooting game featured the traditional appearance from Action Man, this time dressed as a member of the 3rd Foot and Mouth Highland

regiment from *Carry On Up the Khyber*. The film plot revolves around the regiment's fearsome reputation being based on the fact that they wear nothing under their kilts—until one Private Widdle is captured and turns out to be wearing knee-length underwear. This emboldens the



The cornucopia of Grand Raffle prizes

rebellious natives. The film's denouement involves a battle that is won when the regiment are ordered to line up and formally lift their kilts to reveal the absence of underwear. In our game Action Man was connected to a Heath Robinson contraption in which sand trickled from one vessel into a bucket attached by cord and pulleys to Action Man's head; when enough sand has entered the bucket the weight pulls Action Man upright—his hands are gripping the hem of his kilt, lifting it up for all to see. Players must try and shoot the soldier before he can reveal the truth about his underwear situation.



Stuart and (right) Frances Mitchell as Pepe and Floella from *Carry On Abroad*



Our other performance-based game was the Sid James Chuckle contest, though players were also allowed to do impressions of any other character's catchphrase. Meanwhile there were a couple of ongoing competitions running during the night—Carry on Fibbing gave a list of 71 Carry On titles and players simply had to mark whether they thought each one was genuine (and here we included not just the



Suggestive jellies



Stephen Myhill and the Contessa di Campari as Socket and Valeria from *Carry On Screaming*



Lorna Mower-Johnson as Cleo



Torquil as the Khasi of Kalabar

movies but the TV spin-offs and stage productions too) or false. The false titles included some that had been proposed but never got made, as well as some that Scarheart simply made up. Finally guests also had a chance to do some crafting and create a poster for their very own Carry On film. The three most promising entrants were invited on stage to pitch their idea to the crowd, and the one with the most applause won.



Adrian as a non-specific rake



Laura and Bruce taking inspiration from *Carry On Up the Jungle*

At the very last minute, at the suggestion of our hosts the Teahouse Theatre, we introduced a Suggestive Jelly Competition, but the only person who had time to enter was Grace from the venue, so she won. Grace also won the star prize in our traditional Grand Raffle, a DVD boxed set of all 31 Carry On movies. As partygoers drifted into the night Harry was

already planning a month-long Carry On film festival at the venue...

Many thanks to our hosts, not least for the buffet (including the suggestive sausages), and to all who came along and made the effort with their costumes. We shall return with our Christmas party in December, with a theme that we will doubtless decide upon a couple of weeks before the event.

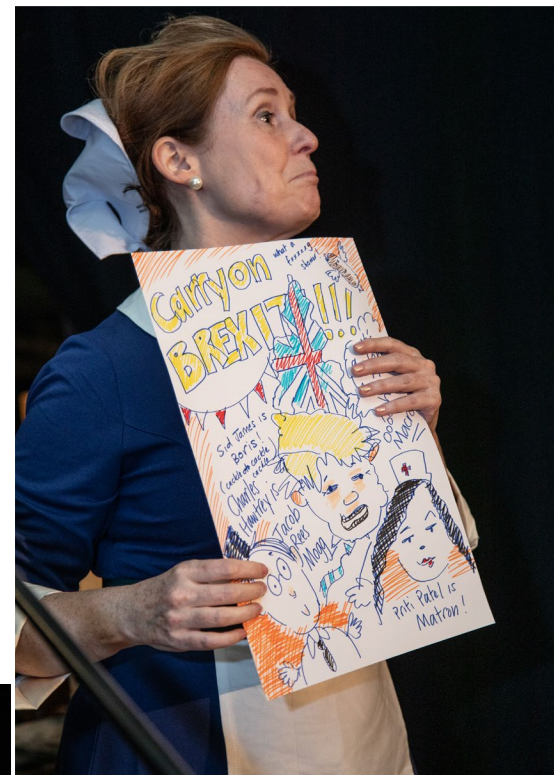


This page: our Devils in Skirts shooting game

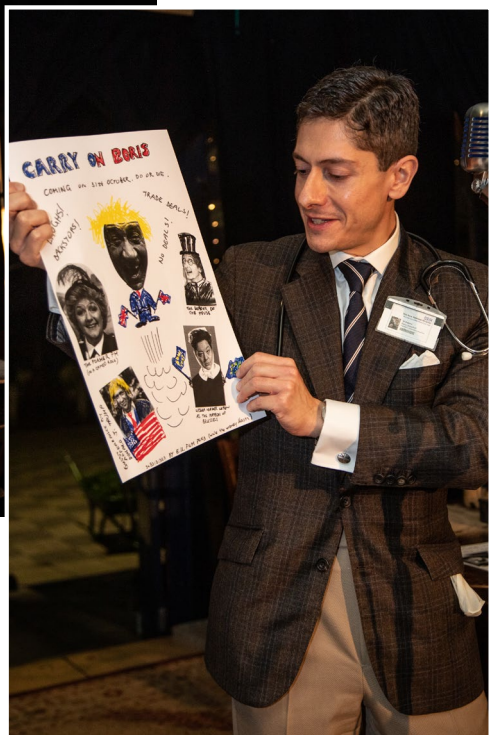


That pink object is the nerf gun projectile in flight





(Above) Five contestants hit us with their Carry On impersonations, (clockwise from top left) the Curé, Bruce Chopping, Sam Marde, Adrian Prooth and Stephen Myhill; (right) in the finals of the movie idea game, Miss Minna pitches Carry On Brexit



(Above) Bruce and Laura give us Carry On Hipster while (right) Ivan also strikes a Brexit note with Carry On Boris (ironically subsidised by a European Film Fund grant)



Stephen and the Contessa win the prize for the True or False game



Sam wins a lovely pair of knockers



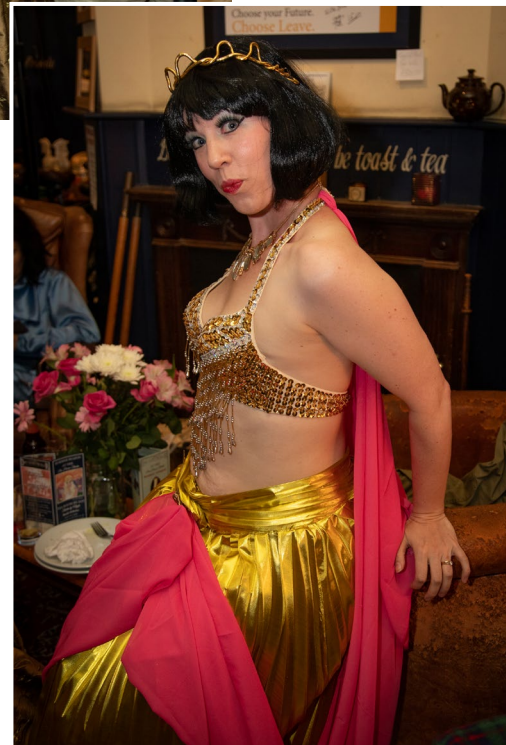
(Above) For an explanation of the daffodil, see *Carry On Nurse*; (left) Jessie has actually been reading the Sid James biog and posting reports: she does not approve



(Left) Has anyone ever been so pleased to get a prize as Birgit is to get this axe? She had had a bad week; (far left) Minna is almost as delighted to win these comedy longjohns and later modelled them; (right) Grace as another Cleo



This sausage needs no comment



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.



Francis Giordanella

Name or preferred name?

Francis Anthony Giordanella.

Where do you hail from?

I was born in south London and raised for many years in Malta before returning to Blighty.

Favourite cocktail?

Now that is a difficult question to answer. Being a qualified sommelier I tend to embrace all the

libations this world has to offer. If I had to pin it down, probably a good old fashioned Gin & Tonic with a slice of lemon or cucumber, with my preferred gin being Tanqueray 10. Or an Old Fashioned; it really depends on my mood at the time.

Most Chappist skill?

Lets see now, another good question. Well I pride myself on being able to marry any cuisine with a splendid bottle of vino. Bacchus would be proud.

Most Chappist possession?

Ah, now this would probably have to be my pair of button boots, along with several pairs of spats that I own. I love them, I really do.

Personal Motto?

Try everything in life at least once. At least then you can have a first-hand educated opinion on the subject. Otherwise your thoughts are superfluous.

Favourite Quotes?

- "A hat's not a hat till its tilted"
—Dean Martin
- "Details, details, things to do, things to get done. Don't bother me with details, just tell me when they're done."
—James Lionel Price, *Layer Cake*.
- "The dandy is a studied portrait of carelessness without the appearance of study. The dandy style: less is more, no wigs, no powder, no scent. The dandy wears trousers, the dandy washes, the dandy is clean and the dandy is neat. The dandy does what he wants, when he wants, where he wants. This is the



dandy." —*This Charming Man*
(Beau Brummell biopic, 2006)

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

I have been a silversmith. I lived in Bangalore, India, for three years teaching silversmithing along with silver spinning. I then became a brick layer and ran my own construction company for many years. I then decided to follow my passion for wine, took my sommelier exams and furthered my studies with the Wine and Spirit Education Trust and gained a diploma in the subject. I have been awarded Freeman Of The City Of London through redemption and am a Freeman of the Worshipful Company Of Goldsmiths.

How long have you been involved with the NSC?

Only a month. But I have found a place where I feel I can share my passion for being a chap with like minded individuals.

How did you hear about the Club to begin with?

I spent quite a long time trying to source a club that resonated with my values and shared my passion for being a dandy but I continually came to a dead end, until I asked a fellow who goes by the soubriquet A Piccadilly Chap, who pointed me in the direction of the NSC.



Working as a bricklayer



What one thing would you recommend to fellow Members and why (cocktail, night out, tailor, watchmaker, public house, etc.)?
Sherry would be my gift to fellow club members. This wonderful, understated beverage, with many nuances on the nose and palate, is, thank God, having a bit of a renaissance but is still finding it hard to win the hearts. I'm not talking about the stuff your grandmother pulled out of her cupboard once in a blue moon, for this is not true sherry, just some concoction for the UK market. The wines produced in the region range from Fino which is about as dry as it gets right through to the Pedro Ximenez (PX) which is like treacle pudding in a glass and so so sweet it sticks to the glass.

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

- Georges Auguste Escoffier, to me the godfather of all chefs and restaurateurs. I could listen to him all night, inspiring my mind with culinary delights and wizardry.

- Oliver Reed, a man who truly knew how to indulge in the finer things in life, especially in libations. In fact I did have the pleasure to meet the man on a few occasions in the King of Denmark pub in Wimbledon.

- Sophia Loren, just to be able gaze across the table into those come-to-bed eyes. Not sure which would be more delicious, Sophia or the meal. Probably Sophia.

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.



Working as a silversmith

A Walk on the Styled Side

Stuart Turner reports as Club members try their hand at the lost art of the ‘flâneur’

WITH THE OLYMPIAD taking its “fallow year”, the *Chap* magazine chose to fill its traditional weekend with The Grand Flâneur Walk (Flâneur has a strange accent thing over the ‘a’, but I am dashed if I can work out how to type that on my keyboard).

[*Flâneur* —Ed]

It was billed as “a stroll without purpose, a saunter without destination and a pointless perambulation...which could finish fifteen minutes later in Mayfair or five days later in Paris”. The clarion call went out far and wide for those of a dandyist bent to meet at the statue of Beau Brummell in Jermyn Street at high noon... after which something may, or may not, occur.

I must confess that this level of vagary, combined with the thought of a seven hour round trip from the Midlands on Sunday service trains, did make me hesitant to commit. But in the end I decided that, if all else fails, I could at least buy some of Fortnum’s splendid piccalilli and avoid the ironing pile.

Therefore, at the crack of dawn on the appointed Sunday, I found myself stood on a station platform in a Midlands mining town, sporting a top hat, carrying a cane with a brass duck head on it and trying in vain to look inconspicuous.

Many hundreds of hours later, I arrived in the metropolis and made my way to St James’s,



filled with trepidation. Would anyone else turn up?

The theme of the event may not be wholly unconnected with *The Chap*’s recent launch of its signature fragrance “Flâneur by Chap”, therefore *The Chap* appeared to have gone to significant lengths to stir up media interest resulting in the event making *Time Out*’s and the *Evening Standard*’s “Things to do in London this weekend” lists.

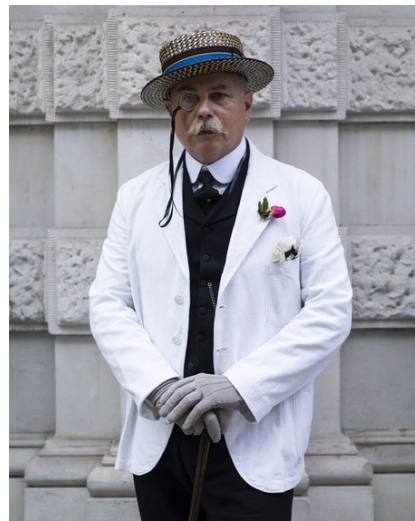
Consequently, when I arrived at Beau’s statue, there was already a significant number of sartorially splendid ladies and gentlemen in attendance and, it appeared, an even more

significant number of photographers.

As the attendee numbers swelled to around 40, so did the crowd of photographers, tourists and interested/bemused passers-by. A prolonged period of individual and group photo calls ensued, which took a toll on the knees of those of us squatting at the front.

At the appointed hour, *Chap* editor Gustav Temple called the group to order to give a reading on the art of *flânerie* before Torquill led a 21 gun salute...with party poppers.

I am unsure on the collective noun for flâneurs, but whatever it is, it then processed up Jermyn Street at a glacial pace while the paparazzi walked backwards taking more photographs until we reached St James’s and strolled down past Lock & Co. hatters and Berry



Bros & Rudd wine merchants, before circling back via St James's Square.

It wasn't long before the group succumbed to gravitational pull of the first of many hostelrys. The procession continued to meander from pub to pub up through Chinatown towards Soho, while being the willing subject of numerous tourist photos and selfies.

As we reached late afternoon I unfortunately had to hightail it back across London to catch a three-hour train back to the Midlands, but I understand some hardened NSC members were still resolutely flâneuring (or maybe just drinking) well into the evening.

All in all, it was a good day, not an Olympiad substitute, but worthwhile nonetheless and one hopes to be repeated.

On a final note, if nothing else, we have the infamy of becoming the subject of a full-on rant from Jeremy Clarkson in his *Sunday Times* column.



So inspiring was the concept that simultaneous flâneurie took place around the world: this image from Dusseldorf was sent in by Ferdinand Sturm



The Sunday Times July 21, 2009
NEWS REVIEW

Jeremy Clarkson

Leave the pointless promenading to the French. A walk is not a walk without a pub at the end



On Sunday a group of chaps and chaperettes met in London's elegant Jermyn Street and set off on what they called "a walk without purpose, a stroll without direction, a civilised and without destination". It might, they said, last five minutes or five hours or five days, and it might end up round the corner or in a cafe in Paris.

Now, in Valencia I've seen people do this a lot. There's a huge walkway along the waterfront, and every evening people get dressed up and mooch along it, at a snail's pace, seemingly going nowhere. And in Spain that makes sense, because have you seen their television shows? I'd far rather climb into a bullfighter costume and walk about in the evening sunshine, looking at all the pretty girls in their thigh bikinis and all the pretty boys strutting their Vespas than sit at home, watching some trust-faced *harridas* and a shabby *lochario* encouraging a studio audience of rural women to clap along to some razzled old Julio Iglesias hit. Watching people in Spain is a thousand times more rewarding than watching television.

It's the same story in Hanoi. Every Sunday the main road to the east of the Hoan Kiem lake is closed to traffic, so that people can take a stroll and enjoy the peace and quiet.

Again, this is because there is no equivalent of breaking fast (on Vietnamese television, and walking along with your kids who are flying kites or spinning tops is just a lovely thing to do).

It's preening, really. It's chatting people up without Tinder and meeting neighbours without moving over a hedge. It's a chance to do business and catch up on gossip and see snuff and take in the sights and the sounds. Naturally, the French have a word for this sort of thing. *Flâneur*. It means "a man who wanders about observing society". And we have words for people who do that sort of thing. "Witelo" is one. Others include "Sex poet". Promenading, which means to take a walk, in public, is something I suspect we'd struggle with.

In the older days, people used to promenade in Britain. The rich even built long galleries in their homes, and

festooned the walls with art, so that when the weather was inclement they could take their evening strolls indoors and have something to look at.

But now? No. There's always a box set to finish, or a new film, or emails to send. And that's fine, except for one thing. Not moving is the new smoking. If you wobble through life with your head resting in the blasphemous of six chairs, you don't get sympathy; you get scorn. You're deemed to have let yourself go, which is a sign of a weak mind.

I'm nervous, however, of just setting off and seeing what happens next. AA Gill used to do that. And he'd always find a little statue of a little-known poet in an even less well-known mess. Or a cobblestone that was out of place. Or an arch that would fascinate him for hours.

I'm not like that. I couldn't care less about almost everything, and I've always never wanted to spend two hours stroking the brain of a faded plaque in Spitalfields. I've tried walking with no purpose. I've simply left my London flat and set

off without knowing where I was going or when I'd be back, and I always, always, always end up in the Ludbrooke Arms. The other day I was in Mayfair and decided to walk back to Holland Park, which was about three miles away, and I ended up in the Ludbrooke Arms, again, with *rosé* wine to nourish and water my remaining chins.

Let's just say I was French and that I liked peeing in public. And let's say I

“The only reason I walk anywhere is because the law won't let me drive home afterwards”

stumbled on a charming back-street cafe where I could spend an hour or so contemplating the meaning of the table and whether the ham in my sandwich was happy, before sauntering home again, possibly with Carole Bouquet. That'd be great. But I'm not French, so the only reason I walk anywhere is because the law won't let me drive home afterwards.

Here in Britain we prefer to go for walks in the countryside, where no-one can see us. I'm not surprised. In continental Europe, looking good is more important than looking where you're going, but here we don't walk to be seen, we walk to stay fit, and getting fit requires specialised clothing. So we pull on cargoos and action trousers, and we set off with some of those silly Theresa May walking poles. And then we are happy when we pivot and our faces turn red. It tells us that we're in control of ourselves. And that our minds are working.

Of course, walking in the countryside is impossible at this time of year, because I rather than buy fever. The long grass doesn't just make my eyes water

and my nose streams; it causes my arms to come up in a rash and my ankles to itch. I think it's God's way of telling me to have a glass of wine instead. It's certainly a very clear indication that I'm not French. I'm not sure there's even a word in French for hay fever.

In the winter it is also impossible to walk here because it is so very cold. And because after half a mile your boots are so caked in mud that each weighs more than 200 tons.

But there is a brief window, on June 6, at about four in the afternoon, when it is possible to go for a walk in the British countryside without being stung, struck down with a medieval disease or made to feel as if you're Rocky in training for his next fight.

I did a walk then and it was lovely. There were many flowers to look at, and as I walked, a squadron of silent *beater* flies fluttered ahead like a fighter escort. I heard birds singing, and soon I arrived at a pub with moob sweat and a raging thirst for beer.

That's not promenading. Which is not something we can do. And we shouldn't try.

TEASER 2965

half the teams are knocked out in each round, so we had a of the teams into equal

was knocked out in the quarter-finals of that stage. This year a higher number

played this year equaled the number played last year. How many teams entered last year and how many

WEATHER
AROUND THE WORLD

THE UK

CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE in the City of London

Luca Jellinek on the Square Mile's unsung Palladian treasures

WHY WOULD AN uncredentialed amateur wish to research, photograph and write about relatively obscure buildings in a style that is generally considered obsolete?

Firstly, at the base of it all, I believe that classical architecture, though very diverse, does represent a unified canon of aesthetic/meta-programmatic sensibilities that are indelibly associated with a broad definition of “European culture”.

Secondly, however subject to changing fashions, the expression of this aesthetic ideal in Great Britain has historically reflected separate characteristics of bourgeois moderation, imperial grandeur and commercial audacity that achieved a more stable and lasting balance here, arguably, than elsewhere.

Thirdly and crucially, the profusion and ubiquity of classically-inspired facades in the City of London proper constitutes a unique form of vernacular architecture, just there, in a style which almost everywhere else would be considered a “High Road” form, in Brandian terms.

The spatial arrangement and street pattern of the City of London have changed only gradually since medieval times but its urban fabric and “street walls” are largely defined by 19th- and 20th-century buildings. Of that substantial architectural heritage, a small portion has attracted nearly all commentary: Dozens of excellent Portland stone facades stand mute and neglected, historiographically speaking. Yet their rich architectural detail speaks of accomplishment and dignity.

The City as “a place apart” in architectural trends?

The City of London is bourgeois and commercial, a foil to the aristocratic and essentially demonstrative City of Westminster. The rebuilding following the great fire of 1666 was largely private and granular in nature but planned, workmanlike and institutional in style, and introduced what we would today call “building codes”. Up to the middle of the 1800s, the growing difference between the aspirational West End and the businesslike, even banal, City was stark. When one ambitious entrepreneur/image builder, Edward Moxhay, chided a prominent private bank (Prescotts) for their shabby, unprepossessing accommodations on Threadneedle Street, their response was predictably that their “shop” was suitable as it was. Moxhay’s showy Hall of Commerce eventually went bust. The bank did not.

In terms of elaborate facades and expensive materials, the advent of joint-stock banks and other limited-liability, “public” enterprises signalled, from the second half of the 19th century onwards, the flowering of fine buildings but did not alter a tendency for conservatism that generally meant architectural fashions have been adopted more much slowly and grudgingly in the City than elsewhere. Partly as a result of this modesty and conservatism, there are major figures in British architectural history that built very little in the City and, on the other hand, architects who designed many significant buildings in the City and very little elsewhere. Nonetheless, even as it stands apart in many

respects, the City of London was and remains (in its broader form) inextricably linked to the social and economic evolution of Britain, and in that sense should be considered an idiosyncratic but nonetheless representative strand within the nation's overall architectural history.

Classicism in Britain from its beginnings to the early 19th century

Over time, Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture increasingly featured classical ornamental detail and even the non-contextual use of classical orders. We see it more superficially in Wollaton Hall and Burghley House and more confidently in Gonville & Caius College's Gate of Honour (in decorative terms) and Longleat House (in terms of regularity of composition). Interestingly, early Tudor/Stuart blending of classicist and more "gothic" motifs was revived with much gusto (and varying skill) during the heyday of Victorian eclecticism.

However, the first major, incontrovertible expression of classical architecture in Britain, is the work of Inigo Jones (1576–1652). There we see the result of both a close, direct study of classical precedent (Jones had visited Italy and was strongly influenced by antique examples as well as Palladio and Scamozzi) and a particularly balanced, graceful application of that idiom. This, arguably, was to have a profound influence in the particular form that "Palladianism" took in 18th- and 19th-century England.

With notable exceptions such as Roger Pratt (1620–1685) and Hugh May (1621–1684), the story of English classicism skips nearly a half century, while on the continent, mannerism



(Above) Gonville & Caius College's Gate of Honour (1575): not just tacked-on classical motifs; (below) proto-classical ornament on the eclectic Victorian Great Eastern Hotel (1884)



Inigo Jones' timeless Banqueting House (1622)



and baroque classicism continued to develop. Constitutional and religious strife gave Britain and its leading figures little time for architectural considerations. That would all change with the Restoration. It is important to recall that Charles II acceded to the throne in 1660 and that in 1666 some five sixths of the City of London burned to the ground. Into that

breach of opportunity leapt Christopher Wren (1632–1723) and his disciples, Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor. The classicism they brought to London was more heavily laden with baroque symbolism and Borrominian love of non-linear articulation.

However, we should be careful not to overstate this drift towards contemporary continental fashion. Wren applied baroque forms in England rather sparingly, especially in major commissions such as St Paul's Cathedral, the Naval College at Greenwich and the Royal Hospital in Chelsea. Looking at the first, the two side turrets are certainly full of plasticity but the frontal portico and pediment are restrained in their articulation. As time passed, picturesque elements began to manifest themselves more clearly (for instance, in Hawksmoor's St George's Church (1730). Nonetheless, both his work and Vanbrugh's continued to evince a strong adherence to an elegant, rather masculine rendition of baroque forms. Their work was expanded on and continued by the likes of Thomas Archer (1668–1743), John James (1672–1743) and James Gibbs (1682–1754), whose output remains essentially within a baroque tradition, albeit an evolving one.

The history of classical architectural theory and practice can be seen as the alternation of periods of greater visual expressivity and ones characterized by a search for "simpler",



St Paul's Cathedral (1710): the degree of movement relative to scale is far more restrained than contemporary Italian, French or Austrian baroque

more "authentically antique" or simply more "sublime" forms. The lack of rococo excess in most English work of the early 18th century, therefore, did not prevent the rising stars of the 1740s and 1750s from presenting their search for a more stripped Palladianism as a sort of Baroque Purge. The leading proponent of this purist movement was Richard Boyle (better known as Lord Burlington, 1694–1753) who fulminated against the "Dam'd (baroque) Gusto". His most famous creation is Chiswick

House (1729); as direct a tribute to Palladio as any but also a partial, ideologically charged (re) interpretation of his work.

It is instructive, in this context, to consider that the other leading architects that revolved

Castle Howard, Yorkshire, by Vanbrugh (1726): while this building is very grand and convincingly baroque, its relatively private programmatic use and interior arrangement contrast with the largely public/ceremonial purpose of such palaces among continental absolute monarchs and their court retinues



around Burlington's sphere of influence soon enough began to enrich their buildings with details that were more in keeping with Palladio's (and others') eclectic vision than with some sort of proto-minimalist or paleostructuralist theory. For instance, William Kent (1686–1748) was not averse to producing the Horse Guards' headquarters. This building (1751, designed by Kent but finished posthumously) is another example of a restrained English application of baroque free from excess. It could easily have been a Wren design.

In this context of a peculiarly British and ideologically charged "Palladianism", the innovation introduced by Robert Adam (1728–1792) was the more ornate and colourful arrangement of interiors that was grounded in a better understanding of Roman precedents but also a desire to express fashionability and aesthetic sensitivity. In introducing picturesque



(Above) Chiswick House (1729) by Lord Burlington: Palladianism as an article of faith; (below) Horse Guards Parade (1751) with William Kent-designed buildings; it's "baroque enough"



elements but also "justifying" them in terms of antique authenticity, Adam helped set the scene for the romanticist neoclassical movement. Meanwhile, William Chambers (1723–1796), Adam's major competitor, hewed closer to a Renaissance concept of antiquity, though he was certainly affected by emerging picturesque concepts. Nonetheless, works like Somerset House (1796) are less idiosyncratic than, say, Adam's modification of Kedleston Hall (1770). In any case, looking at this period in hindsight, we can again place mid-18th-century architecture well within the tradition of

mediated Renaissance-baroque forms with an indelible British stamp on them, notwithstanding their strong Italian and French influences.

The advent of a more pronouncedly archaeological neoclassicism marked a decisive turn towards a more "international" application of the current (even if historicist) classical idiom in England. As early as the late 17th century, Cordemoy, in France, had mentioned the need for a purer expression of form and structure than was currently the fashion, regardless of the fact that the Roman exemplars he recommended in fact broke most of the self-



(Above) While adhering to Renaissance proportions, the decoration at Kedleston Hall (1770) shows Adam's penchant for fanciful ornament; (below) Somerset House (1796) projects a more restrained elegance



imposed rules he expounded. Another French architectural theorist, Laugier, partly as a result of the mid-18th-century archaeological rediscovery of detailed knowledge of Greek architecture, and partly based on theories of primitive architectural originality, stated that architecture needed to hark back to an even earlier, even purer standard.

Such theories (with a leavening of romanticist picturesque ideals) informed the work of two successive generations of architects, including John Soane (1753–1837), John Nash (1752–

1835) and Robert Smirke (1781–1867), the Inwood brothers (both died in 1843) and Decimus Burton (1800–1880). This was the age of the Greek revival, clearly exemplified in works like Smirke's British Museum (and many others—he was particularly busy) and the Inwoods' St Pancras Church.

Neoclassicism spread a great deal of elegance around Europe and Britain but the claims of structural verity and antique authenticity were historically incorrect. Reaction was not long in coming, part of the aforementioned alternation between classical simplicity and mannerist efflorescence. Just as the neoclassicists and the neo-Palladians had critiqued their baroque predecessors, they would in turn be criticised by their own students. Robert Cockerell (1788–1863) helped reintroduce Italianate palazzo forms and more playful relief of mass from the 1820s onwards, overlapping both the later neoclassicists and the beginning of the Victorian style wars.

Classicism in the context of Victorian and Edwardian thought

Architectural style debate from the 1660s to the 1830s is essentially the story of varying currents of classicism, as we have seen. It is also apparent that their proponents and chroniclers have perhaps overstated the functional and even ideological differences between those currents. Additionally, all the various manifestations of classicism in that period of over 150 years (with the exception of the most exacting Greek revivalism) had a clearly British stamp. Specifically, I think these are a restraint in the application of baroque movement and a lightness and lack of overwrought symbolism in the application of Palladianism and Mannerism. All that changed as the middle of the 19th century approached. Why?

A number of broader social challenges affected architectural thought around this time. The crucial elements are: the romantic (individualistic, artistic) revolt against the excesses of the Enlightenment (elitist and rationalistic), the emerging reaction to the by

now fully affirmed Industrial Revolution (and therefore to modernity and positivism) and the mix of growing internationalisation of knowledge versus the solidification of strong cultural nationalism.

At the more mundane level of architectural practice, the key elements fostering Victorian style wars were: the transition from an open occupation to a regulated profession (the RIBA was established in 1834) and the shift from major commissions being the result of royal/aristocratic patronage to their being largely the fruit of commercial or institutional (but in any case more bourgeois) competition. All these factors contributed to a receptivity to a revival of admiration for medievalist and specifically gothic forms and, more broadly, to the emergence of a more lively and pluralistic debate about architectural style and meaning.

The two major theorists that propelled the gothic revival from a niche movement concerned with picturesque country-estate “follies” into the pre-eminent official style of Britain were Augustus Northmore Welby Pugin (1812–1852) and John Ruskin (1819–1900). The former was a practitioner while the latter purely a



(Above) Smirke's British Museum (1846)—Ionic columns as far as the eye can see; (left) The caryatid screen at St Pancras Church (1822)

“critic”—but what an influential one! Their essential contention was not only that classicism had evolved into a degraded expression of its original forms but that even *ab origine* it was suspect as an essentially pagan style and a foreign one with no natural link to Britain.

Conversely, gothic architecture was seen as a Christian, structurally more honest, homegrown expression as well as a more humane (as opposed to humanistic) one. Factually, most of those assertions are false, to one degree or another, but that has never gotten in the way of a good architectural manifesto. As we have suggested above, social and professional development in any case militated strongly for the emergence of a style-debate less rarefied than those of the 18th century.

Cockerell's Ashmolean Museum





Even at the height of the mid-19th-century gothic revival, iconic classical buildings were being designed and commissioned

Besides Pugin, other key representatives in this architectural movement include George Gilbert Scott (1811–1878), William Butterfield (1814–1900) and George Edmund Street (1824–1881).

During this period, classical buildings continued to be built. The man who, with Pugin, produced one of the gothic masterpieces of its age, the Houses of Parliament—Charles Barry (1795–1860)—mostly designed classical buildings. Indeed the only reason he was involved in a gothic building is that the *précis* for the Houses of Parliament specified a Tudor or Gothic design (and that, in itself, says a lot about the inroads made by Ruskin et al. in the architectural norms of their age). Important commissions such as the Royal Exchange (1844) and the Foreign Office (1868) were classical in style and articulation despite being designed and erected at the height of the gothic revival. Indeed, in the case of the Foreign Office, Scott was effectively forced to forego a gothic design.

Between the 1860s and 1880s, the fervour for all things gothic had evolved (or degenerated, depending on your viewpoint) into a more catholic taste for other, less home-grown medieval forms (including Romanesque and Italian gothic, which was generally much less height-obsessed and less loaded with tracery). Just as the early Victorian social and cultural conditions had helped give rise to the gothic movement, their further evolution through the 19th century begat fresh changes in building fashions.

It was an altogether richer, more genteel, more confident (and, at the same time, more

wary of the working classes) bourgeoisie that, thanks also to advances in the transportation network, began its relentless flight towards semi-rural suburbs; and that wrought a further democratisation of institutions and the buildings they occupied. The somewhat forbidding ideological bent of the gothic revivalists was supplanted with a much more relaxed and diverse set of parallel styles: the sweetly domestic, somewhat vernacular, whimsical “Queen Anne” style, the even more vernacularly inspired Art and Crafts style and, increasingly, the impressionistic compositions of varying “free stylists”. Richard Norman Shaw (1831–1912), Philip Speakman Webb (1831–1915) and Charles Harrison Townsend (1851–1928) were perhaps the major representatives of these three, interconnected movements.

While altogether less rigorously argued from first principles, the emerging styles of the latter part of the 19th century effectively established a sort of new British vernacular that was to prove lasting. In terms of private houses, it effectively remains (in a rather debased form) the current norm. In larger, more institutional buildings, however, it disappeared by the turn of the 20th century (including among the mansion blocks that it had dominated for a couple of decades).

Indeed, where office and institutional buildings are concerned, the Queen Anne and free styles never wholly replaced classical forms. Even Shaw designed some accomplished structures in a strongly featured, British classical idiom, especially later in life, such as the Alliance

Assurance Building (1905). The latter, however, is representative of the second to last major period of classical construction and invention in Britain, the Edwardian baroque revival.

This period reflected the Imperial and commercial might of Great Britain (and, by extension, the City) at its zenith. Together with the global gilded-age infatuation of the Beaux Arts movement, it produced a slew of very grand edifices that to this day constitute a significant proportion of the more interesting architecture in the City of London. Two seminal works, in terms of reintroducing this mode, were Chartered Accountants' Hall (1893), by Belcher, Pite, Joass and the Lloyds Register building (1900), by Thomas Edward Collcut. It is worth noting that the latter produced a great many free-style and Queen Anne-ish buildings of repute, including Wigmore Hall (1890).

Classicism from 1918 to the present

In the immediate aftermath of World War I, several important buildings, the construction of which had been halted during the war years, were now completed. One of the main

exponents of classicism in the period straddling WWI was Edwin Landseer Lutyens (1869–1944). Aston Webb (1849–1930) also designed several important classical buildings, part of a prodigious and eclectic output. It is worth noting that, although ebullient baroque facades were being built as late as the 1930s, the broad trend in the post-war period was towards a more stripped classicism, where many of the decorative elements and moduli were abstracted or rendered in lower relief, marked by an absence of subsidiary mouldings.

In contrast to the persistence, stauncher in Britain than elsewhere, of classical commissions in the inter-war period, the post-WWII period saw a much more decisive, indeed almost complete, retreat from classical forms, as various expressions of modernist architecture took hold. Barring the odd neo-Georgian building, almost no classical buildings were erected until the late 20th century. The past couple of decades have seen a small but unmistakable increase in the willingness to construct entirely new, unabashedly classical buildings, but at this time it remains a niche style.

Classical creations and additions currently are more likely to result not from a frank preference for the style but rather from two connected trends: the growing weight of the conservation sentiment (especially in terms of consistency, contextuality, etc.) and the less rigidly modernist attitude that has emerged from architectural academia. This has led, for instance, to a number of extensions and conversions that are much more sympathetic to existing classical precedents than anything

Two iconic examples of the Edwardian reinterpretation of a Baroque classical idiom, Chartered Accountants' Hall and (right) the Lloyd's Register of Shipping building





(Above) Lutyens's Britannic House (1920) shows the movement towards a restrained yet monumental classicism, later to be known as "stripped classicism"; (below) A 1960s addition to the iconic Chartered Accountants' Hall mars it with clashing, brutalist hammered concrete fabric; (below right) a 1988 addition to the Royal Exchange (the top storey) is admirably indistinguishable from the existing period

one might have seen between 1950 and 1980. That said, the norm remains to tack glass-steel-concrete crypto-decorated forms on to "historicist" buildings, rather than complement them sympathetically.



What is the future of the City's classical heritage?

Many interesting classical buildings in the City today stand empty or marginally occupied. The secular trend towards an ever smaller number of ever larger financial-services behemoths means that many Victorian and Edwardian buildings are too small for the leviathans while too large for the "services to finance" minnows that support them. While listing facades certainly helps preserve the urban fabric of our unique, beautiful City, the best way to maintain this historical heritage alive is surely to find viable current uses for it. The Corporation of the City of London, in this sense, has shown the perspicacity of promoting, where appropriate, one hopes, the construction of modern office space while fomenting greater retail, residential and hotel use of existing buildings. Given the City's central location, tremendously layered history and sheer beauty, it would seem that its future lies in becoming once again the diverse, heavily residential place it once was, rather than a sterile banking monoculture.

The Website

A series of short articles about individual classical buildings in the City, with some history of the areas they occupy and the institutions that commissioned them, can be found at CLAXITY.COM. Do visit the site and, if inclined, leave a comment.





CLUB NOTES

The Club's Own Dance Orchestra?

AS YOU WILL REMEMBER from the “Broques Gallery” piece in issue 146 of *Resign!* last December, recent joiner Jack Calloway is a band leader: in addition to his existing

orchestra, he and hot-jazz percussive enthusiast Paul Archibald have launched a new seven-piece specialising in the sounds of British broadcasting and hotel dance bands of the 1920s, 30s and 40s. Recently returning to the country following a Continental tour with renowned jazz vocalist Tatiana Eva-Marie from New York’s vibrant jazz scene, the band, formed just six months ago, is taking the European scene by storm.

Moreover, Jack was so inspired by the New Sheridan Club that he asked if he could name the band after us—behold the New Sheridan 7. If you fancy coming to support the NSC’s own dance band they are playing at the Candlelight Club on 14th September (just 33 tickets left).

See www.thecandlelightclub.com/events.



New Members

WE HAVE NO FEWER than five members to welcome this time. Firstly we have Francis Giordanella, who only signed up at the last meeting but has already made it into our Brogues Gallery: see pages 22–23.

Then we have Terry Simpson from Tring in Hertfordshire who is an artist with a keen interest in motoring—all his other clubs are all car-related.

John Fitzalan-Blackhurst from Carlisle, seen here “flying the flag for tweed”, says that “pre-Chap I was Young Fogey”—I would argue that there is a broad overlap and it is certainly possible to be both at the same time.

Daniel Roehrig hails all the way from Lippstadt in Germany. His favourite cocktail is a Mojito and his key areas of interest are English-inspired gentleman’s style, photography, conversation and writing, though professionally he is a doctor of mathematics working in the automotive industry.

Finally we have Londoner Amanda Barefoot, whose special skill is “dancing when nobody else is” and whose favourite cocktail is “all cocktails but especially anything that evokes history, mystery, classic Hollywood and paradise”. That’s quite a tall order for any bartender but I’ll see what I can rustle up...

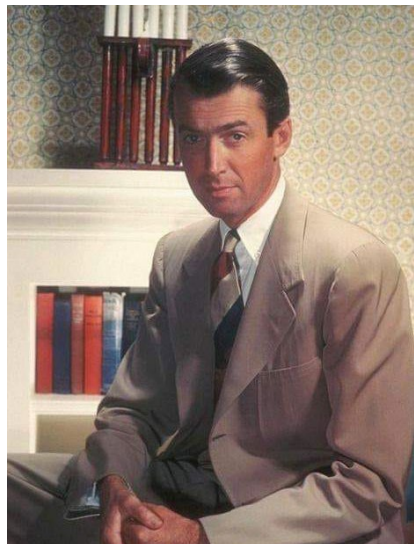


Club Tie Corner

BIT OF A SWIMWEAR theme this issue, in time for the summer—Ivan Debono found these Club trunks, Ed Marlowe alerted us to the NSC bikini in issue 698 of *Loveit*, and this terry towelling poolside blazer was spotted by Craigoh. Meanwhile the Derek Rose dressing gown was noticed by Benjamin Negroto (and from Facebook it looks as if our own Col. Choke went ahead and bought one).

A few actual ties as well, I'm pleased to say. We also have Debono to thank for this shot of Clark Gable in a Club Tie and, while I'm pretty sure we've had it before, here is James Stewart immaculately dressed as ever, thanks to Luke Wenban. On the right we have evidence that Inspector Japp from *Poirot* is a Clubman, while at the bottom Scarheart denied all accusations that the Committee have placed one of our own close to the PM.

Debono also presented this academic hood from the Sheridan University (actually a Staffordshire Uni bachelor's hood), while James Rigby scandalised the Club with his scrunchy arrangement: the colours may be correct but what of the hair? You decide.





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 plus our Facebook page and the web forum.

🎩 NSC Club Night

Wednesday 7th August

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,



In addition to the Chap Olympics, the Firlé Vintage Fair offers vintage shopping, dance routines by the Gatsby Girls (right) a Victorian funfair and more

balboa and Charleston dancing, with no partner or prebooking required. Intermediate lessons 8–9pm and beginner lessons 9–10pm.

The Firlé Vintage Fair

Friday 9th–Sunday 11th August

10am

Firle Place, West Firle, Sussex BN8 6LP

Admission: £10 per day

A three-day festival of all things olde worlde, including vintage stalls, vintage cars, vintage music and dance demonstrations, vintage fashion shows, a Victorian funfair, neo-vintage food and drink (i.e. with “artisan” slapped on the front), a “flower crown workshop”, beekeeping talks and more. Visitors are encouraged to dress in a vintage manner, as if you lot needed any encouragement.

Highlight of the show will come at 1pm on Saturday afternoon, when a version of the Chap Olympics will be presented, in its own dedicated area with its own bar. “All the most popular events, including Umbrella Jousting, Tea Pursuit and Cucumber Sandwich Discus will take place over the course of two hours.”

More details at www.firlevintagefair.co.uk.

Black Tie Ballroom Club

Saturday 10th August

Beginners’ class from 2.30, main dance from 7.30pm

Colliers Wood Community

Admission: Earlybird £10/regular £15 in advance from Design My Night, or £20 on the door; daytime dance class £25

Dress code: Strictly black tie, evening dress or vintage

Ballroom dancing to vintage records and the strict-tempo Ewan Bleach Quintet, playing slow and Viennese waltz, quickstep, slow foxtrot,





Live music and swing dancing are core to the Twinwood experience



Benoit Viellefon performing at Twinwood in 2016

tango, jive, rumba and some cha cha and Charleston numbers. Hot Indian snack food is included in the ticket price. There will be candlelit tables and chairs for all guests, some in a recess of the main hall, so one can easily chat and drink without having to raise one's voice. There will be a bar offering gin Martinis at £5, a bottle of Prosecco with an ice bucket for £15, bottle of wine for £10 or beer at £3. During the day there will be a "Learn to dance in a day" class for would-be or rusty dancers. This will start at 10 am and end at 3.30pm, with two breaks. The teacher is former world champion Raymond Root, who will teach slow waltz. The hall is large, and we will be rotating partners (to avoid human crutches). The price is £25 and you may avoid disappointment by buying a ticket in advance as the class is limited to 20 students, to ensure each student can get some individual attention. During the evening event there will be a lesson for improvers in slow waltz from 7.30pm to 8pm, during which we will change partners, so this is an easy way for guests to meet other dancers. During the social dancing that follows activities will include a quickstep bus stop, a snowball waltz and a Paul Jones. This event will see the

return of the "ten most glamorous looking women able to dance a slow waltz" competition with prizes. There is a video of a previous event at this venue on YouTube and a Facebook page with more details. For more info call George 020 8542 1490.

Twinwood Festival

Friday 23rd–Monday 26th August
Twinwood Arena and Airfield, Clapham, near Bedford, MK41 6AB

Admission: £29–109 for adults

Now in its 16th year, Twinwood is a festival of vintage music, dancing and material culture. The line-up is huge (see www.twinwood.com), though I note that this year Tom Wild, who entertained us at our Christmas party, will be performing a number of sets, and Benoit Viellefon, stalward of the Candlelight Club, is on the programme cover.

Torquil presents our top Grand Raffle prize—a DVD set of all 31 *Carry On* movies—to Grace Iggulden, with costume inspiration from *Carry On Cleo*. See pages 16–21

