

# UNLEASHED



The Club is allowed out—briefly.  
Let the mayhem commence

## **Déjeuner sur l'herbe**

Luca Jellinek on  
the only NSC jaunt  
of the summer

## **Anorak Attack**

Tim Eyre with  
everything you  
need to know  
about Greenland's  
national costume

## **Nazis on the Riviera**

The Earl of Essex on  
the oft-overlooked  
WWII front in the  
south of France

## **'Gay and silly and bright'**

Torquil Arbuthnot on  
neglected author  
Djuna Barnes

# DESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • No. 168 • OCTOBER 2020



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 October**. After a brief respite last month, the Wheatsheaf have confirmed that with the new Rule of Six, on top of the other restrictions for pubs, they are not able to accommodate our gatherings for now. So poor Luca Jellinek's talk on Art Deco will be postponed once again. Instead, Timothy Eyre has leaped into the breach with a live-streamed video address on *The Elements of Typography*. "Typography is everywhere," he says. "A little knowledge of the subject can enhance our appreciation of our surroundings and inform us as we create our own documents." Tim will offer a brief history of type and provide some insight into the finer points of the craft.

**The weblink for the talk is <https://youtu.be/aktOhgYeeIQ>.** There is also a Facebook event at <https://www.facebook.com/events/344816049998525> which might be useful to keep an eye on if we have technical problems and need to change the plan or create a new URL.

To replicate the social aspect of our meetings we usually have a Zoom chat after the talk, but this time—for the benefit of those in a different time zone or who have to be up early the next

day—the Zoom meeting will start at 7pm, an hour before the talk, and will run in the background so people can join/rejoin after the talk as well. The URL is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88916813026>.

### The Last Meeting

Unkeen to try webcasting, the Earl of Essex seized the chance to deliver his much-anticipated talk on *The Riviera: The Forgotten War* in person last month. Keen to dispel the myth that it was an easy ride—a "Hollywood offensive"—with American troops landing unopposed before proceeding to sip Champagne in the cafés of the Côte d'Azur, Essex outlined the importance of securing the deep-water ports and the unique suffering of the local populace, having been occupied by Germans, Italians and the French pro-Nazi Vichy regime.

Despite the pub's rather weedy wifi speed we were able

to broadcast Essex's talk live via YouTube. In order to make the stream work we necessarily had to reduce the resolution to VGA (remember that?), but I've since worked out how to do this while simultaneously recording at higher resolution—so when we return to live meetings my plan is to broadcast them all at low res then later upload the high-res version.



Tune in to Tim's talk to find out why ligatures are not just for autoasphyxiating perverts



(Left) The pub now has stern posters and perspex screens



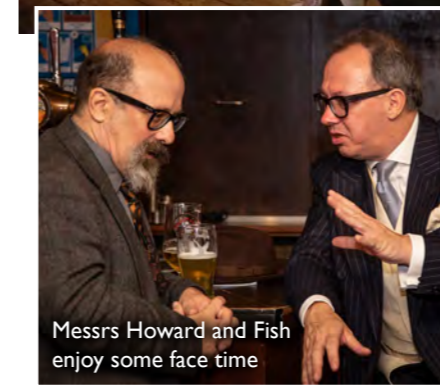
Landlord David was pleased to see us and made the first round on the house



(Right) The tech to send sound and video through the ether



The small but rapt audience



Messrs Howard and Fish enjoy some face time



Group shot—just before robbing a stage coach

# The Riviera

## THE FORGOTTEN WAR PART ONE

**The Earl of Essex** on an oft-overlooked part of the Second World War, with unique hardships for the civilian population

ONE DOES NOT need to travel far on the French Riviera, the 120-mile coastline that meanders north-eastwards from the rocks of the Esterel heights in the west to the Italian border at Menton in the east, to be reminded of the fact that between the autumn of 1939 and the summer of 1945 this was a rampageous battle zone. In every town and village on the way, street plaques, memorials and crumbling fortifications bear witness to the

collaborative Vichy regime and more latterly Italian and German direct occupation. During the 1920s and early 1930s the French Riviera developed as a tourist destination and a place to live for rich Americans. Jay Gould, the industrialist and philanthropist, together with his third wife Florence, moved to the South of France and purchased several casinos and hotels on the Riviera, settling in Juan-les-Pins. Gerald and Sarah Murphy, wealthy American

expatriates from a family that owned a fine leather goods company, attracted the likes of Cole Porter, Ernest Hemingway, Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald and Pablo Picasso to their Villa America in the Cap D'Antibes. Many tourists became acquainted with the Riviera through an initial visit to Cannes, five miles further west along



The casino at Monte Carlo

Jay and Florence Gould with Charlie Chaplin, Nice, 1931



violent conflict and hardship that took place. And the yet the modern perception is that this area of France quietly sat out the war under the glorious weather of the Côte d'Azur. Nothing could be further from the truth. Much of the neglect of the region's war experience can be attributed to the French themselves, who largely wished to purge this black period from their nation's history due to the guilt over how Frenchmen were set against each other under the despotic rule of their own

German soldier, Nice, 1943



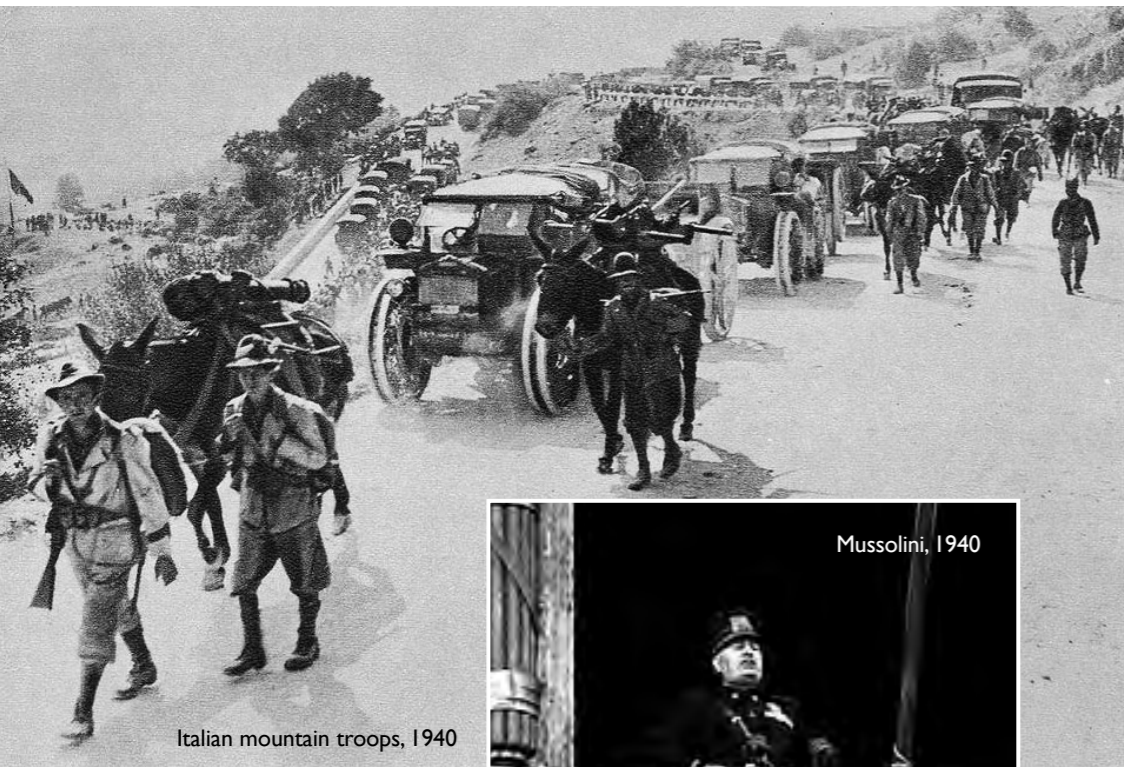
the coast. The eruption of war in Europe could not have come at a worse time for Cannes. The British deserted in early 1940, high-fashion shops along the Rue d'Antibes closed and luxury automobiles remained in showroom windows. The showpiece hotels, the Carlton, Majestic, Martinez and Miramar, were largely empty. Cannes was the second largest city in Alpes-Maritimes with a population of 45,000. Royalty, from maharajahs to kings and princes, visited with regularity and aristocrats like the Rothschilds were in residence. The crowning achievement was to be a film festival scheduled to begin in September 1939. During the summer a galaxy of film stars, Charles Boyer, Gary Cooper, Tyrone Power, George Raft, Norma

Shearer and Mae West, came to promote the inauguration. Everything was ready for the opening night. Then Germany invaded Poland. Nice, the "city of flowers", was the fourth largest in France in 1940. The name derived from the hillsides of greenhouses providing blossoms for establishments to make the essence of perfume in nearby Grasse. Nice was the de facto capital of the French Riviera, even if with no governmental significance.



Gerald and Sarah Murphy

Twenty-five miles south-west of Cannes was the sleepy port of Saint-Tropez. It was the first town to be liberated by the Allies, albeit as the result of a mistake by them during the invasion of Provence. It had prospered by trading fish, coal, wine and wood, but by the 20th century it was better known for the artists Signac, Matisse and Bonnard who painted its



Italian mountain troops, 1940



Mussolini, 1940

the Italian Army in June 1940 and finally ended with the Allied invasion in April 1945—a period longer than that experienced by any other part of France.

After Germany invaded Poland on 1st September 1939, crushing the Polish army in eight days, the Phoney War began in earnest on the French Riviera. Requisitions were issued for lodgings and transport, horses and mules, educational

colourful waterfront.

Marseille, 100 miles west of Nice and birthplace of France's national anthem, was prized for its port, the largest in France. As such, its retention was vitally important to the succession of powers controlling the Midi during the war—Vichy, the Italians, the Germans and finally the Allies.

While the Riviera was not the scene of armies clashing on the battlefield, the capitulation of France in 1940 nevertheless produced a kaleidoscope of hardships without equivalent elsewhere in Europe. Few areas around the world experienced domination by more than one totalitarian regime; yet the inhabitants of the Riviera suffered not only under Italian Fascism and German Nazism, but more significantly under Germany's puppet regime of Vichy France, which set Frenchman against Frenchman.

The reality of the Second World War for the Riviera began with it defending itself against



Italian forces occupy the French Fort Traversette

institutions, hotels, cinemas and sports facilities were commandeered for the emergency. The Palm Beach Casino at Cannes was turned into a hospital. People covered the lights of their houses at night and street lamps were extinguished. *Cartes d'identité* were issued at police stations and municipal governments installed and tested air raid sirens. Belligerent outbursts on the radio by Hitler and Mussolini during the summer and autumn were listened to somberly.

At first military authorities mobilised and stationed between 75,000 and 90,000 soldiers

in the Alpes-Maritimes in a command soon named the Armée des Alpes. But as the threat to northern France became more ominous the best of these units were redeployed there, leaving a "waiting army", ill-equipped and short of everything.

At first these wartime restrictions were taken in good heart, but after the months of no major hostilities the mood soon turned to resigned indifference, and the authorities gradually loosened the reins.

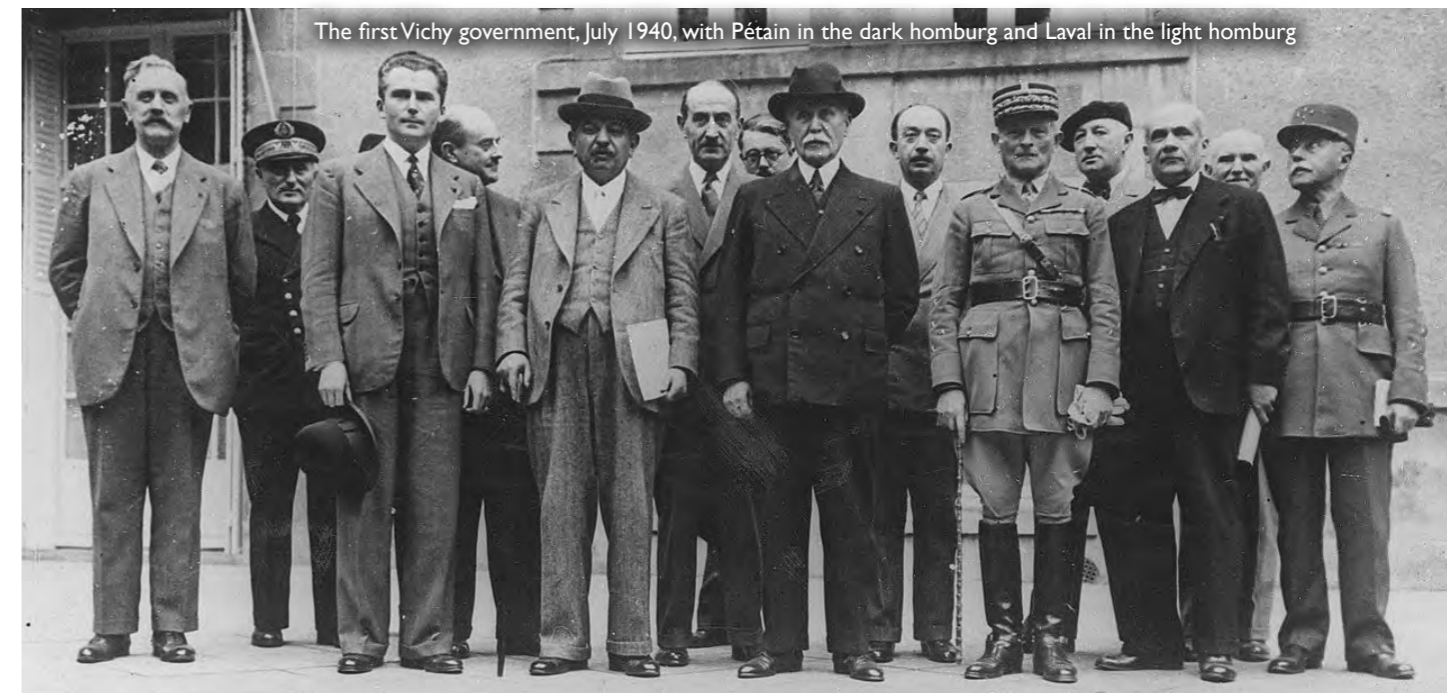
On 10th May 1940 the German army attacked westward, with 136 divisions sweeping across the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and into France, the French recoiling under the onslaught.

Night-time lighting returned to blackout rules on the Riviera and casinos shut their doors. But the attitude of the local populace remained largely optimistic, despite depositors removing

demolished critical military infrastructure, bridges, tunnels, viaducts, sections of roadway and telephone grids.

Popular distrust of Italians had grown as Mussolini's diatribes became more vitriolic in the days leading up to his declaration of war. However, Mussolini had given orders to his commanders to remain on the defensive, taking no initiative and engaging only in surveillance. A commentator wryly observed that for the first time in history a war had begun with the order not to fire.

This reluctance came to an end when a French naval squadron bombed Genoa on 14th June. There followed the first Italian air attack on military targets along the Côte d'Azur. On the same day the French government moved further south to Bordeaux, and three days later the new head of the government, Maréchal Philippe Pétain, sued for peace.



The first Vichy government, July 1940, with Pétain in the dark homburg and Laval in the light homburg

their savings from banks and a steady influx of refugees from the north.

When May became June the situation north of Paris had escalated; Belgium surrendered on 28th May and Lille fell on 31st May. German Heinkels and Junkers bombed Marseille on 1st and 2nd June, and on 10th June the French government fled from Paris to the Loire Valley. On 14th June the Germans entered Paris.

The Phoney War on the French-Italian border ended in the early morning of 11th June when French XV Corps engineers

In 1940 the Italian frontier in south-eastern France ascended through the foothills northward for 25 miles from the sea until it reached the high Alps, where it turned west-north-west then north again. The southernmost fortifications of the Maginot Line closely tracked the border up to the higher elevations, where they were dotted at wider intervals with a combination of forts, blockhouses, trenches and tunnels. Although the Midi had sent their best troops to the German front, the French XV Corps totalled some 117,000 men, against

400,000 troops of the Italian army.

There then began a farcical two-week “war”, evolving into a series of local skirmishes along the border, but no co-ordinated offensive. The Italians had air superiority but did little to take advantage of it. French defenders who came under Italian artillery attack noted that as many as half the shells failed to explode. Only 23rd and 24th June saw any heavy fighting in the south-east, in what was sarcastically called the “Gelato War”—for it took little more time than required to eat an ice cream cone.

A heavy engagement took place in and around Menton, as Mussolini was determined to return the “city of citrons”



(Above) Pétain with Adolf Hitler; (right) map of Occupied France; (below) Pétain with Hermann Göring

to what he considered its rightful place within Italy. Otherwise, the Italians succeeded only in advancing one to five kilometres beyond the frontier, occupying 840 square kilometres with a population of 28,000. The Italians failed to overcome a single fortification manned by French troops, and the downtrodden Armée des Alpes took pride in its defence, refusing to recognise the Italians as their conquerors.

The ceasefire began soon after midnight on 25th June with the French ceding this territory to the Italians, the government under Pétain



preferring to preserve its air and naval assets, which it considered more important than territory in a far corner of France. Casualties in the Alpes-Maritimes during this short conflict amounted to 13 Frenchmen killed, 42 wounded and 33 taken prisoner, while the Italians suffered 208 dead, 941 injured and 131 lost as prisoners.

On Monday 17th June, the 84-year-old

Pétain, the former First World War hero, announced that at the request of the President of the Republic, he had taken leadership of the government of France. He had concluded that it was imperative to stop fighting the Germans. A vast majority of the French were relieved by Pétain’s decision to concede to the invaders. At this point in time, Hitler’s eventual triumph over Britain seemed certain and their control of Western Europe would be complete.

After some faltering steps, Pétain’s government settled into Vichy, a town of 25,000 dating back to Roman times, best known for its mineral waters. It had spacious hotels to accommodate convalescents drawn to the baths, now suitable for administrators, ministers and soon a foreign diplomatic corps. On 10th July the Third Republic was abolished and Pétain designated as head of state.

The armistice signed on 22nd June by the French came into effect from midnight on the 25th. It divided France into occupied and unoccupied zones; the former encapsulated two thirds of the population in the north and west, leaving 13 million inhabitants in the south, which was superior only in the production of wine and fruit, so the supply of food there quickly became a problem.

Although the south was referred to as the “Free Zone” it was still subject to censorship of mail, interception of telegrams and monitoring of telephone conversations. Newspapers were subject to similar scrutiny. German agents circulated on the Côte d’Azur during the Vichy period and the Gestapo soon established a base in Nice to assist French police in arresting anti-Nazis.

The residents of the Alpes-Maritimes were puzzled by the capitulation and, considering that their army of three divisions had not been defeated by 32 Italian divisions, they had a



Italian forces in Occupied France

point. But like the rest of France they fell into line lauding Pétain. The prevailing slogan became “with the Maréchal or against France”.

Pétain used the term “revolution nationale” to encompass his programme to rebuild the “good France”, a strong, centralised state with concentrated capitalism and Catholic moral order. This demanded a revival of patriotism and traditionalism, and in its wake 15,000 naturalised citizens had their status revoked, including 6,000 Jews. German demands for heavy reparations, followed by requisitions of French goods, services and manpower, required the Vichy regime to subject the country to a stringent war economy, essentially doing the Germans’ “dirty work” for them.

Many Frenchmen chose the path of least resistance in the Alpes-Maritimes, focusing on obtaining food and retaining jobs in order to survive a period of uncertainty and despair under Pétain. At least the armistice saved them compliance with direct orders issued by the Reich. Fashion designers, writers, musicians and film stars took refuge on the Côte d’Azur during this twilight period. Although rationing tightened as the months went by there was a thriving black market for those who could still afford to pay. For the not so fortunate, dogs were killed or released into the wild to conserve food. Yet despite these shortages, starvation in France never reached the extremes seen in the Soviet Union, Poland, Holland or Greece.

The longer Pétain’s government stayed in

power the more criticism mounted and his image became tarnished. There were no serious problems with dissent until well in to 1941, but as domestic life and the economy worsened the Vichy regime relied more and more on the police to maintain order. When an active resistance began forming in the unoccupied zone, Vichy's response propelled the fragile government on a downward spiral of repression on behalf of Nazi Germany from which it would never recover.

Initial opposition to the regime was dominated by freemasons, socialists and communists, but soon ordinary people were forced to take sides, pitting Frenchmen against Frenchmen. Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) took the opportunity to recruit 52 agents along the French coast between 1940 and 1942.

A new dictat from Vichy in September made men aged 18–50 and single women aged 21–35 eligible for labour at the state's discretion; overall 665,000 Frenchmen were working in Germany at the end of 1943, and more French citizens were employed in German facilities than any other nationality except Russians.

When the Germans and Italians invaded the unoccupied zone in November 1942 all of France could see that Pétain had failed to protect the nation from its Fascist oppressors. To many residents of the Alpes-Maritimes there was no good reason to continue supporting the Vichy regime.

Pétain had lost his two primary bulwarks against Nazi

Germany: French colonies were largely in Allied hands and the French fleet had scuttled itself in Toulon rather than fall under German control. He had also demonstrated that he would not carry out the threat most feared by Hitler of defecting to the Allies.

The announcement that Allied forces were in North Africa was followed three days later by the Germans crossing the line of demarcation and entering the former unoccupied zone. As a concession to Mussolini, as well as to conserve his own troops for higher priorities, Hitler permitted seven Italian divisions, amounting to 150,000 men, to occupy seven south-eastern departments in their entirety, including Alpes-Maritimes and the Var. On 11th November the Italians marched into Nice.

The Niçois were largely unmoved, noting that the troops looked tired and at a shuffling pace, with dirty uniforms in a shabby state, leggings frayed and shoes down at the heel,

while the officers were well-groomed and elegant, with a whiff of an immoderate use of strong perfume.

The soldiers whistled at pretty women and pinched a behind whenever possible. Some of them boasted that they were “winners”, but one Italian officer noted that, “The French population welcomed us silently, visibly motivated by a sentiment worse than hatred: contempt.” The Italian soldiers were disparagingly referred to as “Macaronis” by the French.

The population was united in the belief that the only undefeated French army had been the one that fought the Italians in June 1940, and that the *bersaglieri* who now arrived with plumes in their hats would leave with the feathers stuck in their backsides.

At first the light touch of the Italian occupiers was a relief after the harsh treatment of the Vichy regime, as political and police pressure eased. But with the Allies in North Africa ships no longer docked at Nice with food and provisions. The Italian army was initially well-provisioned and, for a price, offered the local populace cigarettes and desirable Italian foodstuffs, including pasta. But by the outset of 1943 the logistic pipeline from Italy had dried up and the *bersaglieri* turned from small-time businessmen to part-time thieves, stealing cauliflowers, potatoes and even petroleum. Larger shipments of watermelons, zucchini and corn designated for the Alpes-Maritimes also disappeared.

The cost of accommodating Italian forces went well beyond looting. The Italian Armistice Commission initially imposed an occupation indemnity of 1 billion francs per month. The following June, however, this was increased to 1.5 billion, on top of ongoing reparations being paid to the Third Reich. In the spring the Italian authorities seized wood, vegetables (23 tons a day), and iron and steel. In May they announced the requisition of automobile repair firms, factories making plaster and



Italian-occupied France

cement, and a number of bakeries. Several dozen locomotives and thousands of automobiles were seized, along with industrial machinery useful to the Italian war effort.

As French resistance to the Italian occupation became more organised and violent, the Italian political police OVRA (Organisation for Surveillance and Repression of Anti-Fascism) became more active. Created in 1926,

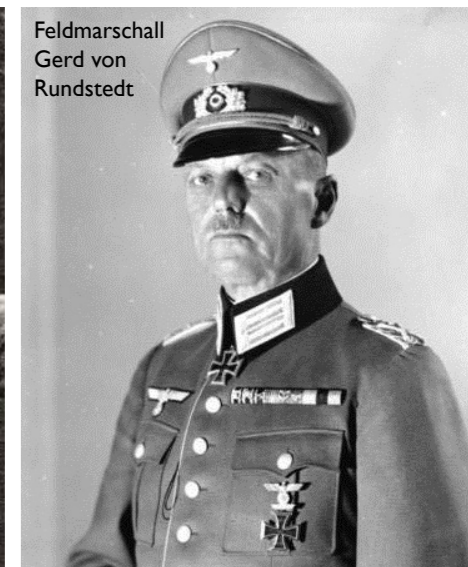
it was the Italian forerunner to the German secret police, the Gestapo, and responded to French sabotage with brutality rumoured to be as vicious as its infamous German counterpart. Arrests were often arbitrary; well over 1,300 people were questioned by OVRA and 975 were imprisoned or deported, including Poles, British, Belgians, Yugoslavs, Italians and Frenchmen. As the Italian occupation progressed, torture by the OVRA became more frequent. Prisoners were beaten with fists, clubs and rifles.

Despite this there were 50 attacks against the railroads in Alpes-Maritimes during the three years ending June 1944—not all successful but the rail line was cut 23 times by local partisans, which delayed troop and materiel movements between Nice and Cuneo, Italy, while locomotives were blown up at Nice's Saint-Roch depot in July 1943.

The appointment of Pierre Laval as prime minister of the Vichy regime and the stationing



General Georg von Sodenstern



Feldmarschall Gerd von Rundstedt



Surrendered Italian forces

where the Italian Commander had requisitioned its finest hotel, then and now, the Hotel Negresco, to accommodate him. Von Rundstedt inspected preparations and fortifications during a two-day visit at Cannes, Nice and Menton. Meanwhile, two days earlier on 25th July, Mussolini was overthrown. By mid-August 1943 the Germans engaged in

of Italian troops on French soil strengthened Vichy's resolve to be the Reich's number one partner in Europe. In September 1942 Laval had authorised several hundred Gestapo agents to infiltrate the unoccupied zone, although in Alpes-Maritimes the Gestapo were already at work. At Cannes, in addition to Villa Montfleury, where the Gestapo carried out torture, they had also set up operations with the OVRA in the Hotel Gallia.

With the growing threat from the Allies in North Africa, the Italians began to build defensive works along the Côte d'Azur, including long-range guns, bunkers and blockhouses. Photographs of the coastline were forbidden and from August 1943 anyone found in possession of a weapon or radio in order to assist the Allies would suffer the death penalty.

However, with their Italian allies crumbling at home, the Germans took the opportunity to send the Commander-in-Chief of Germany's Western Front, Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, to Nice,

live-fire exercises into the sea and by the end of the month they were shipping construction materials by rail into south-eastern France.

The departing Italians gave up all territorial and logistical responsibility and, with the concurrence of Vichy, during the early hours of 3rd September 1943, a Wehrmacht military headquarters was established at Cannes with a complement of soldiers. The incoming commander of the German 19th Army, General der Infanterie Georg von Sodenstern received orders anticipating the dissolution of the Axis. It appeared to von Sodenstern that divided allegiance to Mussolini was paralysing the Italian command.

The announcement on 8th September 1943 of the Italians signing an armistice with Allied

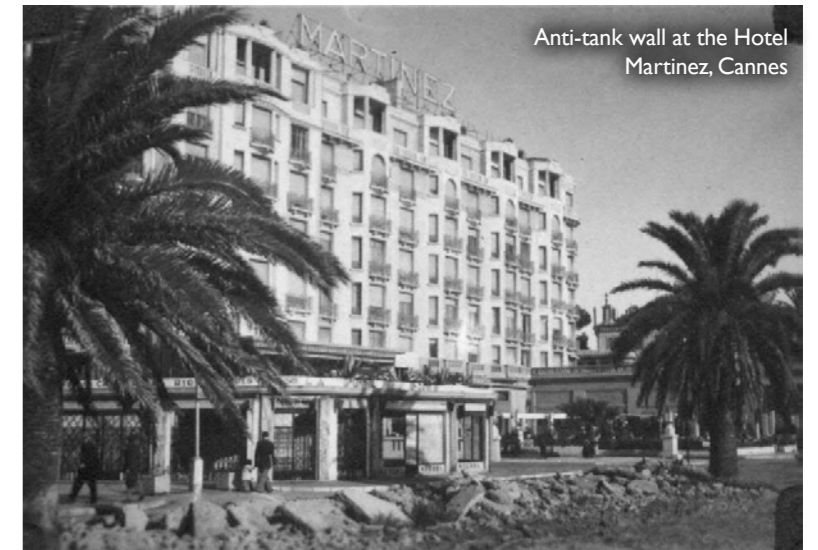
forces sent occupation troops in the Alpes-Maritimes into high spirits: the conflict was over and they could go home to Italy. French resistants were also freed by the OVRA at the Hotel Gallia in Cannes.

The Wehrmacht were poised to react. In Antibes a convoy of Italian artillery waited to depart; while the Italians argued among themselves, two German armoured cars arrived and captured the lot. German units quickly captured the garrison at Caserne Kellerman in Grasse, headquarters of the Italian 11th Corps, while German units in neighbouring communities took charge of munitions depots.

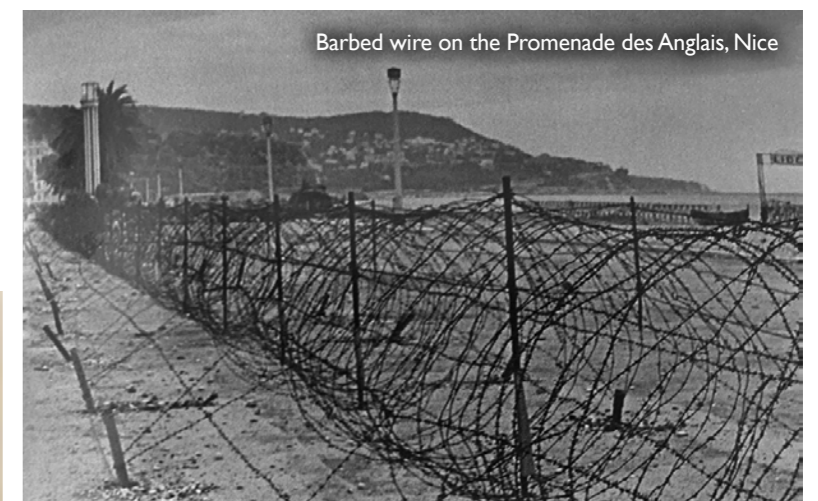
At Cannes the Germans also had little difficulty in subduing the Italian garrison. Five Italian patrol boats arrived at the city docks and were seized by the Kriegsmarine. Members of the Italian Armistice Commission seated at the Hotels Genève and Méditerranée were also detained.

The Germans were not superior in number to the Italian forces or artillery power, but in the absence of orders from Rome, General Vercellini

chose not to organise a defence and conducted an orderly withdrawal. In total more than 52,000 Italian soldiers were taken prisoner by the Germans. Italian soldiers found in plain clothes were considered to be of illegal status by the Germans and any person found to be concealing them was subject to the death penalty.



Anti-tank wall at the Hotel Martinez, Cannes



Barbed wire on the Promenade des Anglais, Nice



Anti-tank defences at the Hotel Martinez, Cannes



"Rommel's asparagus"



German officers on the Promenade des Anglais, Nice

German army intelligence, the Abwehr, operated out of Nice, Grasse, Toulon and Hyères, while the Gestapo posted men in Menton, Cap and Diene. The Gestapo established its headquarters in Nice at the old Hotel Hermitage, with an annex for “intense interrogations” at the Villa Trianon on the heights of Cimiez, a kilometre away.

When the Wehrmacht faced a far greater threat in northern France in 1944 the 715th infantry division was redeployed and replaced by the 148th infantry division. Centred at Grasse it was composed mostly of reservists, Austrians and Poles. A French observer described the troops as “nearly children, with worn uniforms and boots, magnificent discipline, but with very low morale and a sad and worried look”. The troops patronised brothels set up for them in Nice at the Hotel Metropole and in Cannes at the Hotel de Paris. There were fewer incidents of rape and assault than when the Italians were in occupation.

The Germans set about fortifying the coastal defences of the Riviera with more than 100,000 mines and traps, a density of more than 100 devices an acre, in anticipation of the Allied landing. Defensive works completely disfigured a coastline so beloved for its natural beauty and tasteful development. A concrete wall ran along the seaside from Cannes and blocked streets entering into the Quai des États-Unis in Nice. Hundreds of pole mines and concrete

tetradomes from Antibes to La Bocca protected against tank debarking from landing craft. Residents nicknamed the sticks cut from trees in the Var and implanted at low angle along the shore “Rommel’s asparagus”.

To protect these defences from sabotage local inhabitants were forcibly evacuated and neighbourhoods around train stations, ports and factories working for the Reich were off-limits. Despite these restrictions, “collaboration” with the German occupiers was still prevalent, from the “*collaboratrices horizontales*”—women who slept with the Germans—to the much-despised Milice, attired in dark blue uniforms.

The Milice accepted all those seeking to join, being especially attractive to mercenary young thugs and hoodlums of 18–23 years. The leaders were notables, conservatives, strong Catholics and even nobility, all being vehemently anti-communist. The Milice also served as a breeding ground for joining the Waffen SS. After the German occupation of the Alpes-Maritimes, the Milice served as an auxiliary police force for the Germans, even being used to check the reliability of the official French police. They knew their locale better than the Germans and could eavesdrop on fellow citizens more easily than the Gestapo. The Milice were notorious for never taking prisoners, their activities best described as Frenchmen hunting and betraying Frenchmen.



French Resistance in the Alps, 1944



Milice with Resistance prisoners

By the end of 1943 the Resistance became bolder, with Allied successes on battlefields across Europe and North Africa bringing encouragement, and there developed a series of tit-for-tat killings between them and the Milice.

Allied bombing of communities along the Côte d’Azur had begun at Cannes on the night of 11th November 1943. Twenty RAF Lancasters dropped bombs and incendiary devices for an hour and 35 minutes, causing damage to industrial concerns, agricultural facilities and public buildings. There were 45 civilian dead, and the locals referred to it as “Black Thursday”. The frequency and intensity of carpet bombing by American warplanes increased over the south of France and a raid on 26th May 1944 was felt by many Niçois to be the worst of the war, leaving 300 civilians dead, 480 wounded and 100 missing.

Meanwhile the hunger of occupation was a continuing threat for the 580,000 inhabitants of the Alpes-Maritimes who would not survive long in a devastated economy. The combination

of small yields from a few farms in an arid area together with German reparations of 3,500 to 14,000 pounds of fruit and vegetables from local markets every day was an all too familiar threat to civilians across German-occupied Europe. Added to which, the Germans surrounded orchards with barbed wire and planted land mines leading to 16 starving inhabitants being killed and another 17 being crippled.

The Gestapo and Milice began maximising opportunities to accumulate wealth before it became too late. The few remaining English, Russians and especially Italians were favourite targets for theft and degradation. The political police harassed and took bribes to release them, while their accomplices burgled their houses.

But as tough as things were for the general population, things were much worse for those citizens who happened to be Jewish. The guilt of what their fellow Frenchmen did to them under the Vichy regime resonates to this day.

*To be continued...*



# The Pukka Picnic

## BOATERS, BUBBLY AND BELLES

**Luca Jellinek** reports on a civilised gathering that seized the moment before the COVID restrictions slammed down again...

WITH SPRING AND SUMMER bereft of the usual social highlights (the NSC punting and picnic, the Chap Olympiad, etc.), the society belles and men about town of our acquaintance were positively pining for some sartorially distinguished interaction. We therefore decided to take the situation in hand and organise a modest gathering.

The choice of a picnic was dictated by two considerations: the healthful opportunities for “distancing” offered by a sylvan setting as well as an eccentric admiration for the Edwardian habit of bringing fine “indoor” accoutrements to the great outdoors.

A side benefit of such a *déjeuner sur l’herbe* is that it obviates tiresome fussing over the precise number of participants. We identified the Daffodil Lawn in Holland Park as a central location accessible by both automobile and

public transport, with plenty of shade and relative privacy in what is a very popular park.

The official title of the event was *The Pukka Picnic ~ Boaters, Bubbly and Belles*. We encouraged our friends to “bring [their] favourite skimmer, tippie and person(s) and, above all, bring a bit of dash”. I think you’ll agree from the daguerreotypes reproduced here that standards were not just upheld but indeed set.

The much-maligned weather of this Sceptred Isle proved as faithful and reliable as an old family retainer, bathing the jollity and elegance of the picnic in golden sunshine. This was on Sunday 13th September—precisely one day before the authorities were compelled to proscribe social gatherings of this size.

The Pukka Picnic was not exclusive to NSC members and we were delighted to welcome a few fellow exquisites. However, the Club was very well represented and several red-black-silver ties were spotted, including that of a certain lobster than should need no introduction.

For more snaps see the Facebook event at <https://www.facebook.com/events/1246689058995375>.



Luigi Sbaffi with Luca's wife Ginny



Dr Blah with a cheeky can of cider



Luigi's daughters Giada (left) and Ambra



The reassuring presence of Bob the Lobster



Frances and Stuart Mitchell



Mark Christopher, looking disreputable



Lord Hare looking louche and rocking the BOAC holdall look



Our glorious Chairman Torquil Arbuthnot



Host Luca with his wife Ginny



Seonaid and Robert Beckwith



Matthew Howard of that ilk



(Left to right) Gary Grønnestad, Isabella Ferretti, Stewart Lister Vickers, George Davies



Adriana Solari (left) and Isabella Ferretti



Henry Ball sporting an impressive new moustache





# THE SKIN I'M IN

Everything you need to know about Greenland's national costume

By Timothy Eyre

GREENLAND IS HOME to a mere 56,000 souls. Yet this Arctic nation has a highly distinctive national costume. Before the arrival of Moravian Brethren missionaries in 1733, the Inuit of Greenland wore practical clothes skilfully fashioned from animal skins. In their environment, the ability to make robust, warm clothing was a matter of life and death. The missionaries encouraged the Greenlanders to develop their own national costume, and this they did with no little success.

The outfit worn by men is fairly simple. They wear a white anorak made of silk or satin. The Inuit invented the anorak so it is fitting that it should appear in the national dress. Sometimes the anorak is worn with a bow tie. Along with the anorak, men wear black trousers and traditional boots made of depilated sealskin called *kamik*. For men, the *kamik* are black in colour and are decorated with a single row of embroidery. As we might say “wearing black tie”, Greenlandic men are said to be “dressed in white” when wearing their formal anoraks.

The women's equivalent is unique among female national costumes in that there is no skirt or dress. Instead, women wear a pair of shorts made of sealskin with a fur trim. These reach down only to the upper thigh. The remainder of the legs are covered by long stockings and a pair of *kamik*, which are often white in colour. Women's *kamik* are longer than those worn by men and are decorated with lavish embroidery.

On top women wear a blouse called a *timmiaq* beneath a brightly-coloured anorak. A broad yoke-like necklace of intricate beadwork



(Above) Teenagers dressed in national costume awaiting their confirmation ceremony—note the bow tie worn with an anorak; (left) examples of Greenland's national costume at the museum in Uummannaq, complete with walking cane fashioned from a narwhal tusk; (facing page, bottom) Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary of Denmark wearing national costume on a visit to Greenland, a former Danish colony; (facing page, top) hand-made and hand-embroidered *kamik* (traditional sealskin boots) hanging in the basement of my homestay



(Above) An example of the practical hunting clothes worn by Inuit in pre-modern times; (left) fine examples of women's and men's traditional

costume on display at North Atlantic House in Copenhagen—note the use of tartan; (below left) detail of Greenlandic beadwork and embroidery; (below) detail of the embroidery on a stocking inside a kamik boot



completes the ensemble. Sometimes the wearer will carry an embroidered sealskin handbag. The overall effect is colourful and quite unlike any other national costume.

European influences are visible. Tartan details are often seen in the women's anoraks. Roses do not grow in Greenland's climate, yet they are a popular motif in the embroidery. Although the Inuit have used beads made of bone for centuries, the colourful beads used in the national costume were originally introduced by Dutch whalers. Greenlanders themselves are of both Inuit and European heritage and their national costume reflects this blending of cultures.

The use of beadwork and embroidery provides plenty of scope for individual expression. Patterns and colours vary by locality and, to a lesser extent, by age and marital status. There are no age limits to wearing Greenland's national costume; it is worn by all, from toddlers to elders.

Greenlanders wear their national costume on important occasions. These include baptisms, confirmations, weddings and national festivals. During my visit to Greenland in 2013, I was fortunate enough to witness a confirmation ceremony where I saw a group of young Greenlanders dressed to the nines. In everyday life, Greenlanders wear European-style clothes, with an emphasis on the

sort of warm, practical outdoor wear that one would expect in a country with such a rugged landscape and chilly climate.

Making the clothes, assembling the beadwork and stitching the embroidery is the work of Greenlandic women. Many people make their own national costume garments, others buy them. Some towns have a public sewing studio where people can sew alongside their friends and neighbours. During my visit to Greenland, my hostess at a homestay was a seamstress. She invited me into her basement, where I marvelled at a row of embroidered *kamik* that she had stitched. Their work is all the more remarkable when one remembers that within living memory some would perform their craft by the light of a soapstone lamp burning seal oil during the long Arctic night.



(Right, above) A woman's anorak on display at North Atlantic House in Copenhagen; (right, below) sealskin shorts are a notable element of Greenland's national costume

# DJUNA BARNES

By Torquil Arbuthnot

*“There is always more surface to a shattered object than a whole.” – Djuna Barnes*

DJUNA BARNES (who liked to be called “The Barnes”) was born in 1892 in a log cabin at a New York artists’ colony. Her father was a dilettante painter and polygamist, whose wife, mistress and their children all lived in the same household supported by his equally free-thinking mother Zadel. Djuna Barnes received little formal schooling (though Jack London and Franz Liszt were often house guests) until she enrolled in art school in the 1910s. After her parents divorced she became a journalist and illustrator in New York, soon entering the bohemian life of Greenwich Village and becoming friends with the likes of Marcel Duchamp and Eugene O’Neill. Her journalistic style was often “sensational” and participatory, as she would write about such things as entering a gorilla’s cage, being force fed, and getting rescued from the top of a skyscraper. In her dressing she was always smartly groomed and often wore black suits with a brightly coloured or polka-dot scarf at her throat. She also wore dramatic capes, trilbies and metallic turbans.

Barnes was bisexual and had relationships with both men and women during her years in Greenwich Village. In 1914 she was engaged to an Ernst Hanfstaengl, then a publisher of art prints and a friend of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Hanfstaengl broke up with her in 1916, apparently because he wanted a German wife,

and he later returned to Germany and became a close associate of Adolf Hitler.

As a poet Djuna Barnes made her debut in 1915 with *The Book of Repulsive Women*, a collection of poems and Beardsleyesque drawings of women in states of physical and moral degeneration.

In 1921 she was sent to Paris on an assignment and would remain there intermittently for the next fifteen years. She arrived with letters of introduction to Pound and Joyce, and soon entered the bohemian world of Gertrude Stein and Scott Fitzgerald. In Paris she became involved romantically with various ladies and gentlemen, including Nancy Cunard, Peggy Guggenheim and Baroness Else von Freytag-Loringhoven. She also met the great love of her life, the sculptor and silverpoint artist Thelma Wood. Although Djuna desired monogamy Thelma was unfortunately somewhat wayward. Often Djuna would traipse from café to café searching for Miss Wood (who was usually out on the pull, gender no object), often ending up as drunk as her quarry. They finally separated in 1928, the same year in which Barnes produced the *Ladies Almanack*, an erotic pastiche and *roman à clef* of Parisian lesbian life. It was promptly banned by the US customs.

In 1931 she went to England as the guest

of Peggy Guggenheim, and stayed there until the outbreak of the Second World War. It was in England in 1936, with the help of T.S. Eliot, that she published her masterpiece, the novel *Nightwood*. Written in poetic, stream-of-consciousness style, the novel tells of the doomed homosexual and heterosexual loves of five damned, exiled people and is characterised by malevolent characters, dark humour, and a decidedly decadent flavour. Jeanette Winterson describes reading the novel as “like drinking wine with a pearl dissolving in the glass”.

After *Nightwood* she produced only one major work, a surrealist verse play, *The Antiphon* (1958). It was a critical success, with one reviewer saying it was to be savoured for “the pleasure of language. Not spoken language; Miss Barnes has no ear for the stage, but the intricate, rich, almost viciously brilliant discourse, modelled more or less on the murkier post-Elizabethans.”

In 1939 she returned to Greenwich Village, living off the charity again of Peggy Guggenheim. She became a recluse, spending the next forty years in her apartment refusing to see old friends and calling the police on young lesbians who came to pay their respects. She withdrew from life because, she explained, “Years ago I used to see people. I had to, I was a newspaperman, among other things. And I used to be rather the life of the party. I was rather gay and silly and bright and all that sort of stuff and wasted a lot of time. I used to be invited by people who said, ‘Get Djuna for dinner, she’s amusing.’ So I stopped it.”



Djuna Barnes, photographed by Berenice Abbott in 1925



Djuna and Thelma in the South of France, 1927



Thelma Wood



CLUB NOTES

Club Tie Corner

A WEALTH OF TRI-CHROMATIC hoo-hah this month. Clockwise from right: the Club’s spiritual home and new clubhouse (as soon as I can persuade the current occupiers to sign it over to us), discovered in Marazion; Debono offers “the New Sheridan Academy, featured in the movie *Schoolgirl Chums*”; 1929 du Pont Model G speedster, with coachwork by Merrimac, glimpsed on the Art Deco Era Motor and Fashion Group on Facebook—one has been ordered for each member of the Glorious Committee. Facing page, clockwise from top left: Bill Murphy toasts us from his den in a (real) NSC tie, noting that he has been a Country Member for some time but hopes to make a physical meeting when possible (I notice he hasn’t paid his subs in three years, which puts him in good company, I suppose); in time for Christmas, this jumper from L.L. Bean was noted by Colonel Cyrus Choke; Luigi Sbaffi spotted this couple in the street; in art news, Col. Choke offers us Miss Frances Stuart, cousin of Charles II, while Ivan Debono prefers Picasso’s *Still Life with Glass under Lamp* from his “NSC period”; Mark Christopher spotted this tie on ITV’s *Tales of the Unexpected*; gentleman’s outfitter Simon James Cathcart has had the decency to include a Club waistcoat in his latest collection.





Clockwise from top left: Richie Paradise copped this neckwear in *Ford v Ferrari* (2019); Torquil assures us the Club Parrot is doing well; the Club's publishing arm is proving as eclectic as ever, with Col. Choke at the helm; Torquil noticed Peter Finch's tie in *Network* (1976); Debono noticed Jeremy Irons's tie in *Brideshead Revisited* (1981); and Viscount Rushen noticed all three scrutineers' ties in *Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo* (1977).



## Forthcoming Events



**BOTH OFFICIAL NSC JAUNTS (🇬🇧)  
AND THIRD-PARTY WHEEZES WE  
THINK YOU MIGHT ENJOY**

FOR THE LATEST developments, see the Events page at [www.newsheridanclub.co.uk](http://www.newsheridanclub.co.uk) plus our Facebook page and the web forum.

Still mostly online events, but physical happenings are taking off again too...

### 🇬🇧 NSC Virtual Club Night

Wednesday 7th October

7pm BST

See page 2. After our triumphant return to the Wheatsheaf last month we retreat to the virtual world again, with Tim Eyre's talk on typography—the YouTube Live link is <https://youtu.be/aktOhgYeeIQ>.

For late-breaking news and legal disclaimers, see the Facebook event.

### London Hat Week

Tuesday 6th–Monday

12th October

Various physical and online locations

See [www.londonhatweek.com](http://www.londonhatweek.com)

The annual celebration of all things titter-related returns, managing to include a fair few socially-distanced workshops and masterclasses, venue visits such as a day studying 19th-century hats at Wardown House in Luton, as well as a range of online lectures, lessons and their supplier fair. (Note, however, that the popular London Hat Walk, scheduled for this Sunday, has been cancelled.)

### In Air and Fire

Until 12 September 2021 (extended from 28th March)

10am–5pm

Royal Air Force Museum London, Grahame Park Way, London NW9 5LL

Admission: Free, but prebooking required

A collection of work exploring artists' responses to the Battle of Britain and the Blitz (July 1940–May 1941) as they depicted evolving machinery, communications and urban landscapes, shaped by what was an unprecedented “war in the air”. As sky battles unfolded across the South and East of England in the summer of 1940, followed by cities' bombardment in proceeding months, artists produced a pictorial record of the war, many of their works commissioned and purchased by Sir Kenneth Clark's War Artists' Advisory Committee (WAAC). The exhibition features works by Official War Artists, including Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland, Carel Weight, Anthony Gross, Richard Eurich and Eric

Kennington, but also extends beyond the prominent male members of the British School, championed by Clark, to reflect the full range of war artists' contributions. It seeks to bring together the stories and perspectives of artists from diverse backgrounds, highlighting the best of collection works from the period. Visitors can view over sixty works of art, several of which will be on display for the first time as part of this exhibition. See [rafmuseum.org.uk/london](http://rafmuseum.org.uk/london) for more details.



Catch bandleader Jack Calloway's radio show every Sunday on Phonotone Classic

### Cabarets of Death: Playing with Death and the Afterlife on the Stage

Tuesday 13th October

7–9pm

Online vi Zoom

Admission: £4 from Eventbrite

From 1892 until 1954, three cabaret-



Photo from the London Hat Week website featuring three NSC members on the annual Hat Walk. The Walk itself can't happen this year, but the Hat Week is still going ahead

Coates, who will be investigating her work with *Morbid Anatomy* and her new book, *Anatomica*.

Tickets £4 early bird available for a limited time only including a 20% donation to NHS Charities Together. Sales stop at 5pm on the day of the event and ticket-holders will receive a Zoom link at 6pm.

**NSC Quiz Nights**  
Wednesdays 14th, 21st & 28th October,

restaurants in Paris' Montmartre district enraptured tourists with their grotesque portrayals of death in the afterworlds of Hell, Heaven, and Nothingness. Each had specialised cuisines and morbid visual displays with flashes of nudity and shocking optical illusions. These cabarets were considered the most curious and widely featured amusements in the city. Entrepreneurs even hawked graphic postcards of their ironic spectacles and otherworldly interiors.

This illustrated talk will tell the story of the death-themed cabarets of Paris, revealing their history within the context of other death-themed amusements—from phantasmagoria shows to Grand Guignol to Coney Island's disaster spectacles—in the age of rationality and beyond. This talk will be followed by Joanna Ebenstein in conversation with Stephen

and perhaps beyond  
8pm  
Online  
Admission: Free

The NSC weekly online pub quiz has become something of a lockdown tradition, run by Zoom virtual meeting software, with a different Quizmaster/mistress each time. Since we seem to be moving backwards in terms of opening up actual pubs, it looks as if this tradition will be carrying on for the time being.



Our own Dr Jonathan Black has helped curate the exhibition of Battle of Britain and Blitz art at the RAF Museum

Hosting for the 14th is Baron Solf; details for the others to come. Keep an eye on the Facebook group and website Events page for the Zoom link to join in.

**Calling the Spirits—A History of Seances**  
Monday 19th October

7.30–9pm  
Currently online (and it seems unlikely that physical presence will be possible, appropriately enough)  
Admission: Free, though you are asked to make a donation to Conway Hall of £5–£20. Book at [conwayhall.ticketsolve.com/shows/1173605265](http://conwayhall.ticketsolve.com/shows/1173605265)

Lisa Morton investigates the eerie history of our conversations with the dead, from necromancy in Homer's *Odyssey* to the emergence of Spiritualism—when Victorians were entranced by mediums and the seance was born. Among our cast are the Fox sisters, teenagers surrounded by “spirit rappings”; Daniel Dunglas Home, the “greatest medium of all time”; Houdini and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose unlikely friendship was forged, then riven, by the afterlife; and Helen Duncan, the medium whose trial in 1944 for witchcraft proved more compelling to the public than news about the war. At the time of announcement this is an online only event—however, the organisers may also make physical tickets available. If this becomes possible they will announce it on the Facebook event.

**NSC Pub Crawl**  
Saturday 24th October  
4–10pm

Various pubs between Wapping and Tower Bridge  
Admission: Free but bring beer money  
Club Member and CAMRA stalwart Ian White has doggedly scheduled our traditional annual NSC pub crawl, despite the various restrictions which currently shackle the hospitality industry. Rather than seek out new pubs this time, Ian has focused on reliable venues in the Wapping and Tower Bridge areas, which should not be too busy when we visit and which mostly have gardens (assuming the weather permits their enjoyment). Note that the current Rule of Six means that if there are more than six of us (and there usually are) we will have to split into functional units of no more than six. Please remember to bring face masks



for public transport, etc. Note also that pubs currently have to close at 10pm.

Feel free to join or leave at any point. However, in order to coordinate so that we do not inadvertently form a single group larger than six, we will have to run a pre-booking system. **Please email Ian at [whiteik@icloud.com](mailto:whiteik@icloud.com), by 3pm on the day of the event**, to let him know that you will be in attendance and at which point you will be joining the crawl. Here is the itinerary:

*Tube: Wapping*  
4pm: **The Captain Kidd**  
108 Wapping High Street, E1W 2NE  
Sam Smith's

5pm: **The Prospect of Whitby**  
57 Wapping Wall, E1W 3SH  
Greene King

Then one stop on London Overground under the Thames to Rotherhithe.



Tube: Rotherhithe/Bermondsey

6pm **The Angel**

101 Bermondsey Wall East, SE16 4NB

Sam Smith's

Tube: Bermondsey

7pm **The Gregorian**

96 Jamaica Road, SE16 4SQ

Antic

Tube: Bermondsey/London Bridge

8–10pm **The Anchor Tap**

20 Horselydown Lane, SE1 2LN

Sam Smith's

**Tom Carradine's Self-Isolation Singalong**

Every Thursday

8.30pm

[www.facebook.com/events/1224680587870368](http://www.facebook.com/events/1224680587870368)

Master of the Cockney singalong Tom Carradine brings his infamous knees-ups to cyberspace. So gather around the e-Joanna and commence caterwauling.

**Jack Calloway on the wireless**

Every Sunday

10am, 2pm, 6pm and 10pm

[www.phonotoneclassic.com](http://www.phonotoneclassic.com)

Band leader Jack Calloway hosts his regular show on this internet radio station that plays dance music from 1925 to 1945. Jack's show focuses on music from the 1930s. (And you can hear one of Jack's own performances on the Candlelight Club Soundcloud page below.)

**Sugarpush Vintage Dance**

A range of dates

Start times vary: see [www.facebook.com/sugarpushvintagedance](http://www.facebook.com/sugarpushvintagedance)

Dancer, dance teacher and DJ Holly France (a regular at the Candlelight Club) ported her solo jazz and Charleston lessons online via Zoom, but she now seems to be doing live classes again outdoors in parks and playgrounds, plus indoor sessions with socially distanced couples from the same bubble/household. See the Facebook group above or [www.sugarpushvintagedance.com](http://www.sugarpushvintagedance.com).

**Ewan Bleach's Sunday Serenade**

Every Sunday

8pm

[www.facebook.com/events/1102332046826548](http://www.facebook.com/events/1102332046826548)

1102332046826548

Ewan Bleach plays and sings two hours of old style jazz songs on piano, clarinet and saxophones every Sunday night, webcast live from Jamboree. Do feel free to partake in the live message thread that'll run underneath the live stream link. Donations are appreciated via [paypal.me/ewanbleach](https://paypal.me/ewanbleach) or you can buy Ewan's music from [www.ewanbleach.com/music](http://www.ewanbleach.com/music).

**Online Dance Classes with Swing Patrol**

Throughout the month

See schedule at [www.facebook.com/SwingPatrolLondon](http://www.facebook.com/SwingPatrolLondon)

A variety of online classes, including Charleston, Lindy Hop, solo jazz and even Swing Dance Cardio. You buy a ticket through the website and in return they send you a private YouTube link. (At the time of writing they have classes every Sunday plus more from the 31st.)

**The Candlelight Club on Soundcloud**

Owing to the restriction on numbers created by social-distancing regulations, the Candlelight Club is mothballed. But tracks are still being added to the online repository of live recordings at [soundcloud.com/the-candlelight-club](http://soundcloud.com/the-candlelight-club)—the latest additions are a set of funky, bluesy jazz numbers from the Candid Jug Orange Band, evoking the unique sound of New Orleans music, recorded in March of last year—plus many other recordings have been remastered.

**The Arkham Hillbilly**

[www.facebook.com/arkhamhillbilly](http://www.facebook.com/arkhamhillbilly)

Fans of H.P. Lovecraft, the 1920s horror writer and creator of the Cthulhu mythos, will be delighted to learn that the Club's own Darcy Sullivan has been spending these long weeks of self-isolation in the guise of country singer the Arkham Hillbilly, the man who brought you the "Miskatonic Blues", "Jamboree at Innsmouth" and "Doggone It, Dagon". On this Facebook page you can see all his videos, where he sings down-home songs of the uncanny and the eldritch, as well as offering some good, old-fashioned advice about self-isolation itself. Sponsored by Gibbous Moonshine™—the only liquor made in Arkham in a well. That sometimes glows at night. If you're not on Facebook, check out his YouTube playlist.



Scenes from previous NSC Pub Crawls—though we'll have to be in groups of six this time



Stewart Lister Vickers  
pays respectful  
attention as the Earl  
of Essex addresses  
the upstairs room at  
the Wheatsheaf on  
the subject of Nazis  
on the Riviera at our  
September meeting