



DESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB

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Shakespeare's theatrical world

Callum Coates's journey of discovery and his role in rebuilding the Globe theatre

John P. Marquand

Torquil Arbuthot on this forgotten novelist of manners

What's wrong with tablecloths?

Luca Jellinek makes a plea for elegance

Chocks away!

Talking bow ties and aero engines with Bruce Partington-Plans

Brideshead Revisited Revisited

The New Sheridan Club
summer party



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.

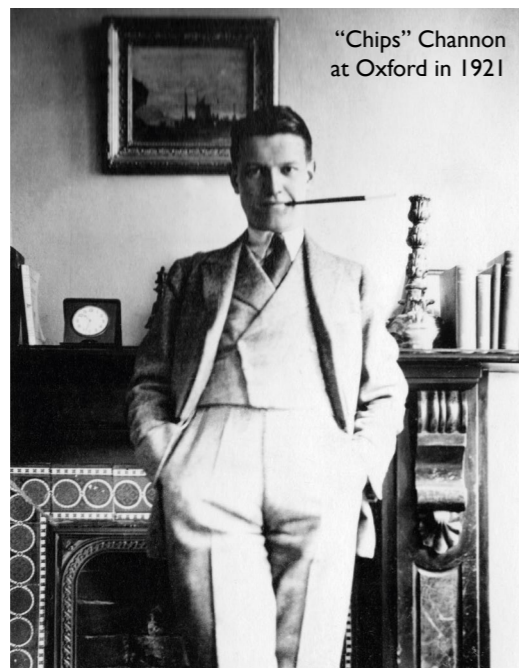
The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on **Wednesday 4th August** in the upstairs room of the Wheatsheaf pub at 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB. Yes, the time has come at last for our corporeal meetings to resume, now that pubs are open and "Freedom Day" has passed.

This month the Earl of Essex will treat us to a follow-up to his previous July 2012 talk about scandalous MP Sir Henry "Chips" Channon—this time with reference to new fully-disclosed observations from the recently-published revised version of Volume One of his diaries (1918–38).

After 17 months of virtual meetings and live-streamed talks, we are hoping to capitalise on the technological know-how gained and live-stream the talk from the pub, for the benefit of those who can't make it in person. We did this once before, last September, when we were briefly allowed back into pubs, and it seemed to work (although the pub's wife is the weak link in all of this). The YouTube link to watch live is https://youtu.be/JbIx_DDBqtY.

We'll have the usual private use of the upstairs room; last time it was waitress service only but I assume everything is now back to normal. Some of you may



still be wary about attending, what with the Delta Variant at large, but at the same time others are itching to return to physical meetings, and it is nice to be able to put some trade the way of David the landlord.

There is a Facebook event for this meeting at www.facebook.com/events/353577296258650.

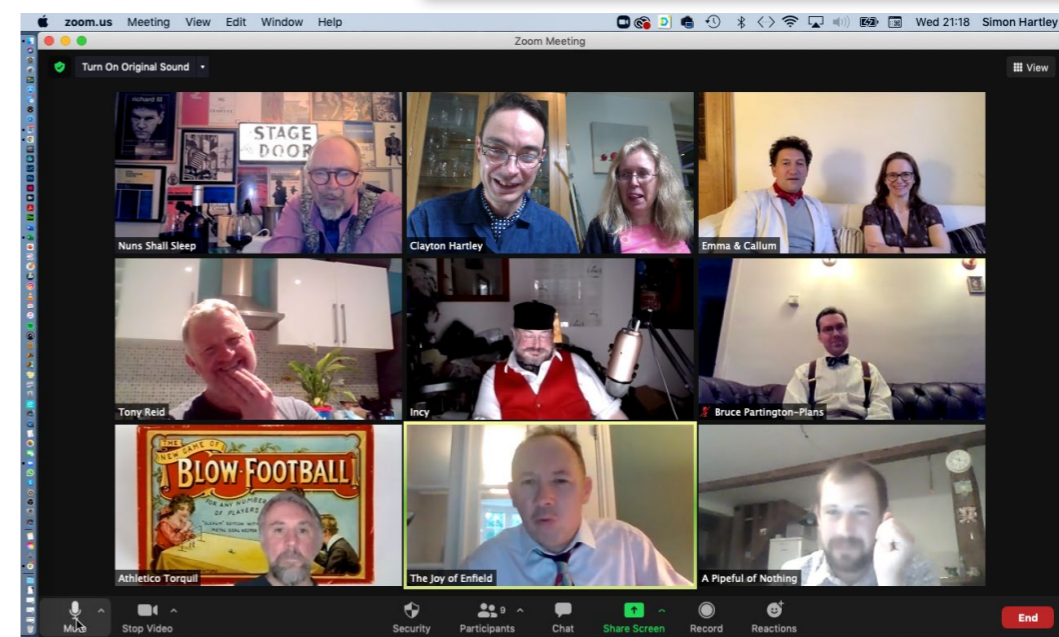
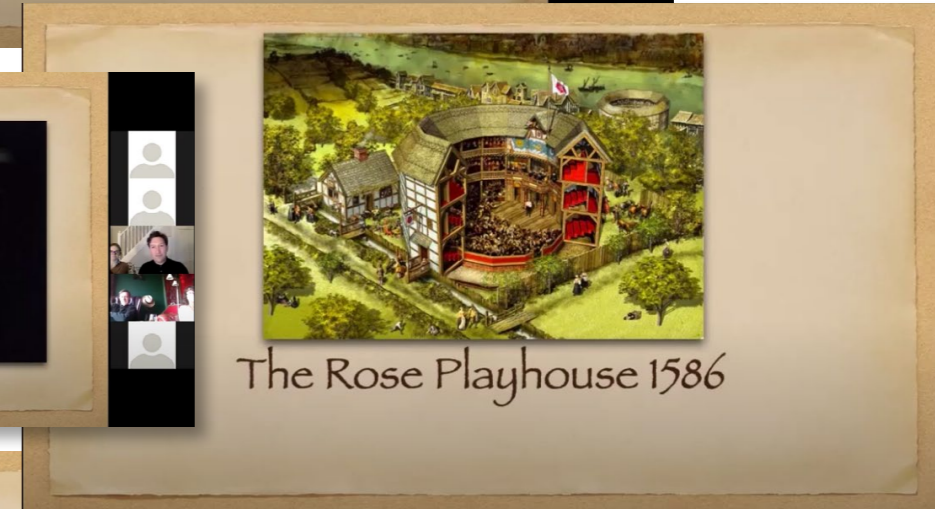
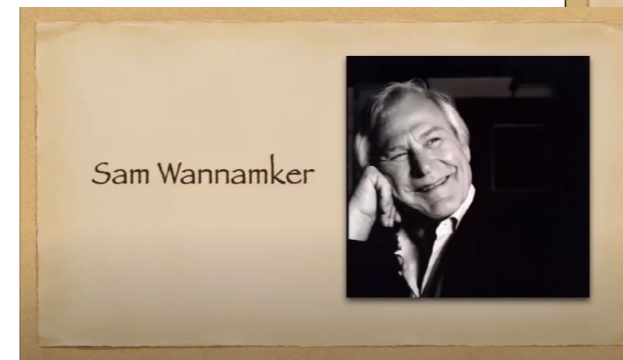
The Last Meeting

Having had to pull out of the June slot at short notice, Callum Coates treated us to his intended talk in July instead. And what a treat it was. As an actor he used to have an uncomfortable relationship with Shakespeare, wondering why something intended as mass entertainment was often rendered boring in production. This led to a personal quest to investigate the true nature of theatre as it was experienced in the Bard's day, and Callum's personal involvement with the preservation of the Rose theatre and the rebuilding of the Globe. We learned the perils and pleasures of performing in the open air and so close to the audience.

A video of the talk can be found on the New Sheridan Club YouTube channel. An essay version begins on page 4.



Highlights from Callum's excellent lecture. You can see a video of the full talk on the NSC YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/VRvv3XlxqI> with 60 minutes of presentation followed by 30 minutes of (edited) questions.



(Left) Lockdown officially ended on 19th July but we continued our weekly virtual pub quizzes until the end of the month and the return of our physical meetings. Moreover, virtual events are clearly a boon for Members who are not near London, so from August we will continue the quizzes on a monthly basis. Many thanks to all who attended over the last 17 months and to those who set questions, sometimes at very short notice!

Mr Shakespeare or How I Learned to Stop Loathing and Love the Bard

By *Master Callum Coates*

SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE ON BANKSIDE is a modern reconstruction—a conjecture of what the playhouse, so famously linked to The Bard, may have been like. It has been my workplace on and off for 27 years and my connection to it goes back to my childhood. I am an actor by profession but have worked for the Globe in myriad guises over the years, most frequently and consistently as a tour guide.

The idea for rebuilding the Globe goes back much further than most realise. In 1897, English actor William Poel decided to see if he could present Shakespeare in a similar manner to that in which it had first been done. He hired Middle Temple Hall, the building in which

Twelfth Night was premiered on Candlemas Eve in 1602 and presented that same play, with a cast of twelve, all in convincingly real looking Elizabethan clothes.

It went down well and was a huge contrast to the massively over done performances of the time that frequently featured real horses, numerous extras and realistic scenery, with changes so complex that the text was eviscerated to shorten running times. He then took his idea to the West End and created a simple set that looked a bit like an Elizabethan stage; what he realised was missing of course, was the rest of the building. He collaborated with the architect Edwin Lutyens and in 1912 built a replica



The 1912 Earl's Court replica

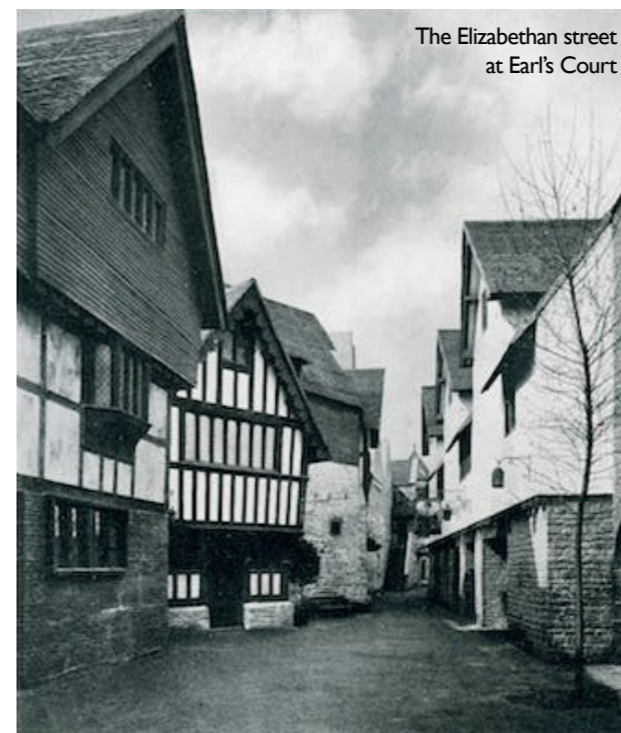
pilgrimage to Bankside to find the real Globe theatre. He found the area derelict and forgotten; bomb sites still abandoned and overgrown, warehouses empty and crumbling. He ended up in the Anchor pub, and enquired if anyone knew where the Globe Playhouse was: he was directed to a plaque on the wall of a brewery bottling plant, placed there just 41 years before. Sam was astounded that the only thing marking Shakespeare's

workplace and, arguably, the birthplace of modern theatre, was a humble bronze plaque.

Over the next 20 years, Sam tried to inspire various members of the English establishment to get behind him and his idea for rebuilding the Globe on its original site. He met resistance and derision at most quarters, but being from Chicago, Sam did not have “no” in his vocabulary. Along the way he met architect, Theo Crosby, who was enthralled and got on board with all sorts of ideas as to what they could achieve. I think it was Theo who suggested building with period-correct materials and using as faithful a design as they could. Neither he nor Sam, were historians nor archaeologists, however, and they knew they needed to get some on board if they were to produce anything like the real thing.

Somehow, Sam persuaded the local council to donate a plot of land on which he would eventually build. The land was an empty plot where a recently-demolished paint factory had been, and was now being used to park the council's refuse vehicles. No one in Southwark council saw any value in the land, so gladly agreed to Sam's having it for a peppercorn rent. Literally. I'm still trying to find out when it began but at some point in the new Globe's history, a jar of pepper corns was sent to the council by way of rent. By the 1990s it was accompanied by a fanfaring trumpeter on at least one occasion.

Sam also acquired a derelict warehouse on Bear Gardens (the street named after the Bear Baiting arenae that had stood there during the 16th and 17th centuries) and there established a small museum; rooms for academic conferences;



The Elizabethan street at Earl's Court

Globe at the Earls Court Exhibition centre and, as far as I can tell, put on plays throughout the summer. Not only did they build the playhouse, but also a Tudor style street with taverns and shops. It seems as though the plan was to find a permanent home for the replica Globe but sadly the Great War got in the way of the plan and nothing ever came of it.

However, in 1933, an “Old Globe Theater” was built in Chicago for the Century of Progress International Exposition and another in 1936 in Cleveland Ohio for the Great Lakes Exposition. A teenage actor called Sam Wanamaker saw these reconstructions, and it planted a seed in his mind.

When Sam moved to England in 1949, one of the first things he did was to make a

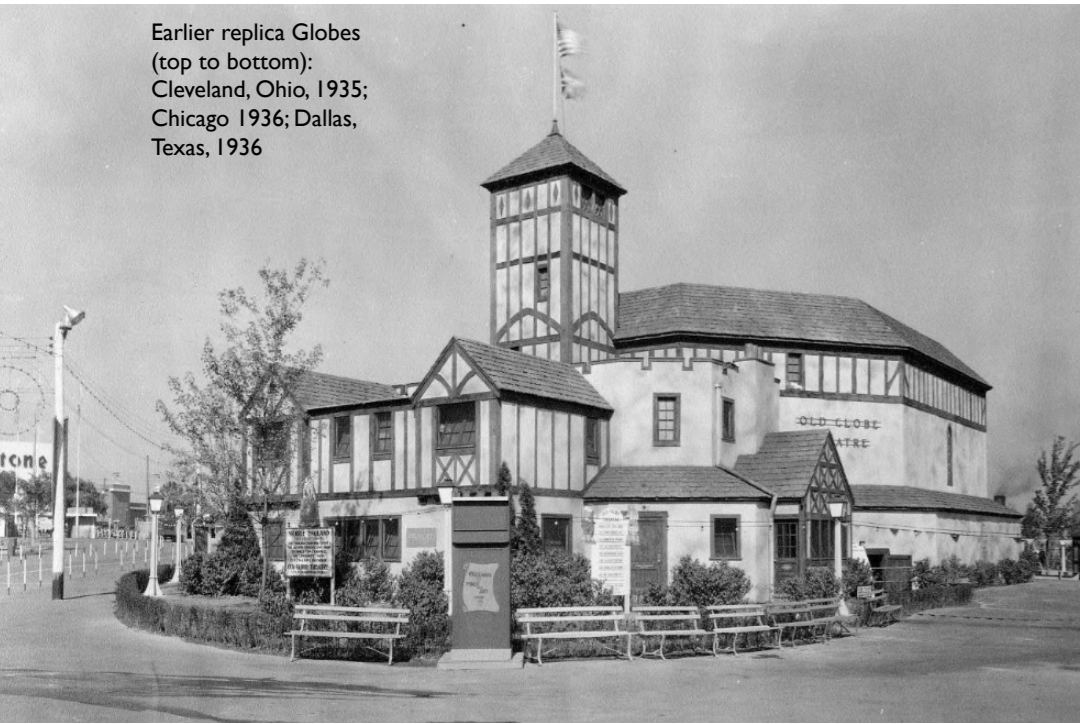


The Globe reconstruction today



Sam Wanamaker

Earlier replica Globes
(top to bottom):
Cleveland, Ohio, 1935;
Chicago 1936; Dallas,
Texas, 1936



offices and a theatre for performances and educational outreach. It was something to remain at the very core of the Globe to this day.

By weird coincidence, it was to this new museum that my mother drove my brother and me in one of those long summers of the early 1970s. My legs had stuck to the vinyl seats of our Morris 1000 and I genuinely remember the sound of the wheels on the cobbles as we pulled up outside the Bear Gardens. “Bear Gardens? Is that like a Beer Garden?” five-year-old me wondered. I never found out, as the museum was shut and our long journey had been in vain, but my connection to the project had begun.

So now with a base, a plot of land and a host of academics on board, the real work of designing the new Globe could begin. How big was it? How many did it hold? What was it made from? How was it decorated? How was it used? These were all questions to which many different professors had many different arguments and often quite conflicting ideas. The evidence was sparse. The handful of exterior views of the Globe merely suggested that it was polygonal but did not agree on the size or number of sides. There are no known interior views of the



Architect
Theo Crosby



The Anchor
at Bankside
as it looked
when Sam
first visited

Globe. The only picture of an Elizabethan stage that is known to exist is of the Swan Playhouse. There are written descriptions of the Globe but frustratingly lacking in any useful detail. There are the plays that could be mined for clues; there are contemporary buildings that give an idea of the aesthetic; and there are craftsmen whose skills have been handed down over the centuries. Sam Wanamaker also knew that an actor's instinct would be of genuine use but most of all, an audience's response. But the Catch-22 of the last was you can't get that until you build...

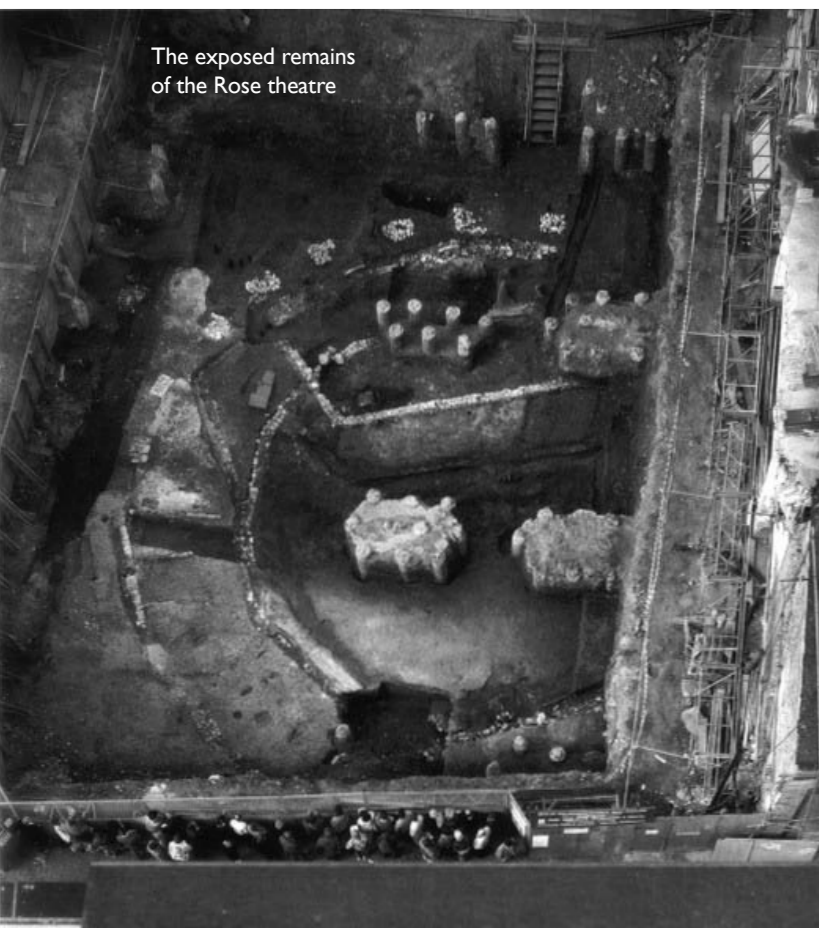
The next time I had a personal connection with the project is when I was doing my A-levels. I was not a fan of Shakespeare (despite my mother's best efforts) and English Literature seemed to be doing its level best to sap any life the plays had, with a deeply dull curriculum and a deeply dull teacher. Drama, however, showed it in a totally different light and my Theatre Studies class were taken on a field trip to the Bear Gardens for a day-long workshop. There I learned that plays were done in the afternoon, in daylight and the audience and actors could all see each other the entire time. Suddenly the constant references to time, the moon, the sun, etc., made sense, as did monologues—they were not monologues but direct addresses to the audience. The actors had minimal scenery—hence the constant references to where they are.

The actors were all male, hence the many plays with cross-dressing plots. It was all very meta. Shakespeare's audience were largely working class. They were as passionate about theatre as modern youth are about football—they stood, they heckled, they joined in, they drank beer, they really enjoyed it! It was a light bulb moment, made even better for teenage me by our illicit lunchtime pints in the Anchor pub. I had been converted to the idea that context matters, and the idea of wanting to rebuild the Globe became of immense fascination to me.

In 1989 there was a great leap forward in the understanding of Early Modern Theatre, when the remains of The Rose Playhouse, built in 1587, were uncovered following the demolition of a 1950s office block. Almost the entire ground level of the Rose was intact. The floor on which Marlowe had stood to hear his plays was there. The foundations of the stage where Shakespeare's Henry VI was premiered, were there. So too was evidence of food and drinks enjoyed, how money was taken, who sat where (broken glass to the sides and rear of the stage indicates that's where the rich sat, and drank). The foundations of the perimeter walls were fully intact, enabling a confident reconstruction of how big it was, how many sides it had and to some extent, even how tall it was and how many storeys it had. It's well



Reconstructed image of the Rose



The exposed remains of the Rose theatre

Unfortunately the property developers were losing a great deal of money while the dig continued, and were very keen to get on with construction and the inevitable destruction of the remains. A public outcry ensued, fanned by Heritage Secretary Nicholas Ridley's refusal to acknowledge it as a site of National Importance. People came to the site of the Rose to protest. To wave banners and don T-shirts bearing the slogan, SAVE THE ROSE or DONT DOSE THE ROSE. Schoolchildren came in droves, celebrities, jobbing actors, historians, librarians, road sweeps, cabbies and all walks of life took it on themselves to demand the preservation of the only Elizabethan theatre then to have been discovered.

I was amongst them, with many of my colleagues from drama school. In the Anchor pub one night, some of us decided we would not let the bulldozers on site to destroy our history. We went home, grabbed sleeping bags and camped out on the pavement every night, intent on throwing ourselves in front of the bulldozers when they came. After a while Timothy Dalton paid for a portacabin/ command centre caravan to use as a base for our operations. It was during this time that I met Sam Wanamaker. He invited us into his office, opposite the excavations, to warm up in the mornings, have coffee and a bit of a wash and frequently a bit of a chat. I liked him immensely

worth looking at DeMontfort University's recent VR reconstruction, based on the archaeology (see www.dmu.ac.uk/about-dmu/news/2019/july/watch-immersive-video-allows-you-to-experience-life-for-elizabethan-theatre-goers.aspx.)

but at the time thought that the actual remains were far more important than his reconstruction could ever be—oh, the arrogance of youth. For much of the summer of 1989 we felt as though we had joined the great student protests of history and were playing a vital role.

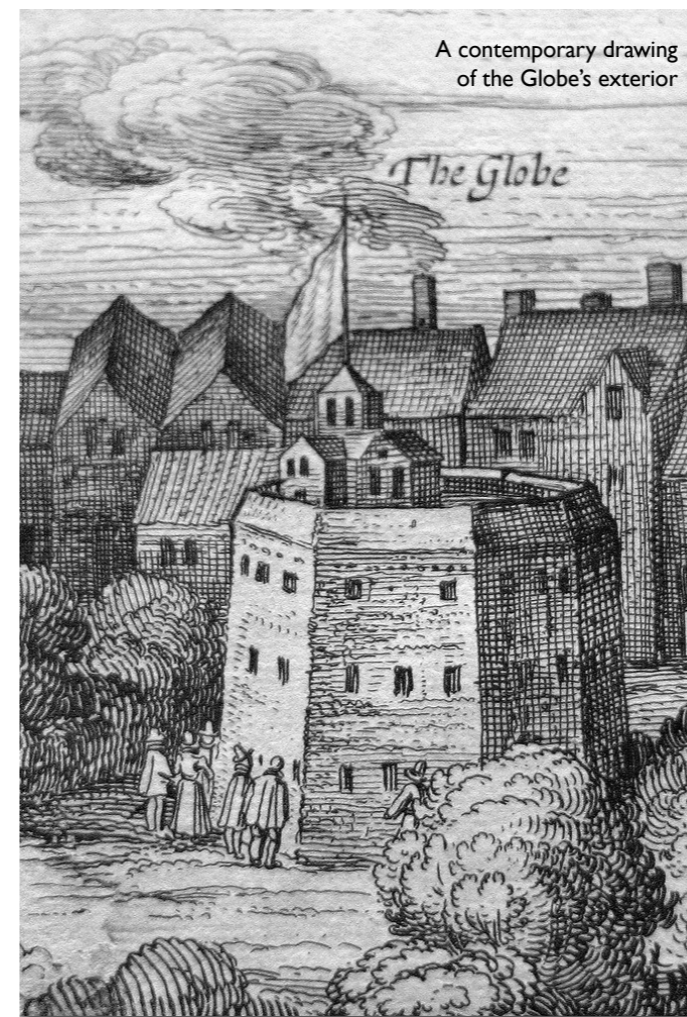
The upshot of the campaign, the public interest and the publicity generated by luminaries such as Ian McKellen, Brian Cox, Vanessa Redgrave and Sir Lawrence Olivier, was that the office block was redesigned so as not to damage the Rose remains and the office block could be put up with clear consciences all round.

Us radical drama students however saw it as our Les Mis moment and decided to barricade the site from the bulldozers as best we could. On the day they arrived, Nick Moran was padlocked to a concrete outcrop in the middle of the playhouse yard and I ran up Fleet Street to alert Reuters. By the time I had returned with hacks and photographers in tow, Nick had been cut free and carted off in a police van. Our act of defiance was entirely unnecessary, I'm sure, but we had our moment of glory and were terribly proud of ourselves.

Under the direction of the Museum of London, the remains were covered in an inert sand, a special membrane, monitoring systems,

more sand; covered with a concrete cap and then flooded, to protect the remains for a future uncovering. That future still has not arrived but hopefully one day, the theatre that gave Shakespeare some of his earliest opportunities, and in which Marlowe's plays enthralled the London labourers, will be on display once more.

Four years later I had joined The Original Shakespeare Company, which attempted to explore performance practice of the Early Modern playhouses. From the accounts of the Rose, we know that The Admiral's Men and several other acting troupes were able to present five or six different plays each week. They could present a new play almost every fortnight. In one year they may have done over 36 different plays. And the plays were being presented in the afternoons. When on earth did they rehearse? How did they rehearse? The OSC decided that it might be fun to do Shakespeare with no rehearsal, just to see what might happen. No director. No designer. No overarching concepts. Just let the actors do what they feel serves the play. And just to add a further frisson, 400 years ago the actors did not get a copy of the play to study but just the words they needed to memorise and a few cue words. They learned their lines with no idea of what the play was about, or at

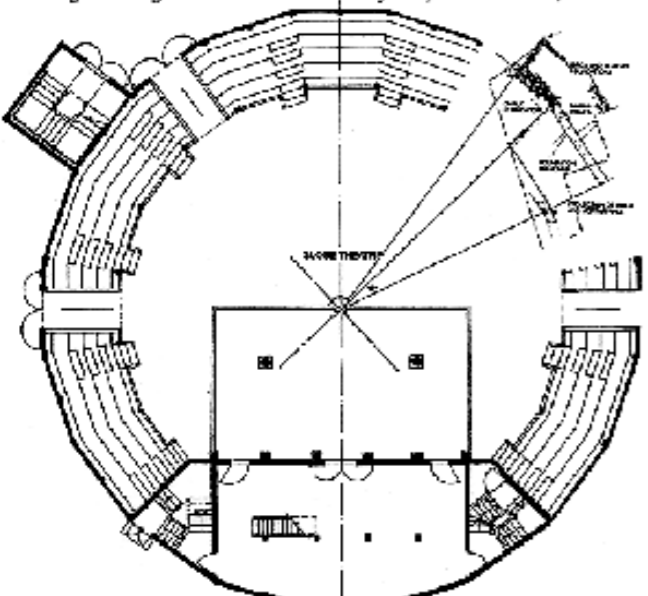


A contemporary drawing of the Globe's exterior

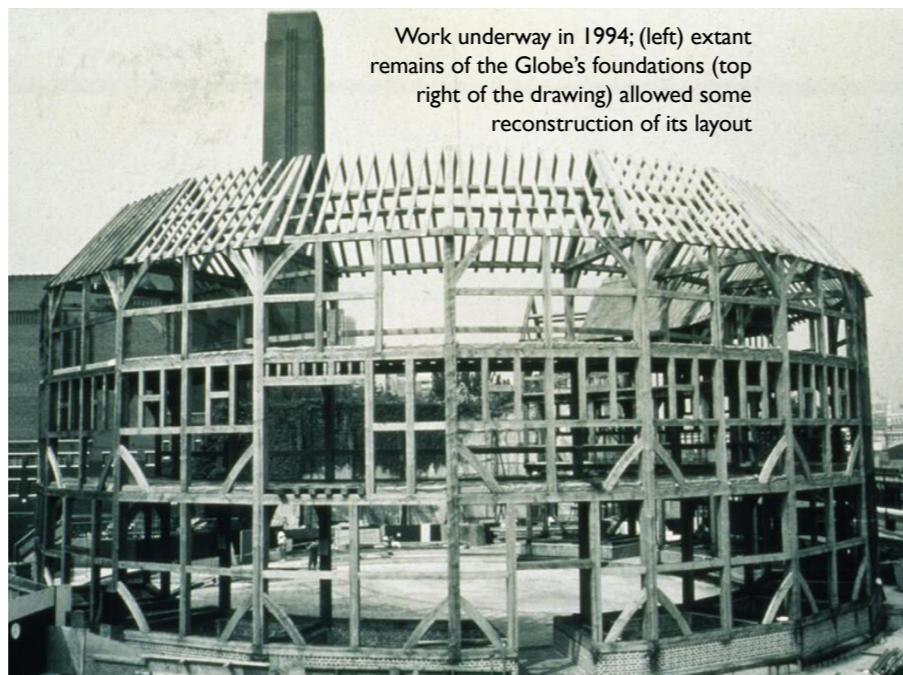


Another contemporary resource: a drawing (actually a drawing of a drawing) of the Swan theatre by a Dutch visitor

© Pentagram Design Ltd. London. Theo Crosby and John Greenfield, architects.



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Work underway in 1994; (left) extant remains of the Globe's foundations (top right of the drawing) allowed some reconstruction of its layout

least with no way of studying the whole piece. A "part" survives that belonged to Edward Alleyn (he that established Dulwich College as a way of buying his way in to heaven after his sinful life). It is all handwritten and has long black lines, terminating in a few words. Those are his cues from another actor. That is followed by one of his speeches. Then another black line and so on. Nothing explains who says the words at the end of the line or when they come...

So, the OSC was invited to perform at the new Globe, which was still under construction. There was hardly anything of the Globe in place, just two oak-framed bays standing on either side of the temporary scaffold stage and a concrete circle topped by stadium seating. But it was exhilarating to be part of the first performances in that space. We did *A Midsomer Night's Dreame* and *The Merchant of Venice*. From

there we went to the Neuss Globe, another Elizabethan style theatre near Dusseldorf, built in 1989 (though constructed of rather Teutonic steel and Formica, instead of English oak and lime plaster). Playing in both spaces I realised that they had a profound effect on how you perform the plays and how they were enjoyed by the audience. Sadly, not long after those first performances, Sam Wanamaker died, but at least he knew it was going to get built.

The following year I was passing the Globe construction site and, seeing an open hoarding, let myself in. Before long, a very well dressed lady came out of a PortaCabin to stop me. "You can't come in here; it's a building site."

"Yes. Sorry. I played here last year and just wanted to see how it's getting on." Sandra Moretto went on to explain how they were getting on and that they had decided that



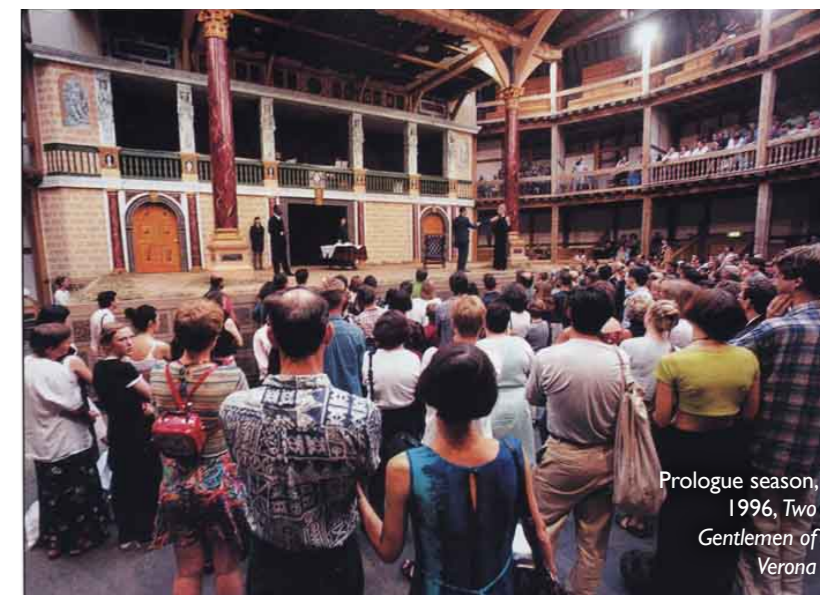
The tour guide team during construction, with Callum third from right in sunglasses

people would want to see it being constructed and that they were planning to give guided tours of the site. "Who's going to do the guiding?" She didn't know. "I will. I'd love to be involved." By July 1994, I had joined a small team of Shakespeare enthusiasts who had spent months studying everything we could about the original playhouses. I got to know the carpenters, the plasterers and the architects. I attended the academic conferences still under way. The Globe became an all consuming thing and I feel privileged to have been around in its early stages.

As the building progressed it was clear that the productions that would open the theatre would need to be approached in a totally different way from elsewhere. It was decided that there should be a series of workshop performances to explore the space and how to use it. The auditorium was now finished enough to have people sitting in the galleries and standing in the yard, but the stage still had not been built. Another temporary scaffold stage was put up but this time with a roof supported with pillars. A month was spent working on the stage and debating findings as we went. It became clear that Early Modern plays had been written for this style of theatre very specifically and the audiences' responses were extraordinary. However, we were not happy with the design of the stage. The pillars and doors were in the wrong place. The dynamics just didn't work. Now was the time for the actors' instincts to be added to the voices of academics, archaeologists and architects. A post-season conference came to the conclusion that we would need another stage built, but one that would more closely resemble the final product. By dint of being one of the youngest actors to have been involved in the experimental performances so far, I ended up being asked to join a working party to consider the final design of the stage. After much debate with historians, archaeologists, highly respected (and famous)



Workshop season, 1995



Prologue season, 1996, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*

theatre practitioners and little me, we settled on yet another scheme.

After a Prologue Season in 1996, with another temporary stage to test the new design, the oak timbers were finally brought into the site the following year and, after a mad scramble to get the thing finished, Shakespeare's Globe opened with a specially commissioned play about Sam Wanamaker's struggle, *Triumph and Mirths*. In the audience sat one of the passionate and committed patrons of the project, the Duke of Edinburgh, who had shown a keen interest in Sam's project from its earliest of days. Next to the Duke was HM Queen Elizabeth II and, in the yard, on horseback no less, was Queen Elizabeth I (in the form of Jane Lapotaire). If only Sam had been there too, but in his stead was his daughter Zoe.

The Life of Henry The Fifth was the first of Shakespeare's plays to be performed that year, largely because it is a play that makes absolute



Globe interior today

sense in “This Wooden O”. The actors were dressed in handmade clothes of the Elizabethan era (as opposed to theatrical costumes). The music was played on replica instruments and the acting company was all male. To me, it was one of the most exciting things I had ever seen on stage. Everything seemed right. Everything made absolute sense and suddenly the play was completely illuminated. I don’t know anyone who saw it that did not think it was revelatory.

Incidentally, you often hear that it was illegal for women to be actors in Shakespeare’s time. As far as I can find, that isn’t true. I cannot find any statute that prohibits it. In fact, in 1610, when Thomas Coryat is in Italy he says, “[Here] I saw women acte, a thing that I never saw before, though I have heard that it hath been sometimes used in London, and they performed it with as good grace, action, gesture and whatsoever convenient for a Player as ever I saw any masculine Actor.” They must have been very good. When it has been done well at the new Globe, it has really worked but there have been equally fabulous all-women productions and shows where men played women and women played men. Why not? Everyone on stage is pretending to be something they’re not.

In that opening season, I was lucky enough to play Touchstone in The Original Shakespeare Company’s *As You Like It*. As with our previous shows it was done with almost no rehearsal and working from cue scripts. To walk on the Globe stage in front of 1,500, with no idea how the play would go was one of the highlights of my career and the audience response was ecstatic. It

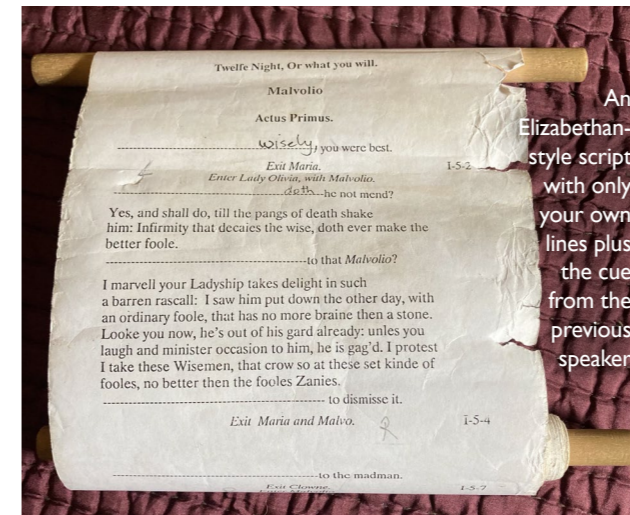
was something we would also do with *King John* and *Cymbeline* in the following seasons.

Perhaps the most extraordinary production I was fortunate enough to be a part of, was the Globe’s first *Romeo and Juliet*. It was another of the shows where the clothes were all handmade using Early Modern techniques and fabrics. Little expense was spared. The fabric for my doublet was handwoven in Italy and the sleeves were made of real cloth of gold, covered in carnation silk, slashed so you could see the gold beneath. My hat had a real bird of paradise feather, for which special permission had to be sought. We learnt how to fight with rapiers and daggers using period-correct techniques. We had to learn period-correct dances and manners, bows and other courtesies, etc. Unlike the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, most of the female roles were played by women: our Juliet was Kananu Kirimi (and our Romeo was Tom Burke) but our Nurse was a man—the rather fabulous cabaret artist, Bette Bourne, who was simply extraordinary. We strove to find all the truths in the play and not impose any concepts.

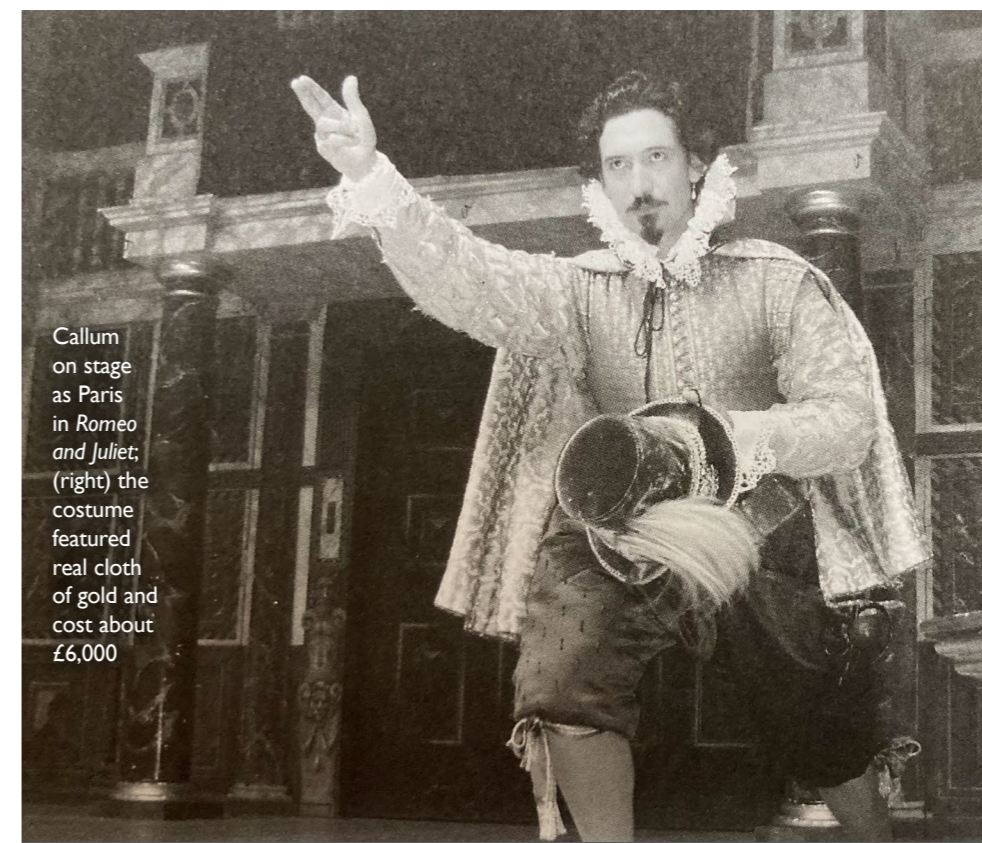
No one knows for certain what the acting style was at the time, but the clothes, shoes, and weaponry almost automatically make you move in a way that is very different from modern life. So we made no attempt to argue our acting was Elizabethan, but we certainly were not quite modern. However, one somewhat leftfield idea from Mark Rylance was to question how people spoke 400 years ago. Did they sound anything like John Gielgud or Sir Larry? The assumption was no, but linguist David Crystal

was drafted in to see if he could tell us.

David had spent much of his career trying to work out how English sounded throughout the centuries and was delighted to be able to use us as a practical experiment in Elizabethan pronunciation. It’s not really possible to describe it here, so Google David (or Ben) Crystal and “Elizabethan pronunciation” and you’ll be able to hear them. It’s not RP. It’s earthy. It’s both urban and rural. Some of it is West Country, some of it Geordie, some Cockney, some Derry. Rhymes work that don’t in RP. Rhythms work that don’t in RP. Best of all, my character, Paris, suddenly gained far more sympathy from the audience. No longer was he the posh interloper that no one in the yard liked. Upon his/my death, the audience finally seemed to see the tragedy of his situation. Just because I wasn’t speaking RP. It was very, very intriguing.



An Elizabethan-style script with only your own lines plus the cue from the previous speaker



Callum on stage as Paris in *Romeo and Juliet*; (right) the costume featured real cloth of gold and cost about £6,000

Over the years the Globe has presented plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries and also, perhaps more importantly, modern plays, written for the unique space. When presenting a new play, in a modern style of acting, with modern music and choreography, in modern clothes, it is arguably the only time that Elizabethan practice is being followed.

I think I was very lucky to have been involved in the early years and to have seen and experienced the unique Original Practice productions. I doubt that you’ll ever see it again—it’s prohibitively expensive! Like all theatre it was ephemeral and transient. Ben Johnson said of Shakespeare that “he was not of an Age, but for all time!” and over the last 25 years, the Globe has shown very well that you can do almost anything with Shakespeare. It won’t always be to everyone’s taste but if you haven’t yet been, it’s worth going just to be part of that shared space, where actors and audience are interactive; where the building is as much part of the show as the actors and where the words come to life in a way that is simply not possible in a Victorian theatre.

Best of all, it’s stupidly cheap. If you can stand for the length of a play, it costs £5. In 1599, it cost 1d (one sixth of low paid labourer’s daily wage), so I think that means that it is now cheaper to be a groundling that it was when Shakespeare was in the cast...



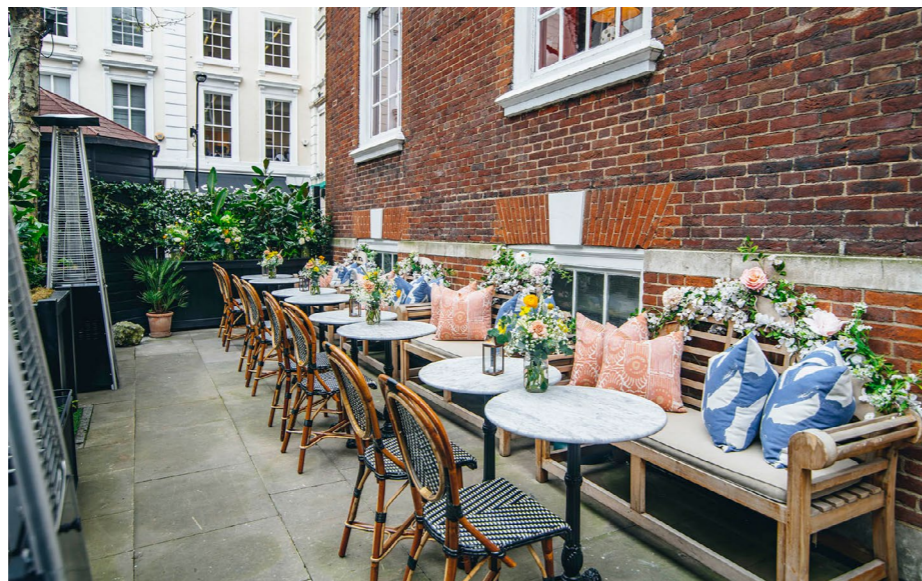
THE CORAL ROOM

A BRIGHT SPOT IN BLOOMSBURY

By Luca Jellinek



THE STORY OF how we are able to enjoy a jolly nice place like the Coral Room is not a new one. In fact, it is a well-rehearsed narrative and *that* is what's great about it. Start with a fine, early 20th-century building that has outlived its original purpose; in this case, the Neo-Georgian former London headquarters of the Young Women's Christian Association, completed in 1932 to a design by prominent architect Sir E.L. Lutyens. Turn it into a hotel; in this case the Bloomsbury Hotel, on Great Russell Street. Create, from scratch, a spacious and impressive drinking den with a catchy name and a back-lit main bar—*voilà*: the Coral Room. We can only celebrate the fact that, since the early 2000s, through a time of general social decadence in aesthetics and demeanour, the



hospitality industry has created or renovated a record number of spaces that are welcoming and visually impressive.

Taking its name from the vibrant but attractive paint scheme, the design of this



is out there); Mint Juleps rigorously served in attractive metal cup.

Seating limits were still in place in early July, so we gathered a small subset of NSC stalwarts. The annoying necessity (plague rules) of studying the menu via an “app”, coupled with our impatient

2018 renovation was led by Martin Brudnizki, also involved with places like the Dean Street Townhouse, Hix, Scarfes Bar and the Ivy. Not unlike other rooms designed by Mr Brudnizki, the individual details are deceptively modern but the overall effect is satisfyingly redolent of a more elegant era, in this case the early 20th century. The ambition, according to the blurbs, was to create the ambience of “an exquisite country house transported to the city”. The specific stylistic choices seem relatively urbane, rather than bucolic but nonetheless a sense of elegant relaxation does come across.

thirst, meant that we only realised later in the evening that the Coral Room makes it rather a specialty to stock an impressive array of English sparkling wine. We'll no doubt sample some home-grown bubbly on our next visit. What about the damage? By the rapacious standards of London lux hotel prices, the average cost per drink compares quite favourably.

The Coral Room at the Bloomsbury Hotel, 16–22 Great Russell St, Bloomsbury, WC1B 3NN (020 7347 1221)

We had been meaning to give the Coral Room a go since it opened but individual circumstances and a global pandemic conspired to delay our visit until recently. The first thing to say is that the service, on a relatively quiet evening, was decidedly courteous. All the Murano chandeliers in this world can't rescue off-hand staff but that is clearly not a problem there. The drinks and bar snacks were well-received: Champagne chilled to the right temperature and evidently well-kept (it's astounding how much heat-spoilt champagne

This article first appeared on www.wonderland.city



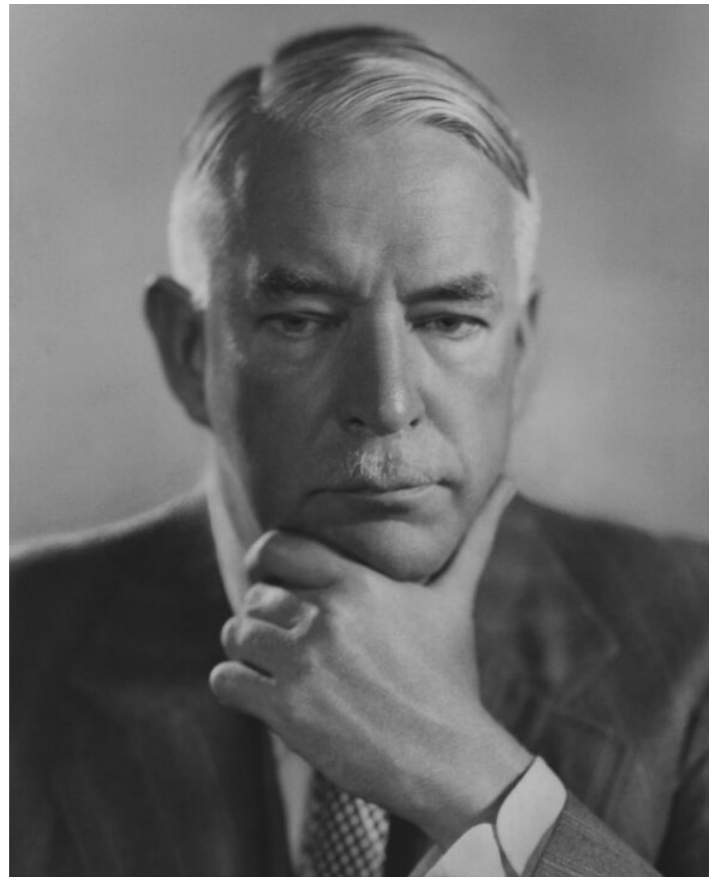
Left to right: Stuart Mitchell, Frances Mitchell, Luca Jellinek, Luigi Sbaffi, Torquil Arbutnot

NEGLECTED AUTHORS

JOHN P. MARQUAND

By Torquil Arbuthnot

JOHN PHILLIPS MARQUAND was born in 1893, to Philip and Margaret Fuller Marquand, both descendants of old New England families. Although he was born in Wilmington, Delaware, and lived in Rye, New York, until he was fourteen, Marquand considered himself a New Englander. When Marquand was 13 his father lost almost all of the family's money in the financial crash of 1907. The family had to move from their extremely comfortable home



in the wealthy suburb of Rye, and Marquand had to leave his private school classmates and attend a public high school. As a biographer wrote, "The doors to Eden abruptly slammed shut on Marquand." His father then found a job working on a new project called the Panama Canal and departed there with his wife. The boy was shipped off to a small town in Massachusetts named Newburyport, to be raised by three eccentric, elderly, spinster aunts in a crumbling and isolated country house. One aunt was an ardent abolitionist, who offered her house as a stop on the Underground

Railroad. Once, a very large male slave was delivered hidden in a wooden crate to her remote house. Upon unpacking the crate she made the tragic discovery that the man had been shipped upside down from Boston and was now definitely dead. With little hesitation, the aunt dragged the quickly stiffening body to the orchard, buried the slave and planted a pear tree over the unmarked grave, a tree that flourishes still.

During his boyhood summers Marquand had a chance to know his grandfather, John Phillips Marquand, the man after whom he was named. His grandfather was a very successful investment banker in New York who had married Margaret Curzon of Newburyport. As a result, he summered with the extended family at Curzon's Mill. The author would later recall that his grandfather

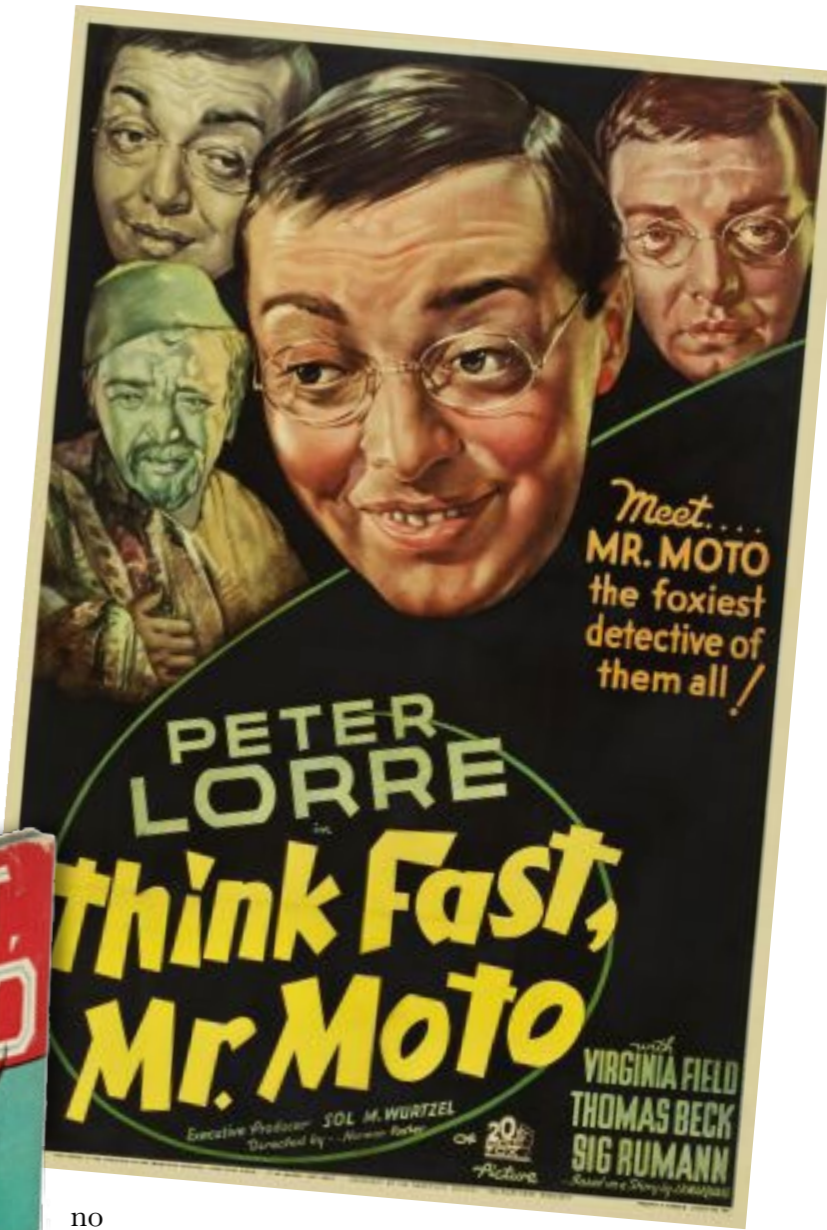
obviously enjoyed the place but was not above complaining that everyone seemed to be living off him as it was only his money that kept the buildings painted and the gardens planted. His grandfather told young John how he first met

"Marriage is a damnably serious business, particularly around Boston."

– The Late George Apley

his wife Margaret Curzon: "They were sitting under an apple tree, Margaret was painting a picture and they asked me to stay to supper and then they found there wasn't any supper. I took Margaret down in the carriage and bought some. That was forty years ago. I've been buying everybody's supper ever since. The whole damn family's supper."

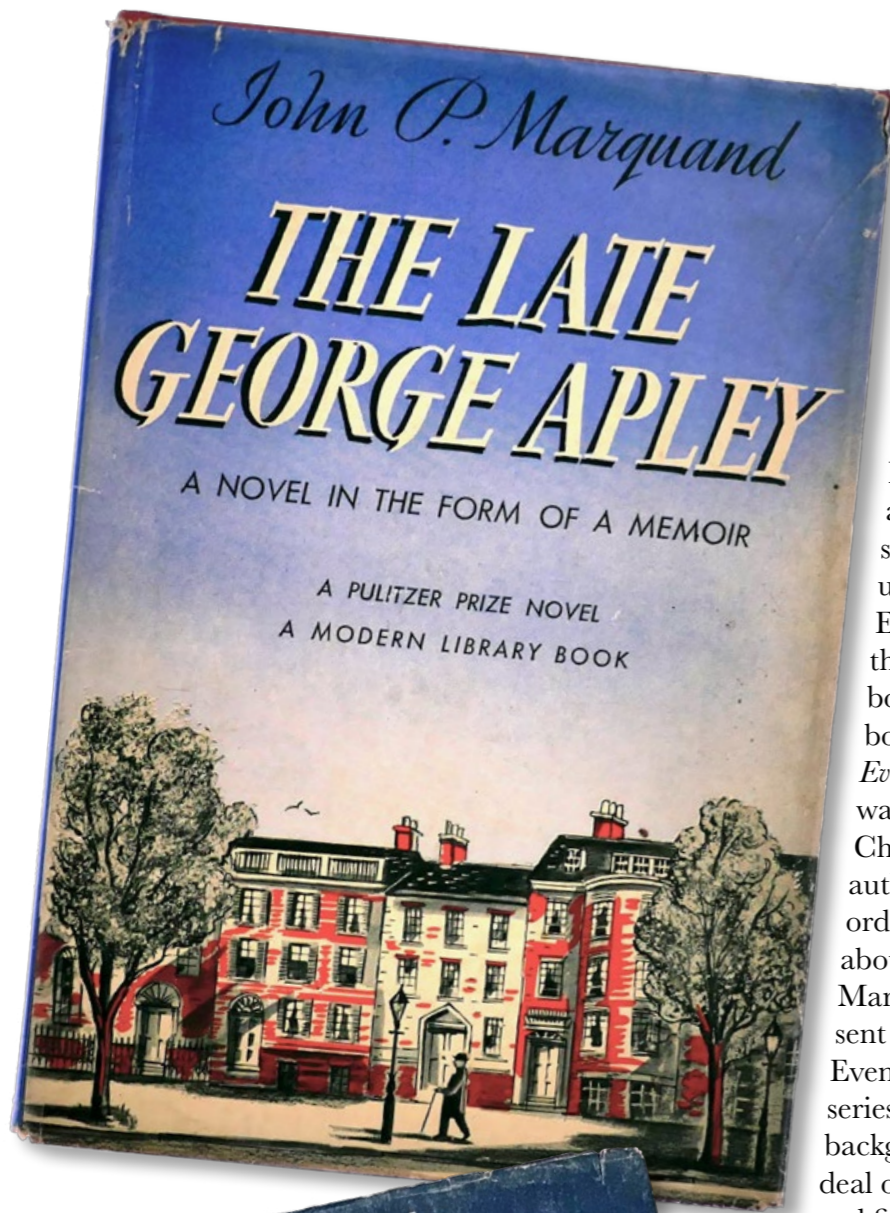
He attended Harvard, but instead of sailing through college with a comfortable allowance and an active social life, he scraped his way through on a chemistry scholarship (a subject he hated). "He was one of the boys," Marquand would write of the similarly situated hero of *So Little Time*, "who wore celluloid collars which you could wash off in your room, and who used the reading room in the library as a resting place because there was



no other place to go, and who ate a sandwich there for lunch, and to whom no one spoke unless it was absolutely necessary."

As a result of these family upheavals and because of his background Marquand always had one foot inside and one foot outside the blue-blooded New England establishment, the focus of his social satire.

At Harvard he managed to get elected to the editorial board of the humor magazine, the *Harvard Lampoon*. After graduating in 1915 he was assistant magazine editor of the *Boston Transcript*. He also joined the Massachusetts national guard, serving for a while on the Mexican border. He left the *Transcript* in 1917 to serve in the First World War as a first lieutenant, where he fought at Château-Thierry with the 77th Regiment Field Artillery. After the war he worked at the *New York Tribune* and as a copywriter at J. Walter Thompson. He became a novelist in 1922 when he published the romantic



thriller, *The Unspeakable Gentleman*. He also became a frequent contributor of short stories to several popular magazines of the day, most notably the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Collier's*, and *Good Housekeeping*. Many of his later novels were also serialized in shortened form in these magazines. Marquand achieved great popular and commercial success with a series of spy novels about a Japanese undercover operative called Mr Moto. Earl Derr Biggers, the creator of the Charlie Chan series of detective books, died in 1933. The Chan books were serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post*. The magazine's editors wanted a new Asian sleuth to replace Charlie Chan and offered a number of authors the chance to go to China in order to soak up atmosphere and learn about the mysterious East first-hand. Marquand said of this expedition, "I was sent to China in 1934 by the *Saturday Evening Post* with instructions to do a series of stories with authentic Oriental background. Naturally, I did a great deal of poking around in Chinese cities and finally wandered to Japan. There I was constantly shadowed by a polite little

Japanese detective. Suddenly, it dawned on me that he was just the protagonist I was looking for—and while my shadow did his duty very conscientiously, 'Mr Moto', the shrewd, the polite, the efficient sleuth was born." The Mr Moto novels were turned into films starring Peter Lorre as the eponymous spy.

At the peak of this career tailoring slick love stories and espionage serials for magazine readers, Marquand unexpectedly brought out in 1937 *The Late George Apley*, a satirical novel of manners about Boston society which won the Pulitzer Prize and eventually led him to curtail his lucrative magazine work in favour of full-length novels. The "new" Marquand soon became even more popular than his strictly commercial predecessor. Not only did his novels sell handsomely, but as of 1952 his total book sales outside of regular trade sales, meaning book-club editions and cheap reissues,

came to nearly four million.

Subtitled *A Novel in the Form of a Memoir*, *The Late George Apley* is actually a parody of an old-fashioned life-and-letters biography. We learn in the foreword that "Horatio Willing", the ostensible author of the book, has undertaken the task of writing a memoir of his old friend George Apley. "It has been my privilege many times in the past to edit the notes and letters of other prominent Bostonians under the advice of the family," Willing announces at the outset. "In this case, as is usual in such matters, the advice of the family stands first. In this case, however, the advice is not usual." For John Apley, George's son, has asked Willing to write a more "distinctive" memoir than usual, one intended only for private circulation.

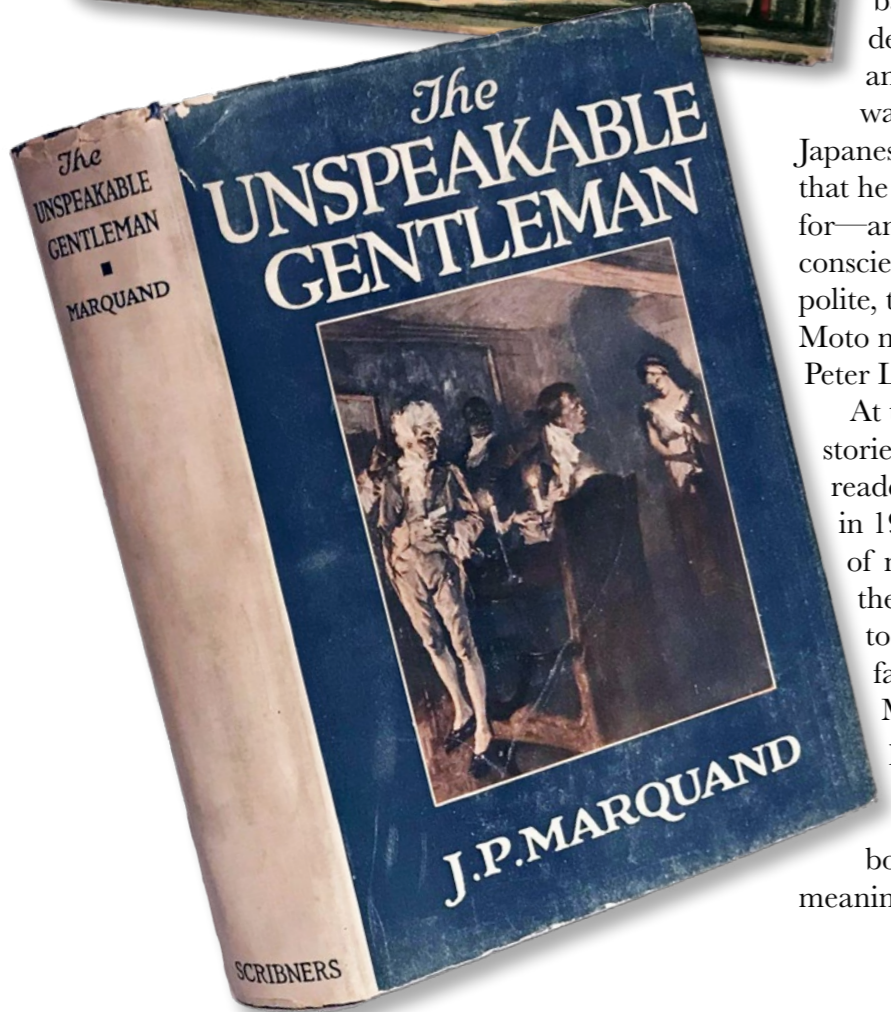
George Apley is the man to whom, despite his best efforts, nothing happens. As a senior at Harvard, he falls in love with an Irish girl named Mary Monahan. His imperious father breaks up the romance and drags George off to Europe for a grand tour. As a law student, he is found wanting in business sense by his father and uncle. ("As a cotton buyer he has not the shrewdness of souls, and when he sells he lacks the pliability, so necessary.") He is shunted off into a small legal practice of his own, his substantial inheritance placed in trust. He marries a plain blueblood who runs his life with an iron hand from dawn to dusk. He fritters his days away in board meetings. When he becomes involved in the "Save Boston Movement" he is framed by an unscrupulous Irishman and quickly retires from public life, living just long enough to see his son marry a divorcée and his daughter, still worse, a reporter.

The overall effect is in the end quite grim, for George Apley is a man doomed by inheritance to lead an ineffectual, unsatisfactory life. "I am the sort of man I am," Apley says, "because environment prevented my being anything

else." Horatio Willing quotes this remark with smug satisfaction on the first page of *The Late George Apley*, but the remainder of the book makes it perfectly clear that this is a confession not of aristocratic repose but of barely controlled despair.

Every novel Marquand wrote after Apley almost instantly became a best seller. In 1949, his face was on the cover of *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines with long feature articles that stressed the fact that this talented novelist of manners had become America's most successful writer of that era. Even the higher-brow *New Yorker* magazine carried a long and glowing profile of the author.

John P. Marquand died in his sleep of a heart attack in July 1960 in Newburyport, Massachusetts.



William Sloan, Robert Frost and John Marquand at Marquand's house at Kent's Island, Massachusetts

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.



Bruce Partington-Plans

Name or preferred name?

Bruce Partington-Plans in and around the club; known as Nick Rutter to the authorities.

Why that nickname or nom de plume?

I'm an avid Holmesian and that particular adventure is among my favourites. I believe I had it open in my copy of the complete works at the time I chose it.

Where do you hail from?

Originally Canvey Island but, having tried to civilise the wilds of sarf Essex for the last 37 years, in

2021 I have, if not quite given up, then moved on to Kent, the Garden of England, and its county town of Maidstone.

Favourite cocktail?

I've never been a big drinker but I am fond of the occasional sweet sherry or crème de menthe. A Mint Cooler (1½ measures of gin, 1 measure of green crème de menthe, topped up with ginger ale) sounds nice, though.

Most Chappist skill?

The ability to identify a pre- or self-tied bow tie from 20 paces (a skill I believe I share with HM the Queen). Alternatively, the ability to discern a Merlin aero engine over a distance of several thousand feet. I've yet to have the opportunity to combine these two skills.

Most Chappist possession?

Clothes/Accessories: My 1940s Kaufmann's brown wool overcoat given to me by an American aunt, my collection of bow ties, my grandfather's fob chain and my latest acquisition, a Corby tie press. Furniture: I have just recently, and after nearly 15 years of trying, come into the possession of a leather wingback chair, Chesterfield sofa and a 1930s cabinet gramophone (all housed inside a Victorian property). Book: *The Last Englishman*, the autobiography of noted cavalry officer and eccentric Lt Col A.D. Wintle.

Personal Motto?

The family motto is *sine macula*, which translates as "without stain", but since that sounds like a poor advert for washing powder I'll go with

one that has stood me in good stead down the years: "It's always better to have too much than not enough."

Favourite quotes?

"There is no time, sir, at which ties do not matter." (*Jeeves and the Impending Doom*)

"Life is not a matter of holding good cards, but of playing a poor hand well." (Robert Louis Stevenson)

"If you can fly a Sopwith Camel, you can fly anything!" (Biggles)

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

I may be related to Charlie Chaplin (the genealogical work continues...)

How long have you been involved with the NSC?

Since at least 2008.

How did you hear about the Club to begin with?

The Sheridan Club forum, via the *Chap* website, I think.

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

If you ever find yourself in the vicinity of Maldon, Essex, I can heartily recommend a visit to Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, which is the largest and most complete WW1 aerodrome in



the country, with a fine display of early aircraft and militaria, not to mention many aeronautically-themed events. Maldon town itself is quite a chappish location too.

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

Sir Henry "Tim" Birkin, inter-war racing driver, playboy and Bentley Boy—a chap who always liked a party. I fancy he would liven the evening up a bit in between chatting about our shared interest in motor racing and cars.

R.J. Mitchell, designer of the Spitfire among others—a no-nonsense chap who would be interesting to talk to on the subjects of engineering, aeronautics and life in general.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle—if he were willing to discuss his most famous creation, fine, but even if not, his knowledge of the Boer War and WW1 plus his views on spiritualism would doubtless make for an interesting evening.

Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?

Answer: Artemis Scarheart. We met at an event about 12 years ago and I still haven't recovered.

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

I've not yet had the experience of doing a Turn; I suspect my fellow club members Actuarii and the Earl of Essex have covered all the subjects I have any knowledge on. I suppose I could cobble something together on a theme related to my interests in the history of motoring, aviation or the life of one of my personal heroes, but the risk of sending the membership into a stupor is high, I should think!

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.

On White Tablecloths, Civility and Substance

By Luca Jellinek

RESTAURANT COLUMNISTS AND culinary faddists, who are the former's rightful prey, love novelty. They are fickle by nature. We were nonetheless profoundly annoyed when, at some point in the 2000s, a certain type of narcissistic chef and their uncritical critics began to sneer at the idea of "fine dining" and use "white tablecloth" as a term of opprobrium to denote fusty, *passé* restaurants. That nonsensical slur is still used, at times. A recent restaurant review in the *Sunday Times* conflated tablecloths in a restaurant with the phrase "too grown-up" (as if there could be such a thing).

Decades ago, there was arguably *some* historical justification for irony, however frivolous. During the long, dark night of England's post-war decline, when London's dining scene was globally infamous, there were establishments that made a show of ceremony in a futile attempt to disguise the bankruptcy of their core product: the food. Spiritless and frayed around the edges, some faded *grand dames* endured too long. The brash young fellows bringing culinary verve and artistry back to the Capital did not want to be associated with such dinosaurs.

By the late 1990s, however, as the material results of economic reform began to be reflected by cultural expression, the best London restaurants did not fear comparison with established culinary centres. So the condescension, indeed hostility, towards the idea of quality food being served courteously

and in elegant surrounding seemed something more insidious than a just cheap shot at one's predecessors. Rather, it spoke of a pervasive cultural infatuation with banal notions of "authenticity" and "relevance".

The solipsistic conceit could be stated as: "my food is so damn delicious, surprising and *different*, that you'll gladly scarf it off a clunky



The "industrial" look is meant to convey, somehow, lack of pretence



No restaurateur, yet, wants to be associated with tired 1970s tropes



None of this makes the food taste better... *au contraire!*

piece of slate, on a clattering, greasy tabletop, surrounded by the harsh din of braying punters and served by waitstaff too self-absorbed and matey by half." It was, of course, a giant *faux pas*. Most of the novelty was a crashing failure and even when the food was truly good, our enjoyment of it could only be reduced by the lack of decent cutlery, soft lighting, modulated sounds and solicitude.

Maintaining excellence and creating delight, in fact, require hard work, planning, earnestness. Furthermore, beyond objective utility, our lives require many forms of meaning. Among those, we count some form of *theatre*. What better stage, for our comedy of manners, than grand dining halls of Edwardian splendour and style?

Some will protest that beauty and civility

sheer flavour.

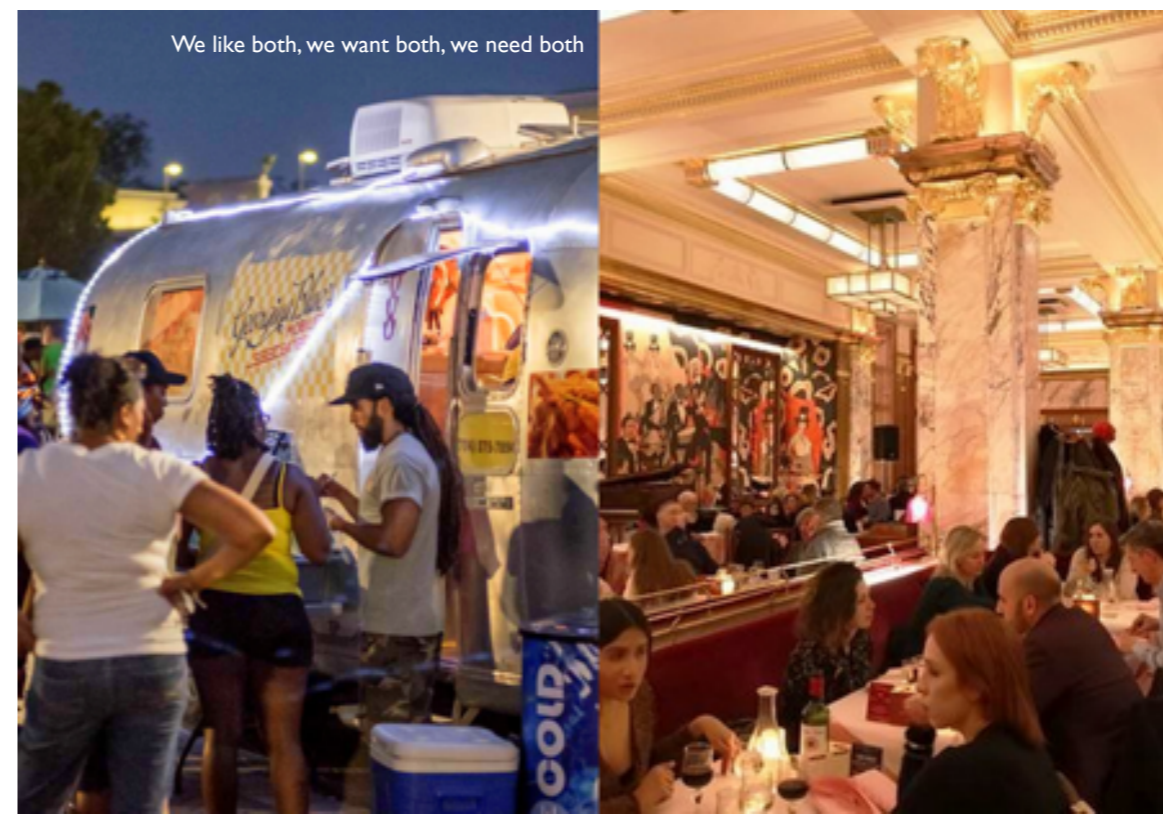
But, equally, we shall find time for the swish of silk against crisp tablecloths, the



This is what doing something right, with care, looks like

accidental clink of silver against crystal, the starched perfection of white tie and midnight Champagne and "sir" and "madam".

It is only in the half-formed mind of adolescents that the energy and sex of rock-n-roll are incompatible with the majesty and emotion of Bach. Celebrate white tablecloths, flattering lighting, marble halls, zinc bars, people (*any* people) in evening dress and the glow of elegance. We have nothing to lose but our *ennui*.



We like both, we want both, we need both

Brideshead Revisited

Revisited



Our summer party (the first party we've had since Christmas 2019) celebrates the 75th anniversary of Evelyn Waugh's most popular novel

Saturday 7th August

7pm–12am

The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)

Admission: Free for NSC Members, £5 for non-Members (which is refunded if they join the Club on the night)

Dress: I'm sure there'll be plenty of cricket whites and teddy bears, but consider also priest, nun, monk, gondolier, nightclub hostess, WW2 army, General Striker, 1920s liner chic, Oxford bags, hunting pink, don, nanny...

Since 2020 was the 75th anniversary of the publication of *Brideshead Revisited* and 2021 is the 40th anniversary of the TV adaptation, we've decided to make this the theme of our summer party. As usual there will be silly games, a complimentary buffet and our famous Grand Raffle (for which entry is free, but for Members only).

Raffle prizes will include such obvious things as the book itself, a teddy bear, a bottle of Sauternes and some strawberries, a megaphone and a copy of *The Waste Land*, a rosary and some holy water, a fez and the *Rough Guide to Morocco*, a set of watercolours, the makings of a Brandy Alexander and an ocean liner (well, a cruet set in the shape of an ocean liner), as well as a host of books about Waugh, the Bright Young Things and the Oxford of the day, plus DVDs of all 11 episodes of the 1980s series and the more recent feature film.

Games are expected to include Find Sebastian's Hidden Hip Flask (pictured above), Knock the Aesthete Into the Fountain, Paint a Garden Room Mural and Suppress the General Strikers (with an armoured car).



If you can find where Sebastian has hidden his hip flask (specially engraved for the party) you can keep it as a prize

"Ought we to be drunk every night?"
Sebastian asked one morning.
"Yes, I think so."
"I think so too."



Perhaps you'll win this chrome cruet set, a souvenir of the Golden Age of Travel



Just some of the prizes on offer in the Grand Raffle

Basil Youdell



CLUB NOTES

New Members

CLEARLY THE CHAPPIST sap is rising, as this month we have four new Members. Gomez Zephyr (probably not his given name) from Letchworth in Herfordshire enjoys a Death in the Afternoon cocktail (absinthe and Champagne) and gives his areas of expertise as “idling, loafing, imbibing and flaneuring”, which is probably all one is good for after a Death in the Afternoon.

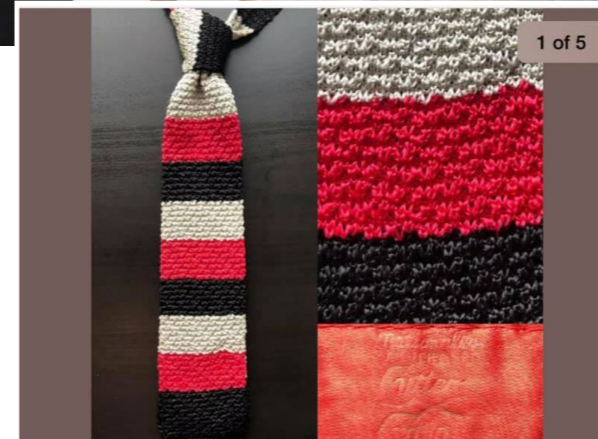
Martijn Hoogsteder from Utrecht in the Netherlands is more bookish, citing a specialism in pre-modern German literature. His favourite cocktail is a Dorflinger, which I had to look up: it’s another absinthe vehicle, this time with gin and orange bitters.

Scott Aston joins us from the other side of the world—Bulli, New South Wales, to be precise. He doesn’t give much away but prides himself on “pointing out obvious predicaments when tempers are frayed”. Clearly a man who has found his niche.

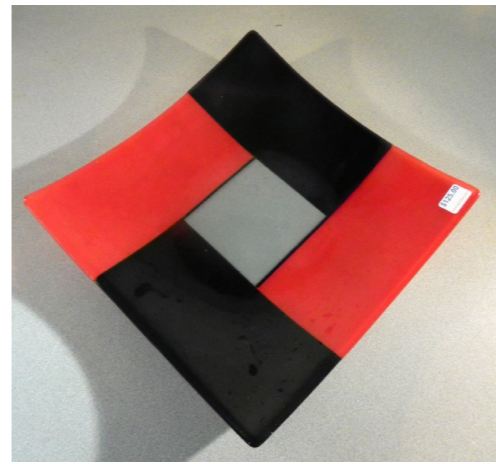
Finally the Revd Basil Youdell returns to the fold. He actually joined in 2012 but we heard nothing from him after 2013. He has longer hair these days, but eight years in the wilderness will do that. A hearty welcome to all four chaps.

Club Tie Corner

TIME FOR THE monthly round-up. Facing page, clockwise from the top: as HM the Queen visits the set of *Coronation Street*, Ken Barlow signals to his masters by sporting a Club tie, spotted by Stephen Myhill; early advert from the Club’s tailoring service, fondly remembered by Ivan Debono; Mark Christopher noticed Michael Madsen giving the Club’s leisurewear range an outing in *Donnie Brasco*; in his cups Col. Cyrus Choke managed to hire an entire Club cheerleading team; Will Smith found this rather nice actual tie. (Now sold out, I’m afraid.)



Gomez Zephyr



With the art collection spruced up, the Committee have turned their attention to the Club House (well, the Boardroom—let's not get carried away with the public areas). Clockwise from above: it's a nice ashtray that Debono has proposed, but is it \$125 nice? These NSC cocktail glasses were spotted on eBay and, owing to administrative delays, are still in the Secretary's living room; and what would go better with the glasses than this cocktail trolley spotted by Adrian Prooth; Actuarus points out that the new Steward seems to be trying a bit too hard to show his dedication to the Club—better count the spoons again; Debono also has a theory that, if you look carefully, the late Anthony Powell was desperately signaling his desire to be made an honorary Member



The Committee have been shopping for art again. This page, clockwise from above: top trouserage sported by Nikolaus II Fürst von Esterházy in 1793, spotted by Debono; Jean Dubuffet's love for the Club spills out (you can see this work in the current exhibition at the Barbican); Will Smith has been relaxing with a paint brush during lockdown—this work reflects a dream he had about trying to find the stairs; Col. Choke has likewise been dabbling in Constructivism, though he also found time to discover this image he claims is "from a marketing brochure touting the Glorious Committee's latest venture in Port Said". No comment





Clockwise from top right: Col. Choke somehow got past security to snap the Committee's private jet; the Committee's destination was Venice, for their annual conference, where Debono noticed with approval the decision to buy a private gondola; Acturius has been working on his proposal to relaunch Scuderia Sheridan; Callum Coates has been demonstrating that one can be the modern gad-about and still dress properly; another one from Acturius, perhaps a bit closer to the Club's heart; it seems Philip Hancock got even further past security to photograph the jet's interior. Facing page, clockwise from top left: Col. Choke has redeemed himself with yet another donation to the car pool; more leisurewear from Club Tailor Will Smith; Debono was a bit wide of the mark with this Club jetski, while Col. Choke was more on the money, noting Cunard sporting Club colours; in fact the Colonel even suggested some entertainment for the Committee's stop-over in Paris; Luigi's Staffi's prototype car for the masses—"any colour you like as long as it's black, red and silver".



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.

🚫 NSC Club Night

Wednesday 4th August

7pm–11pm

The upstairs room at the Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB

Admission: Free

See page 2. The Earl of Essex will deliver an insight into the world of scandalous MP Sir Henry “Chips” Channon, based on his recently published uncensored diaries. The talk will begin at 8pm.

Although we are now returning to physical

meetings, we will be endeavouring to learn from our lockdown technical awakening and live-stream the talk from the pub. The link to view this is https://youtu.be/JbIx_DDBqtY. Success or failure will depend to a large extent on the pub’s wifi, though we’ll attempt to video the talk as well.

🚫 NSC Summer Party:

Brideshead Revisited Revisited

Saturday 7th August

7pm–12am

The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)

Admission: Free for NSC Members, £5 for non-Members

See page 25.

Nosferatu with Live Piano

Tuesday 10th and Wednesday 11th August

7.30–9pm

Wilton’s Music Hall, Graces Alley, London

E1 8JB

Admission: £11.50–£13 from wiltons.org.uk

The Lucky Dog Picture House returns with its programme of vintage silent movies presented—as they would originally have been enjoyed—with live music accompaniment. This time it’s F.W. Murnau’s classic 1922 vampire tale *Nosferatu* with

live piano score from Sam Watts.



Catch the majesty of Ewan Bleach and his Quartet at the Mildmay Jazz Club on 24th August

live piano score from Sam Watts.

The Mildmay Jazz Club

Tuesdays 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st August

8pm–12am

Mildmay Working Men’s Club, 34 Newington Green, London N16 8QL

Admission: £10 a night or £35 for a month, in advance from Eventbrite; £15 on the door or £20 with the lesson

Weekly jazz night featuring live acts each time—this month it’s the Bathtub Blue Blowers with Nick Ball and Martin Wheatley on the 10th, the Old Jelly Rollers on the 17th, the Ewan Bleach Quartet on the 24th and the Thames House Orchestra on the 31st.

You’re welcome just to come, sit and enjoy the cheap drinks, but if you want to learn to dance there is an introductory swing dance lesson for total beginners (no need to bring a partner) at 8pm, followed by the main event from 8.30; the band plays sets at 9pm, 10pm and 11pm, and doors close at midnight.

🚫 NSC Quiz Night

Wednesday 18th August

7.45pm

Online via Zoom

Admission: Free

With lockdown officially over, we are able to resume our monthly corporeal meetings at the Wheatsheaf, and there is perhaps less need for the weekly virtual pub quizzes with which we

entertained ourselves. So we have decided to continue them just on a monthly basis, on the third Wednesday of the month (balancing our Club Nights which are on the first Wednesday).

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 846 2389 7374 and the passcode is 089793.) The quiz starts at 8pm, though the meeting convenes about 15 minutes earlier to allow people to register their teams if they haven’t already done so. The quiz will have six rounds with an



Enjoy the silent horror classic *Nosferatu* as it was intended to be experienced, with a live musical accompaniment





Mr Ian White is having birthday drinks. He's essentially good-natured, but don't get between him and a pub

interval, and each team can play their joker on one round in advance, which doubles the points they receive for that round.

Some Like It Swing

Friday 20th August

7.30–11.30pm

Genesis Cinema, 93–95 Mile End Road, London E1 4UJ

Admission: £5 for the lesson (prebooking recommended from genesiscinema.co.uk); social dance is free

Dress: 1940s

Genesis Cinema and SwingdanceUK invite you to a monthly swing dancing night where you can learn the steps at the beginners class, enjoy some cocktails and Lindy Hop till you drop:

7.30pm: Beginners Lindy Hop Class with Simon and Anna (£5)

8.30pm: Dancing with resident DJ Mr Kicks (free), all welcome.

Ian White's Birthday Drinks

Tuesday 24th August

6.30–11pm

The Royal Oak, Tabard Street, London SE1 4JU

An evening in a fine public house, organised



Get the full Alex Mendham experience at the Musical Museum this Bank Holiday Monday

by Ian White, the Club's resident real ale expert and CAMRA stalwart. "It was my 60th last year, but I didn't really get to celebrate it in great form," Ian says. "So it has just been my 61st and thus an excuse to have a good session!"

The Royal Oak (royaloaklondon.co.uk) is a fine Harveys pub of late Victorian era, with Sussex real ales and good food. The nearest tube station is Borough and London Bridge is only a few minutes walk away. Plenty of bus routes pass by from various locations including Old Kent Road, Lewisham, Streatham, Liverpool Street, Victoria.

The Noel Coward Saunter

Saturday 28th August

2.30–11pm

Guildhall Art Gallery, Guildhall Yard, London EC2V 5AE

Miss Minna is organising a group trip to see the Noel Coward exhibition at the Guildhall Gallery. (It's free but requires booking.) Minna says, "No idea what will be happening regarding plague precautions but let's see," although in fact the website does not suggest any requirements other than the need to book. (If you wish to view the permanent collection as well you'll need to pre-book separately for that.) "Could go on to Oscar's or the Ned or somewhere afterwards," Minna adds, "...and of course it is an excuse to go out suitably attired to

view the great man's dressing gown." To book see guildhall-art-gallery.arttickets.org.uk. See also the Facebook event here.

Big Bank Holiday Dance

Monday 30th August

7pm

The Musical Museum, 399 High Street, Brentford, London TW8 0DU

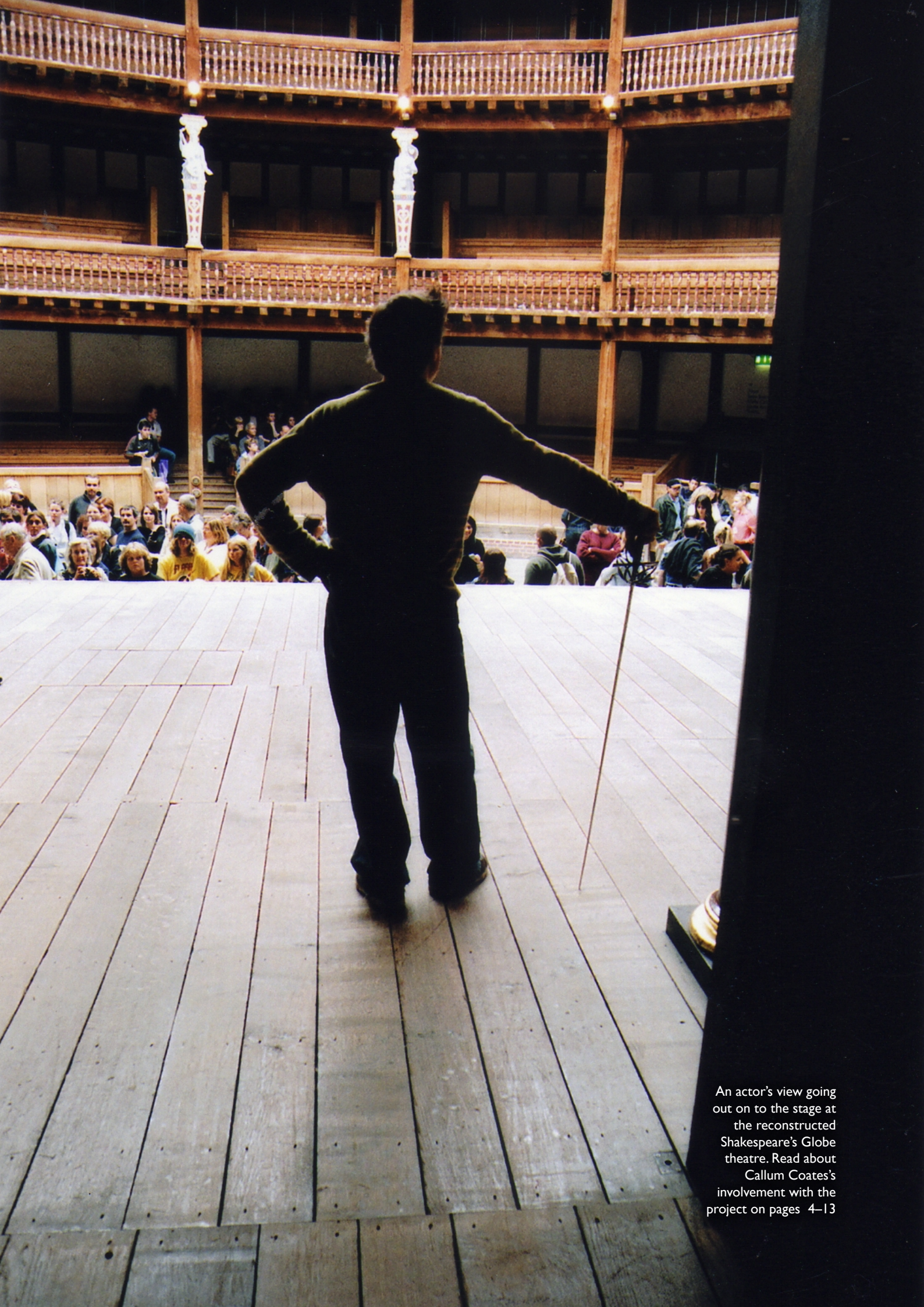
Admission: £15 dance tickets, £12.50 seated tickets, available from Eventbrite

Glide the Bank Holiday Monday away on a waft of 1930s glamour to the sounds of Alex Mendham and His Orchestra. Alex's determination to recreate the elegance, scale and detail of the period dance orchestras has certainly paid off. Beginning with a legendary sell-out show at the Kursaal Concert Hall in Belgium, Alex has taken his orchestra to new heights internationally, performing everywhere from the lush Art Deco Cicada Club in Los Angeles to open-air concerts in the gothic palaces of Russia, via grand events on the romantic canals of Venice. The Orchestra also is a regular on BBC Radio, and has lent its talents to film and television productions.

Tickets are available either for dancing on the sprung dance floor in front of the orchestra or for sitting in the balcony area. All tickets include a glass of Prosecco (or non alcoholic alternative).



Check out the Noel Coward exhibition at the Guildhall in the company of fellow NSC types on 28th August



An actor's view going out on to the stage at the reconstructed Shakespeare's Globe theatre. Read about Callum Coates's involvement with the project on pages 4–13