

# RESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • No. 179 • SEPTEMBER 2021

## *The New Sheridan Club, I presume?*

Members meet for the first time post-lockdown at the Wheatsheaf and our Brideshead Revisited party

### **'Chips' Channing**

The Earl of Essex on the diaries of this scandalous MP

### **Fiction factory**

Torquil Arbuthnot on prolific thriller writer Victor Canning





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 1st September** in the upstairs room of the Wheatsheaf pub at 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB.

This month, for our second meeting back at the Wheatsheaf, Timothy Eyre will talk to us about *The Japanese Language*. Dr Eyre will describe the salient features of a tongue that is not as impenetrable as one might imagine. He will contrast Japanese grammar with that of English and provide some insight into the notorious writing system. Once again we will be attempting to live-stream the talk from the pub—as ever at the mercy of the Wheatsheaf's wifi—as well as recording the video to upload later. The YouTube link to watch live is <https://youtu.be/TRJFhn1VLHs>.

There is a Facebook event for this meeting at [www.facebook.com/events/545773426737437](http://www.facebook.com/events/545773426737437).

### The Last Meeting

On 4th August we were finally, for the first time in 11 months, allowed back into the upstairs room at the Wheatsheaf, our ancestral home. In truth it was a select gathering, with maybe 15 people in

total over the evening; the pub itself was quiet, as were the surrounding streets, so certainly things are not yet back to normal. Our speaker was the Earl of Essex, reprising the subject of an earlier talk, the scandalous MP Sir Henry “Chips” Channon. Channon's uncensored diaries have since been published and these formed the source of Essex's talk. Essentially it was a collection of extracts, giving a glimpse into Channon's bizarrely privileged life and attitudes. He's forever dismissing people as “common” at the same time as lambasting others for being “frightful snobs”. He's born into great wealth but is always getting into debt, such are his spendthrift ways—it's as if he has an aching boredom that can only be assuaged

through very expensive things, mostly clothing and jewelled objects. The talk ended when Essex reached the point in the diaries that he had read to (around 1938)—at about 1,000 pages the source material itself had proved too big a challenge in the time available.

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



Let Tim Eyre unravel the mysteries of the Japanese language



(Clockwise from right) Mr White proudly shows off these Club socks that he has found; the audience hangs on Essex's words; Mike Reynolds (left) and Francis Giordanella; dusting down the signing-in book; Bob the Lobster is, of course, in attendance; Stewart Lister Vickers and the Duchesse De St Gènes; a co-respondent brogue-off; Chappist still life; Andrew Fish; Essex begins his address; conviviality returns to the Wheatsheaf after so many months





And the bear and the lobster shall lie down together... Frances Mitchell augments her menagerie with an Aloysius stand-in

# Brideshead Revisited Revisited

## The New Sheridan Club summer party

general 1920s endless-summer sort of look.

Early in the planning (yes, these events are planned, sort of) there was a fear that some might still be Covid-shy so we thought of ways to use the outside space; to this end, our first game, Knock the Aesthete Into the Fountain, was designed to take place outdoors. As is traditional, the game involved firing the ancestral nerf gun at the aesthete—played by long-suffering Action Man—in an attempt to knock him backwards into the fountain. The fountain in this case was a paddling pool filled with actual water, with a pond pump creating the fountain itself. For verité Action Man even had a picnic hamper, including Champagne, strawberries, Fuller’s walnut cake and cucumber sandwiches, lovingly modelled from sugar paste by Mrs H. Of course, no sooner had I set it up and filled the pool than the heavens opened (I could just have left the pool outside and it would have filled with rain anyway). Nevertheless, by the time of the game itself the rain had

ON SATURDAY 7TH AUGUST the New Sheridan Club held its summer party, Brideshead Revisited Revisited—marking the fact that 2020 was the 75th anniversary of the publication of Evelyn Waugh’s most popular novel and 2021 was the 40th anniversary of the iconic 1980s TV adaptation. It had been a year and a half since our last proper party (the Evil Party of Christmas 2019), with only two scattered monthly meetings in that period too, and there was a palpable buzz in the air. Some came dressed as specific characters—there was a Lord Marchmain, an Anthony Blanche and a Father Mowbray, for example—others just enjoyed a



(Left to right) Andrew Fish, Stuart Mitchell, Mark Christopher, Ian White



“Chuckles” Younghusband (left) as Kurt with the injured foot, and Paul Effeny



Pandora Harrison



The throng gathers outside the Tea House (with Luca Jellinek, centre, as Anthony Blanche)



Artemis Scarheart and Rachel Effeny

stopped and we were able to carry on. A few contestants in and it was beginning to look as if the calibration of this event was awry: one or two direct hits didn't seem to make Action Man fall over and I was beginning to wonder if I needed somehow to make him more precarious. But at that point the matter became moot because the bolt on the nerf gun broke, rendering it inutile. Thinking quickly, Scarheart decided to change the rules and announce that in fact contestants had to close their eyes, turn through 720 degrees, then try and throw Action Man into the fountain, guided only by the sound of the water. A couple of contestants succeeded leading to a rather post-tsunami spectacle of Action Man floating face-down in the



Craigoh and Josie as Marchmain and Cara



Adrian Prooth as himself. Which is more than enough

paddling pool, his picnic goodies melting into the water splashed on to them. At this point we realised that we had not allowed a way to decide which of the two successful contestants was the winner. We decided we'd think about that later on, and in the end we avoided the problem by forgetting to hand out any prize at all for that event.

Our second activity game was Break the General Strike. This perhaps reached a new



Action Man prepares for a civilised picnic, unaware that he is about to be shot at then thrown into a fountain



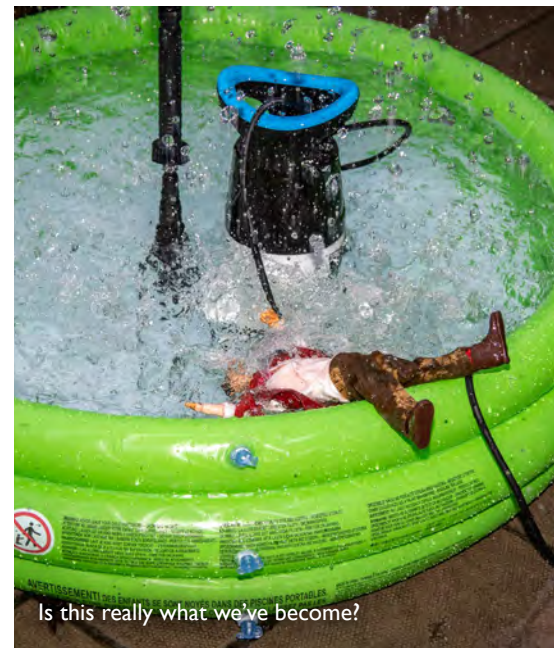
Andrew Fish takes aim



A nerf round whistles past Action Man's head (seemingly causing his scarf to flap)



Lord Hare making what looks like a pretty accurate throw



Is this really what we've become?

level of tastelessness for us. Inspired by a scene in the book where Ryder talks to expat Brits who are returning home to defend the established order from General Strikers and the presumed revolution or armed uprising this would lead to, the object of the game was to roll a World War I era Rolls Royce armoured car down a ramp and try to hit some armed insurrectionists (played by 1:35 scale WWII partisan figures lovingly painted by me the

day before). However, the street scene where this was taking place also contained a couple of clusters of innocent bystanders (1:48 scale railway model figures) as well as a group of 1:48 scale Catholic priests. (In case anyone wondered why the insurgents were physically larger than everyone else, we explained that this merely represented the enormity of their perceived threat to the established order.) Players scored a point for each insurgent taken out, but lost a

point for every innocent civilian massacred in the process. The average score was around -3, and the eventual winner—our host Hal, with a score of +2—was the only person to score above zero. Even Curé Michael Silver succeeded only in slaughtering the priests, though there may have been a secret inter-denominational agenda...

Our third game was active in the background all the time. In the book we learn how Sebastian hides drink around the place, and Sebastian's hip flask was indeed hidden somewhere in the building, the task being to find it. We tried this once before, with our Hunt for Red October game at the Russian Revolution themed party in 2017, and the submarine was discovered about halfway through the evening, but this time round we found ourselves getting to the end of the evening with the hip flask still unlocated. In truth only Scarheart knew where it was and none of us on the Committee could find it either. In end, after Scarheart made various tannoy announcements dropping clues, the flask was found on the book case, quite visible between a couple of books.

The evening also featured a complimentary buffet courtesy of our hosts the Tea House Theatre in Vauxhall, but the grand finale was, as ever, the Grand Raffle at the end of the evening. All the prizes were themed around Brideshead and included the book itself, a teddy bear, a bottle of Sauternes and some strawberries, a megaphone and a copy of "The Waste Land", a rosary, a fez and the



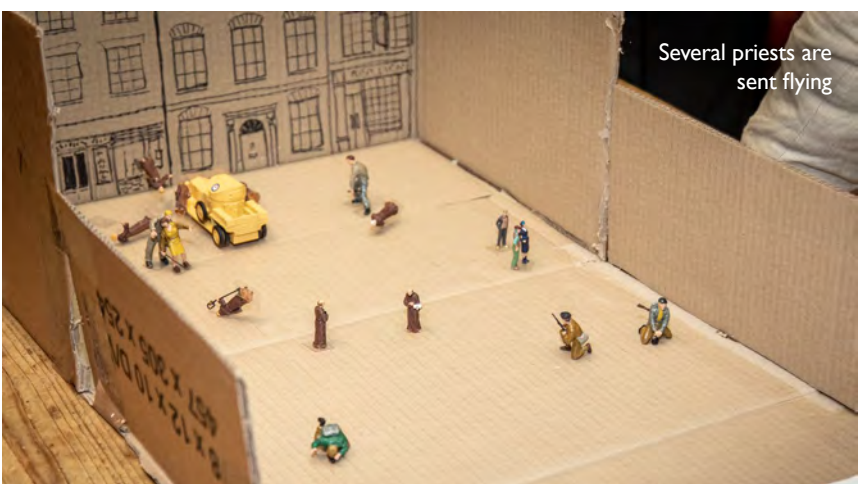
A city square is threatened by armed insurgents (the large ones with guns)



Scarheart explains the mission to Baron Von Rukavina



Lucky Henry takes aim



Several priests are sent flying



Bunty manages to keep his monocle in long enough for this photo



Ginny Yeoward (left) and Adie Hess, Duchesse De St Gènes



Mark Christopher with Miss Minna looking mannish



More mannish maids, George Davies (left) and Katie Holt



Giles Culppepper with Emilia Karlsson

*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 DVDs of the 1980s TV series, the later film version and the Laurel and Hardy flick *A Chump at Oxford*, and various books about Waugh, his social set and Oxford at the time.

Many thanks to all who came. Judging by the comments we've had since, a good time was had by all.

You can see a full set of photos from the party on our Flickr account.



Curé Michael Silver and Revd Basil Youdell take a break from raving to discuss ecumenical matters





The engraved hip flask that was the object of so much searching



The young man who finally found the flask



Hiro and Louise Shimamoto with a fez won in the raffle



Emilia wins the teddy bear



Craigoh is delighted at once again winning a box of sand



Essex wins one of many Brideshead-related books



Henry wins the makings of a Brandy Alexander

# The Uncensored Diaries *of*

Sir Henry  
“Chips”  
Channon



## The Earl of Essex plumbs the scandalous MP's newly unexpurgated accounts of social, sexual and financial escapades

SOME OF YOU may remember that I gave a talk about Sir Henry “Chips” Channon in July 2012, although I suspect most of you would have forgotten it even if I had given it last night, so for the benefit of all I shall give a brief synopsis in order to aid tonight’s talk.

Henry Channon was born in Chicago on 7th March 1897, the only son of businessman Henry Channon II and his wife Vera. His paternal family were English, his grandfather, also Henry Channon, had been born in Bridgewater, Somerset and had left home to go to sea aged 15.

He eventually settled in Chicago where he founded a ship chandler’s business, H. Channon and Co. He also acquired a fleet of sailing vessels and founded the Great Lakes Shipping Company: both businesses prospered and were the foundation of Chips’s father’s wealth and eventually his own income.

Chips’s relationship with his father was quixotic at best, describing him as a “dull, charmless, uneducated, unexciting, unhappy, untidy little man, but I always quite liked him and he doted on me”.

His mother Vera Westover, also a Chicagoan, was a woman of charm and intelligence, but in later life became eccentric, nervous and difficult. The marriage was not successful and after a long separation there was eventually a divorce.

Chips attended school in Chicago and also in Paris for three months in 1907. He had visited Paris a few more times by the time he was stationed there with the Red Cross in 1917 during the latter part of the First World War.

This is where the new unexpurgated diaries began: Channon’s lifelong diary-keeping habit dates from this period in Paris, where subsequently he became an honorary attaché at the US Embassy, before going up to Oxford to study at Christ Church College.

He was an acute observer of the people he met and those would consist of the cream of English social and political society. As he rose in stature, he would marry into the extremely wealthy Guinness brewing family, inheriting their family seat at Southend as a Conservative MP, with a front row view as Britain sought to

avoid war with Germany.

Channon fully intended his diaries to be published, although—given their intimate and somewhat scurrilous observations—only 50 years after his death.

Channon died in 1958, aged just 61, a year after receiving his knighthood, and left the diaries to his live-in companion Peter Coats, a gardening writer, photographer and designer whom Channon had met in 1939.

Coats would guide the eventual editor of the expurgated version of the diaries, Robert Rhodes James, also a Conservative MP, strongly away from the material that

might cause embarrassment or difficulties—by the simple expedient of not letting him see it.

Rhodes James never saw the original manuscripts and produced an expurgated version of only 250,000 words from a manuscript estimated to contain nearly two million. The diaries were published in 1962.

The new diaries, to be published in three volumes, begin with Channon aged 20 in Paris in 1918. Here follows a selection of his entries.

### **1918 Thursday 24th January**

Channon has met a young Englishman in Paris.

“Bobbie Pratt Barlow tore himself away to re-join the Coldstream Guards. I almost wept and I have never liked anyone so much in so short a time. I suppose he will be killed, and I will go on dining out.”

### **Saturday 26th January**

“Dined with Countess D’Hautpoul; it seems she



takes drugs; I must find out what kind.”

### ***Monday 28th January***

“I have moved to a much nicer suite at the Ritz. A letter from Bobbie Pratt Barlow from the front. Thank God he is still alive. He thinks only of me when he is going into battle, which is nice of him.”

### ***Saturday 23rd February***

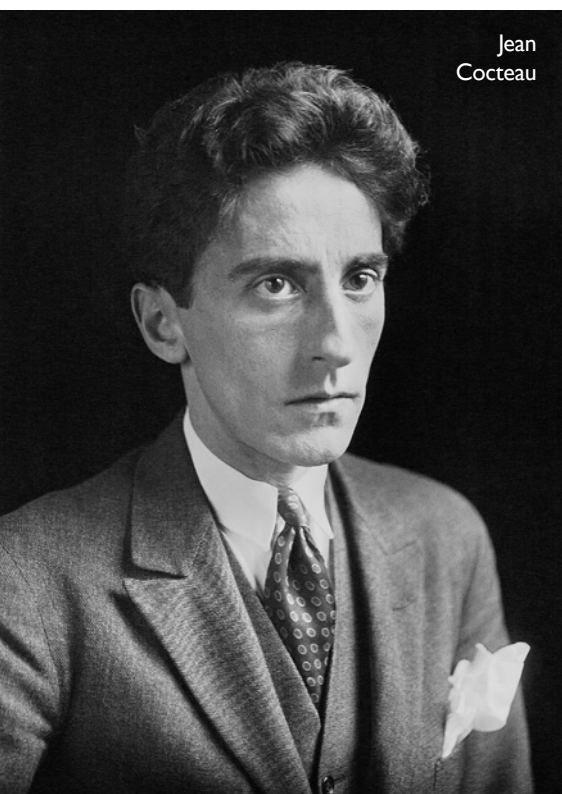
“A very amusing witty dinner at Madelaine de Chevre’s. Jean Cocteau is like some satyr of old, his wit was dazzling and manner electrifying. He wanted to lunch with me the next day but something told me I should not be seen with him. He said my eyes were set by Cartier.”

### ***Thursday 7th March***

“My birthday. I bought myself a platinum wristwatch from Cartier with a cheque father had sent me.”

### ***Saturday 1st June***

“I drew some money from the bank and discovered that I had spent over a thousand dollars a month for three months [the equivalent of £215,628 in 2021] and to show for it? I am a member of two clubs, have a beautiful wristwatch and a few trinkets, and am still alive; that is all.”



Jean  
Cocteau

### ***Monday 11th November***

“There was a rumour that the Armistice had been signed. I telephoned Chaumont-Quitry, an official in the French Foreign Ministry, who said it had been signed that morning at 5.00AM... Immediately we put the flags out at the



### **Prince Paul of Yugoslavia (1893–1976)**

Educated at Christ Church, Oxford, his closest friends were Chips and Prince George, Duke of Kent. In 1923 he married Princess Olga of Greece, sister of Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent. He became Prince Regent of Yugoslavia in the years 1934–41, but was caught aligning himself with the Allies while simultaneously working with the Nazis to avoid Yugoslavia’s being invaded. He was forced into exile in 1941.

embassy and at twelve cannons began to fire.”

### ***Saturday 16th November***

“I dined with Princess Soutza, a large dinner. There were many men over. Consequently I was between Marcel Proust and Jean Cocteau; their manners, usually so bad, were excellent.”

### ***Friday 22nd November***

“I fear I really must do something about securing a mistress, it must be very satisfactory having a lust-outlet always there.”

No diaries are extant for the years 1919–22. Channon briefly returned to America in 1919, but from January 1920 to December 1921 he was at Christ Church, Oxford, where he left having obtained a pass degree in French.

This marks the start of his permanent exile in England. At the start of 1923 he was nearly 26 and had since the end of 1921 been sharing



**Viscount Gage (1885-1982)**

Gage's family ancestry included extensive roots in British North America. He succeeded his father as Viscount Gage in 1912. He served in the First World War as a Captain in the Coldstream Guards. He married in 1931 and had three children.

rooms in Mount Street, Mayfair, with his two closest friends, Prince Paul of Yugoslavia and Viscount Gage, both of whom he befriended at Oxford. There is no indication of him pursuing any employment.

**1923 Wednesday 31st January**

“An enormous crowd fighting for admission was outside St Margaret’s, Westminster, this afternoon at Joan Poynter’s marriage to Sir Edward Grigg. Joan seemed ecstatic; I cannot understand exactly why, as he is middle-aged and almost bald.”

**Wednesday 7th March**

“I have achieved a very advanced age! I was pleased to receive a £100 cheque [£6,203

equivalent] from father. I dined at Lady Crawford’s; she always looks untidy, if not dirty, which Lord Crawford, the most charming of men, frankly is.”

**Monday 28th May**

A large Friday-to-Tuesday party at the Cazelets to meet HRH Princess Alice and Lord Athlone. The gardens were an excellent setting. I came as Charles II, complete except for the spaniels, and I was much the most applauded. Baba Curzon and Mary Thynne were let off with selling programmes to the proletariat.”

**Friday 15th June**

“I dined with Lady Cunard for her fancy dress ball. I wore my Comte de Flahaut and looked really exquisite with a curled, reddish wig.”

**Monday 18th June to Saturday 23rd June**

Hackwood. “A jolly Ascot party, only a little too grand even for Chips. The ladies of our party include Mrs Walter Burns, a boring little Marquis de Polignac. She is the most disgusting snob and was so ecstatic at lunching with the King, I fear she will never recover. We motor in state with five Rolls-Royces to the racecourse everyday.”

**Wednesday 11th July**

“Dined at Holland House. A large party. I enjoyed dinner wildly and was overflowing with high spirits. Later Tony Ashley and I made a round of the brothels but they were hotter and stuffy and more unattractive than the ball, to which we returned.”

**Monday 16th July**

“I dined with many chaps at Buck’s Club, and then hurriedly got into costume for the Sutherland ball. I went as a Bolshee with a red wig and beard. The Prince of Wales and his equerry Fruity Metcalfe came as coolies and no-one knew them and everyone was rude to him.”



Lady Baba Curzon and Fruity Metcalfe



Nancy Astor on her election to the House of Commons in 1919

**Monday 22nd July**

“Paul was married today in faraway Belgrade with a large group of kings and queens to watch. There can be no one there who loves him as I do. I am quite miserable.”

**1924 Thursday 30th March**

“Dined at Lady Astor’s. We were about fifty. She arrived late from the House of Commons; she had been making one of her speeches about the poor housing or something. She is an ardent teetotaler, but fortunately her guests are not asked to subscribe to such opinions, and excellent Champagne is provided.”

**Wednesday 14th May**

“A ball at court in honour of Romanian sovereigns. Dominic Brown and I went as twin little lord Fauntleroy’s in dark blue velvet. I was the most alluring.”

**Wednesday 25th June**

“An enormous Saturday-to-Monday party. Rudyard Kipling was there. He is a tiny ape-like, simian little man with incredible eyebrows of great bushiness and deep endless brown eyes. He is brown and a little dirty, and clumps of hair protrude from his ears.”

**1925 Saturday 14th March**

“Lady Curzon’s birthday. Lord Curzon is still really weak. He was allowed three oysters but ate

four to spite his doctor. I gave Lady Curzon a silver decanter cart on wheels with primroses. In the evening Hubert, Gage and I went to the new 50-50 Club organised by Ivor Novello. My friends say I must secure a definitive job, a political appointment perhaps.”

**Tuesday 28th April**

“Yesterday afternoon, Gage was in waiting and introduced Baldwin into the presence, and he was next to Mrs Baldwin last night at dinner. She is a monumental bore and enunciated time-worn bromides with a tiny air of elegance. She is a large woman and her frocks are as ridiculous as her coiffure.”

**Sunday 3rd May**

Paris. “Exhausted. Tony Ashley and I gave Mrs Vanderbilt and Grace Curzon luncheon at Voisins’s and then we went to the races at Longchamp. All the same people; have they been going every Sunday all their lives? I thought they looked more squalid, but then the squalor of French crowds always amazes one after London.”

**Tuesday 5th May**

“Tony Ashley and I accompanied Lady Curzon back to London. I like travelling with her; one’s met everywhere by officials and treated like royalty.”

**Sunday 10th May**

“An incredible day, but then do I ever have a normal one? Herbert Duggen, Francis



Lord and Lady Curzon in 1922

Stone and I plus three ladies, Lady Lettice Lygon, Lady Sybil Lygon and Daphne Vivian, motored to Oxford in the pouring rain. We arrived drenched to the skin and to warm ourselves drank too much wine at luncheon with disastrous results. On the way back to London, after an orgy worthy of footmen and housemaids in the car, we went into the woods near Henley and sang and danced and finally undressed, making a sacrificial pile of clothes whilst we danced around it.”

**Friday 29th May**

Montague House, Somerset. “Baba Curzon’s engagement is announced to Fruity Metcalfe. Born in Dublin of second-rate, unheard-of parents; spent his youth in dreary regiments abroad with unpopular people. Suddenly at 32 he meets and fascinates the Prince of Wales at a dinner in India. In three months he is the Prince’s *eminence gris*.”

**Wednesday 1st July**

“Dined with Lady Ribblesdale, old and exquisite and chic and witty. We went on to the popular play *No! No! Nanette!* Later to the inevitable Embassy Club, crowded with Americans. How ghastly they are.”

**Monday 13th July**

“Dined at Hurlingham with Lord and Lady Beauchamp. A dinner of forty-nine. At one o’clock in the gardens, a Russian dancer called Dolin did a very questionable dance with no clothes, save for a golden spider rose attached to him.”

**Friday 16th October**

“A maddening morning. My bankers say I am £400 overdrawn [£24,946 in 2021] and my income from America delayed because of a tiresome family wrangle.”

**1926 Wednesday 6th January**

“Sir Basil Thomson, a high official in Scotland Yard

Tallulah Bankhead



has been arrested in the park for an indecent offence. The woman is a well-known tart; it is no longer safe in the park at all!”

**Sunday 7th February**

“Gage and Ivo return. I took them to lunch with Tallulah Bankhead. They were fascinated by her. She is amusing, but a terrible snob and is in the backwater of minor royalty. In the evening, supper with Tallulah again. Later for hours she lay in my arms, the lights almost out, the low bed, the fire and I.”

**Monday 8th February**

“Very bored with Tallulah, whom I met at supper tonight at the Eiffel Tower. She greatly attracts me but she is such a snob.”

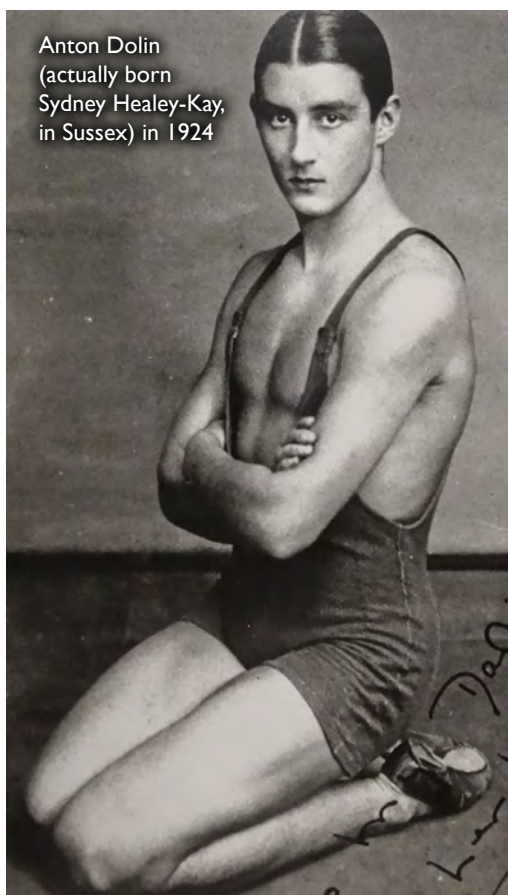
**Wednesday 10th February**

“I am really very attracted by Tallulah. She is so strange and ardent. I am quite captivated.”

**Friday 12th February**

“Tallulah and I went to the Embassy Club. Much later we went to the ‘Two Uncles’ restaurant and at four returned to her flat. A friend of hers was there and we played a game called ‘stripping words’. Tallulah was soon naked, I next and her friend last.”

Anton Dolin (actually born Sydney Healey-Kay, in Sussex) in 1924



***Sunday 7th March***

“My birthday, I feel 110. Spent the day writing my first novel. Dined at Hanover Lodge with my divine Obelenskys. They gave me diamond and onyx links. I should have preferred something grander.”

***Tuesday 5th March***

“We went to Lady Granard’s ball where we found all of London. I counted eight people with whom at one time I had persecuted the sweet delights of carnal love.”

***Wednesday 21st April***

“Outside the guns were booming. We rang up The Palace who told us that a baby princess had been born at 2.40 this morning at 17 Bruton Street. Poor little darling Elizabeth, I have a feeling the child will be Queen of England and perhaps the last sovereign.”

***Tuesday 4th May***

“The first day of the general strike. The streets were very crowded and the traffic impossible. Everyone is doing something. Tea with the Obelenskys and the Duchess of London.”

***Wednesday 5th May***

“I have joined up as a special constable. I have a baton and a whistle. The season is postponed.”

***Thursday 6th May***

All day I drilled men at Scotland Yard in a stinking room like the Roman catacombs, and as stuffy as the black hole of Calcutta.”

The Prince of Wales



***Sunday 9th May***

“All day in the ghetto fraternising with the crowd. They cheer us now. Dinner at Buck’s.”

***Saturday 15th May***

“I had an Embassy Club party. The Prince of Wales was at the next table with Sheila Loughborough. She was charming to us, and in fact was irresistible but looks common.”

***Tuesday 25th June***

The beau monde are all going this evening to Richmond Park with Prince Chichibu of Japan. He follows me about like a dog; such is

Special constables during the General Strike





my genius with bores.”

**Saturday 10th July**

“I dined with Gilbert Hays for his bachelor dinner. Sixteen chaps, all roaring, dangerously drunk before the entrée. All the furniture smashed to atoms, ice and bottles thrown on the people below.”

**Thursday 15th July**

“Tonight is the long-planned Sutherland ball, which is a splendid sight. A parquet floor had been laid on the tennis court, pink lights, all London was present. I went as a sheik, the Prince of Wales was dressed as a girl in a pink gingham frock. He was very painted and, wearing a yellow wig, almost unrecognisable.”

**Monday 9th August**

Hackwood. “I have been here several days. The house is much improved, but the atmosphere sadly deteriorated. The little room of yore where we played ‘sardines’ when we were all under the bed—Lord Londonderry, the Spanish ambassadress, Biddy Carlise, the Aga Khan, Lady Curzon and I—has disappeared. It forms part of the sad sitting room.”

**1927 Tuesday 3rd May**

“I ought to be very happy today, as I had long letters from my friends. I now inherit 1/13th of my grandmother’s real estate, i.e. a sum of \$85,000 [£1,095,505 in 2021] in addition of course to father’s settlement on me.”

**Wednesday 4th May**

“I ought to be gloriously happy for now I know I am financially safe, secure and belong to the order of those that have.”

**Thursday 5th May**

“Gage and I and David Margesson to the Wimbledon Club for golf. Coming back I

mentioned that Mrs Esmond Harmsworth did not excite my lust, David Margesson capped this by saying ‘When she’s about my old man has more wrinkles than inches.’”

**Monday 10th May**

“Mrs Churchill confided to someone the other day that she never knew when she was safe from Winston; he exerts his conjugal rights at odd times and in unexpected places, frequently after a debate.”

**Tuesday 24th May**

“Lunched with Mary Baker and tried unsuccessfully to ravish her; I couldn’t get it in.”

**Monday 24th June**

“Every summer a new form of madness attacks London; this year it’s the greyhound racing. People are potty about it and talk of nothing else.”

**Monday 4th July**

“I went this morning to the memorial service for Lord Oranmore and Browne. A pleasant, fat, absurd little man he was always very genial, social and a tremendous gossip.”

**Tuesday 19th July**

“My mother’s birthday. She was born in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, in 1865 and must

therefore be 58. She has looked 75 for years and years, and is very much like her aunts, thin delicate, suspicious, a little mad, loyal and odd.”

**Saturday 13th August**

Amsterdam. “We spent the day going to antiquities and museums with Michael Hernby. Then Michael and I slipped away to the famous street of harlots near the station. We selected two old harridans, gave them some beer and accompanied them upstairs, expecting to see a dazzling array of Dutch treats. They then proceeded to undress: they were themselves the fayre. Of course, we could not touch such



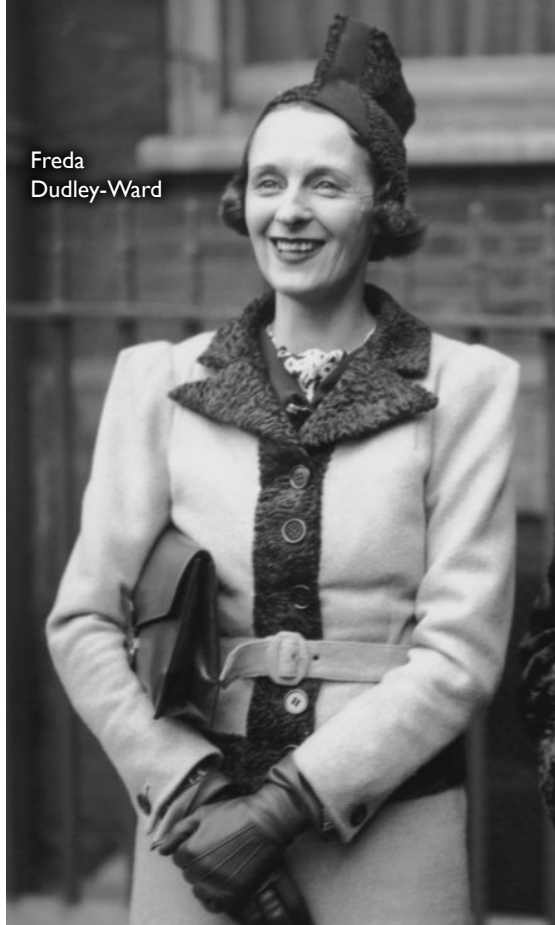
Mrs Esmond Harmsworth (pictured in 1922): did not excite Channon’s lust

unpalatable stuff, but Michael said “Let’s spank them!” It was a happy idea and we soundly spanked them until their bottoms resembled large tomatoes.”

**Friday 16th September**

“I have sent Daphne and Henry Weymouth a Cartier onyx clock set in diamonds as a wedding present; to Perry Brownman and Kitty Kinloch I sent a pair of George III sugar shakers from George and me; to Mary Thynne and John Nurnburnholme a pair of silver dishes.”

Freda  
Dudley-Ward



**Friday 2nd December**

The Century, Chicago. “On the train to New York Mother accompanied me as far as Montreal. I was sorry indeed to part from her and I saw her pathetic little figure standing on the platform, shaking with sobs. The very last thing she did was to demand repayment of £16 that she says I owe her.”

**Saturday 3rd December**

1 Sutton Place, New York. “We went to the Schuyel Parsons for tea. Beverley Nichols played the piano. Suddenly Colonel Lindbergh was announced; a gaunt man looking absurdly young came in. He sat on a sofa next to me and refused tea, cigarettes and whisky. We discussed the flight, he was amazingly modest about it and was less than five minutes late arriving in Paris.”

**Thursday 8th December**

RMS *Aquitania*. “Last night I came aboard, I have a large luxurious cabin to myself; it makes one long for marriage.”

**Wednesday 14th December**

“My bankers write to say that I am overdrawn and demand a credit. When one thinks of the thousands I have squandered on lawyers fees, it is absurd to be so hard put to find a few hundred.”

**Monday 19th December**

“I went to my bankers in the High Street for a dreadful interview; it seems I am considerably overdrawn and they insist on immediate repayment, and I have not got the funds. They want me to borrow £600 [£38,665 in 2021] which I refused to do. It was all a terrible bore and seemed so unnecessary.”

**Tuesday 20th December**

“I have sent a desperate cable of despair to my father for money.”

**Wednesday 21st**

**December**

“I met the Prince of Wales in Cartier’s this morning, he was buying bracelets, emerald ones, for Freda Dudley-Ward, I suppose. Freda has put him against me, I am sure. She is so common and absurd.”

**Friday 23rd December**

“In Cartier’s I met Grace Curzon buying presents for the servants and retainers at Hackwood; mad, mad woman, she will soon be ruined all over again.”

**Christmas Day**

“A silver lighter from the Spanish Ambassadors and family, four silver George III decanter labels shaped like ivy leaves from Lady Scarborough and other presents too numerous to mention.”

**Thursday 29th December**

“Still no answer from America, and now I fear the worst.”

**1928 Wednesday 11th January**

“The strain has passed and father has agreed to pay off all my obligations, so I can breathe again, but strains like this leave me fatigued.”

**Thursday 12th January**

“Lunched with Grace Curzon, she is quickly

becoming common. Dined with Emerald Cunard, a brilliant affair to meet the Revd Montague Summer. He is a fat podgy man of about 55 and undoubtedly a homo; but he is a great scholar and authority on the Restoration drama.”

### ***Friday 20th January***

“I lunched with Tallulah Bankhead and Mary Baker who signed a guarantee for my overdraft until the promised funds from America arrive. I dined with Emerald Cunard, Oswald Balfour and others at the Embassy, where a dark little man called Rodgers joined us. He is the composer of ‘My Heart Stood Still’.”

### ***Wednesday 25th January***

“Hubert, Philip York and I dined with Tallulah Bankhead in her voluptuously arranged house, 1 Farm Street. We put Tallulah to bed, the setting was libidinous. A vast white bed with lace and fur, a mirrored dressing table with gold fittings and half-emptied Champagne bottles.”

### ***Thursday 9th February***

“As I was undressing at the Bath Club, the Prince of Wales passed me and smiled. Later I saw him as he left in a vulgar overcoat, pipe and bowler. He looked like a racing tout.”

### ***Thursday 23rd February***

“I dined with Marchioness Grace, a pompous affair with rows of ambassadors, dukes, etc. as usual. How tired I am of it. I went in last.”

### ***Sunday 26th February***

“Motored to Oxford with Darling Duggan. I tried to instil poison in his mind to prevent him from marrying that under-bred slut. Will he?”

### ***Tuesday 28th February***

“I lunched with Emerald Cunard. In the afternoon I arranged my costume for this evening. Freda Dudley-Ward was a mediaeval queen, Mrs Keppel was marvellous as the old Chancellor and Winston Churchill looked saturnine dressed as Nero with a toga. A little figure, heavily hooded in red, I instantly recognised as the Prince of Wales.”

### ***Sunday 4th March***

“I had tea with Lady Scarborough, Sir George Arthur was there, the friend and biographer of Kitchener. I had never met him before, but he gave me the usual homosexual handshake!”

### ***Wednesday 7th March***

“My birthday. It is appalling, never had a year flown by like this. A very beautiful silver and gold cigarette case arrived from Mary Baker, so far my only present.”

### ***Thursday 8th March***

“What to do about Montague Summers? The old libidinous priest is ‘gone on me’, he



Montague Summers



Maud "Emerald" Lady Cunard

rings me up every day and sometimes more often. Happy evening alone with George. We dined at Pratt's and later took the tube to an obscure brothel in Notting Hill High Street and went to bed with two old whores. Usual despair afterwards."



The wedding of Chips and Honor

**Friday 23rd**

**March**

"I now never mention Montague Summers, for apparently he is a madman, and I sailed very near the wind; indeed there may yet be an appalling scandal."

**Friday 30th March**

"I slipped down to Richmond to dine with Montague Summers for the second time. After

a bad dinner, he whipped me with a dog-whip which seemed to give him infinite delight, and me only momentary discomfort, so I did not protest."

**Friday 26th April**

"I have been spending too much money again and I am overdrawn. How I hate to be so hampered by these minor little difficulties. I ordered clothes from Paris today, about £40 worth [£2,937 in 2021]."



Duff and Diana Cooper

**Friday 9th November**

"My father is 60 years old today. I sent him a cablegram, by chance I received a letter from him. As usual he infers that he will soon be richer. He never offers to give me money, yet he never refuses; I wish he would think of it on his own sometimes."

**Friday 7th December**

"I lunched with Emerald Cunard. Later I went to Claridge's to see my American flirt, Isabelle Crow. She arrived this morning from Chicago. We drank port in her sitting room and suddenly I seized her and carried her to the bedroom."

**Monday 17th December**

"Poppy Spring's wedding; she looked delicious. All London was at the wedding, but none of the Royal Family. A little less rouge and Poppy might have been Princess George of England [i.e. Duchess of Kent]."

***Monday 24th December***

“I telephoned Isabelle Crow at nine in the morning; she was at Claridge’s, having arrived late last night from Denmark. I hurried around to see her, soon she was in my arms and we rolled on the floor in a strange ecstasy; the act was consummated at 10.20am.”

***Tuesday 25th December***

“I have had very different Christmas presents, handkerchiefs, silk pyjamas, a set of Byron, Keats and a Blake from George, ‘bits of dirt’ from others; £250 [£18,354 in 2021] from my father.”

***Wednesday 26th December***

“Shot all day with Gerry Wellesley and very badly too.”

The diary ends, not to resume for five years. In 1933 Chips would marry brewing heiress, Lady Honor Guinness (1909–1976), eldest daughter of Rupert Guinness, 2nd Earl of Iveagh. He would succeed Lady Gwendoline Guinness as Conservative MP for Southend in 1935.

***1934 Sunday 18th February***

“Our house is looking at its best now, and I’ve had a dinner party tonight. Duff and Diana Cooper, Lord Ivor Churchill, Cole Porter, who played on the piano to us. There was bridge, backgammon and game playing.”

***Wednesday 21st February***

“At 3.00pm, I picked up Honor and motored to Southend. Oh! Aren’t you to be much in my future. Southend seems charming, the grey sea coast, the mud and the sea. Honor and I drove in state with Lord and Lady Iveagh to the Conservative ball; we were met by the Committee and I tried to be charming to everyone, especially the ladies. I was not in the least nervous and spoke well! How many of these people, these frumps and snobs will play a role in my life?”

***Tuesday 17th May***

Southend. “We drove here yesterday. In the afternoon we drove-up in state to St Clement’s Ward Committee Room. There were about 150 old frumps, mostly women. Honor spoke better than I. I thought she would never sit down.”



Cole Porter



Cecil Beaton

***Tuesday 18th December***

“The Iveaghs dined tonight and were sweet, shy, appreciative and charming. They gave me a George II chest, circa 1746 with magnificent silver mouldings.”

***Wednesday 19th December***

“Now that Honor is recovered from her feminine operation, we can more hopefully anticipate babies; I should like six, five boys and a girl.”

***1935 Tuesday 8th January***

“I drove to Southend and addressed the



Lord Iveagh



Lady Iveagh

Primrose League: I am its ruling counsellor, and a more stodgy group of moth-eaten old dames I have never seen. They are ossified.”

**Tuesday 15th January**

“I adore Elvedon, its calm, its luxurious Edwardian atmosphere. For a fortnight now I have lain in the King’s bed, which only Edward VII and George V have used. However I had a humiliating accident, I somehow smashed the Royal chamber pot.

“There is an article in the *New Yorker* which reveals that the property on 5th Avenue, New York, thought to belong to King George, is really owned by Lord Iveagh, about \$16 million worth [£233.5 million in 2021]. Shall I see any of it?

“We seem to have spent a fantastic sum of money this last year; but as Honor is so rich easily £600,000 perhaps it does not matter [£44 million in 2021].”

**Thursday 17th January**

“Returned to London and lunched alone with Honor. I hope that she has started a baby. I should like lots of children: boys to beat and girls to marry off well.

“Emerald Cunard swept into tea and stayed

two hours. She had a dinner party last night. At 11.20 the front doorbell rang and there was the Prince of Wales accompanied by Mr and Mrs Simpson.”

**Friday 18th January**

“We lunched with Cecil, commonly called ‘sexy’ Beaton. A quaint creature, gay with great flair and sunny and kind and homosexual.”

**Saturday 19th January**

“Randolph Churchill, the knave of cards has announced his intention of standing as an independent at Wavertree. He has been threatening to contest Southend, that would be highly unpleasant, but I should still win. He has few qualities; he speaks eloquently, is plausible to meet, has charm, but he is unprincipled, uneducated, unkind, has a fiery temper and is nearly always drunk. He is a famous fornicator and blabs afterwards. I really dislike him.”

**Wednesday 23rd January**

“Lunched with Emerald Cunard to meet Mrs Simpson, the *maîtresse-en-titre* of the Prince of Wales. She is a nice, quiet, well-bred mouse of a woman with large startled eyes and a huge, huge mole.

“Dined with Lady Ribblesdale, a pompous blowout. The German Ambassador, Baron Hoesch, was very charming. He has to pretend to be a Nazi, but isn’t really.”

***Tuesday 24th  
January***

“Darling Honor is going to have a baby.”

***Friday 8th February***

“A German lesson with Wolfgang Reinhardt; he told me that whipping is very popular in Germany, particularly in Berlin.”

***Tuesday 12th February***

“I spent the day with my father-in-law who told me of our full wealth. Our riches are incalculable. Honor must have £100,000 per annum in 20 years time [£7.25 million in 2021].”

***Friday 15th February***

“And so to Southend. I addressed the people of Westborough Ward and then to supper at



Randolph  
Churchill

Milton Ward; one must be so careful with these middle-class people, their standards are so different from one’s own.”

***Tuesday 19th  
February***

“We dined with the Milbanks in their intoxicating, white modernised house, 32 Hamilton Terrace. I am always amazed at how the so-called ‘poor’ live. Everything beautifully done with only four servants.”

***Sunday 23rd March***

“We decided to buy 5 Belgrave Square. It is not too grand and is dirt cheap compared to all the other houses we have seen.”

***Tuesday 26th March***

“The great event today is the return of my shaggy, woolly, delightful dog Bundi after six months’ quarantine. He is like his grandfather, Lord Iveagh, to look at, all white, woolly and comfortable.”



Chips and Honor at  
Lord Iveagh’s house

**Thursday 4th April**

“A full exhausting day. We had a luncheon party here. The plot was a politesse to Mrs Simpson. She is a jolly, plain, intelligent little woman. Both unpretentious and unprepossessing. She has complete power over the Prince of Wales. He is trying to launch her into society.”

**Friday 3rd May**

“We went over the plans for 5 Belgrave Square. Repairs, alterations, etc., will come to £12,000; a lot [£875,435 in 2021]. 10% of these charges are attributable to the proximity of the Duke of Kent! As workmen will only be allowed to work at certain stipulated times.”

**Wednesday 8th May**

“Luncheon with the Colefaxes, a dreadful display of bores. We discussed Freddie March, now Duke of Richmond since his father’s death two days ago. Poor ineffectual little Freddie.”

**Sunday 12th May**

“Tremendous excitement about Mrs Simpson who has banned Freda Dudley-Ward and her group from York House. Officially I am on Freda’s side, but secretly delighted for she was an appallingly selfish silly influence whilst she reigned.”



**Friday 24th May**

“I joined Honor for cocktails at Mrs Simpson’s little flat in Bryanston Court. There I found Emerald Cunard, David Margesson and the Prince of Wales. His voice is more American than ever.”

**Sunday 25th May**

Belton House. “We motored here, an endless drive. The house is always a dream of loveliness but the little Brownlows do it badly and appear surrounded by their possessions. The house is uncomfortable and the food poisonous.”

**Monday 17th June**

We spent the afternoon working at 5 Belgrave Square. Mr Boudin from Jansens in Paris has come over and we hear he is to do our new dining room like the Amalienborg: a symphony in blue and silver, cascades of aquamarine.”

**Saturday 29th June**

“Dined with Laura Corrigan, a little dinner of 128 or 130 and a decided flop.”







The dining room at  
5 Belgrave Square

### ***Monday 29th July***

“Monsieur Boudin of Jansen came to us this morning with his final drawings and estimates it will cost us over £6,000 [£437,717 in 2021]. I fear the whole house will cost £40,000 [£2,918,115].”

### ***Thursday 29th August***

“We drove to 5 Belgrave Square where there are 23 men working all day. Long conferences with Mrs Mann, a quiet, dim little woman, probably a semi-lesbian who has excellent taste.”

### ***Friday 27th September***

“The Iveaghs lunched and returned to dine. It is very difficult to spend less than £200 [£14,590 in 2021] when one goes out shopping.”

### ***Wednesday 9th October***

“Nanny Burns knocked

and came in. ‘It’s begun,’ she said. I leapt from my bed and rushed to Honor. Later that day, Henry Paul Guinness Channon was born.”

### ***Monday 9th December***

“Gerry Wellesley met us to decide colours for the library. He was rude and sulked like a spoilt child. He is an extraordinary character. Common yet distinguished, he is pompous, stilted, witty yet humourless. In fact, a ridiculous person altogether, for whom I always have great affection.”

### ***Tuesday 10th December***

“Most of the day at the House of Commons. Today for the first time I really liked it, I became outrageously drunk and on little, two glasses of Champagne and one of port. I fell in the street on the way home. How disgraceful. I hope no-one noticed.”

### ***Thursday 12th December***

“House of Commons all day and it seems interminable. Am I to sit and smoke and drink myself to death in the smoking room?”

### ***Wednesday 25th December***

“I got up and went to Honor who had a stocking for me full of lovely presents. A cigarette case marked with election results, a gold Champagne stirrer from Bundi, a Fabergé lighter from Honor and playing cards from baby Paul. I gave baby Paul a set of cat’s eyes and diamond

waistcoat buttons and studs made by Bolin, the famous Russian Court jeweller. We lunched at the Berkeley Hotel, so as to give the servants a chance for their party.”

1935 concluded a successful year for Chips on the professional and domestic front; with his diaries continuing until 1938 in this volume.

*Thanks to Baron Solf for transcribing Essex’s manuscript.*



Chips with his  
beloved Bundi

# VICTOR CANNING

By Torquil Arbuthnot

**V**ICTOR CANNING WAS born in 1911 in Plymouth. Although he planned to go to Oxford to study classics, his family could not afford it and instead he went to work as a clerk at the age of 16, first in Oxford, and later in Weston-super-Mare. According to an article in *Book & Magazine Collector*, Canning started writing soon afterwards:

I was seventeen. I wanted a motor-bike...and to drink beer with the other fellows in the rugby club. I'd no money—I was earning 17s 6d a week in an office. I picked up some kids' magazine and I read a story. I thought: "My God! If I couldn't write a better story than this, I'd well...!" I sat down and wrote one... I got four guineas for it. That was it—I'd started.

Canning was soon selling short stories regularly to boys' magazines and newspapers. In 1934 his first novel, *Mr Finchley Discovers his England*, was published and became a best seller. (To give a flavour of



Victor Canning in 1930

**"I had my feet up on the windowsill, watching the pageantry of life outside... I got tired of the pageant and looked at my feet. The suede shoes wanted a good going over with a wire brush. My green socks didn't look good with a dark suit. I didn't care much."**

— *The Melting Man*

Artillery in Llandrindod Wells in Wales, where he trained alongside his friend Eric Ambler.

1934, other books published in that year included J.B. Priestley's *English Journey*, Orwell's *Burmese Days*, Wodehouse's *Right Ho, Jeeves*, Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*, and Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust*.) Canning gave up his clerical job and became a full-time writer, producing 13 more novels in the next six years under three different names. Lord Rothermere engaged him to write for the *Daily Mail*, and a number of his travel articles were published as a book with illustrations by Leslie Stead under the title *Everyman's England* in 1936.

In 1935 he married Phyllis McEwen, a girl from a theatrical family whom he met while she was working with a touring vaudeville production at Weston-super-Mare.

He enlisted in the Army in 1940 and was sent for training with the Royal

Both were commissioned as second lieutenants in 1941. In Ambler's autobiography, *Here Lies Eric Ambler*, he writes about his army training:

There was a pleasant side. Victor Canning was in the same troop as I was. On Saturday nights, duty permitting, we would go to the local repertory theatre and on Sunday nights to the cinema. In both places, of course, we could sit down. I cannot recall our ever going into a pub for a drink where one had to stand at the bar.



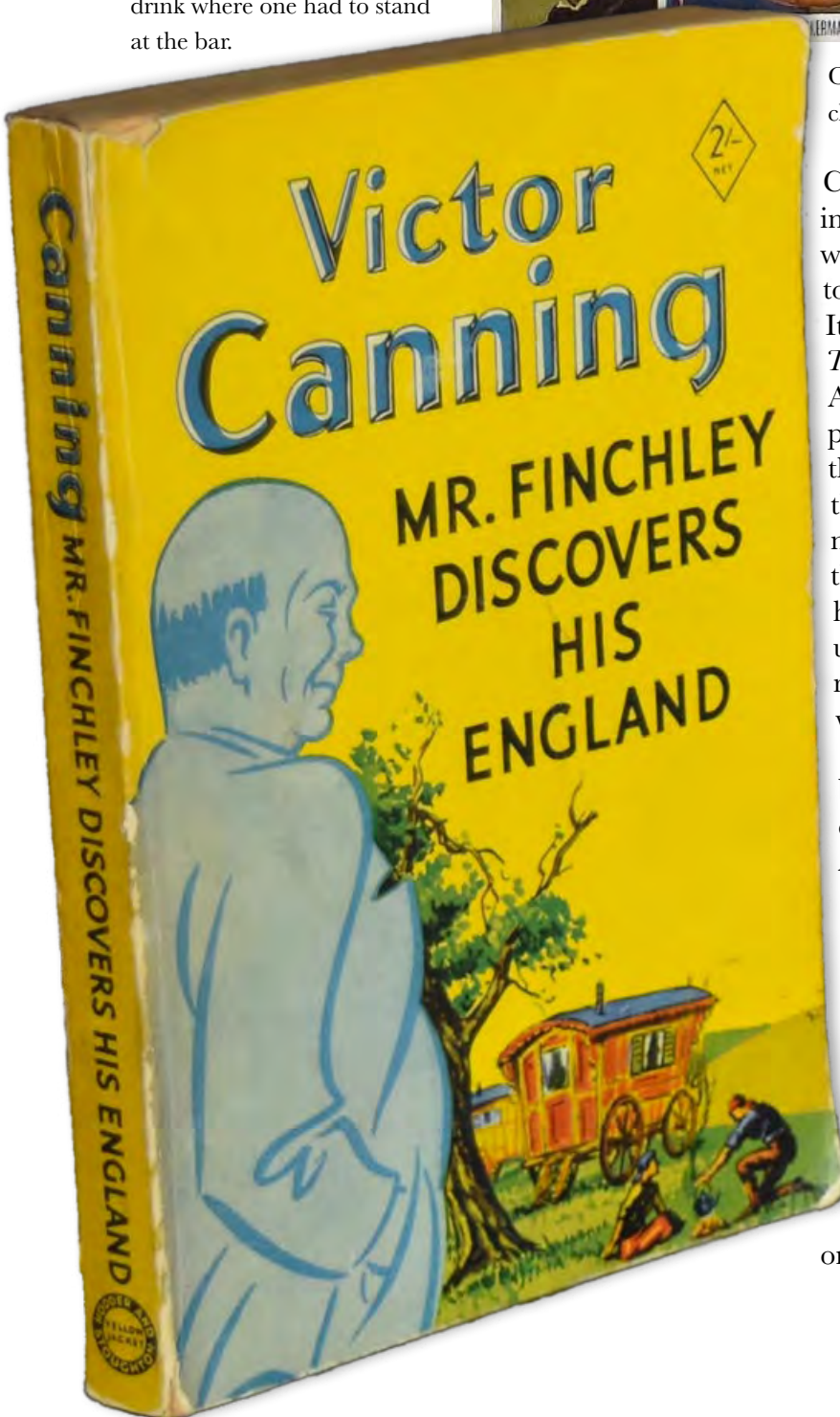
...ERMAN and LEONARD LEE - Directed by GEORGE SHERMAN - Produced by RALPH DIETRICH - A UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL PICTURE

On weekday nights, if not on duty or cramming or cleaning equipment, one went to bed early.

Canning worked in anti-aircraft batteries in the south of England until early 1943, when he was sent to North Africa and took part in the invasion of Sicily and the Italian campaigns. Canning's obituary in *The Times* notes that "...even in the Royal Artillery he had a stimulus to write on the promptings of a loyal batman who was in the habit of rebuking Major Canning in the morning if he felt that the boss had not been long enough at his typewriter the previous night." At the end of the war he was assigned to an Anglo-American unit doing experimental work with radar range-finding. He was discharged in 1946 with the rank of major.

Although before the war he had been predominantly a writer of gentle comedies, he resumed writing, on Ambler's advice, thrillers set in exotic locations. His thrillers are mainly set overseas since, Canning is reported to have said, "In this country you can always call a policeman."

Canning's second post-war book, *Panthers' Moon*, published in 1948, had a plot involving two panthers who are carrying microfilm in their collars being sent from Milan to a circus in Paris. It was filmed as *Spy Hunt*, and from then on Canning was established as someone



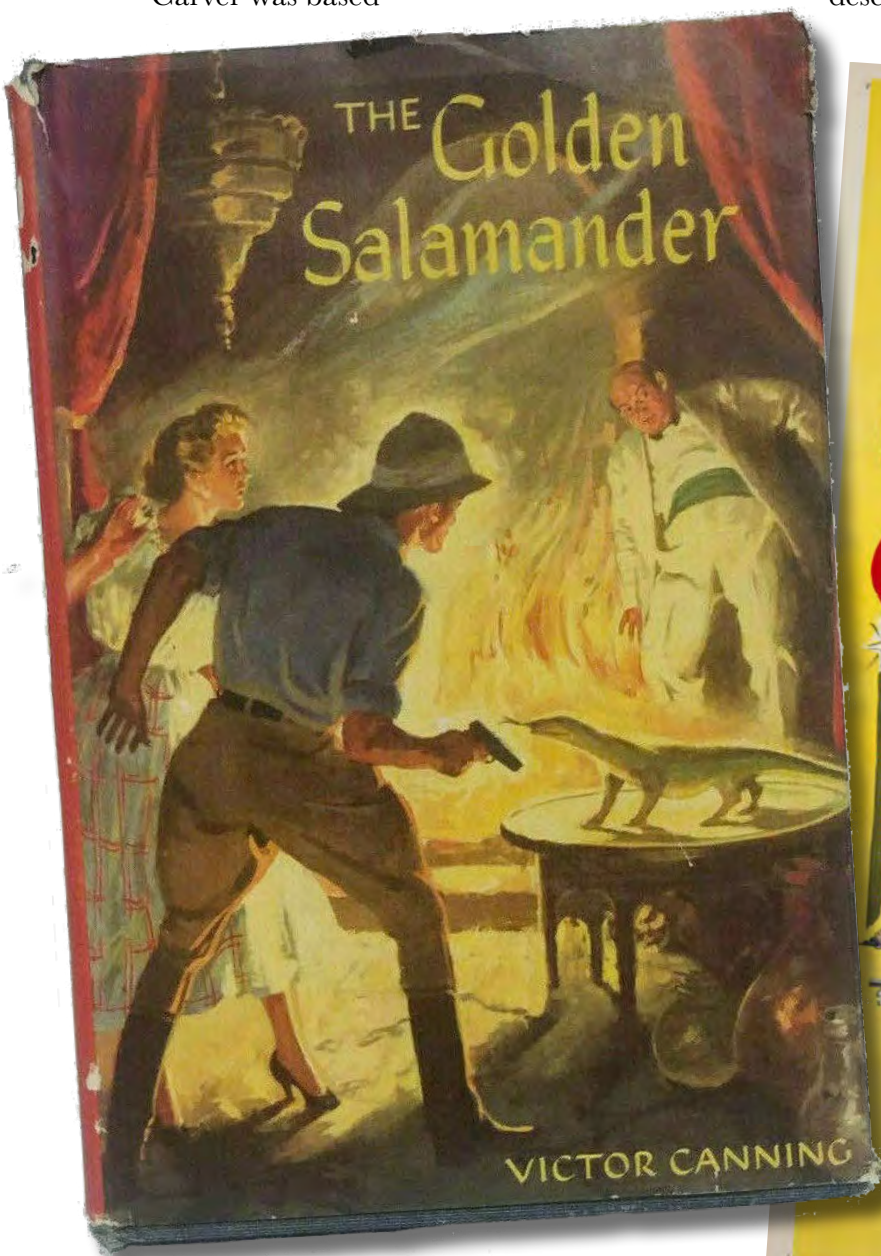
who could write a book a year in the suspense genre, have them reliably appear in book club and paperback editions on both sides of the Atlantic, be translated into the main European languages, and in many cases get filmed.

In 1952 Canning briefly worked in Hollywood on scripts for films of his own books and on television shows. The money earned from the film of *The Golden Salamander* (starring Trevor Howard) meant that Canning could buy a substantial country house in Kent.

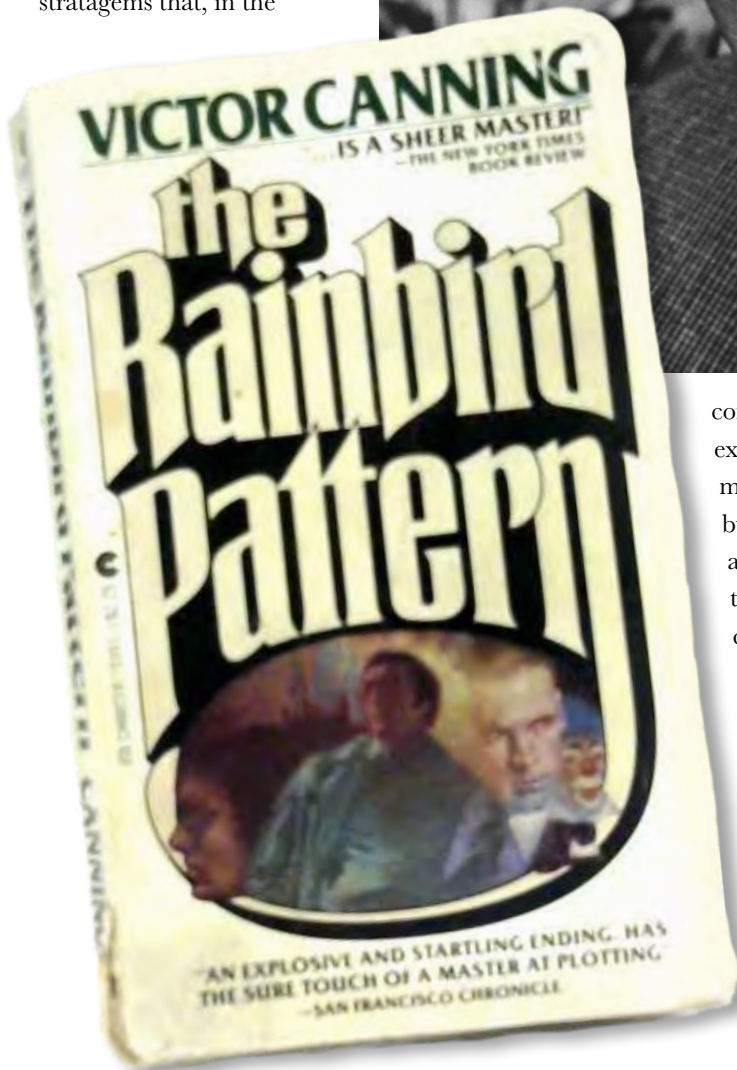
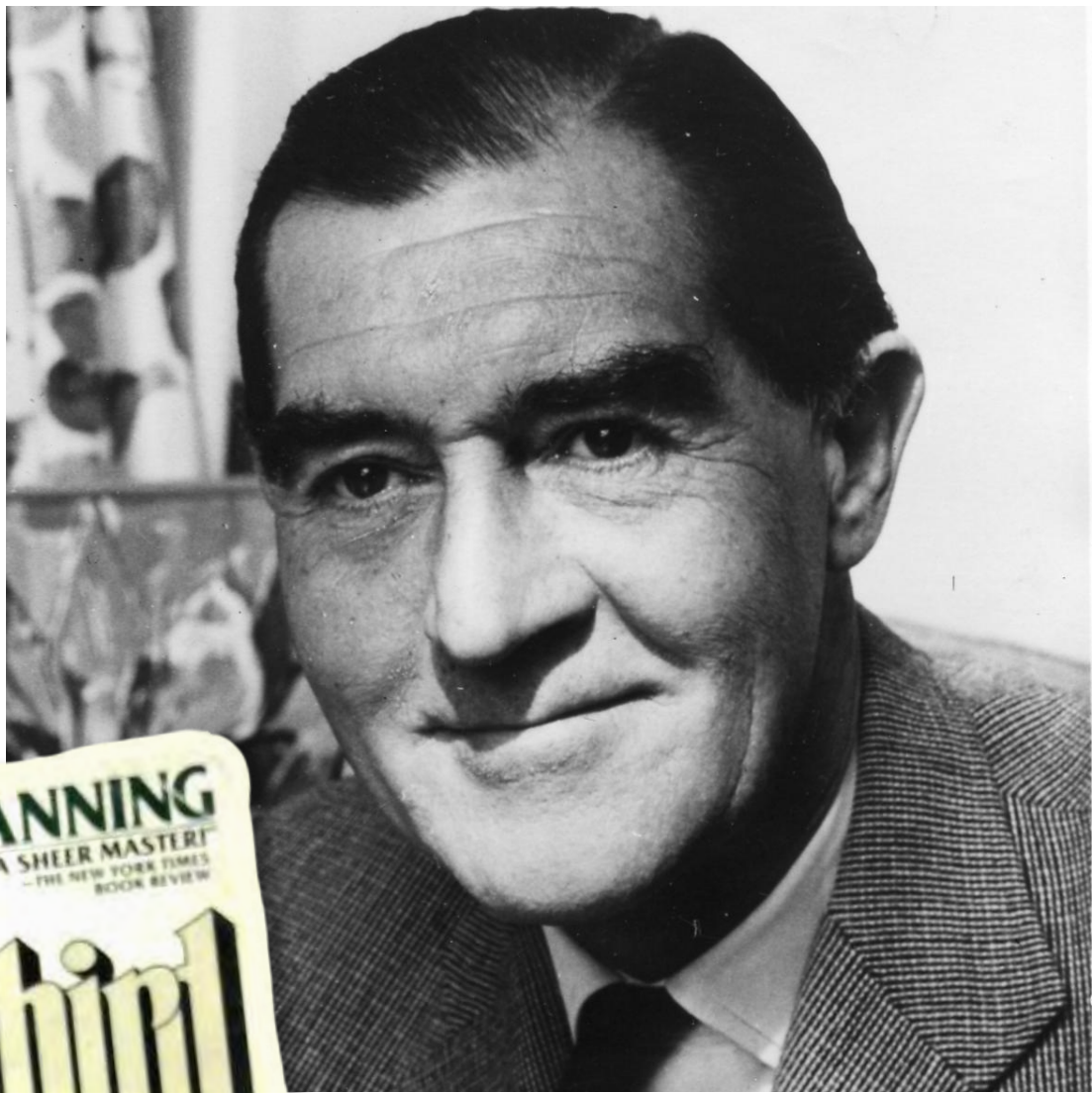
During the 1950s and 1960s Canning also wrote short stories for the many pulp fiction magazines that then existed, such as *Argosy*, *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* and *John Bull*. In 1965 he began a series of four books featuring a down-at-heel private detective called Rex Carver, whose character owed something to Len Deighton's unnamed narrator of *The Ipcress File* and *Horse Under Water*. Although Rex Carver was based

in Pimlico, his work usually took him abroad and involved a colourful array of villains and their henchmen.

At the end of the 1960s Canning fell in love with the wife of a London solicitor, which led to his separation from his wife Phyllis. His second wife died of cancer in 1976. The seven and a half years that they lived together were, as a critic says, "an extraordinarily productive period for him, containing almost all of his best work, including the first five of his 'Birdcage' novels, a trilogy of books for children starting with *The Runaways*, and the beginning of a trilogy retelling the legends of King Arthur, *The Crimson Chalice*." With his "Birdcage" series of novels, beginning with *Firecrest* (1971), he moved away from exotic locales and concentrated much of the action in the south of England. These novels featured a branch of the secret service known only as "The Department", which Canning described thus:



The Department was an offshoot of the Ministry of Defence. Its existence had never been officially acknowledged. Its functions—proliferating under the pressure of national security—were as old as organised society. Its work was discreet and indecent. Security and economy demanded that certain people and certain situations had to be handled, organised, dispatched or suppressed without the public being disturbed or distressed by any awareness of the mostly unmentionable stratagems that, in the



commonplaces of the Department. The Department existed, but its existence would have been denied. Its members and operators lived in the common society but acted outside it. Most had entered the Department aware of some of its extreme aspects and prepared to adjust themselves. None had had originally a complete understanding of it; and when this had come it was too late—for knowledge had by then brought acquiescence and even a measure of pride and self-satisfaction at being part of a body of work and action which first changed, then isolated them, and finally smoothly endowed them with an inhumanity that inwardly set them aside from all other people.

Alfred Hitchcock's last film, *Family Plot* (1976), was based on the Birdcage novel *The Rainbird Pattern* (1972).

Canning continued writing a book a year, and died of a heart attack in February 1986, in Cirencester. His final book, *Table Number Seven*, was completed by his third wife Adria and his sister Jean.

interests of the national welfare, the Department was given an ambiguous mandate to employ. Murder, blackmail, fraud, theft and betrayal were the

Scott Aston



Craig Paterson



**CLUB NOTES**

## New Members

JUST ONE NEW bug this month, Dr Craig Paterson from Topanga, California, shown above with the Queen (well, technically it’s a picture of the Queen but there’s no need to tell him that). Craig likes a Cosmopolitan cocktail and, for someone resident in the Former Colonies, he belongs to a lot of British clubs: Royal Scots and Scots Guards in Edinburgh, and Victory Services and Civil Service in London. His special skill is his sense of smell, which must come in handy when savouring whisky (which in turn might explain the Edinburgh connections).

Also pictured above is Scott Aston from Australia, whom we introduced last month, but it’s nice now to have a face to put to the name.

## Members Out and About

GROUPS OF SHERIDANITES have been taking advantage of the end of lockdown to assay a few

modest jaunts in the metrop. On Saturday Miss Minna’s Noel Coward Saunter saw some dozen or 15 members take in the “Noël Coward: Art & Style” exhibition at the Guildhall Art Gallery—naturally attired in a manner of which Mr Coward would have approved—before repairing to the Counting House pub and then the Ned, both former banking halls. The Coward show is well worth a visit (not least because it is free, though you currently have to book online), showcasing the man’s astonishing versatility as a playwright, actor, director, singer and songwriter. Of course these are all things that you can’t actually see, so the exhibition dwells a lot on stage and costume design and the symbiotic relationship with fashion, but there is also the chance to see some of the great man’s clothes, accoutrements and furniture.

The Counting House is a lofty and ornate space with decent real ales and friendly staff. The Ned is an even loftier space, well worth sticking your head into, if they’ll let you in, just to see it, but it is confusingly subdivided—walk ten feet and you find yourself notionally in a different bar or restaurant from the one you were in before. The acoustics are also poor



Interior of the Noël Coward exhibition, with one of several dressing gowns on display



Members repair to the Counting House



Miss Minna strikes a pose with her Cowardian cigarette holder



Dining at Fischer's



Luigi Sbaffi (left) and Luca Jellinek



Evidence of Chap incursion at the Ned

and the cocktails likewise. It's supposed to be a private club but also allows in non-members, most of whom were decidedly inelegantly dressed. In fairness it's also a hotel, and I guess they can't ban guests from using the eating and drinking facilities. Perhaps they were just hoping that the grandeur of the space would inspire visitors to sartorial grandeur, but it ain't happening. Do pop downstairs to the loos, which are grand, but also to see the huge door into the vault, which is now a private cocktail bar for members.

A few days earlier, following recent Chappist ensoncements at L'Oscar and the Coral Room, Luca Jellinek led a sally to Fischer's, a Viennese-style café in Marylebone. Here are a few snaps from the occasion and you can read a report at [wonderland.city/2021/08/black-tie-dinner-at-fischers](http://wonderland.city/2021/08/black-tie-dinner-at-fischers).

## Club Tie Corner

THEY SAY AUGUST is "silly season" in media and it's true that this month we have only one bona fide tie spot: below Torquil has clocked this Clubman in an old advert. Then we have Allen Ginsberg (above right, from Alpheus de Vauldere—who isn't even a Member) and, appropriately, founder of the Paralympic Games



Sir Ludwig Gutmann (opposite top right, from Adrian Prooth), who *may* be wearing NSC ties. Below J.R.R. Tolkien lends the Club some academic credibility (Luigi Sbaffi), while on the facing page Luigi has also spotted a Renaissance member (bottom left) and Colonel Cyrus Choke realises that King Vytautas of Lithuania clearly based his entire kingdom on Club principles (whatever they are). Finally, both Lobby Lud and David Pittard noticed that the micro-nation of Sealand (essentially a concrete tower in the North Sea) flies Club colours. Sealand offers spurious noble titles in exchange for cash—which is, let's face it, precisely the sort of thing the Committee would do given the chance.

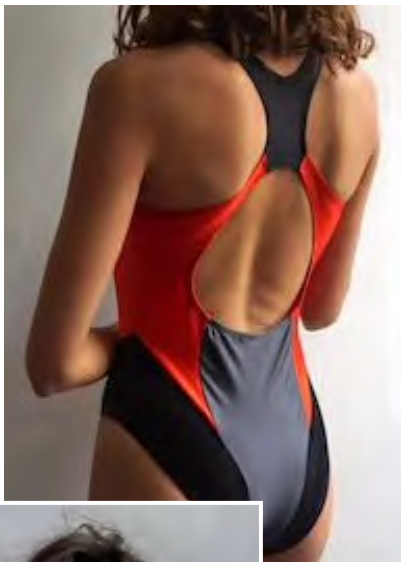






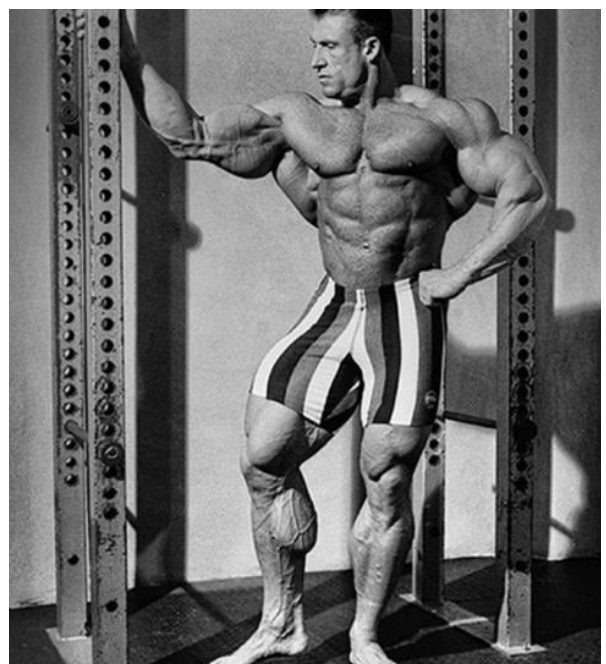


Clockwise from top left: Col. Choke isn't sure what this chap actually does around the Club but doesn't really mind; Ivan Debono has been hard at work on this ruggedly practical clothing-of-the-future concept, while simultaneously playtesting a swimwear range, and conducting experiments with a miracle crash-weight-gain port and stilton diet; Col. Choke has also discovered the Committee's charity work, about which we don't like to talk (and that is *not* because we've been using the homeless as subjects in our port and stilton diet experiments)



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Clockwise from top left: Col. Choke has noticed that Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia (1596–1662) is subtly signalling Club affiliations; Suzanne Coles has spotted the same vibe coming from Lorenzo de' Medici; the Colonel is also responsible for ordering these trews in the Club tartan from Brooks Bros; Suzanne has also submitted some designs for overhauling the Clubhouse (which only leaves the small matter of acquiring a Clubhouse); Ivan Debono has clearly been working too hard



Anti-clockwise from top left: Some say the Club garage may soon be too small for the Committee's collection, as Acturius adds both this Le Mans contender and this sinister high-powered van; Debono offers this barge, which is a nice thought but perhaps leave it in the Netherlands for now; meanwhile Callum Coates adds a Club flourish while on duty at Newmarket Palace





## 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.

**🔴 NSC Club Night**  
Wednesday 1st September  
7pm–11pm  
The upstairs room at the  
Wheatsheaf,  
25 Rathbone Place,  
London W1T 1JB  
Admission: Free

See page 2. Dr Tim Eyre will talk to us about *The Japanese Language*. The talk will begin at 8pm.

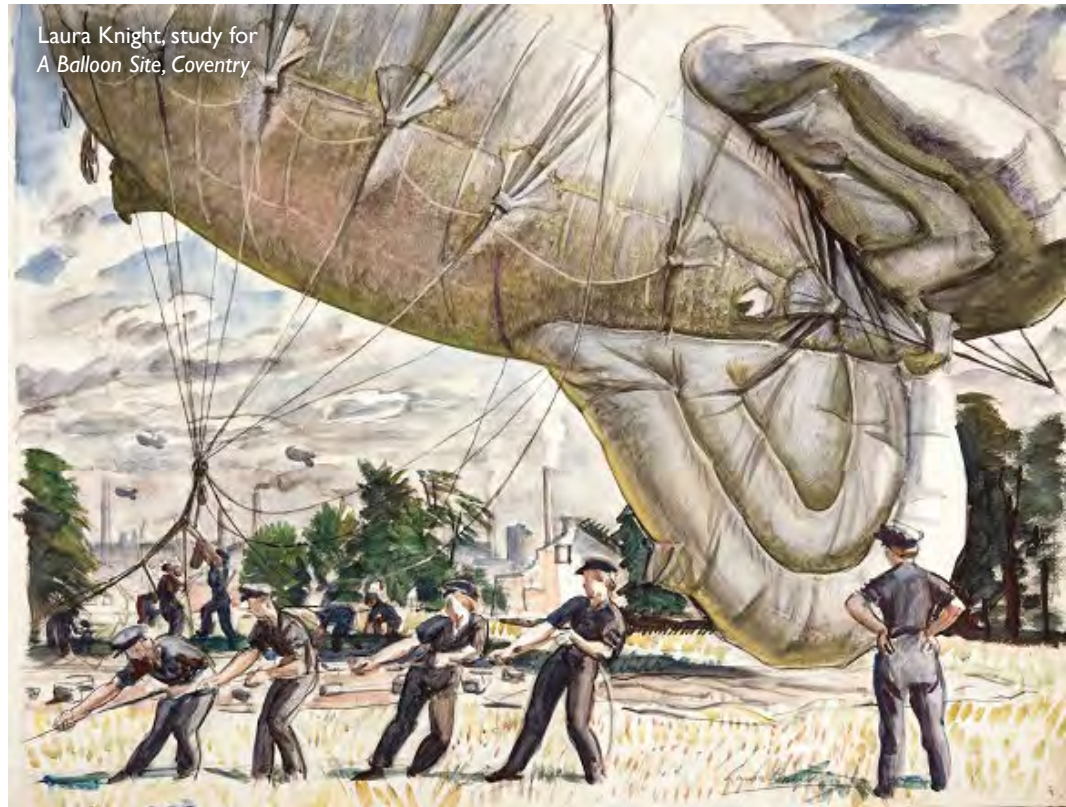
Although we are now returning to physical meetings, we will be endeavouring to live-stream the talk from the pub. The link to view this is <https://youtu.be/TRJFhn1VLHs>. Success or failure will depend to a large extent on the pub's wifi, though we'll also attempt to record the video for later upload.

### **In Air and Fire**

Until 12th September  
10am–5pm  
Royal Air Force Museum London, Grahame  
Park Way, London NW9 5LL  
Admission: Free, but prebooking required

Last chance to see this collection of work exploring artists' responses to the Battle of Britain and the Blitz (July 1940–May 1941) as they depicted evolving machinery, communications and urban landscapes, shaped

by what was an unprecedented “war in the air”. As sky battles unfolded across the south and east of England in the summer of 1940, followed by cities' bombardment in proceeding months, artists produced a pictorial record of the war, many of their works commissioned and purchased by Sir Kenneth Clark's War Artists' Advisory Committee (WAAC). The exhibition features works by Official War Artists, including Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland, Carel Weight, Anthony Gross, Richard Eurich and Eric Kennington, but also extends beyond the prominent male members of the British School, championed by Clark, to reflect the full range of war artists' contributions. It seeks to bring together the stories and



Laura Knight, study for  
*A Balloon Site, Coventry*

perspectives of artists from diverse backgrounds, highlighting the best of collection works from the period. Visitors can view over sixty works of art, several of which will be on display for the first time as part of this exhibition. See [rafmuseum.org.uk/london](http://rafmuseum.org.uk/london) for more details.

### **Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair**

Saturday 4th–Sunday 5th September  
11am–5pm  
Freemason's Hall, 60 Great Queen Street,  
London WC2B 5AE  
Admission: £5 per day (£3 for students) or £7.50



Have a poke around Ian White's pioneering self-build home

asked to wait before entering. For this reason it may be a good idea to buy your ticket in advance.

### **The East London Furniture Flea**

Sunday 5th September

10.30am–4.30pm

York Hall, 5 Old Ford Road, London E2 9PH

Admission: £5 from 10.30am, £4 from 11.30am from Ticket Tailor

Returning after the Covid hiatus, Vintage Furniture Flea focuses on mid-century furniture and homewares as a combination of quality and affordability, as opposed to expensive reproductions. Expect to see chairs, tables and more by giants like Ercol and G-Plan, cocktail glasses, barware and kitchenalia, textiles and fabrics, sewing machines, cameras, record players and radios, posters and magazines, lampshades, mirrors, toys, telephones, ceramics, lighting and more.

### **Mr White's Open House**

Sunday 5th September

1–8pm

10 Walters Way, London SE23 3LH

Admission: Free

As part of London Open House, when buildings across the city normally closed to the public are thrown open for snooping, Mr Ian White's house will be available for inspection. Walters Way is a self-build timber-framed scheme by pioneering architect Walter Segal, and a council housing project from the 1980s. There are 13 such houses in a cul-de-sac on steep sloping ground, although many have been extended and adapted. Another house in the street will also be open. Films on self-building schemes will be running and refreshments will be available. From 5.30pm Mr White will be hosting a drinks do featuring his own cider! NSC Members very welcome to come and imbibe. Bring drink and snacks. See <https://openhouselondon.open-city.org.uk/listings/1615>

### **The Mildmay Jazz Club**

Tuesdays 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th September  
8pm–12am

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

Admission: £10 a night or £35 for a month, in

for a weekend pass from Eventbrite

After months of running events virtually via Instagram, the Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair returns to Covent Garden with a Weekend Special at the Freemasons Hall with more than 50 dealers in vintage fashion, accessories, trimmings and textiles from the 1900s onwards, alongside designer labels from Biba, Ossie Clark and Dior to YSL, Chanel and more.

There will be an on-the-spot alterations team to help make purchases fit or you can bring items you already own to be revamped. There will also be food and refreshments served all day in Freemasons Hall cafe.

There will be Health & Safety measures in place on the day including temperature checking at the door, hand sanitiser points, one-way shopping routes, contactless payments encouraged whenever possible, toilets and high-frequency touch points sanitised regularly by Freemasons cleaning staff, contact tracing systems in operation and the mandatory wearing of face masks.

Owing to restrictions on numbers you may be



Let your hair down, Prohibition-style, at the Candlelight Club's Welcome Back Party

advance from Eventbrite; £15 on the door or £20 with the lesson

Weekly jazz night featuring live acts each time—this month including the Gator Dogs Brass Band on the 7th, the Rhythm Sisters on the 14th and Corina Kwami on the 21st.

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.

### **The Candlelight Club's Welcome Back Party**

Friday 10th and Saturday 11th September  
7pm–12am

A secret location in central London

Admission: £25 in advance

Dress: Prohibition dandies, swells, gangsters and molls, Peaky Blinders, decadent aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know

The Candlelight Club is a clandestine pop-up 1920s speakeasy, in a secret London venue lit by candles. Each event offers a one-off cocktail menu with special themes, plus live period jazz bands and vintage vinylism for your dancing pleasure. Ticket holders get an email two days before revealing the location.

For our first event after the lifting of social distancing restrictions we are delighted to be joined by the Swing Ninjas offering toe-tapping jazz and tuba-driven hijinks. Your host with the most will be purveyor of saucy song Champagne Charlie, with vintage vinyl spun by the Bee's Knees. There will also be a pop-up vintage jewellery store, a fortune teller and a roaming photographer.

In addition to the main cocktail bar, our famous rum and cigar bar will be selling genuine Havana cigars to smoke in our private garden. You can reserve a table with Champagne, to which you can also add food from a menu of snacks and sharing platters.

"The closest you'll find to an authentic Jazz Age experience in central London. Its unique ambience, fuelled by hundreds of candles, is truly a scene to behold." —*Time Out*

### **The Pukka Picnic II: Boaters, Bubbly and Belles**

Saturday 11th September

2–6pm

Holland Park, London

Admission: Free, but you'll need a picnic

Luca Jellinek follows up his original Pukka Picnic idea with a sequel. "Our second friendly *déjeuner sur l'herbe* to celebrate the end of summer. Bring your favourite skimmer, tipple

Tune in to a free talk about E.H. Shepard's  
WWI sketches and caricatures



and person(s) and, above all, bring a bit of dash.” See also the Facebook event.

### **E.H. Shepard’s War**

Tuesday 14th September

7–9.45pm

Online

Admission: Free, though you are exhorted to make a donation to the museum

Ernest Shepard is best known for delighting generations of children with his charming illustrations for A.A. Milne’s *Winnie the Pooh* and later editions of Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows*. But before he found the height of his fame bringing Pooh, Piglet, Eeyore and Tigger to life he used his artistic talent to document his time in the trenches during the First World War through a series of humorous caricatures and detailed studies.

In this online talk James Campbell will explore the life and Great War experiences of E.H. Shepard, illustrated with sketches and drawings from the artist’s early career as a cartoonist right through his military service as an artillery officer on the Western and Italian Fronts.

Watch the talk live on the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum website on Tuesday 14th September to join in with the live Q&A and have your questions answered.

### **NSC Quiz Night**

Wednesday 15th September

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 820 5227 2543 and the passcode is 150286.) 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 interval, and each team can play their joker on one round in advance, which doubles the points they receive for that round.

### **Nighthawks Summer Weekender**

Friday 17th–Sunday 19th September

Blackpit Brewery, Stowe Castle Road,  
Buckingham MK18 5LJ

Admission: Full weekend £125, day  
tickets £65 Saturday, £45 Sunday. Tickets  
from [www.tickettailor.com/events/  
theartfuldodgems/523812](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/theartfuldodgems/523812)

The Nighthawks Weekender is an outdoor mini-festival held over three days on the Blackpit Farm in Buckinghamshire, featuring live swing, jazz and blues music on two stages, one outdoor (covered) and one indoor, with DJs spinning vintage shellac and vinyl, plus an array of attractions and activities.



### **Some Like It Swing**

Friday 17th September

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](http://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.

### **Bishopsgate Swing**

Sunday 19th September

6.30–10.30pm

Bishopsgate Insitute, 230 Bishopsgate,  
London EC2M 4QD

Swing dance night in partnership with Swing Patrol, with live music from Mississippi Swing. Prebooked tickets only, from [www.bishopsgate.org.uk/whats-on/activity/210919-bishopsgate-swing](http://www.bishopsgate.org.uk/whats-on/activity/210919-bishopsgate-swing). It sounds as if they are still being pretty cautious re. Covid, so read the T&Cs on the website.

### **Eccentric Club Dinner**

Friday 24th September

7.13–10.13pm

The Savile Club, 69 Brook Street,  
London W1K 4ER

Admission: £68, which includes a three course dinner, wine, coffee and petits fours, room hire,

catering staff, etc.

Dress code: Gentlemen black tie, ladies eccentric but tasteful eveningwear; tiaras are welcome.

Definitely no jeans/denim, sports or casual wear, trainers, etc.

The ancient and multiply revived Eccentric Club invites its members, their guests and reciprocal members (which apparently includes the NSC) to join them for a club dinner. (All the names of those booked and intending to attend the event should be communicated to the Eccentric Club well in advance to be checked.)

Please book online at [eccentric-club.square.site/product/the-eccentric-club-dinner/1](http://eccentric-club.square.site/product/the-eccentric-club-dinner/1).

There are a lot of house rules and conditions, so do check them on the site.

### **Fascinatin' Rhythm: The Premiere**

Friday 1st October

7–10pm

Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square,  
London WC1R 4RL

You are invited to embark on a romantic journey to old Shanghai and star-studded Hollywood with Alex Mendham and his Orchestra as they assemble for the live premiere of their new album, *Fascinatin' Rhythm*. “The virtuosic 11-piece orchestra will beguile and charm with enchanting melodies and stories of a forgotten era, rekindled for the first time in a century to provide a foot-tapping score for the new Golden Age,” it says here.

There will be an afterparty and guests are encouraged to dress in period evening wear—as if NSC members needed any encouragement.

Tickets are available from Alex's website: [www.alexmendham.com/fascinatin-rhythm-premiere-show](http://www.alexmendham.com/fascinatin-rhythm-premiere-show).



Celebrants at the first Pukka Picnic earlier this year



The Earl of Essex  
delivering his talk on  
"Chips" Channon at  
our last Club meeting,  
with Lady Cunard  
looking on