

RESISTANCE!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN

JANUARY 2021

HAMMERING HITLER IN STYLE

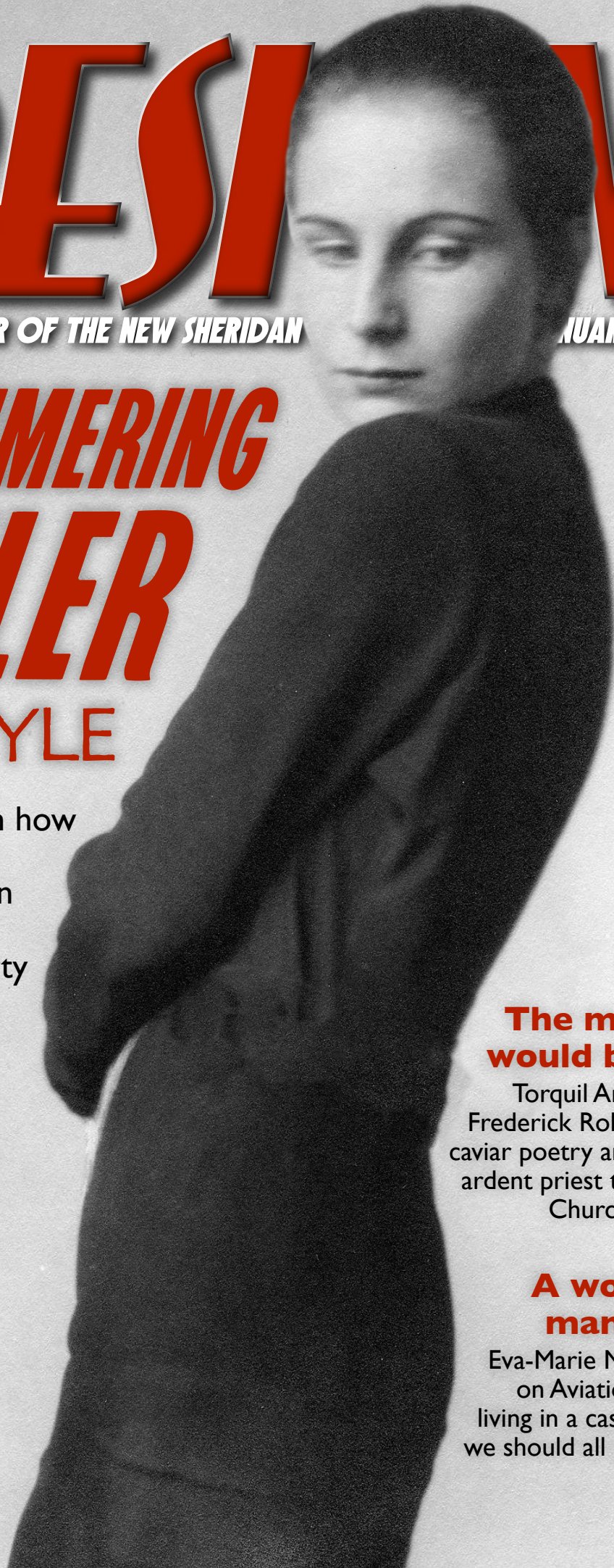
Baron Solf on how
his ancestors
brought down
the Abwehr
with a tea party

The man who would be Pope

Torquil Arbuthnot on
Frederick Rolfe, writer of
caviar poetry and the most
ardent priest the Catholic
Church never had

A woman of many parts

Eva-Marie Muller-Stuler
on Aviation cocktails,
living in a castle and why
we should all study maths





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 6th January**. Needless to say, this will be virtual once again as the lockdown rules will keep the Wheatsheaf resolutely shuttered.

Our speaker will be Cyril Browne, who will address us on *Amateur radio: what it is, why it isn't CB, and why it is more popular than ever*, possibly including a mention of the time his radio club arranged a radio link-up with the International Space Station for a local school.

This time the talk will be delivered by



Tune in to Cyril's talk on amateur radio this Wednesday

YouTube: the link is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPR3JwgQZac>. You do not need an account to view it, though I think you need a YouTube account if you wish to post comments and real-time chat messages. The talk itself will begin at 8pm. To replicate the social aspect of our meetings we will be having the usual Zoom chat, beginning at 7pm and carrying on after the talk for as long as people wish: use the link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83301757068?pwd=c24zL0I0QzNYa0tjOFY1ektnUk1JTz09>.

There is also a Facebook event at <https://www.facebook.com/events/2031171017037903> 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.

The Last Meeting

Our speaker last month was Baron Solf, who dug into the exotic history of his own family. As if being descended from Wilhelm Solf—an eminent diplomat, sometime Governor of Samoa and Colonial State Secretary—weren't enough, Wilhelm's widow Hanna later played a major role during the Second World War. Her "tea party" circle of dissidents and anti-Nazi agents brought down the Abwehr and eventually led to her and her daughter Lagi being imprisoned and nearly executed.

An essay version of this talk begins on page 4.

Wilhelm Solf – Early Life



Highlights from Baron Solf's virtual lecture via Zoom Live last month. To find out what it is all about, see the essay version that starts overleaf. You can also watch a recorded video of the talk as it happened (including comments from viewers) at <https://youtu.be/Jm5HI-014Vlk>

The Frau Solf Tea Circle (Solf-Kreis)



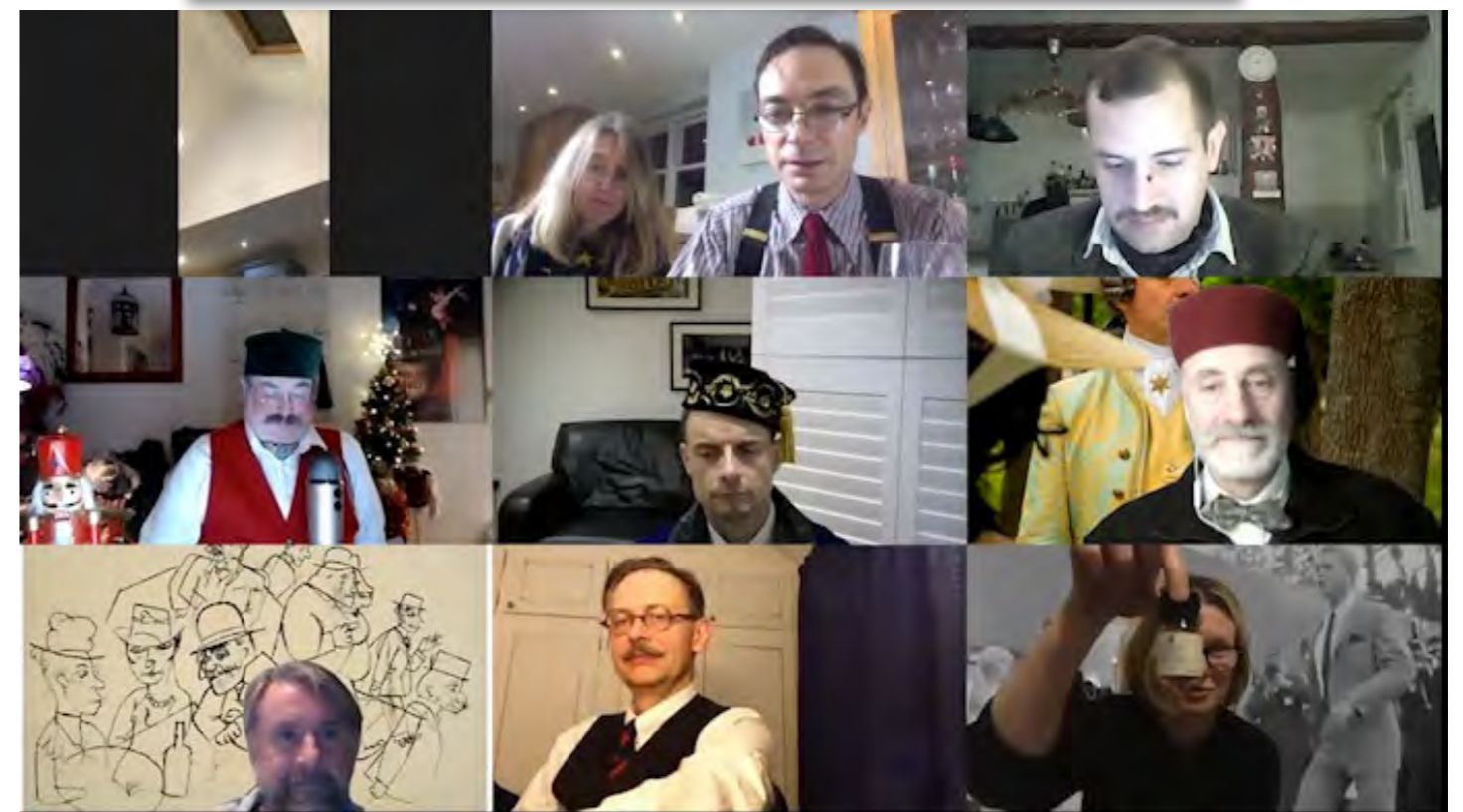
The Abwehr



Imprisonment and Trials



Pictures of Ravensbrück concentration camp and Heinrich Muller head of the Gestapo



Wilhelm Solf

and the

Frau Solf Tea Party

Baron Solf on his great-great-grandfather, Governor of Samoa and Colonial Secretary of State, whose widow and daughter formed a secret circle of anti-Nazi dissidents, leading to nail-biting jeopardy for them in the closing months of the war...

WILHELM SOLF WAS BORN on 5th October 1862, the fourth of seven children in Berlin. At that time his family were reasonably wealthy and were part of the flourishing social life of the Berlin bourgeoisie. In accordance with his mother's wishes, Wilhelm attended a school outside the busy city. First he went to the grammar school in Anklam but was expelled because of his "loose mouth". From 1879 he attended the Grand Ducal Gymnasium in Mannheim, where he passed the school leaving examination in 1881 with good average performance.

Stories about the Far East, and in particular the Indian

subcontinent, fascinated Wilhelm. He therefore decided to study Indology and, he later said, his teacher Richard Pischel created the "spiritual tincture of his worldview" and was thus of decisive importance for the further course of his life.

After graduating, the young doctor of philosophy worked at the University Library in Kiel. In Schleswig-Holstein he was drafted into the navy, but a little later dismissed as unfit for military service because of his stoutness and a foot ailment.

Solf thus used the time that was freed up to learn Urdu and Persian. In 1888 his German translation of Franz Kielhorn's English-language

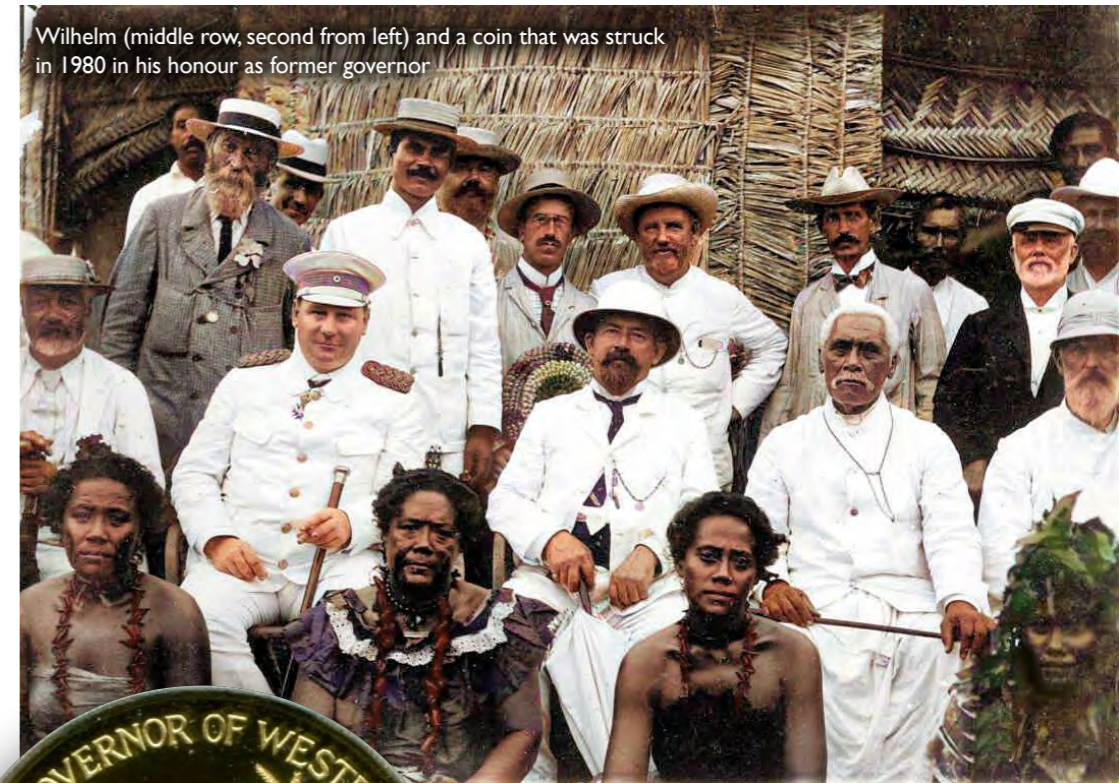
Sanskrit grammar was published, which is still one of the standard works of Indology today.

In the same year he followed his college friend the orientalist Friedrich Rosen, to London, then the world capital of India research. In letters to his parents, Wilhelm Solf described the British lifestyle: "It is true that English life is expensive and Sundays so boring that every dog can be happy that it has fleas." But the elegance and greater inner freedom, free from all the "formal nonsense in our homeland", suited him.

At this time, the diplomat Rudolf Lindau, who was known to the Solf family, approached the Foreign Office to propose Wilhelm for a career as an interpreter. His extraordinary language skills led to his admission to the Foreign Service, which he even preferred to the secure position at Oxford University. On 10th December 1888, Wilhelm Solf was entrusted with the administration of the secretariat at the Imperial Consulate General in Calcutta (then the capital of British India).

India

At the beginning of January 1889 Wilhelm Solf travelled to India with a diplomatic passport. The 27-year-old wrote from Calcutta that he had now "put himself in the bondage of the greats of this world ... of course with the freedoms of a gentleman". As early as 31st May his superior, Consul General Gerlich, was able to report to Bismarck that Solf had shone



Wilhelm (middle row, second from left) and a coin that was struck in 1980 in his honour as former governor



with "discretion, tact, good language skills and conscientiousness" and was therefore also suitable for higher tasks.

Soon he became a member of the Asiatic Society and, to the suspicion of the British, spent much time with the locals, benefiting from his command of Hindustani.

In 1890, Edmund von Heyking, a new consul general arrived. The self-confident and clumsy Baltic baron had a much worse relationship with Wilhelm Solf than his predecessor had. Solf wrote home that Heyking was one of "the noble bugs that nestled in the crevices of the thrones". Heyking refused Solf, who was striving for higher duties, the additional examination that would have been necessary for taking on consular activities. Despite his personal dislike of his superior, he saw that he was right in the matter: a legal education was necessary in order to achieve higher positions. Therefore, on 14th January 1891, Solf resigned.

In September 1896 he passed the state examination and was appointed Grand Ducal Saxon Court Assessor. In the same year he reported to the Foreign Office to resume service, whereupon, according to his own request, he came to the colonial department.





Hannah and Wilhelm in Samoa

East Africa

As early as August 1897 Oswald von Richthofen, the head of the colonial department, entrusted Solf with the important task of drafting a reform for the taxation of the local population in German East Africa (Tanzania). Solf showed such an urge to engage with the culture of the country concerned that he embarked on a steamer for German East Africa the following spring. The Indologist and fully-qualified lawyer had received instructions to take over the post of judge in the capital of the colony, Dar es Salaam.

In mid-April he set foot on African soil for the first time in Tanga and was warmly welcomed by the Deputy Governor Rudolf von Bennigsen. At first he had a good relationship with Governor Eduard von Liebert and was thus able to exert a decisive influence on him. The governor was little versed in matters of foreign policy and gave Judge Solf all of the administrative tasks relating to the British and Belgian neighbouring colonies. Wilhelm stated: “The governor is a passionate enemy of the English, and I must use all my skill to keep him from doing any resulting nonsense.”

After visiting the island of Zanzibar in 1898,

he wrote wistfully that Zanzibar could also be in India. As in India, where his main focus was on the locals, in Dar es Salaam he dealt with African culture. He wrote to his parents that the Africans would give him a lot of joy and that every German should thank them for “not having the idea of colonising us”.

Samoa

In the late autumn of 1898 Solf received the call from the Foreign Office to go to Samoa as German

consul. He was impressed by the offer and left for the South Pacific while Governor Liebert was in Germany. Liebert then referred to Solf as a deserter and the formerly good relationship with him turned into its opposite, not least because of the growing political distance.

As Governor of Samoa his most urgent task was to pacify the inhabitants. The quarrelling Samoans had now come under unified foreign rule for the first time. Solf’s maxim on this question was clear: “Right from the start I took the point of view that I learned in India and taught in Africa, to interfere as little as possible with pure indigenous relationships.”

Wilhelm Solf was more popular as governor with the Samoans and the English inhabitants than with his own compatriots. Most of the Germans in Samoa orientated themselves towards the Pan-German Association, which advertised Samoa as a settlement colony in the Reich. The spokesman of this group, Richard Deeken, a former lieutenant, published the book *Manuia Samoa*—“Heil Samoa”—in 1901, causing a real enthusiasm for Samoa in Germany, although Solf wrote to the Foreign Office that Deeken had only been in Samoa for a few weeks and that his descriptions

should be called superficial.

At the end of 1901 Solf went on his first home leave to Germany for health reasons, where he was awarded the Order of the Crown by Kaiser Wilhelm II.

In 1901 Wilhelm Solf had said to his deputy Heinrich Schnee, “I hope I won’t be infected by this rampant addiction to marriage.” Yet in 1908 Solf, who was already approaching the age of 50, stepped in front of the altar to marry Hanna Dotti, 25 years his junior. A trend of the Solf family ever since. The governor’s young wife did not match the image of an average woman who dedicated her life to home and hearth. Her lively temperament (she famously shot a charging bull elephant from a range of less than 20 yards), her empathy and her understanding of art allowed her to participate fully in her husband’s work from the start. On 31st August 1909 their first daughter was born in Vailima, Samoa. She was given a Samoan name, So’oa’emalelagi, meaning “the one who came from heaven”, but everyone called her Lagi.

On 1st March 1910 the people of Samoa celebrated ten years of membership of the German Empire. In the meantime Friedrich von Lindequist had become the colonial state secretary, successor to the economically liberal and friendly Bernhard Dernburg. Since Lindequist did not share the Anglophilia of the South Seas governor and was in any case a representative of Pan-German settlement policy—called *Radieschenpolitik* by Solf—the relationship between Apia and Berlin became difficult in the last few years of Solf’s time as governor. Consequently the call to East Africa, which he had long desired, did not come.

In 1910 he returned to Germany for medical treatment and during his trip he also visited Berlin and spoke to the budget commission of the Reichstag. When von Lindequist resigned in protest against the compensation that Germany received after the end of the Second Moroccan Crisis (namely New Cameroon), his successor was the Governor of Samoa. From the most

remote colony of the empire, Solf moved to the management of the entire German colonial administration. His successor as governor was Erich Schultz-Ewerth.

Solf lobbied for a negotiated peace settlement in 1917 and 1918. He also opposed the implementation of unrestricted submarine warfare, a policy which eventually contributed to the entry of the United States into the war in 1917.

With the defeat of Germany imminent and the likelihood of revolution growing, he was appointed as what turned out to be the last of the Imperial Foreign Ministers in October 1918. In this capacity he undertook negotiations for the armistice that took effect on 11th November.



Solf as ambassador to Japan, with members of Japanese society attending a garden party in the Kyoto botanical gardens, around 1926

He resigned his post as Foreign Minister on 13th December 1918 with the onset of the German revolution, after news became public of a large payment by the Russian ambassador to the supposedly centrist Independent Social Democratic Party.

Japan

The Versailles Treaty paved the way for the resumption of diplomatic relations, including between Japan and Germany. Wilhelm Solf was appointed chargé d’affaires in Tokyo by Reich President Ebert and, after his arrival in August, was appointed ambassador from December 1920.

Despite the interruption caused by the First World War, the traditionally close German–Japanese relationship had not suffered. Captured German soldiers were treated well in the Bando POW camp on Shikoku, and most Germans living in Japan were allowed to keep their homes during the war. Immediately after the war, Japan returned large parts of the blocked assets to the

...Now I am the doyen of the diplomatic corps, president of the international club, chairman of the Asiatic Society of Japan, Commodore of the... yacht club, etc. My position with the Japanese government is that I was often consulted in negotiations on Russian and Far Eastern issues.”

Because he had reached the age limit, Solf

was to be recalled in early 1928. Japan asked the German government to keep him at his post as ambassador until the end of the year, so that he could convey the diplomats’ congratulations to the emperor as representative of the diplomatic corps at the Showa-Tenno’s coronation celebrations.

In December 1928 Solf returned to Germany. In 1929 he became president of the Japan Institute in Berlin. During his tenure the institute focused primarily on Buddhist research but Solf also promoted research into the history of Japan and presented modern Japanese literature. In 1930 the theological faculty of the University of Göttingen awarded him a doctorate.

During this time he also succeeded in organising an extensive “exhibition of works by living Japanese painters”, which took place at the

beginning of 1931 in the Prussian Academy of the Arts in Berlin.

He passed away on the 6th February 1936.

The Abwehr

Although the Treaty of Versailles totally

prohibited the Germans from establishing an intelligence organisation of their own, they formed an espionage group in 1920 within the Ministry of Defence, calling it the Abwehr. The initial purpose of the Abwehr was defence against foreign espionage—an organisational role which later evolved considerably. Under General Kurt von Schleicher the individual military services’ intelligence units were combined and, in 1929, centralised under his Ministry of Defence, forming the foundation for the more commonly understood manifestation of the Abwehr, which would be the German military intelligence service for the Reichswehr and Wehrmacht from until 1945.

Each Abwehr station throughout Germany was based on army districts and more offices were opened in amenable neutral countries and in the occupied territories as the greater Reich expanded. The Ministry of Defence was renamed the Ministry of War in 1935 and then replaced by Adolf Hitler altogether with the new OKW. The OKW was part of the Führer’s personal “working staff” from June 1938 and the Abwehr became its intelligence agency under Vice-Admiral Wilhelm Canaris.

Under Canaris the Abwehr expanded and proved to be efficient during the early years of the war. Its most notable success was Operation Nordpol, which was an operation against the Dutch underground network, which at the time was supported by the Special Operations Executive. Concomitant to the period known

as the Phoney War, the Abwehr collected information on Denmark and Norway. Shipping in and out of Danish and Norwegian ports was placed under observation and over 150,000 tons of shipping was destroyed as a result. Agents in Norway and Denmark successfully penetrated their military thoroughly enough to determine the disposition and strength of land forces in

both countries and deep-cover Abwehr operatives kept the German forces, particularly the Luftwaffe, intimately informed during the invasion of Norway. Against both of these nations, the Abwehr mounted what one would call a successful intelligence operation of some scale and proved itself critical to the success of German military endeavours there.

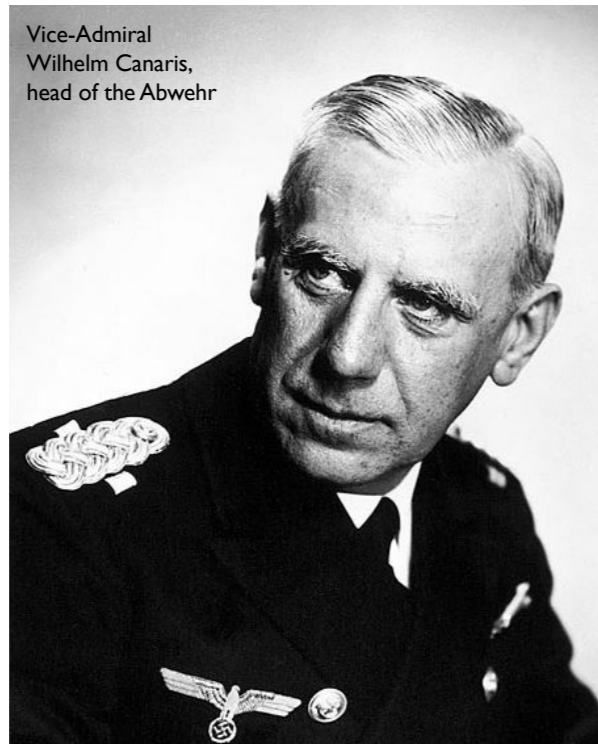
Just how committed to German victory were typical members of the Abwehr is difficult to assess, but if its leadership tells a story, it is not one of conviction.

For instance, during March 1942, when many Germans still had confidence in their Führer and their army, Canaris saw things differently and told General Friedrich Fromm that there was no way Germany could win the war.

Canaris had made the United States a primary target even before its entry into the conflict. By 1942, German agents were operating from within all of America’s top armaments manufacturers. The Abwehr also suffered a very public debacle in Operation Pastorius, which resulted in the executions of six Abwehr agents sent to the United States to



OKW radio staff using Enigma machines to encode and decode messages



Vice-Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, head of the Abwehr



Johannah Solf

Germans. Confiscated facilities of the German community abroad in Japan, clubs and schools were released; some compensation was paid.

Solf had to explain the changed conditions in Germany to the Germans in Japan. At the same time, he had to empathise with Japan to arouse confidence in the new German government and also seek cooperation with other diplomatic missions. For example, after a short time he was able to establish relationships with the British ambassador, whom he knew from his time as governor in Samoa. By 1923 he was an important figure in Tokyo. In the end he assessed his tenure thus: “When I arrived, there was also... war psychosis. For a good two years I was the most avoided Boche.

sabotage the American aluminium industry. The Abwehr attempted to use coercion as a means to infiltrate the United States when they “recruited” William G. Sebold, a naturalised American citizen visiting Germany, with Gestapo threats and blackmail, code-naming him TRAMP, and assigning him the task of “serving as radio and microfilm channel for Major Nikolaus Ritter, head of the Abwehr Hamburg post’s air intelligence section”. Unfortunately for the Germans, who used Sebold successfully for a short period, he was discovered, and became a counterspy, and his communications to Germany were screened by the FBI. Not every



Lagi Solf

spy the Abwehr sent was captured or converted in this manner, but the Americans, and especially the British, proved mostly successful in countering the efforts of the German Abwehr officers, and used them to their advantage. The Abwehr was impaired by agents who aided the Allies in whatever covert means were necessary. Canaris personally gave false information that discouraged Hitler from invading Switzerland (Operation Tannenbaum). He also persuaded Francisco Franco not to allow German forces to pass through Spain to invade Gibraltar (Operation Felix), but it may have been just as much the imposition of the SD, the SS’s own security service. The SD was allegedly spreading rumours about the partition of Spain. SD operatives also established a station at the central post office in Madrid to police mail going through Spain, and even attempted to assassinate one of Franco’s pro-Allied generals, which strengthened Franco’s intransigence to Hitler and the Nazi regime. Many historians agree that, generally

speaking, the Abwehr had a poor reputation for the quality of its work and its unusually decentralised organisation. Some of the Abwehr’s less-than-stellar image and performance was due to the intense rivalry it had with the SS, the RSHA and with the SD. Other considerations for the failings of the Abwehr could have something to do with Allied success in deciphering the German Enigma machine ciphers, thanks to the code-breakers at Bletchley Park. During the August and September 1942 engagements

in North Africa against Rommel, this Allied capability was a crucial element to Montgomery’s success, as British signals intelligence SIGINT was superior to that of the Germans.

When the Second World War began Johanna Solf was 51, living in an apartment in the diplomatic area of central Berlin. The apartment was owned by her neighbour, state secretary Arthur Zarden, who lived next door with his daughter Irmgard. Lagi Solf was back from Shanghai, divorced at 29. Slim and well dressed, Lagi imbued any gathering with an aura of international sophistication. The Gestapo called her in for questioning over helping Shanghai Jewish refugees. No action was taken at the time.

Johanna and Lagi were quietly using their other extensive ties to the Wehrmacht and the Abwehr to help Jews leave Germany. Lagi found it both dangerous and tedious, visiting “innumerable embassies and consulates in quest of visas”.



(Left to right) Otto Kiep; Elisabeth von Thadden; Arhtur Zarden; Irmgard Zarden with the husband she married later in New York

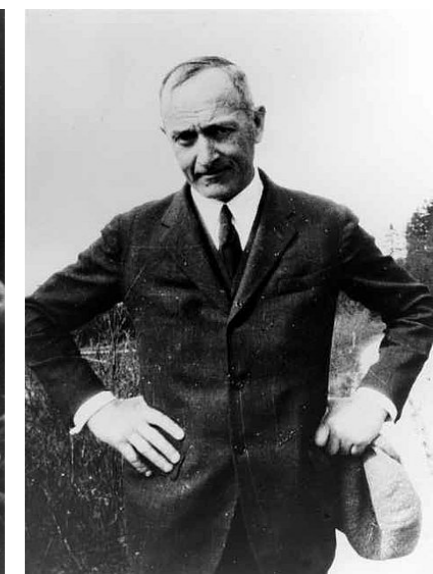
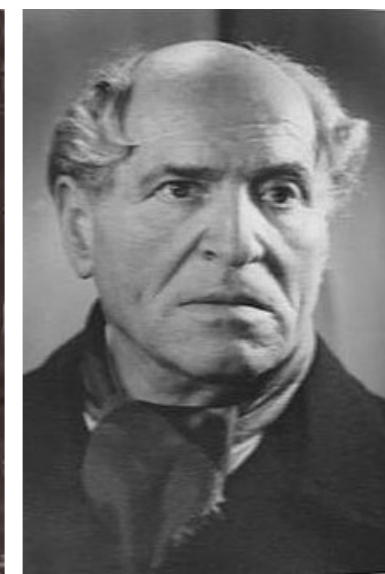
In the autumn of 1940 Lagi married a conscripted Wehrmacht officer on leave in Berlin—he was returning from Poland and heading to Norway, soon to be invaded. Count Hubert Graf von Ballestrem, 29, of old Silesian nobility, was the seventh son of one of Germany’s richest men, coal and steel industrialist Valentin Ballestrem and his wife Agnes. The marriage made Lagi a countess, and one of Germany’s richest women.

Her husband, a Catholic, had long opposed the Nazis. The newly married couple were soon parted by war, Lagi to join her mother to continue their subversive work. Jewish apartments had to be marked with the Star of David and non-Jews were forbidden from visiting. Lagi would go into such apartments, getting from the occupants lists of what they needed, including vegetables and items still

not rationed. “Our butcher’s wife, with a wink, would weight me up a larger piece of meat than the ration called for,” she recalled. Jews were occasionally hidden in the Solf apartment. The janitor said he knew who was being hidden “but they would never have found out from me”. Every day involved great effort. Lagi would avoid giving the mandatory Nazi salute on the street by carrying a shopping bag loaded with laundry or vegetables in each hand. The Gestapo pulled Lagi in again. She told her mother to get help if she was not back within six hours. Lagi was accused of helping Jews: “I pointed out that the Jewish couple who owned the house were friends of mine.” She was released. She believed her encounter with the Gestapo had been relatively gentle because of the family connection with Japan, soon joined in a “Pact of Steel” between Tokyo, Berlin

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(Left to right) Albrecht von Bernstorff; Fr Friedrich Erxleben; Nikolaus von Halem; Richard Kuenzer





Herbert Lange



Roland Freisler

became still more careful on the telephone.”

On 10th September 1943 the Solf Circle met at a birthday party given by Elisabeth von Thadden, the Protestant headmistress of a famous girls’ school in Wieblingen, near Heidelberg. Among the guests were:

• Otto Kiep, a high-ranking official from the

Foreign Office, who was once dismissed from his position as consul general in New York for attending a public luncheon in honour of Albert Einstein, but was able to get himself reinstated in the diplomatic service

- Countess Hannah von Bredow, granddaughter of Otto von Bismarck
- Count Albrecht von Bernstorff, nephew of Count Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff, the German ambassador to the United States during the First World War
- Father Friedrich Erxleben, a well-known Jesuit priest
- Nikolaus von Halem, a merchant, later hanged for conspiracy to kill Hitler
- Legation adviser Richard Kuenzer
- Arthur Zarden and his daughter Irmgard

Thadden arrived with a 30-year-old who called himself Robby. His name was Paul Reckzeh, a doctor at Berlin’s Charite Hospital. He said he was back from Switzerland and had a letter of introduction from Maria Segantini, daughter of an influential but long dead Swiss painter. Reckzeh told the circle he was keen to take mail out to Switzerland for them. That was an offence. He told Johanna he could deliver messages to her contacts among German emigrant circles in Switzerland. She refused. “We were too careful with messages abroad to entrust them to any but the closest friends.”

and Rome. At the Japanese Embassy, military attaché and later ambassador Baron Hiroshi Oshima was a favourite with senior Nazi figures. He had been friendly with the Solfs, not least because Wilhelm Solf had been respected in Tokyo.

Lagi and Johanna met with friends at their apartment, to “speak freely, vent their disgust and despair, receive information and take counsel”. They listened to banned foreign radio stations. In time these gatherings would be marked up in Gestapo files as the “Solf Circle”.

Johanna and Lagi were aware of what the Gestapo were doing because close confidants spied, in turn, on the Gestapo. Johanna sent another couple down to Baden but they were arrested and tortured. They said Johanna Solf had told them where to go. Again, nothing happened to the Solfs.

“No one who has not lived through it can fully understand the feeling of being cornered that haunted us day and night,” Lagi later wrote. “We could trust no one except those whom we knew well. We could not use the telephone freely—it might be tapped. We were never sure we were not being watched. As the war went on, we saw ourselves losing out in our struggle against the Nazis.”

In August 1943 Lagi was warned that the Gestapo were watching them closely. “We

Irmgard, Arthur Zarden’s daughter, discovered Thadden had met him just 24 hours before.

“That should have rung an alarm—a young man in health, not in the army, travelling to Switzerland in the middle of the war?” Irmgard later wrote.

“Obviously on that afternoon everybody had forgotten that the first rule in the fight for survival was never to speak to strangers about politics... Reckzeh was a colourless man with no distinctive features, ideal for a spy.” Her father, present at the meeting, told her: “I wish I had not gone, I have a bad feeling about this man.”

As Solf Circle members worried about arrest, Berlin suffered a series of Allied bombing raids.

Lagi was bombed out and moved to her mother’s house. Then Johanna’s apartment was destroyed and she left for her sister’s home in Partenkirchen, 700 kilometres south of Berlin on the Austrian–Bavarian border. Lagi had been injured fighting fires—she had a “rupture” and needed surgery—and travelled on later.

On Wednesday 12th January 1944 the Gestapo moved, seizing 74 people linked to the Solf Circle. Seven Gestapo men arrested Johanna and Lagi.

Hitler had long suspected that the Abwehr had been infiltrated by anti-Nazi defectors and Allied agents, and the defection of Vemehren after the Solf Circle arrests all but confirmed it. It was also mistakenly believed in Berlin that the Vermehrens absconded with the secret codes of the Abwehr and turned them over to the British. That proved to be the last straw for Hitler. Despite the efforts of the Abwehr to shift the blame to the SS or even to the Foreign Ministry, Hitler had had enough of Canaris and he told Himmler so twice. He summoned the chief of the Abwehr for a final interview and accused him of allowing the Abwehr to “fall to bits”. Canaris quietly agreed that it was “not surprising”, as Germany was losing the war.

Hitler fired Canaris on the spot, and on 18th February 1944, Hitler signed a decree that abolished the Abwehr. Its functions were taken over by the Reichssicherheitshauptamt or RSHA (Reich Main Security Office) and SS-Brigadeführer and Generalmajor (Brigadier

General) of Police Walter Schellenberg replaced Canaris functionally within the RSHA. This action deprived the German Armed Forces (Wehrmacht) and the anti-Nazi conspirators of an intelligence service of its own and strengthened Himmler’s control over the military.

Canaris was cashiered and given the empty title of Chief of the Office of Commercial and Economic Warfare. He was arrested on 23rd July 1944, in the aftermath of the “July 20th Plot” against Hitler, and executed shortly before the end of the war, along with Oster, his deputy. The functions of the Abwehr were then fully absorbed by Amt VI, SD-Ausland, a sub-office of the RSHA, which was part of the SS.

Though the Gestapo were often fiendishly clever in their methods, they could be exceedingly stupid. Johanna was held



Paul Reckzeh

incommunicado in a windowless tower and interrogated for two days before being sent north. Two Gestapo agents, a man and a woman, took Lagi on a regular passenger train. One of them was SS Leader Heinrich Himmler’s niece.

One of the guards gave her the ticket and suitcase. “In case we get into different cars, don’t forget that you get out at Drogen,” he said. As she sat for two hours in the crowded station, Lagi found the situation grotesque: “I had money, my identification card, my baggage... But I knew the Gestapo too well to think lightly of what they might do to my mother if I escaped.” So she took the train.

At Drogen a police car took her to Ravensbrück, Hitler’s concentration camp for women, 160 kilometres up the Berlin-to-

Rostock road. At its height on any one day, Ravensbrück, opened in May 1939, had around 45,000 prisoners. Over six years 130,000 women were to be beaten, starved, worked to death, poisoned, executed and gassed. How many people were to die in the camp was never really known; estimates range between 30,000 to 90,000.

“That raw, gloomy evening I saw for the first time the dreary barracks and the columns of inmates in their striped uniforms,” Lagi wrote. “I could see the large open space of the camp square and hear the shrieking siren and the roll calls and camp activities...”

Mother and daughter were given medical checks. The SS doctors wanted to know if the women were strong enough to be tortured. They were not.

“Every day I saw men return from interrogation with obvious signs of beating; sometimes they were covered with blood,” Lagi wrote. “A young man in the cell next to mine had been so brutally used that he was afraid he might reveal the names of friends in the next interrogation.” He hanged himself.

Lange would give Johanna sleeping draughts then wake her up for sessions that lasted six to 15 hours. He threatened her with execution. He threatened to arrest her youngest son; told her she would have to cart rocks; that he would put her in a dark cell.

Lagi and Johanna were then placed at the mercy of Roland Freisler, judge-president of the Volksgerichtshof (People’s Court). Freisler was infamous for wild temper tantrums and screaming fits. Around 2,600 people were killed on his orders. He specified the manner—hanging or death by *fallbeil*, the German variation on the guillotine. Others were shot.

The Nazis’ chief public prosecutor, Ernst Lautz, presented Johanna with the treason indictment. She would appear before Freisler on 1st July 1944 along with Thadden, Irmgard Zarden and the diplomats Hilger van Scherpenberg and Otto Kiep. Lagi was not charged, perhaps because she had not been at most of the circle meeting the Gestapo infiltrator had attended.

Johanna was accused of instructing Reckzeh on how to begin peace negotiations with the Allies. She replied that if she had wanted to do that she would have found a better messenger.

“You called our treatment of the Jews inhuman?” Freisler barked.

“Yes.”

Freisler reached his guilty verdicts three hours into the trial. Thadden was decapitated with an axe at Plötzensee Prison in Berlin. Her last words were, “Put an end, Lord, to all our sufferings.”

Charges against Johanna were withdrawn. “Further investigation” of mother and daughter



Women prisoners in Ravensbrück



Inmates in striped uniforms at Ravensbrück concentration camp

was to take place. The Ministry of Justice in a *Führerinformation* (information for the Führer) said the case against Johanna had been separated because of new evidence. A lawyer helping Johanna met with ministry officials and was told “the case against Solf is absolutely serious and the death sentence will be seriously considered”.

Then came an attempt to kill Hitler on 20th July 1944. Wehrmacht Oberst (Colonel) Claus von Stauffenberg, a friend of Lagi’s husband, smuggled a bomb inside his briefcase into Hitler’s Eastern Front headquarters. The Gestapo began to work brutally on Solf Circle members, looking for links to the plot.

Johanna Solf was, after the trial, sent back to Ravensbrück for further investigation. “The reprieve meant more uncertainty,” Lagi believed, “more interrogations, more misery... The examination lasted all night and stopped only at 7am when Mother fainted.”

The treatment the two women received and the absence of executions raised questions. Johanna was not cooperating with the Gestapo

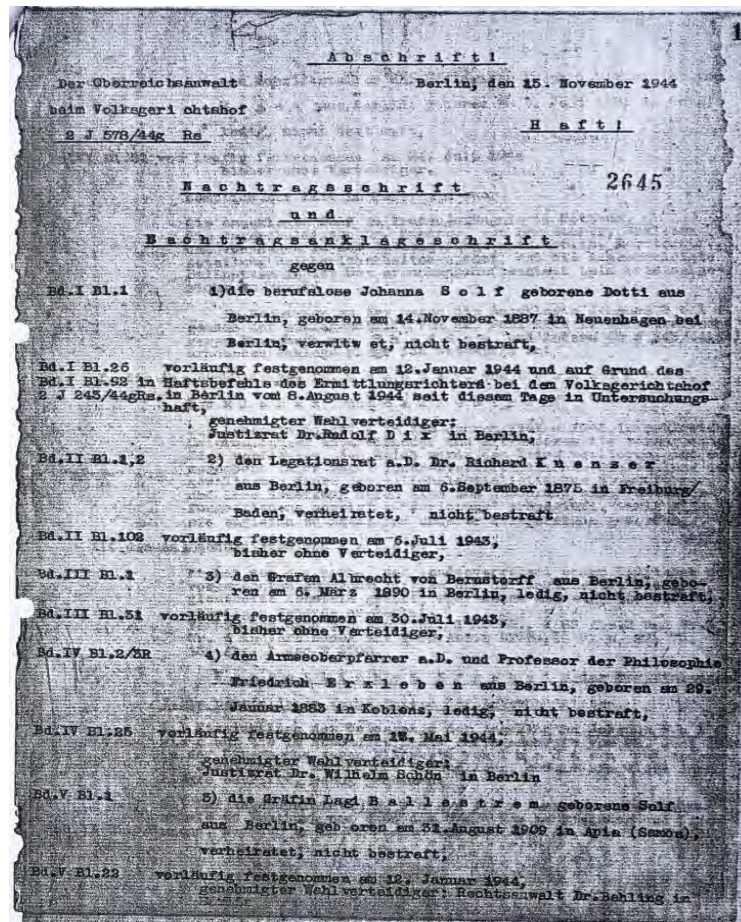
and, besides, previous cases showed that even those who gave up information to the Gestapo ended dead anyway.

Lawyer Rudolf Dix, who had been assigned her case just an hour before the first trial, feared the Nazis wanted to hold a bigger trial with more defendants from the Solf Circle. It was rumoured too that Himmler was building up a list of political prisoners, Lagi and Johanna included, who could be traded with the Allies.

On 18th October 1944 a guard appeared at Lagi’s cell. “Get ready, you leave in 20 minutes.”

She was put in a prison van holding seven men. They were taken to Moabit criminal prison.

Johanna and Lagi each received a typed copy of the 12-page indictment against them, charged with treason. Ernst Lautz, the prosecutor, began by listing the accused, beginning: “Johanna Solf, née Dotti, unemployed, of Berlin, born 14th November 1887 in Neuenhagen, near Berlin, widowed, not punished. Provisionally arrested on 12th January 1944. Has been in



The first page of the Gestapo's 12-page indictment against Johanna and Lagi for treason

remand since 8th August 1944 due to the detention order from the investigating Judge at the People's Court in Berlin. Approved defence lawyer: Judicial Dr Rudolf Dix in Berlin."

Her daughter was last on the list: "Countess Lagi Ballestrem, née Solf, of Berlin, born 31st August 1909 in Apia (Samoa), married, not punished. Provisionally arrested on 12th January 1944."

The two women were to stand trial with Richard Kuenzer, Count Albrecht von Bernstorff, Professor Friedrich Erxleben, a Jesuit priest described as an Army Rector and Professor of Philosophy, and Maximilian von Hagen, writer and historian, of Berlin.

The day of the trial was set for Saturday 3rd February 1945. It turned out the US Army Air Force planned a thousand bomber daylight raid on Berlin, for that day.

Lagi was locked in a cell as the bombers arrived. "The huge old prison building with its thick stone walls shook to its foundations. We sat in our cells—I darned a bottomless pile of military socks—when the bombs fell all around and the air was filled with the noise of

modern aerial warfare."

Amid the bombing Freisler carried on at his desk. He was expecting a busy day of sending people to their deaths. Heading to see him was the family of Rudiger Schleicher, 50. He was married to Ursula Bonhoeffer, sister of the celebrated anti-Nazi theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. On Friday Freisler had sentenced another brother, Karl Bonhoeffer, 44, to death. The delegation from his family were nearing the court, to ask for a stay of execution. Among the group crossing the city by train was his brother Rolf, a medical doctor serving in the military. They reached the central Berlin Potsdamer Platz as the bombers came over. Freisler and an accused man were still in the court. They were making for an air raid shelter when Freisler realised the accused's file was still on his desk. He turned back as a bomb exploded close by. Freisler was hit. As the bombing stopped, Dr Rolf Schleicher and the family left the station and headed to the court to appeal for their brother's life. Emmi Bonhoeffer told how Rolf was near the scene.

"His uniform showed that he was a military doctor and he was called to a seriously injured person without knowing it was Freisler. He could only certify that the man was dead," Bonhoeffer said. "Then he learned that this was the judge of the People's Court whom everyone was so afraid of. He pointed to the corpse and said to the bystanders: 'This is the man who illegally condemned my brother to death yesterday.'"

Word reached Lagi next day: "Fellow prisoners whispered, 'Freisler is dead!' I could hardly believe it. It meant life for us—time gained and the elimination of our most dangerous enemy. He had delayed going to the air-raid cellar and was killed by a bomb which hit the court building. Many records were burnt in the raid, among them our own."

A fever gripped Lagi: "Even the most apathetic developed a wild desire to live. We knew that the war could not last much longer but that there was still danger of being killed, at the end, by the SS."

Some criminals and lesser political prisoners



Johannah giving evidence at the Nuremberg trials after the war

were freed, female guards stopped coming to the camp, fearing that liberation might mean their deaths. The trees in the prison yard were turning green. Birds sang. The chill was easing a little in the cells. "All these seemed promises of early freedom."

Volksgerichtshof trials later resumed, with Johanna and Lagi scheduled for a late April date.

On 23rd April, the door to Lagi's cell was thrown open. "Get ready for discharge," the guard said.

An official responsible for the distribution of rationed shoes, Ernst Heuss, had been working to get Johanna and Lagi out. He had started out as a lawyer, but had refused to take an oath to Hitler. He had helped the Solf Circle to get Jews out of Germany. Heuss came to the prison that day and found senior guards who were disorientated and hysterical as the Soviets moved closer. Many were drunk. He managed to get them to release Lagi and Johanna. They were taken to the prison office where Maria Elsas, the widow of a former Berlin deputy mayor, Fritz Elsas, and her daughter Barbara were waiting.

"We were all bewildered and not sure what was happening to us, but we found ourselves

indeed discharged and walking out of prison." It was a mistake, of course, and Goebbels was alarmed and ordered all efforts be made to get the two women back. But it was too late. Hitler had killed himself.

Around a hundred people had been involved in the Solf Circle, of whom 66 were murdered. At Nuremberg, major war criminals were tried over the course of a year from November 1945. Johanna Solf was a prosecution witness against the Nazi's chief public prosecutor Ernst Lautz who had approved 1,500 prosecutions brought each month.

Lagi's husband, Hubert von Ballestrem, spent many years after the war imprisoned on trumped-up charges in communist East Germany. Lagi died in Bonn on 14th September 1955, just ten months after her mother had passed on.

A few months before her death, Lagi wrote the following: "I do not like to think about the past because it has lost its meaning. The world has learned nothing from it—neither the butchers, the victims nor the onlookers. Our time is like a dance of death whose eerie rhythm few understand. Everyone swirls around in confusion without seeing the abyss."

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.



Eva Muller-Stuler

Name or preferred name?

Eva.

Why that nickname or nom de plume?

My full name is Eva-Marie Muller-Stuler, but I'm the only Muller-Stuler on social media so all my colleagues can find me, and if they ask to be my friend I can't say no. And then I can't post about how

I enjoyed my day at the grand prix when I told my boss I was working. So I changed my Facebook name.

Where do you hail from?

Kassel in Germany. Then I studied in Munich and also studied number theory in Tokyo. I lived in London for seven years and now in Dubai. I also went to boarding school in Yorkshire when I was 16. At Ackworth, a Quaker school. I had a cousin there and my grandmother was a Quaker too. I'm not much of a Quaker myself as they are pacifists and I like shooting. But we did learn to believe in the good of people, and I do believe in that. Although that doesn't mean they don't drive me nuts. But overall I'm not a very religious person—maybe on a scale of 1 to 10 I'd be a 1, on a good day.

Favourite cocktail?

Definitely the Aviation [gin, maraschino, lemon juice and crème de violette]. It's not too sweet, and I like flowers. I love violets in particular in any kind of food. It's a problem here in Dubai that because of corona we can't get certain alcohols. Once upon a time you could only get a drink in hotels, but more and more places have licences now. And they have something here called Friday Brunch, where for a set price you get all you can eat and all you can drink, so if you want to see really drunk people come to Dubai at 4pm on a Friday.

Most Chappist skill?

I'm currently training as a camel jockey.

I'm not sure I'll keep it up, though, as I don't know if I really like it. You tend to be sore for days afterwards.

Most Chappist possession?

A castle. Schloss Schöneck, close to Frankfurt in the Rhine Valley. It comes with lots of aunts and uncles, which are also pretty Chappist possessions. It's not posh—no suits of armour, old furniture or big carpets. Germany lost the war and everything that was inside was either stolen, burned or eaten. I also have a desert car, but it's not very Chappist. Tinted windows and lots of lights. The tinted windows are useful here if you are unmarried.

Personal Motto?

We don't have a family motto but we do have a family whistle. When we were teenagers it was really embarrassing because if my mother couldn't find us in the supermarket she'd whistle this tune. I guess my personal motto would be something like, "Don't die with the music still in you." Live your life to the full and don't hold back.

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

I was in trouble with the police as a teenager for trading stolen alcohol. I was aged 14, so too young to drink anyway. I also travelled around the world for a year, emulating my great grandfather. He told his parents he wanted to write his doctoral thesis about how juvenile criminals are treated around the world so he got his parents to pay for the trip. I'm not sure how much time he spent studying that, because he also spent a lot of time getting to know the women around the world.

How long have you



been involved with the NSC?

Since 2011 when I came to London.

How did you hear about the Club to begin with?

From friends.

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

Travel. Not to places like Thailand but cool places like Tokyo or Riad. Reading and travel you can't get enough of. And study mathematics, it's a beautiful subject.

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

My great aunts, great uncles and grandmothers. It would be a fun dinner. And my great grandfather, Alfons Paquet. He was a journalist in the Russian Winter Palace in 1918, a political writer in an interesting time. This is not the same grandfather who travelled round the world—he became a lawyer. Alfons married an artist and they produced a book, a painting and a child each year.

Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?

Answer: Artemis Scarheart.

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

Not yet. But I normally talk about boring things like data science, AI and ethics. Perhaps a history of robots? Something science-related anyway. The history of women in tech. Very short.

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.

FREDERICK ROLFE

AKA Baron Corvo

By Torquil Arbuthnot

“YOU CALL ME mad, rash, incorrigible, proud, irreconcilable, deluded and all the rest,” Frederick Rolfe once wrote to a critic. “But you must allow me to lead my life upon that higher and uncrowded plane where supernatural influences work unchecked... Have you not realised yet that it is not an ordinary, but an extraordinary man with whom you have to deal?”

Rolfe was indeed an extraordinary man. A self-styled baronet and priest, he was also, variously, a confidence trickster, pauper, schoolmaster, painter, pioneering photographer, blackmailer and paedophile; and author of seven novels and various short stories. Rolfe’s vindictiveness and paranoia have become legendary, mainly through AJA Symon’s biography, *The Quest for Corvo*, and as the eponymous protagonist of Pamela Hansford Johnson’s roman-à-clef, *The Unspeakable Skipton*.

The son of a piano maker, Frederick Rolfe was born in 1860 into a Dissenting family. An early convert to Roman Catholicism,

Magazine cover featuring Alec McCowen in *Hadrian VII* at the Mermaid Theatre, 1968, before transferring to Broadway



such was his religious ardour that at fourteen he had his breast tattooed with a cross.

Rolfe strongly believed that he had a vocation to become a priest; however, this belief was not shared by the Catholic church. His life became an obsessively fruitless quest to enter the priesthood. He was expelled from seminaries in England and Rome. Although the ostensible reason given for his expulsions were that he was spending too much time on poetry and painting, Rolfe had actually irritated the authorities by arguing violently with anyone who questioned his actions, and for his habit of running up numerous debts he had no hope of paying.

Although his hopes of entering the priesthood were at an end, he vowed to remain celibate for 20 years so he could be ready for the “call” if it ever came. It never did. He became convinced that all his hardships were the result of a Papist conspiracy against him.

However, he did take to signing himself Fr. Rolfe—the abbreviation of Frederick being his way of suggesting he had a right to the traditional Catholic honorific, Father.

After the Rome debacle Rolfe



Rolfe, probably in Jesus College, Oxford, 1907

settled in Hampshire, where he presented himself as Baron Corvo. According to him it was an honorary title bestowed upon him by the Duchess Sforza-Cesarini, a wealthy patron who had taken him in when he was homeless in Rome. He left Hampshire under a cloud of debt and fraud and started afresh in Aberdeen. Within two months of securing a job as a photographer’s assistant he was sacked, although he refused to accept his dismissal and had to be physically prevented from attending work by the police. After running up a huge bill at his lodgings he was eventually thrown out into the street in his pyjamas—when threatened with eviction Rolfe’s habit was to retire to bed and pretend it wasn’t happening.

Despite all this, Rolfe continued writing. He had adopted an arcane and idiosyncratic writing style, baroque and rococo, using archaic spelling designed to present an aesthetic “feel” to his work, and strewing his writing with foreign words. The *Times Literary Supplement* derided his writing as “caviar”. He wrote in green and heliotrope inks on sheets of paper and tacked them to his walls and then edited from there. He became a regular at the Hogarth Club, much frequented by 1890s aesthetes such as Aubrey Beardsley, Max Beerbohm and Robbie Ross.

His most famous work is *Hadrian VII*, in which George Arthur Rose, an impoverished and oppressed writer, manages to be elected

Pope—Rolfe’s greatest fantasy.

Another (posthumous) work is *Tre racconti su Venezia*, a collection of 23 letters and two telegrams written between 1909 and 1910 and addressed to a wealthy English benefactor named Charles Masson Fox. The purpose of the letters was to stimulate the pornographic fantasies of Rolfe’s friend Fox in exchange for a large fee. The letters contain descriptions of homosexual encounters (both real and imagined) between Rolfe and various young Venetian gondoliers. The letters were supposed to have been destroyed once read, and certainly not intended for publication, but were somehow retained and published in 1972.

Rolfe spent the last five years of his troubled life in Venice. He applied for a job as a gondolier, but usually he relied on other people’s generosity for his survival. In his last year, he somehow borrowed enough money to buy a dazzling gondola, draped in leopard and lynx skins, which he ostentatiously poled through the canals.

Nevertheless, after a period of sleeping under tarpaulins on the canals, he died of “heart paralysis” on 25th October 1913 in a flat belonging to a friend.

His legacy is not only the myth of the man and his works, but also a medical condition known as Corvo’s Syndrome—a quasi-delusional state in which an individual sees himself, not the incumbent, as the Pope of Rome.



CLUB NOTES

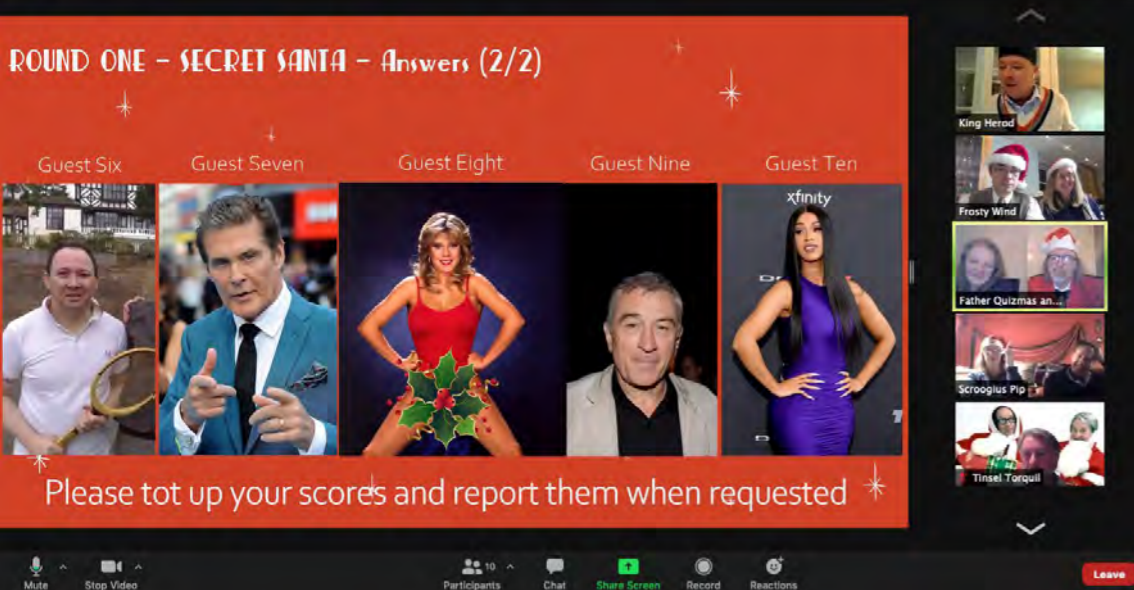
Virtuality Continues

HERE WE ARE in 2021, under a new lockdown (at least here in the UK) as new variants of the Covid-19 surge through the population. So I'm afraid Club activities will, for the foreseeable future, continue to operate online.

My thanks go to all those Members who have

volunteered their time and sanity working out how to deliver live online lectures in lieu of our traditional meetings at the Wheatsheaf, whether by Facebook, YouTube or Zoom. (Don't forget that if you missed any of these, or wish to revisit them, they are almost all preserved on our YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC12cBo5A2WHK6wg7p8_-gug.)

We have also kept up our programme of weekly NSC Pub Quizzes, also via Zoom: six rounds of ten questions with an intermission, with players marking their own answers. The quizzes are normally every Wednesday, except the first of the month, which is the Club Night. Particular thanks go to James Rigby and Mrs Morley for their Christmas Special on 16th



New Member

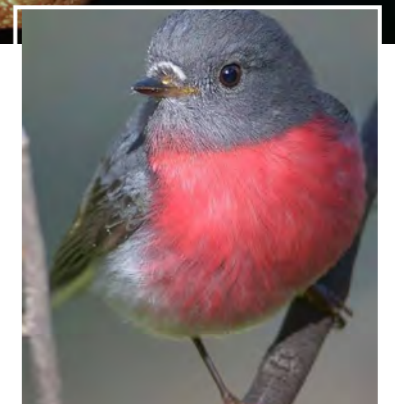
IN THE ABSENCE of much Club activity we haven't seen many new bugs signing up, so all the more reason to welcome Mr John James. In truth he is no stranger to the Club, having been both to our monthly meetings and to Club parties (see this picture of him winning a raffle prize at our *I Am Not a Number, I Am a Free Chap* party in 2014), so clearly he sensibly believes in taking his time before making any commitment. He claims to have received "excellent reports of the club from Oliver Lane"—yet despite this he still joined. He gives his special area of expertise as "naval navigation" (not to be confused with navel navigation) and his favourite cocktail as a Horse's Neck. (Originally a non-alcoholic drink of ginger ale with a long strip of lemon peel, this morphed into a more enduring version that added brandy or bourbon; by the mid-20th century it had become a favourite with Royal Navy officers, so perhaps there is a connection here with Mr James's naval activities.)



Club Tie Corner

"I DON'T NORMALLY do this sort of thing," blushes Darcy Sullivan as he submits this photo of raconteur Robert Lloyd Parry, playing the role of M.R. James, furnished in Club silk; meanwhile Mrs H. noticed that Tom Hanks in *Forrest Gump* (1994) clearly joined the NSC among all his other

achievements; and Stephen Smith has discovered the Club Robin, "immaculately turned out, intelligent, fiercely territorial, rather noisy."

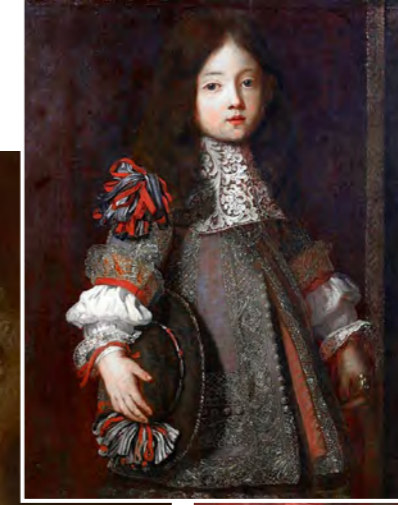




(Above) Ivan Debono noticed Mrs Slocombe's plumage in 1970s TV sitcom *Are You Being Served?* as well as this example (right) standing out in a crowd; (below) Col. Cyrus Choke blushing stammers, "I seem to have stumbled upon one of the club's Middle East business ventures in Port Said. For the record, I only went in to use the pay phone."



(Left) Debono also spotted this comfy-looking Club bath-robe. (Facing page, clockwise from top left) Our art history division (i.e. Ivan Debono) has been busy trying to prove that valuable works are clearly Club property, securing this portrait of a woman by Jacob Ferdinand Voet, this portrait of a boy from the studio of Henri Gascar and this portrait of the Infanta Margaret Theresa by Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo; meanwhile our home furnishing division has been finessing the details of the new club house, featuring this striking rug designed by Stuart Turner, these rather Eighties bedclothes, the cinema room and the parlour, all conceived by Debono. Sadly the money set aside actually to build the club house seems to have gone astray *again*, so I'm afraid we have to ask all Members for another whip-round. You know the drill.



Now is the time to sell, and our experts are here to help. Visit our site to get started.



(Clockwise from top left) "Do we really need to put the club roadster on the block?" grieved Col. Choke when he saw this advert. "Isn't there something else we can do? Say it ain't so!" Fortunately Stephen Smith offered this nippy alternative, and then Debono brought us down to earth by offering this Club buggy instead; high-vis sensible clothing suggested by Debono, not for the first time (does he have a stake?); Benjamin Negroto has found evidence of the Club selling socks in what looks like the 1960s doing the 1920s; Col. Choke also comments: "Glad to see the Glorious Committee has finally upgraded the Club train. Tommy kept stopping to smell the daisies growing by the tracks causing delay after delay. The new German-built model from Berlin goes 320 km/h and stops only when sharply ordered to halt."



Chaussettes

La qualité revient à la mode.

WOOL MARK
PURE LANE VERDE



(Clockwise from above) Col. Choke concedes, "Going out on a limb here: Tony 'Big Tuna' Accardo of Chicago"—let's hope I don't wake up with Corona Cat's head in my bed for printing this; shameless Republican senator Ted Cruz wearing what Col. Choke describes as a Club tie clearly stolen from a Member; Negroto is responsible for this exemplary display of neckwear from Roger Moore in *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977); Stephen Myhill was perplexed by the sight of cast members from the West End production of *Mary Poppins* offering doorstep productions during lockdown—in Club colours; Matthew Howard noticed *Times* cartoonist Peter Brookes has depicted Matt Hancock in a Club tie; Col. Choke suggests this "agitational" swimwear for "Club fellow travellers"

There is a hidden message weaved into this pattern: "Complete the 5 year plan in 4 years!" The design is based on a 1930's Soviet agitational textile pattern, from a time when the Soviet aesthetic was woven into the fabric of everyday life.



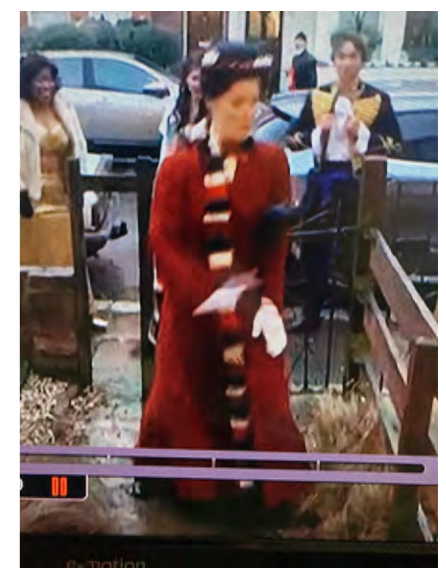
MATT HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR

FROM THE BLOOD DONOR TO THE VACCINE GUINEA PIG!

JUST A LITTLE PRICK!

NHS

LIVE ON TV

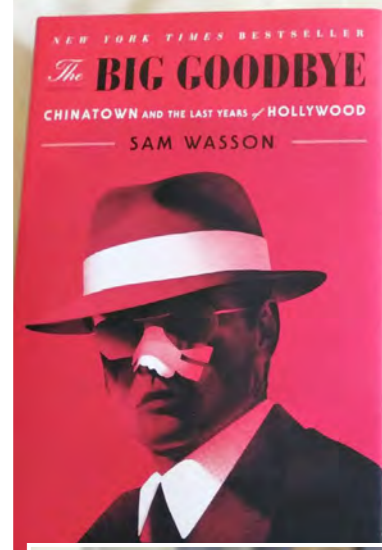




F HD



(Clockwise from above) More Club birds, this time a brace of African Grey Crowned Cranes bagged by Col. Choke; this hat sparked a reminiscence from Debono: "When Club members threatened to resign en masse, the Chairman ordered the bar to serve the infamous 'whiff of grapeshot' (gin, Champagne, port, absinthe, in a gunpowder-rimmed glass). The effect was devastating. The uprising was quelled and inebriated peace was restored to the Club." Stephen Smith noticed the Club tartan pop up in a TV advert for Dark Horse wine; Torquil had a moment of truth when he spotted first that Ernie is wearing Club pyjamas in this *Morecombe and Wise Show* skit, then that Tina in *Eastenders* is sporting Club colours, then that two of his Christmas presents were also Club-hued "by coincidence", and finally that Al Pacino in *The Godfather* (1972) was a Member—but noted he wasn't ruthless enough to make it on to the Glorious Committee



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.

Since a new lockdown starts tomorrow, many scheduled events this month may be cancelled so do check.

🍷 NSC Virtual Club Night Wednesday 6th January 7pm BST

See page 2. Cyril Browne will deliver an online lecture on the subject of *Amateur radio: what it is, why it isn't CB, and why it is more popular than ever.*

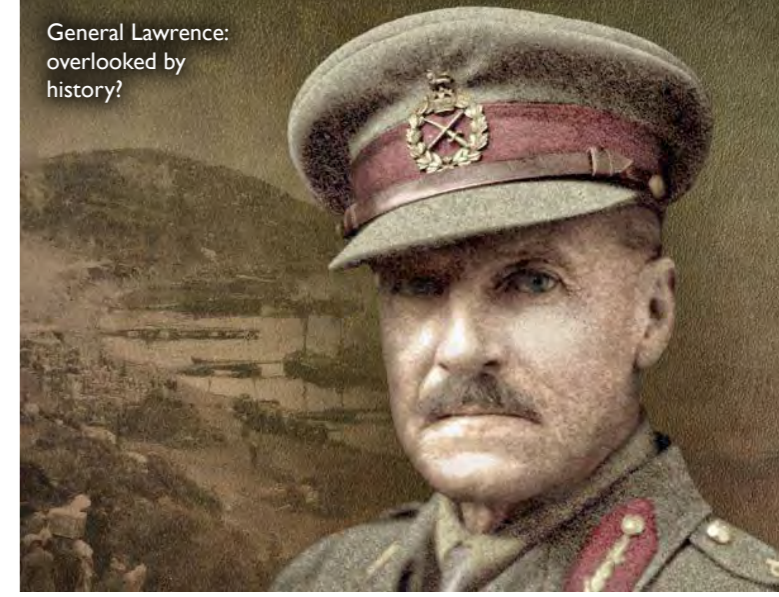
This time the talk will be delivered by YouTube: the link is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPR3JwgQZac>. The talk itself will begin at 8pm, but there will be a Zoom chat running in the background from 7pm and after the talk for as long as people wish: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83301757068?pwd=c24zL0l0QzNYa0tjOFY1ektUkUJkZz09>. There is also a Facebook event at <https://www.facebook.com/events/2031171017037903>.

🍷 NSC Quiz Night Wednesday 13th January 8pm Online via Zoom Admission: Free

Our virtual pub quizzes continue, held via Zoom meeting and hosted by a different Club Member each time—this time it's Cyril Browne. You'll need the (free) Zoom app installed, which should launch automatically when you click on the meeting's weblink: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83649488731?pwd=WdV2YlhFdXlPdFd1L0FmSEZmeEYxZz09>. (You can go directly via Zoom: the meeting ID

is 836 4948 8731 and the passcode is 677008.) The meeting starts about 15 minutes early to allow people to register their teams if they haven't already done so. The quiz usually has six rounds with an interval, and each team can play their joker on one round in advance, which doubles the points they receive for that round.

Note that our quizzes will probably carry on every Wednesday (except the first of the month) while lockdown continues. Keep an eye on the Events page of the website and the Facebook group for more details.



General Sir Herbert Lawrence: the Unsung Architect of Victory?

Thursday 14th January
8pm
Facebook live video via www.facebook.com/westernfrontassociation
Admission: Free

Need some revisionist military history in your life? As Chief of Staff to Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig in 1918, General Sir Herbert Lawrence played a key role in the defeat of Germany in the First World War. Described as "a man of outstanding ability both as a soldier and in business", this towering individual has received surprisingly little attention. He remains one of the forgotten figures of the war. This presentation will trace his remarkable career and argue that Lawrence has a strong claim to be recognised as one of the principal architects of Allied victory. It will be based upon the recently published book *General Sir Herbert Lawrence, Haig's Chief of Staff* by Paul Harris.



Passengers No More: Lost and Forgotten

Railways of London
Thursday 20th January
3-4pm
Online via Zoom

Admission: £6-12 via Eventbrite

One for public transport nostalgists, a virtual tour conducted live via Zoom video conferencing, in which your host, Stephen Benton, will show slides and give a talk to accompany them. There will be the opportunity for questions both during and after the talk. London has many closed and abandoned railway lines and stations. Some have completely vanished, such as Holborn Viaduct and Broad Street stations in the City, while in other places there are tantalising reminders of the past, such as Crystal Palace High Level, Spa Road Bermondsey and Highgate. In some cases railway buildings no longer needed have found new uses, as

can be seen at Fulham Broadway and Denmark Hill. Join Stephen as he roves across London and shares with you many of the lost and forgotten railways of London.

Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair

Sunday 23rd January
11am-5pm
On Instagram at @clerkenwellvint
Admission: Free

Normally a physical fair full of stallholders in a civic hall, for the fourth month this event will go online via Instagram. The organisers explain: "Check out our instagram grid the day before our fair. There will be a post for each of

our traders. Scroll through the posts to see if there is anything you like. Click through our posts to the trader's own instagram page and stories to view more items for sale and comment to purchase. *All purchases are between the seller and buyer.*"



Witch-Hunting, Old and New

Tuesday 26th January
8-10pm
Online via Zoom

Admission: £10 from Eventbrite

Join Professor Ronald Hutton of Bristol University to find out why the notorious medieval and early modern European witch-hunts took place. Discover what made them different from witch-hunts elsewhere in the world, why they stopped and what impact they had on witchcraft beliefs and human rights in the present world. The story of witch-hunting takes us on a journey through the civilisations of the ancient world and early Christianity to a change in mood in late medieval European Christian times. This is when people stopped perceiving witchcraft as a minor problem affecting individuals and started seeing it as a satanic conspiracy directed against the whole of society. Europe is unique in making this transition and viewing witchcraft as a demonic form of religion. It is also unique in moving from a profound fear of witchcraft to a disbelief in it, officially at least. How this change came about and how far that fear still presents a problem to the modern world will be the central issues of this lecture.



Tom Carradine's Self-Isolation Singalong

Every Thursday
8.30pm
www.facebook.com/cockneysingalong

Master of the Cockney singalong Tom Carradine brings his infamous knees-ups to cyberspace. Tom did weekly lockdown shows from April to NYE, so I'm assuming he'll carry on...

Sugarpush Vintage Dance

A range of dates
Start times vary: see 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, briefly returned to live, socially distanced classes, went back to the virtual world for Lockdown 2, and will presumably carry on that way for now. See the Facebook group above or www.sugarpushvintagedance.com.

Online Dance Classes with Swing Patrol

Throughout the month
See schedule at 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.

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. Recent additions include the complete show from Champagne Charlie and the Bubbly Boys on New Year's Eve 2018/2019. (We broadcast this as a whole on New Year's Eve, and you can hear this verion—including a specially recorded NYE 2020 message from Champagne Charlie himself at midnight—on YouTube at https://youtu.be/kwzekTtr4mw.) Many other recordings have also been remastered.

What could be more Chappist than a castle perched on a crag in the Rhine Valley? Allow Eva-Marie Muller-Stuler to show you around Schloss Schöneck (see page 18)

