

# The Rise *and Fall* of Izzy *and Moe*

Celebrating  
Prohibition's  
unlikeliest agents

## Elizabeth Taylor

Torquil Arbuthnot  
on the mid-  
century's most  
underrated author

## Our man Morrison

A ghost from  
the Club's  
early days  
returns

# RESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • No.175 • MAY 2021



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 5th May**.

In what should (fingers crossed) be our penultimate virtual Club Night, your speaker this month is Priya Kalia on *Jugendstil in Helsinki: An Art Nouveau-Style Movement*. She's hoping to include walking-tour video clips in her presentation to add to the giddy verité.

The talk will be delivered online via YouTube at 8pm: use the link <https://youtu.be/P8-RA6SppgY>.

As usual there will also be a Zoom meeting for social purposes, running from 7pm and resuming after the lecture for as long as folk feel

inclined. The link for that is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85365352057?pwd=aU1nbGNvZGxWbkZEVjJONytnRndQUT09> (meeting ID: 853 6535 2057, passcode: 943560).

There is also a Facebook event at <https://www.facebook.com/events/636240164184043> 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

Last month's virtual talk came from me, Clayton Hartley, on the perky subject of *The Rise and Fall of Izzy and Moe*. They were so unlikely-looking that recruiters initially turned them down but, with no training, Izzy Einstein and Moe Smith became the most successful enforcement agents of Prohibition in the US in the 1920s. Despite working to uphold an unpopular law that most Americans were happy to break, such was the playfulness and ingenuity of their methods (including a bizarre array of disguises) that Izzy and Moe became immensely popular with the public—something that would ultimately lead to their downfall.

An essay version of this talk begins on page 4.



Thrilling moments from April's live-streamed Club Night talk, on the notorious Prohibition agents Izzy and Moe, seen here (right) celebrating the end of Prohibition with a drink and (below right) in disguise as labourers; above is saloon-smasher Carrie Nation and below the poster from a film about the regular "wet parade" mass protests against the anti-booze laws



(Left) Our weekly Zoom pub quizzes not only continue for now but are, for want of a better word, evolving. Here Adrian Prooth gives the contestants five minutes to make a hat from a list of objects they were told to have ready (without know what they would be asked to do with them)

Clayton Hartley salutes Prohibition's most unlikely enforcement agents

# The Rise and Fall of Izzy and Moe

AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, this January was the 101st anniversary of Prohibition coming into force in the US. It was quite an elaborate, drawn-out affair: the idea was first put to Congress in December 1917, and it wasn't until the 36th state ratified it in January 1919 that it became law. The Eighteenth Amendment banning the "manufacture, sale and transportation of intoxicating liquors" would come into force one year later, in January 1920—giving citizens a

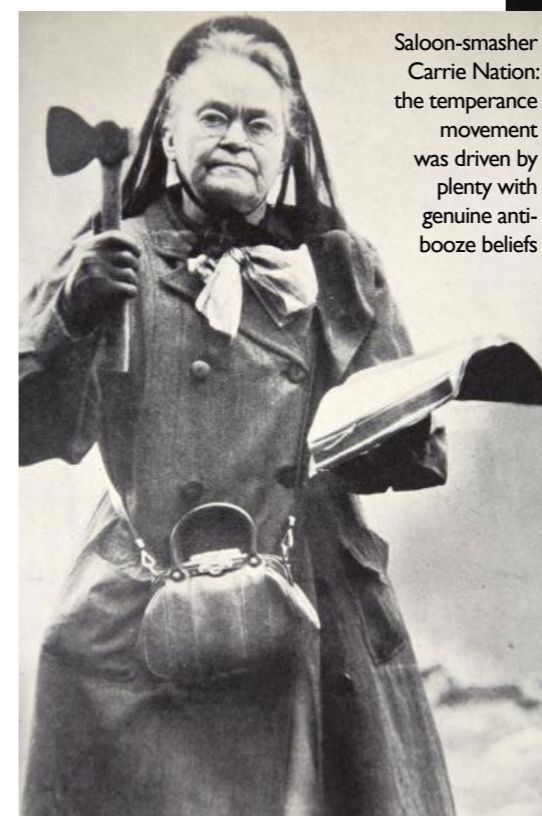


Isadore Einstein (right) and Moe Smith, looking pleased with themselves

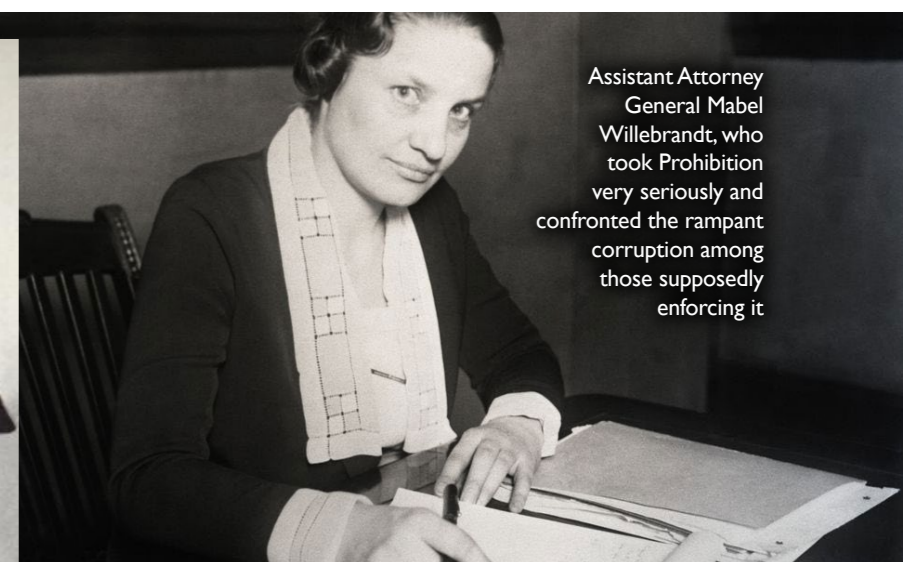
year to get ready and the authorities a year to work out exactly what was and was not allowed and, moreover, how they were going to enforce the ban, something addressed by the Volstead Act of October 1919.

But the federal authorities behind the new

laws could not simply rely on local police to enforce them. In fact different states had different rules, and in some areas local laws were actually stricter, making it illegal even to possess or drink alcohol, which was not part of the national prohibition. But elsewhere there



Saloon-smasher Carrie Nation: the temperance movement was driven by plenty with genuine anti-booze beliefs



Assistant Attorney General Mabel Willebrandt, who took Prohibition very seriously and confronted the rampant corruption among those supposedly enforcing it

of the Anti-Saloon League or the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. And the wealthy might be in a position to stockpile booze ahead of January 1920, after which they could legally drink it as long as supplies lasted. On the eve of Prohibition the *Daily News* wrote an obituary for John Barleycorn (a folk figure symbolising cereal crops and the booze made from them), quoting him as saying, "I've had more friends in private and more foes in public than any other man in America."

In fact this popular ambivalence would ultimately be Prohibition's downfall. While it is a bit of a myth that consumption actually increased during the ban, it's true that the number of illegal drinking dens that sprang up (as many as 100,000 in New York City alone) outstripped the number of legal ones there had been before. Before Prohibition, saloons were not places a respectable woman would go;

were no state laws against booze and the state police and courts made it clear they were leaving it up to Washington to enforce the federal prohibition. (Uniquely, after the passing of the Volstead Act, New York had passed its own Mullan-Gage Act, backing up Prohibition at a state level—but by only 1923 it actually repealed these laws, as it was simply too burdensome to process all the cases. One writer estimated that 18,000 jurors would have to be sworn in every day to deal with all the potential cases.) One way or another the federal Prohibition Unit was going to require an army of Prohibition Agents.

This is not to say that these new agents needed to have a vehement hatred of the sauce—any more than the politicians who voted the Amendment through. In fact many who were politically Dry were personally Wet: they may simply have wanted the votes



A "funeral" for John Barleycorn; swathes of the population did not agree with Prohibition and would not let it lie



Prohibition Agents had their work cut out for them. Isadore Einstein, the subject of this article, used to say that he could get off a train in any city and find alcohol within 30 minutes. In New York it took him 14 minutes, in Pittsburgh 11. In New Orleans it took just 35 seconds—he got off the train, jumped into a taxi and asked the driver if he knew anywhere he could get a drink. The taxi driver pulled out a bottle and offered to sell it to him.

The federal government initially provided funds for 1,500 agents to cover the whole country, gave them guns and vehicles but little or no training. There don't seem to have been many entry requirements (one agent was still in prison for armed robbery at the time he was given his badge) and salaries were low, so corruption was rife. Stanley Walker, an editor at the *Herald-Tribune*, said most Prohibition Agents “were fairly decent fellows and their demands... were never extortionate”. As early as 1921, 100 agents in New York alone were fired for taking bribes from wealthy bootleggers. Some were bootleggers themselves.

Just five-foot-five in height but a good 16 stone, “Izzy” Einstein did not come across as a stereotypical gangbuster. Before joining the agency he'd been a mail sorter, and his friend Moe Smith, whom he persuaded to join him as a Prohi, was a cigar store owner and small-time boxing manager (and even heavier). In fact when Izzy first responded to a newspaper report that the Prohibition Unit was recruiting, the

during the ban, however, since everyone entering a speakeasy was equally breaking the rules, it became socially quite acceptable for women to be seen drinking in public, a trend that carried on during the nightclub era that followed repeal.

In Chicago fashionable middle-class people bragged about the bootlegging gangsters they knew, and by the time the Twenty-First Amendment was passed in 1933, repealing the Eighteenth, many who had campaigned for Prohibition in the first place were now campaigning to end it—because they realised it had created a generation with no respect for the law.

So it can come as no surprise that the



Izzy and Moe (on the far right) busting a still in Mount Vernon, NY



Another publicity shot at a raided illegal still

bureau Chief Agent James Shelvin told him he “wasn't the type”. But Izzy argued that looking like an everyman was just what was needed and, as a former salesman, he understood people and could gain their confidence. The chief was persuaded.

Izzy wasn't wrong: he would go on to write an autobiography called *Prohibition Agent No. 1*, celebrating the fact that he and Moe notched up more arrests than any other Prohi. You might think this would make them unpopular, but they developed a cult status with the public. His book is hard to find these days (I've not been able to score a copy yet) but there are many magazine and newspaper articles about him from the time. I think their popularity was partly because they were perceived as refreshingly honest and law-abiding, but also because of the playful ingenuity that they brought to their work. Although they did their fair

share of smashing stills and busting bootleggers, most of their collars seem to have been at the retail end and their forte was trickery rather than force (Izzy never carried a gun; Moe did but never fired it at anyone).

The key was trust. A bar or restaurant that sold liquor on the sly had to be able to judge who was a genuine customer and who was an agent. Izzy was so unlikely an agent that no one believed he was one: allegedly on his first assignment he marched up to a notorious Brooklyn speakeasy and knocked on the door. The peephole slid open and the doorman asked who he was.



Dumping seized liquor into the gutters

“Izzy Einstein,” he responded. “I want a drink.”

“Oh yeah? Who sent you here, bud? What’s your business?”

“My boss sent me,” Izzy explained. “I’m a Prohibition Agent. I just got appointed.”

The door swung open and the doorman slapped him on the back. “That’s the best gag I’ve heard yet.” Once inside, Izzy showed the crowd drinking there his federal badge. The bartender exclaimed, “It looks just like the real thing.”

But although Izzy had observed the drinking going on he had no physical evidence, and the bartender grabbed the bottle of whiskey and fled out the back door. Izzy had learned a vital lesson.

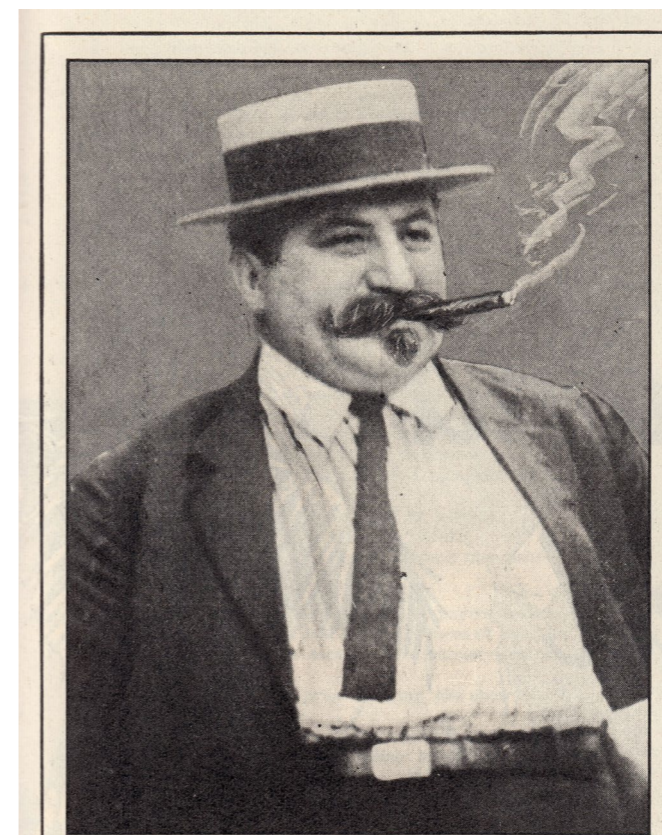
He devised a funnel that he inserted into the breast pocket of his jacket, attached to a tube that led into a bottle hidden on the inside of his jacket. He’d order a shot of whiskey—then, when the bartender looked away, he’d tip it into the funnel. (He claimed he got so good at this that even someone standing behind him wouldn’t notice the sleight of hand.) Later he’d nip out to stopper the bottle and label it with the time and place it was served to him, ready to present in court.

But Izzy couldn’t rely just on being himself to lull a speakeasy into serving him. He specialised in being many other people. An Austrian Jewish immigrant, Izzy spoke German, Polish, Hungarian and Yiddish, had smatterings of Russian, Spanish, French, Italian and Chinese, and was apparently good at accents. A “man of a thousand disguises”, he dressed as a Texas



oil man, a Southern colonel, a Polish count, a Jewish gravedigger, a Hungarian violinist (he did play the violin), a Russian fisherman, a gas meter inspector, a judge, a beauty contest judge, a rabbi, an opera singer, a Texan delegate to the Democratic National Convention and a football player—hard as that is to imagine. (In fact he roped in a team’s worth of agents, dressed them in football kit, smeared their faces with mud and bundled them into a bar, yelling, “Season’s over, we can have a drink.”)

Having persuaded his boss to hire Moe too, on the grounds that “he doesn’t look like an agent either”, Izzy found that as a duo there



IN ONE OF HIS MULTITUDINOUS DISGUISES.

A photograph of Izzy Einstein, the famous rum sleuth, is hard to obtain, but this one is said to look much like him—as he looked once, for a short time. His astonishing success is attributed largely to the fact that he can “make up” like anything from a longshore laborer to a society man, and carry the part, too

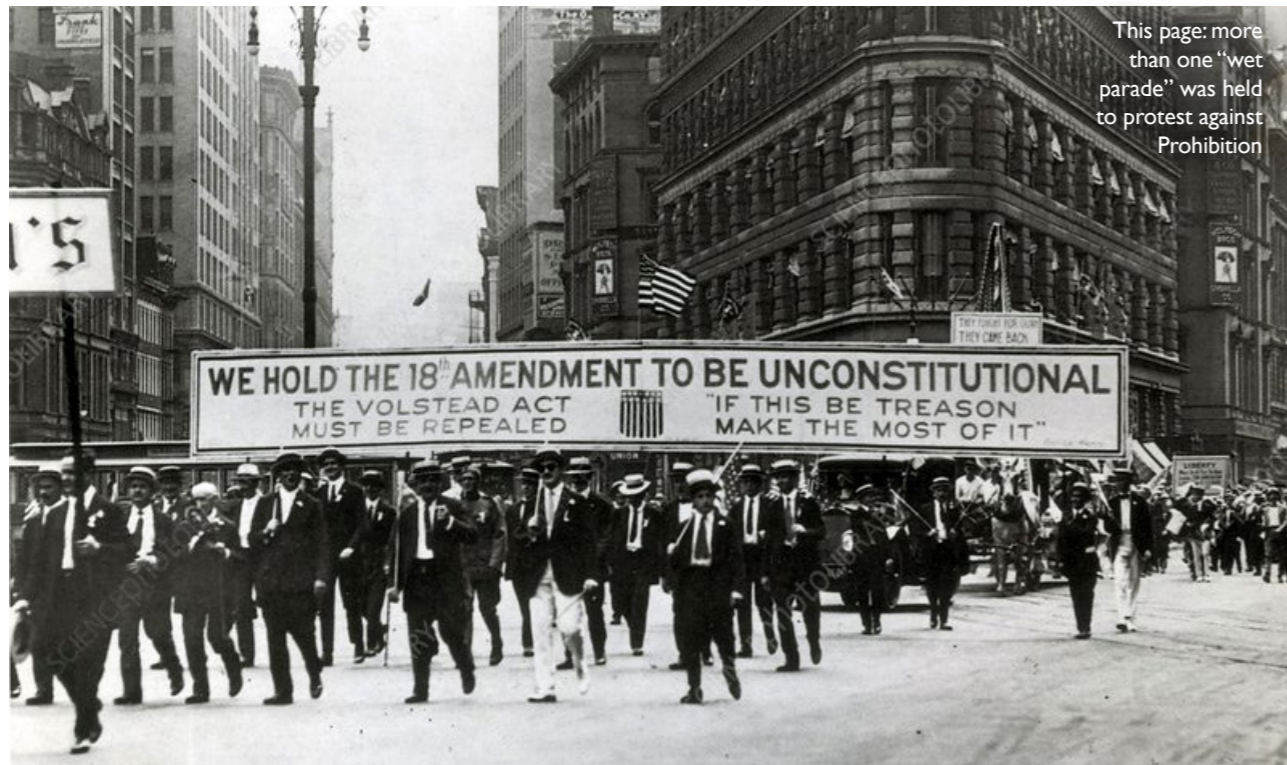
was even more scope for subterfuge and distracting ruses. Their schemes included a host of, sometimes unlikely, disguises: their inventory of props included dozens of false whiskers, nine kinds of spectacles, six papier-mâché noses, 11 wigs and hundreds of business cards, each presenting a different name and occupation. They believed that props—a fishing rod, a string of fish, a pitcher of milk, a bucket of pickles—went a long way towards throwing people off the scent.

They dressed as women. Izzy and Moe’s drag act may not seem very convincing today, but apparently it worked. Izzy even got away with pretending to be a Chinese launderer, a Mexican labourer in El Paso and blacking-up to play an African American in Harlem.

“Dress clothes for Broadway and overalls for the water-front,” Izzy explained. An article in *The Literary Digest* for 15th April 1922 gushes:

A day with Izzy would make a chameleon blush for lack of variations. Up with the milk strikers and car crews, along the docks in the morning hours of ship-to-truck loading, in and out of the best and the worst of noon-hour lunch bars, on one or more of any number of special coups in the afternoon, to the restaurants in and near New York for dinner and an evening devoted to social and semi-social events...

From their New York base, Izzy and Moe were also sent to Atlanta, Pittsburgh, St Louis and Cleveland. In Hollywood they dressed in suits of armour to pretend to be movie extras to get into a speakeasy used by actors. On Coney Island Izzy entered a bar in wet clothes, shivering and gasping for a warming drink (some sources say a bathing suit, others say regular clothes, but I guess the suggestion is that he’d been dunked in the sea). At the break of day he’d go into a bar in the livery of a streetcar driver, put a \$5 bill on the counter and ask for change “for my run”. Annoyed, the barman would answer, “Why don’t you buy a drink. That’s the way to get change.”



This page: more than one "wet parade" was held to protest against Prohibition

At a time when musicians would play the Prohibition standard "How Dry I Am" as a coded warning to punters that an agent might be in the room, Izzy went into a musician's bar with a trombone under his arm. When asked to play, he gave such a moving rendition of "How Dry I Am" that waiters rushed to reward him with a drink. (In other versions of the tale it is a violin, though he could apparently play the trombone too.)

Posing as a salesman of something a bar might want—offered at an irresistibly good price—was often enough to gain entrance. Using this approach, Izzy and Moe had great

success selling coal, fruit and veg, ice, cigars and pickles. More than once, the proprietor, pleased with the good deal he'd just got, offered the salesman a keenly priced drink in return.

The ruses became more psychologically sophisticated. Sometimes Izzy would station two other agents outside a joint, clearly visible to the proprietor—whom he knew would spot them a mile off. This made Izzy even more invisible by contrast and, once the "bulls" had moved on as previously briefed, the premises owner opened up. In another routine, Izzy would rush in and ask to borrow a pen—he'd just sold his car to Moe and needed it so Moe could write a cheque. Feigning a mixture of celebration and lament at having to sell the faithful vehicle, Izzy's vocal wishes that he had a proper drink with which to send Moe on his way usually got the desired offer from the proprietor. (They worked this stunt successfully six times before retiring it, for fear that news would spread.)

Izzy clearly knew how to choose his moment. On 4th July 1921 he marched alongside protestors in New York's "Wet Parade", following them as they broke off to find a drink. In one drug store he asked for half a pint and received



it. Rather than arresting the owner he casually pocketed the bottle, made for the door, then paused as if his eye was caught by some wares. After a few minutes, as his hand was on the door handle, the proprietor called, "Come back, friend, and I'll sell you some real stuff. I wasn't sure who you were so I gave you coloured water. You might have been a Prohibition agent

and I have to be careful. But you haven't tried to pinch me so I guess you're all right."

Izzy and Moe were only too happy to accommodate newspapers interested in their antics—what Izzy called the "Einstein Theory of Rum Snooping". They scheduled raids to suit the convenience of reporters—Sundays were popular, as the papers were usually short of material on a Monday. They once managed 71 raids in 12 hours, accompanied by eager newspapermen. (Other sources give their record as 48 raids in one night.)

As their fame spread, speakeasy proprietors would put up pictures of Izzy with the warning, "Look out for this man." But he was hard to recognise because of all the disguises. So Izzy would ask for a drink, announcing, "I'm Izzy Einstein." Disarmed by the joke, the bartender would sell him the drink, whereupon he was cuffed. Allegedly Izzy's catchphrase was, "There's sad news here. You're under arrest."

In a Detroit bar adorned with pictures of Izzy framed with "creepy black crêpe",



The pair seemed happy to pose with booze after Repeal

the bartender refused to serve him because he didn't know him. So Izzy tried a different tack. "I'm Izzy Epstein, the famous prohibition agent."

"You mean 'Einstein'," said the bartender said. "The bum's name is Izzy Einstein."

"You think I don't know my own name? It's Epstein."

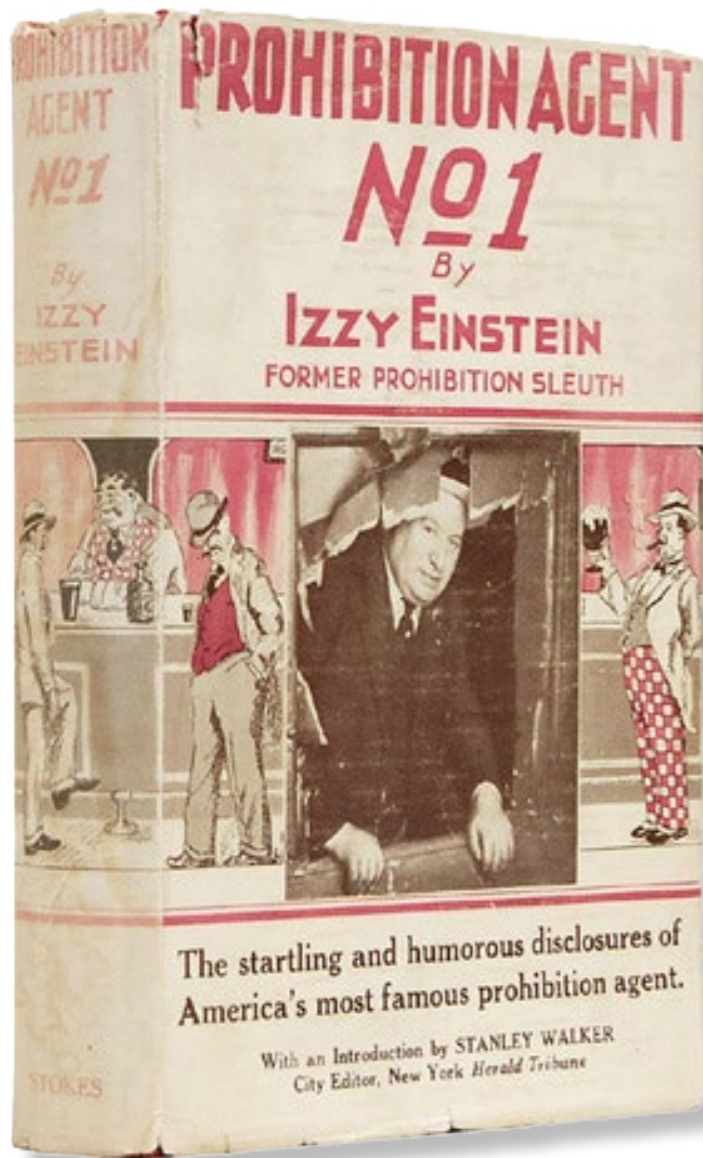
The barman was insistent. So Izzy bet a round of drinks for everyone in the bar. The

other customers were consulted and everyone agreed the agent's name was Izzy Einstein. Izzy lost the bet and paid up for a round of drinks. While they were being poured he arrested the barman.

One bar in upstate New York, knowing Izzy was Jewish, demanded newcomers taste a ham sandwich before being served. Izzy cheerfully accepted the sandwich and, as he went to eat it, allegedly carefully blew the ham out of the sandwich.

Eventually their superiors in the Prohibition Unit tired of the constant publicity. Izzy was summoned to





Izzy in 1932, signing the contract for his memoirs (left)

week and who, we can't help thinking, ought to make the best pair of bootleggers in these parts, knowing what they do about the sources of supply." But Izzy's 1938 obituary in the *New York Times* states that, while Moe left the service in 1925, Yiddish-speaking Izzy actually stayed on until 1928 "investigating rabbinical wine scandals".\* Izzy later claimed he resigned after being offered a transfer to Chicago in 1927 that he did not fancy. Both men went on to work for the New York Life Insurance Company. (The *Times* says they carried cards reading, "Formerly with U.S. Govt 'Prohibition'. Izzy and Moe.")

While the article in *The Literary Digest* claimed that Izzy didn't like whiskey, other sources say that he and Moe would celebrate a day of sleuthing with a drink (something the 1922 article couldn't really have said even if it was



Izzy and Moe in a post-Prohibition publicity shot at the Hotel Edison

Washington and reminded he was "just a subordinate, not the whole show" (none of his seniors ever got mentioned in the press, perhaps to their chagrin). Then, as part of a reorganisation by incoming boss General Lincoln C. Andrews in November 1925, the partnership was split up "for the good of the service". An official is reported to have explained, "The service must be dignified. Izzy and Moe belong on the vaudeville stage."

Some sources say the pair were promptly fired: *New Yorker* magazine for November 1925 printed the cartoon on this page and wrote, "MOE SMITH AND IZZY EINSTEIN—Who lost their jobs as prohibition agents last



At a raided still in New Hampton

suspected). Writing about that first mission, his own biography observes "that a slug of hooch in an agent's belly might feel good, but it ain't evidence". Some say they could be found in certain speakeasies, though it seems unlikely they would drink in public, given their fame. In any case, after Prohibition was repealed the two seem to have been happy to pose for photos with a celebratory snifter.

At a press conference (I think promoting the memoir in 1932) one reporter asked him, "What are your convictions, Mr Einstein? Do you believe in the moral principle of Prohibition?" Izzy was apparently genuinely stumped, and just replied, "I don't get you."

So despite the pair's boundless energy and ingenuity when it came to nabbing wet-goods merchants, it's clear they had nothing against booze themselves and probably weren't especially behind the law banning it, except in as far as it gave them a chance to earn a wage enforcing it. It really does just seem to have been a game for them—both in the sense of playing and in the sense of wanting to win.

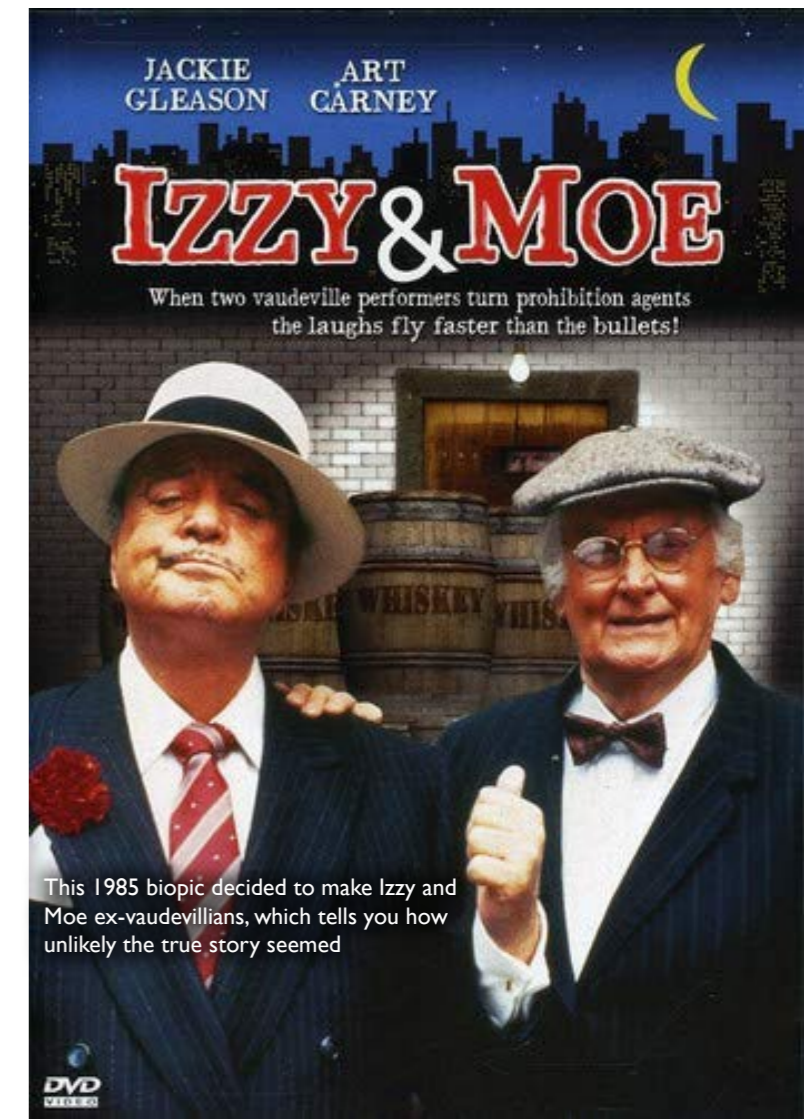
Izzy dedicated his 1932 memoir to the 4,932 people he arrested, "hoping they bear me no grudge for having done my duty". He claims to have later sold insurance to some of them, and that "many of the men I pinched are now friends of mine".

The memoir also tells how Izzy once met his namesake, Albert Einstein, when the physicist first came to America. He asked the professor what line of business he was in. "I discover stars in the sky," Einstein replied.

"I'm a discoverer too," said Izzy, "only I discover in basements."

\* This was a considerable problem, as the Volstead Act exempted wine sold for sacramental purposes. Each family was allowed up to ten gallons a year, and some rabbis started ordering in extra wine for congregations that ballooned suspiciously (sometimes swelled by the names of people who turned out to be long dead). Indeed the number of "rabbis" also

grew: Izzy encountered rabbis named Patrick Houlahan and James Maguire, while another agent came across two black rabbis in Harlem, who claimed to have "got religion in the Hebraic persuasion". Some offered not just sacramental wine, but sacramental Champagne, brandy and crème de menthe. Weirdly, the one time Izzy was thwarted was when a supplier of rabbinical wine would not serve him, on the grounds that he didn't look Jewish enough.



# ELIZABETH TAYLOR

By Torquil Arbuthnot

**I**N HIS *MEMOIRS* (published in 1991) Kingsley Amis sticks the boot into many of his writer contemporaries but is full of praise for Elizabeth Taylor. He says that Taylor's "deeply unsensational style and subject-matter saw to it that, in life, she never received her due as one of the best English novelists born in this century. I hope she will in the future." In 1986, Anita Brookner was noting: "It is time that justice was done to Elizabeth Taylor, the Jane Austen of the 1950s and 1960s, a writer so beautifully modest that few have taken up the cudgels on her behalf."



**“The most sensible thing to do to people you hate is to drink their brandy.”**

– *A View of the Harbour*

Elizabeth Taylor was born in 1912 in Reading, Berkshire, the daughter of an insurance inspector. She was educated at the Abbey School in Reading, where Jane Austen—the writer Taylor most admired, and to whom she was often compared—was a former pupil. After leaving school Taylor worked as a governess, as a tutor and then in a library. She joined the Communist Party in

her early twenties and delivered leaflets from door to door, but later transferred her allegiance to the Labour Party, which she supported for the rest of her life. In 1936 she married John Taylor, the owner of a confectionery business, and settled with him in Buckinghamshire.

Elizabeth Taylor's first novel, *At Mrs Lippincote's*, was published in 1945. Her career began, though, with a stroke of bad luck, since a few months earlier, the film *National Velvet* had made the 12-year-

old actress Elizabeth Taylor an international star. The novelist was doomed thereafter to be known as “the other Elizabeth Taylor” (which became the title of Nicola Beauman's biography of the writer). In later life she said, “Another, more eventful world intrudes from time to time in the form of fan letters to the other Elizabeth Taylor. Men write to me and ask for a picture of me in my bikini.” The actress is also alluded to in a later novel when the “blowsy Mrs Burton” comes to stay at a hotel.

*At Mrs Lippincote's* was followed a year later by *Palladian*, which displays the influence of Jane Austen—there are several sly references to *Northanger Abbey* and *Mansfield Park*, and the principal female character is named Cassandra Dashwood. The man who woos Cassandra is an aesthete called Marion Vanbrugh, who lives in a decaying country house and reads the Greek classics in the original.

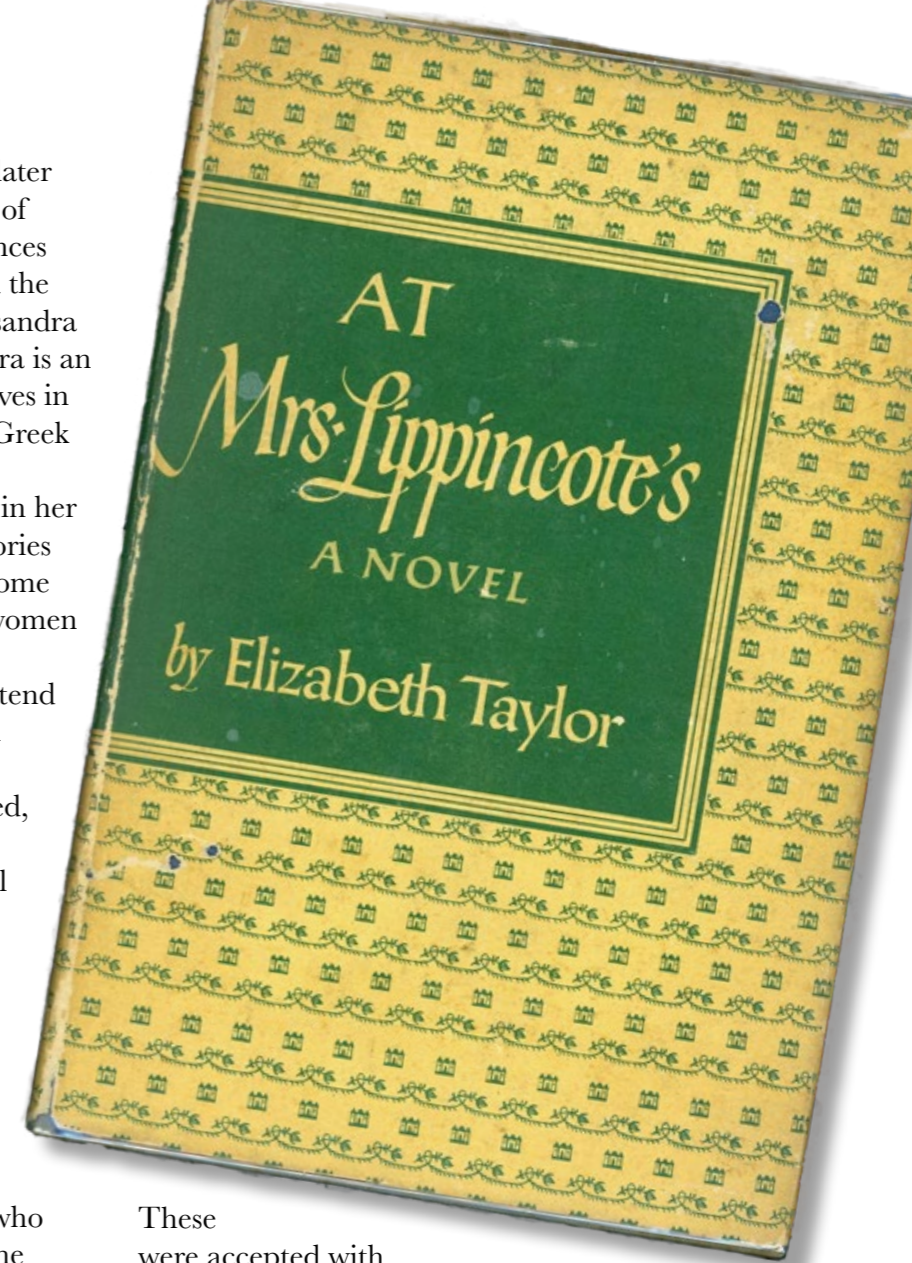
The world Elizabeth Taylor describes in her 12 novels and four collections of short stories is confined, in the main, to the English home counties. The majority of her men and women have outwardly comfortable lives. They patronise tearooms and antique shops, attend gymkhanas and church fêtes, and seldom discuss the political issues of the day.

After her own work had been published, years later, Elizabeth Taylor identified specific authors as having been influential for her development as a novelist and short story writer. The works of Jane Austen, E.M. Forster, Anton Chekhov, and Virginia Woolf were particularly important, along with Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, and Ivan Turgenev.

Elizabeth Taylor was much admired by Elizabeth Bowen and Angus Wilson, who were also distinguished practitioners of the short story. The short form was her métier, in which—as Wilson once observed—her “warm heart, sharp claws and exceptional powers of formal balance” were joined together in perfect artistic harmony. Another critic summed up her work thus:

Her prose is clear, almost to the point of transparency, and thus an immediate pleasure to read. This clarity of expression is the product of deep and careful consideration, for Taylor believed that the best art always gives the appearance of effortlessness. She is a stylist in the Evelyn Waugh mode, using the right word in the right place to maximum effect.

For many years Taylor maintained a friendship with the novelist Ivy Compton-Burnett. One of the reasons why this friendship with her lasted so well was that Compton-Burnett was fond of chocolates. Whenever she went to London, Taylor never forgot to bring a box of the most expensive chocolates from her husband's factory.



These were accepted with gratitude, though Compton-Burnett deplored their cost, wondering why Mr Taylor could not manufacture cheaper sweets.

In 1974 Elizabeth Taylor was diagnosed as having an inoperable cancer. “Try to keep me alive until I have finished my novel,” she urged the doctors who examined her. That novel, *Blaming*, was published posthumously, in 1976. She died at her home, Grove's Barn, Penn, on 19th November 1975. A selection of her best stories, with the apposite title *Dangerous Calm*, appeared in 1995.

“I am always disconcerted when I am asked for my life story, for nothing sensational, thank heavens, has ever happened,” Taylor explained in a 1953 article for the *New York Herald Tribune*. She elaborated: “I dislike much travel or change of environment and prefer the days (each with its own domestic flavour) to come round almost the same, week after week. Only in such circumstances can I find time or peace in which to write.”



# 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.*



## Andrew Morrison

**Name or preferred name?**  
My friends call me Fruity.

**Why that nickname or nom de plume?**

After a hero of mine—Major Edward Dudley “Fruity” Metcalfe MVO, MC. Equerry and best man to the Duke of Windsor.

**Where do you hail from?**

Kirkintilloch, a small semi-formal town north of Glasgow.

**Favourite cocktail?**

A gimlet [gin and lime cordial traditionally, though some use fresh lime juice and sugar syrup —Ed].

**Most Chappist skill?**

I am rather a dab hand at fencing.

**Most Chappist possession?**

My cufflink collection .

**Personal Motto?**

My family one of course, “Dun Eistein” [traditional stronghold of the Morrises of Ness] and “Teaghlach Phabbay” [“Family of Pabbay”, the Morrison family fort Dun Pabbay on the island of Harris —Ed].



**Favourite quotes?**

“Living well is the best revenge.”  
—George Herbert

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

I once rescued a heron from a river. I assure you it is a thrilling tale.

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

Officially only recently. However, I was involved with the old online Sheridan Club [as Leopold Montague Fearnely-Whittingstall; see [www.sheridanclub.co.uk](http://www.sheridanclub.co.uk) —Ed] and arranged some corporeal meetings in Glasgow and Edinburgh many years ago. If I remember correctly, Viscount Rushen and his good lady attended as well as Cyril Browne and a few other good eggs.

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

Interestingly my father happened across *The Chap* magazine in the now sadly defunct Borders bookshop when I was 15. The philosophy and tweed appealed to me greatly.

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

Hailing from Glasgow we are sadly somewhat lacking in such things, but we are fortunate to have a rather excellent tobacconist—Robert Graham 1874, which can be found on West George Street.



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

Freddie Mercury: one of my great regrets in life is that I am too young to have seen him live.

Harry Flashman, the great anti-hero and toady from the eponymous series of novels.

Richard III, a long-time hero of mine and much maligned by those dastardly Tudors.

**Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?**  
Why all of them! It would be like selecting a favourite child.

**Have you done a Turn yet? If so what was it on, if not what are you planning to do?**  
Not yet, but I would very much enjoy a jaunt down to the bright lights of London again soon. In the meanwhile I’ll have a ponder.

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



## The Sheridan Children's Weekend at the Beach

Friday 14th–Sunday 16th May  
 Shear Barn, Barley Lane, Hastings TN35 5DX

Admission: see [www.shearbarn.com](http://www.shearbarn.com)

Have your children spent the pandemic bored & indoors? *writes Ensign Polyethyl*. Would you like them to escape to the Glorious British Seaside, there to run with other Sheridanite children in a mess of icecream, sand and exuberance?

Bring your children to Hastings, staying at Shear Barn Holiday Park, Barley Lane, Hastings, TN35 5DX ([www.shearbarn.com](http://www.shearbarn.com), 01424 423583).

They are offering holiday cabins for three-night stays (sadly tents are still pandemic-banned). We are arriving Friday 14th May evening and departing Sunday 16th May afternoon. Dogs Welcome.

The holiday park is on top of the white cliffs, so we will take a funicular down to Hastings Beach. Braver Sheridanites might try swimming. We'll probably also take a jaunt to Battle and recreate the Battle of Hastings in miniature, hopefully without too many tears or scraped knees. And perhaps visit Hastings Castle. Then back to the holiday park to sit around their lake, drinking, talking, tree climbing and playing chase.

Hope to see your tweed-clad offspring in the May sunshine on the Beach. For any queries, contact me at [jmcpbeattie@hotmail.com](mailto:jmcpbeattie@hotmail.com).



Sun, sand and savoir faire



CLUB NOTES

## Club Members Dominate the Media

NSC MEMBER AND expert on the history of menswear Sean Longden popped up on the latest series of the BBC's *Great British Railway Journeys*, on the "Oxford to Abingdon" episode, talking about Oxford bags—the famously wide trouser on which he gave a talk to the NSC at our Club Night in June 2013. "For once, as their sources are good (i.e. me—but I would say that!) the story is more accurate than is often told," says Sean. "The presenter, former government minister Michael Portillo, appears wearing a pair of SJC summer trousers with a 24 inch ankle and 26 inch knee (the standard measurements of genuine Oxford Bags, rather than the exaggerated styles that are sometimes seen)." You can see the episode on BBC iPlayer.



Meanwhile, Darcy Sullivan's alter ego **The Arkham Hillbilly** continues to put out tentacle-tapping tunes warning us about the Cthulhu Mythos and the eldritch horrors to come. Hear him on Bandcamp.



# Club Tie Corner

STARTING WITH SOME actual ties (clockwise from right) Colonel Choke offers us both a slightly inebriated Charles Collinridge chatting up the ill-fated Mattie Storin in *House of Cards* and this from a small boarding house in Minehead, Somerset, where residents Mr Hilter, “Von” Ribbentrop and Mr Bimler, are planning an excursion; Frances Mitchell collared this chap on a BBC documentary about bent cops; by chance we have both a Club dressing gown from Manny Manchester and a Club bath robe from Ivan Debono. Facing page, clockwise from top left: striking headwear in home-front Nazi-fest *Six Minutes to Midnight*, courtesy of the Earl of Essex; Reggie Armitage (Christopher Scoular) having been shot in the arm by an unknown assailant in an episode of the late 1980s television series *Hannay*, from Lindsay Sinclair; Suzanne Coles celebrates London Fashion Week; Frances celebrates this bulldog; James Rigby spots Peter Purves making off with the Club wheelchair; Suzanne gazes into her wardrobe and finds not a thing to wear; Stuart Turner prefers the livery of the Club’s Kathmandu Chapter.



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Art news:  
(this page,  
clockwise from top  
left) Debono chiselled  
this out of the ruins  
of Pompei; Col. Choke  
unearthed this 17th-  
century Sheridanite  
while looting a  
château; Col. Choke  
observes, "Artifacts  
from the recent  
Lady Edwina Malvern  
Expedition to central  
Africa confirm the  
reach of Sheridanite  
influence—I hear the  
Chairman's book is at

the printers." Mrs H. spotted Torquil doing a spot of gardening; Suzanne has been hard at work exposing the conspiracy linking this Hockney painting to Ludwig van Beethoven, while Col. Choke was busy pilfering this 16th-century Sheridanite. This page, clockwise from top left: top secret experimental dazzle pattern smock leaked by "chatty rat" Luigi Sbaffi; the Club estate's top secret experimental Autotronic tractor; twocked by Debono; the Club's flamingoes have escaped again; Lord Hare (see also the back cover of this issue) holds such influence in the government department where he works that has persuaded them to redecorate in the Club's honour (either that or they've had to set up an entirely new government department just to keep tabs on the misdoings of Club Members), though funds clearly don't stretch to an in-house barber; as if he weren't busy enough, Debono has also bred a Club cockerel, doubtless trained for a new type of cock fighting where contestants rise late and hurl witheringly witty *bons mots* at each other.





## 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.

Since we're still under a lockdown for most social activity, scheduled physical events may be cancelled so do check.

### 🍷 NSC Virtual Club Night

Wednesday 5th May  
7pm GMT

See page 2. Priya Kalia on *Jugendstil in Helsinki: An Art Nouveau-Style Movement*. She's hoping to include walking-tour video clips in her presentation to add to the giddy verité

The talk will be delivered online via YouTube at 8pm: use the link <https://youtu.be/P8-RA6SppgY>.

There will also be a social Zoom meeting from 7pm and resuming after the lecture. The link for that is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85365352057?pwd=aU1nbGNvZGxWbkZEVjJONytnRndQUT09> (meeting ID: 853 6535 2057, passcode: 943560).

There is a Facebook event at <https://www.facebook.com/events/636240164184043>.

### Jazz at the Movies

Wednesdays 5th, 12th and 19th May  
8pm  
Online

Admission: £6 from [www.hotjazzrag.com](http://www.hotjazzrag.com)

As part of dance teacher Nikki Santilli's online Rhythm & Book series of Wednesday night talks, these three focus on jazz music in the movies. On 5th May Emily O'Hara and Nicholas Ball will talk about Jazz in Silent Movies (I guess this means the live accompaniment), and how their Lucky Dog Picture House goes about scoring and performing live silent film soundtracks, based on

authentic historical practices. On 12th May Alice Mary Williamson will talk about The Golden Age of Hollywood and on 19th May it's Film Noir Soundtracks from Florence Joelle. I'm assuming you'll be sent the links when you buy your ticket (note that booking closes two hours before the talk).

### Hackney Ethical Market

Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th May  
11am-6pm  
Bohemia Place, London E8 1DU  
Admission: Free, with optional £2 donation

Although the emphasis is on "ethical" fashion, this evidently includes rare and vintage schmutter too. Beware: there will be "upcycling workshops" and vegan street food. Although I'm not sure if it is mandatory, you can book tickets online (perhaps numbers are limited under Covid restrictions) through the Facebook event and Eventbrite.

### Alex Mendham and his Orchestra:

#### Live from London

Wednesday 12th May  
7pm

Online via YouTube

Admission: £8 for just the streamed concert; £12 for the concert plus participation in a Q&A with Alex afterwards



Take pot luck at the Hackney Ethical Market



Catch Alex Mendham and his band live via YouTube

Like all musicians, Alex and his 11-piece dance orchestra have had a lot of plans cancelled or postponed over the last year (including a residency on the *Queen Mary 2*, which has been pushed on to April 2022). So they are webcasting a live performance from (somewhere in) London. All the money raised goes directly to the musicians. For an extra £4 you get to participate in an after-party Q&A session with Alex, in which each paying guest gets to ask him one question. More details at [www.alexmendham.com](http://www.alexmendham.com).

### 🍷 NSC Quiz Night

Wednesday 12th May  
8pm

Online via Zoom: <https://bit.ly/3xMX135>

Admission: Free

Continuing our series of NSC virtual pub quizzes for now, our host this time will be our chairman, Torquil Arbuthnot. You'll need the (free) Zoom app installed, which should launch automatically when you click on the meeting's weblink above. (You can go directly via Zoom: the meeting ID is 858 4540 3613 and the passcode is 974905.) The meeting starts about 15 minutes early to allow people to register

their teams if they haven't already done so. The quiz will have 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.

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

Friday 14th-Sunday 16th May  
Shear Barn, Barley Lane, Hastings TN35 5DX  
Admission: see

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

Now a regular fixture in the Sheridan calendar: bring your tweed-clad children for a weekend by the seaside, enjoying British weather, ice cream, playing on Hastings Sands, flying kites, sea bathing, riding the cliff train, exploring Hastings Castle, etc. Please book your tent/caravan pitch or holiday cabin directly (see [www.shearbarn.com](http://www.shearbarn.com)). Dogs welcome.



Learn all about music in the movies at three Rhythm & Book talks this month



Premonition, 1937, by Walter Nessler, on display at the RAF Museum

### Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair

Sunday 16th May

11am–5pm

On Instagram at @clerkenwellvint

Admission: Free

Normally a physical fair full of stallholders in a civic hall, for the seventh 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.*”

### In Air and Fire

Reopening 17th May

Until 12 September 2021

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



Snap up some olden goodies at the Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair online



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.

### NSC Quiz Night

Wednesday 19th May

8pm

Online via Zoom: <https://bit.ly/3nLzYRG>

Admission: Free

See above. Our hosts this time will be Rachel Downer and Paul Effeny. You’ll need the (free) Zoom app installed, which should launch automatically when you click on the meeting’s weblink above. (You can go directly via Zoom:

the meeting ID is 894 9477 1064 and the passcode is 336291.)

### Vintage Vehicles

Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd May

10.30am–5pm

The Watercress Line, Alresford Station, Station Road, New Alresford, Hampshire SO24 9JG  
Admission: Adult £5; child £3; family (up to 3 children) £15

A festival of classic cars, motorcycles, tractors and commercial vehicles as well as large and miniature traction engines and steam lorries, on display around the Watercress Line, a ten-mile preserved stream railway. Fares are for standard all-day access to the rail line, with the vintage vehicle display as a bonus on this weekend upon presentation of your Watercress Line ticket. The vehicles will in two car parks at Ropley station (SO24 0BL), where there is also free parking for visitors. More details at [watercressline.co.uk](http://watercressline.co.uk).

### NSC Quiz Night

Wednesday 26th May

8pm

Online via Zoom: <https://bit.ly/3ejRTfb>

Admission: Free

See above. Our host this time will be Tony Reid. You’ll need the (free) Zoom app installed, which should launch automatically when you click on the meeting’s weblink. (You can go directly via Zoom: the meeting ID is 872 7622 9039 and the passcode is 303774.)



Steam engines large and small at the Watercress Line’s Vintage Vehicles event



Lord Hare keeping the side up sartorially, as he poses with a vintage motor wheeled in to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Ministry of Transport, where he earns a crust