



Melodies of the Gods

Sam Marde Mehdiabad on ancient Greek music “and other stuff”

**The Club’s
Christmas party
salutes Jules Verne**

Ode to empire

Torquil Arbuthnot on Joseph Roth, elegist of pre-Hitler Old Europe

Last knees-up in town

The Club sees out the year with its Christmas Moot—seemingly the only pub full of drinkers in the City

**JOURNEY
TO THE
CENTRE OF
VAUXHALL**

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • No.183 • JANUARY 2022

DESIGN!



The New Sheridan Club traditionally meets in the upstairs room of the Wheatsheaf, just off Oxford Street. The Wheatsheaf is one of Fitzrovia's historic pubs, a one-time haunt of Dylan Thomas, George Orwell, Augustus John and Julian Maclaren-Ross. In fact Thomas met his wife Caitlin in The Wheatsheaf and, legend has it, he was known to flash at women there as well. Fitzrovia's associations with literature go back to the eighteenth century. In the twentieth century both Woolf and Shaw lived in Fitzroy Square; Pound and Lewis launched *Blast!* at the Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel in Percy Street. John Buchan lived in Portland Place and in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* Richard Hannay has a flat there. Both Lawrences (D.H. and T.E.) took rooms there, as did Aleister Crowley, Wilfred Owen, Rupert Brooke and Katherine Mansfield.

The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on **Wednesday 5th January** in the upstairs room of the Wheatsheaf pub at 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB.

Assuming it will be allowed to go ahead, our first meeting of 2022 will see Adrienne Hess, Duchesse De St Gènes, intrigue us on the subject of *The Mysteries of the Lutenist Life: Historic Memories of the Most Delicate Instrument Ever*.

As usual we will be attempting to livestream the talk (very much at the mercy of the pub's wifi connection). The link to watch that is <https://youtu.be/7BfjpwbgINc>.

There is also a Facebook event at <https://www.facebook.com/events/216941230620584>.

The Last Meeting

Our speaker last month was Sam Marde Mehdiabad, on the subject of *Ancient Greek Music and Other Stuff*. Mostly Ancient Greek music. He discussed the instruments of the time, how they evolved and under what circumstances and by whom they were played. He looked at the ways we have of actually knowing what this music sounded like, given that there are obviously no recordings. Fortunately there are people who are interested enough in such things not only to work this out but also to reproduce the instruments and learn how to play them—so we were treated to some modern recordings of ancient Greek noodling (which is

the best way to describe this rather unstructured material).

From a technical standpoint, the evening did not go that well: I thought I had established that Sam's laptop would talk to the projector, but sadly I had forgotten there was a difference between "DisplayPort" connections and "Mini-DisplayPort" connections. So we ended up



having to use my laptop for the presentation, meaning we weren't able to use it for the live video webcast. I did try to record the talk on to the camera's memory card, but this ran out of space halfway through, so it was all a bit of a disaster. At some point I might upload this video of half a talk...

An essay version begins on page 4.



(Left, top to bottom) Matthew Howard and Stuart Mitchell with Bobby Boden, who seems to have got his steampunk on in readiness for the party; Tim Eyre with Adie Hess; a disconcertingly moustache-less Andrew Fish with a reassuringly hirsute Parson Woodforde; Essex, on the other hand has acquired a new moustache. (Right) Frances produces Bob the Lobster, as tradition dictates (above right) Sam lets fly, while I attempt to film him (unsuccessfully).

ANCIENT GREEK MUSIC

And other stuff

IN WRITING THIS paper, good Clubmen, it strikes me I am faced with a not inconsiderable disadvantage: namely, unlike when I had the unbounded joy of delivering it in person at the Lodge, I am unable to leverage the trappings of academic profundity (in my case a rather fetching Bristol BA gown in russell cord) in order to impress upon my victims an appropriate sense of intellectual authority. Indeed, those who were there will remember that this sense was so completely established that my initial discussion of the famed *kitharapodai*,

By Sam Marde Mehdiabad

the virgin acolytes who would welcome returning Achaean heroes by strumming on purpose-built lyres with their feet, could have gone on for at least another ten minutes before anyone had realized it was a “load of old cobbles” (in the popular phrase).

Alas, I presently instead sit in an over-darned jumper, with the remains of the Christmas ham (now slightly high) bubbling away in a pot in the next room, with my attention vaguely split by the question of when to add the marrowfat peas. Perhaps the secretary has provided a photograph of SSMM mid-delivery, in order to convey an appropriate sense of scholarly majesty? [See p.3 —Ed.] If not, I can only ask, dear Reader, that you imagine a cross between Plato and Aristotle, with a touch of Hegel thrown in; but, nonetheless, retaining my own dashing good looks. That will be a good start. Furthermore, it will be obvious to some of you that the format in which I am delivering this write-up necessarily precludes the aural examples of the music I was able to provide at the Place of Rathbone; thus, I will provide web-links as I go that will allow those of you with a suitable connection to peruse these examples at your leisure.

Even those with a fairly well-developed interest in the ancient world might not realize how ubiquitous music was in ancient Greece. While only a little evidence survives, much more skulks only just out of sight. An example par excellence of this can be found in Greek lyric poetry, in which is contained an explicit, fixed rhythm which can be deduced from the number of syllables in a line—as many a schoolboy has been made painfully aware. These poems were most likely chanted as often as not; and so, while

we may not have their melodies, we have their beats. One can even approach a sense of what these melodies may have been like through the ancient Greek pitch-accent; for, unlike modern languages, ancient Greek words were not accented by stress (as we might say, “hip-po-POT-amus”; “BOW-ler hat”) but by pitch.

Thus, when you next routinely think of Odysseus’s daring escape from the clutches of the cyclops Polyphemus, beneath the belly of a suspiciously fluffy ram, remember that in Homer’s Greek, “cyclops” (κύκλωψ, “koo-kloaps”) is pronounced with a very similar intonation to the English ejaculation “yoo-hoo”. For a sense of how this may be applied to surviving ancient Greek poetry, see <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/kal/sh> for a reconstruction of some Homer by two academics, pre-eminent in this field. The more ecclesiastical among you may notice this effect is not terribly far removed from Latin church chant, an example of which can be found here: <https://youtu.be/EXub6v3e8-Y>. Thus, an appreciation of the rôle played by music in ancient Greece can perhaps figuratively give colour to a rather monochrome misapprehension, much as the restoration of paint-schemes in statuary more literally can (fig 1).

As ever, one must be careful not to imagine any past reality based solely on its dilapidated remains.

The question of ancient Greek music is one that has been often overlooked by historical surveys of that place and period, mainly, perhaps, due to the comparative dearth of evidence. There are fewer than 30 known—by which I mean, “published”—surviving documents which contain ancient Greek musical notation; many of these are very fragmentary, lasting less than one minute, while the longest fragments are choral, as opposed to instrumental. Only three composers are either credited or can be established with certainty, and these are all of different centuries. In contrast, theoretical texts are far better represented—a mixed blessing, as while they have enabled surviving musical notation to be deciphered, as well as the reconstruction of systems of scale (more properly described as “mode”) and tuning, they offer nothing in the way of “real music” as performed. The major theoretical primers that have survived include: Aristoxenus of Tarentum (375–335 BC), Ἀρμονικὰ στοιχεῖα



Fig.2

[Elements of Harmony]; Claudius Ptolemy (c. AD 100–170), Ἀρμονικόν [Harmonics]; Aristides Quintilianus (after Aristoxenus—c. AD 300?) Περὶ Μουσικῆς [On Music]; and Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (c. AD 477–524) *De Institutione Musica* [On the Institution of Music]. Aristoxenus provides a general theory of music, complete with a detailed examination of scale and tuning; Ptolemy is a maths-y type who seems to be attempting to improve the system elaborated by Aristoxenus; Aristides Quintilianus reproduces Aristoxenus’s system in full with some additions; and Boethius attempts to use this (by his time no longer entirely understood) musical theory in order to support his own discussions of the philosophical ramifications and importance of music, and in so doing gave birth to the “church modes” by misinterpreting the ancient Greek ones (and being copied by legions of monastic admirers after his canonization post-strangulation by the Ostrogothic king of Rome).

These theoretical texts, in combination with pictorial evidence and the odd lucky survival, have enabled the reconstruction of several ancient Greek musical instruments. Of these,



Fig.1

two certainly seem to have been the most important: the lyre (*kithara*) and reed pipes (*auloi*). Fig.2 shows a gentleman by the name of Michael Levy holding a reconstructed *kithara*; a recording of him improvising on an ancient Greek mode is available on the Tube of You at the following address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=177LRoosZco>.

One may observe the general features of the instrument: the pegs by which the strings are tuned, the method of playing it by plucking individual strings with the left hand while using a plectrum to “strum” with the right, as well as the soundbox (which amplifies an otherwise tinny sound in the way of a violin or guitar) at the bottom. It also seems a vibrato (wobbling) effect could be created by waggling the top of the instrument, as it was attached to the base by spring-like rods whose purpose seems to have been to allow this. This instrument was used to accompany vocalists, as well as in a solo capacity (often with the player singing himself): there were regular competitions between the *kitharodes* who played it, with representations of the victors (often on Greek vases) forming an important source of evidence.

The *aulos*, meanwhile, was a very different instrument, though just as important in this period. Fig.3 is an image of an *auletris* from a Greek vase; while one can listen to

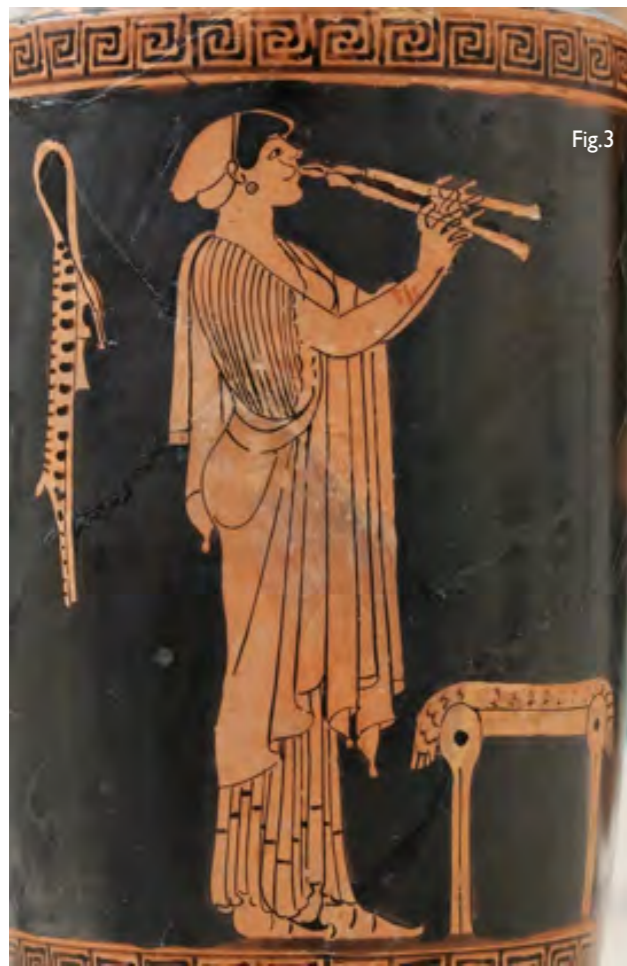


Fig.3

an example of its performance by the Prof. Stefan Hagel of the first musical clip at the following address: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcHWv116mpg&feature=emb_title.

The sound is vaguely reminiscent of the oboe and clarinet, though not strictly like either—one plays it by stopping holes in the manner of a modern woodwind instrument, though one does not usually play such instruments nowadays in pairs. *Auloi* seem to have been used in a similar way to the *kithara* insofar as they accompanied singers and also had solo outings—though one would of course find it slightly more difficult to sing while playing them.

According to Pindar’s twelfth Pythian Ode, the *aulos* was invented by Athena to reproduce the wailing of Medusa’s bereaved sisters (after a visit by a nice young boy caused her to completely lose her head); Plutarch writes that she discarded her invention after seeing how playing it caused her face to pucker up, after which it was claimed by the man-goat satyr Marsyas. He met his end after losing a musical contest to the god Apollo, flayed alive (perhaps at his own disgusted request) and, according to Plato, turned into a wineskin—a fate with which many members of the Club will be familiar.

Similarly familiar may be the case of Syrinx in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, a nymph transformed by her sisters into a bunch of reeds in order to escape a randily pursuing Pan (another satyr); he used them to fashion the first Panpipes, in an inventive combination of resourcefulness and sexual assault. “Flute-girls” were also stock objects of desire in ancient Greek society: a dinner guest in one of Aristophanes’s comedies disgraces himself by getting tiddled at a dinner party and abducting the flute-girl; paintings featuring them are often rather saucier than the one reproduced earlier. [I can supply those for a very reasonable fee—please contact me through Club channels.]

As well as this more practical side of ancient Greek music, we also possess some substantial philosophical discussions of its place in society, and ideal effect. For, to the Greek, music had a real and measurable effect upon the emotions of its hearer, and, moreover, his moral character. Thus Plato writes a well-known passage at Book 3, ll. 398–403 of his *Republic*, where two characters (Socrates and

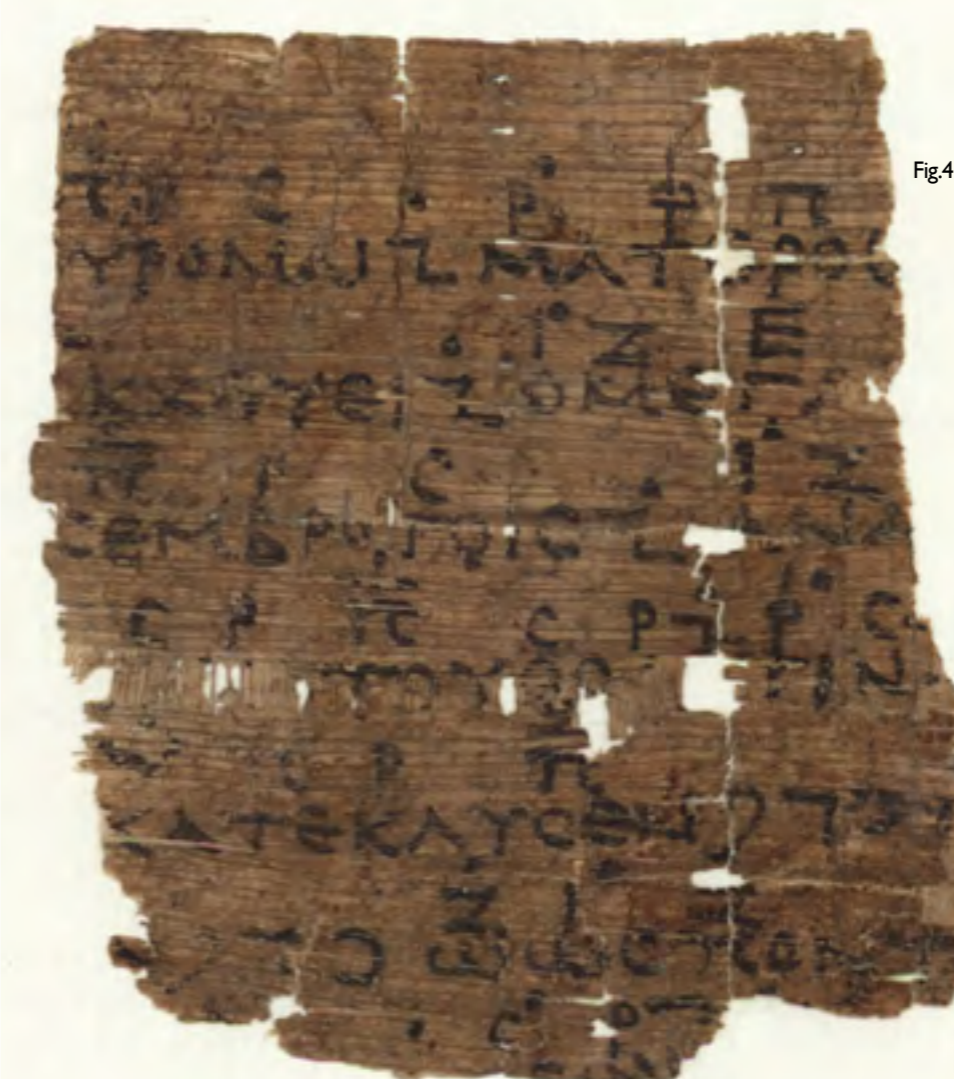


Fig.4

more than one, it was because the first left us incapable of anything else.)

For an illustration of the moral and emotional effect (moral and emotional timbre being *ethos* in Greek) one might see Book 9 of Xenophon’s *Symposium*, a slightly less annoying dialogue about a dinner party with dancing girls, which discusses the matter of love. Its climax occurs when a boy and girl re-enact a scene of Dionysus and Ariadne’s courtship so convincingly that the assembled company of dirty old men jump on their horses to rush home to their wives; or in Socrates (for again, ’tis he) and the other bachelors’ case, take a vigorous walk around their host’s garden.

I mentioned surviving musical documents earlier: would you like to hear some?

Let us begin with Vienna Pap. G 2315 (Fig.4). This papyrus fragment was discovered in the collection of Archduke Rainer Ferdinand of Austria by Karl Wessely in 1892. Both men had splendid moustaches; though the Archduke’s, befitting his position, was rather longer (see Figs 5 and 6). someone else) engage in an annoyingly stilted discussion surrounding the sort of music the rulers of Socrates’s imaginary ideal city ought and ought not to be allowed to listen to in order that their moral character be preserved. I do not reproduce it here, for to hasten entropy in such a way would be inexcusable; those who are interested in reading it can find a translation themselves and so take full responsibility for drowning an hour of their lives in mud. (Remember, people like me read a degree that jars uncomfortably with contemporary ideas of occupation and profession in almost every conceivable way in order that others wouldn’t have to. If we read

Let us begin with Vienna Pap. G 2315 (Fig.4). This papyrus fragment was discovered in the collection of Archduke Rainer Ferdinand of Austria by Karl Wessely in 1892. Both men had splendid moustaches; though the Archduke’s, befitting his position, was rather longer (see Figs 5 and 6).



Fig.5



Fig.6

Recorded on this Vienna papyrus is a musical setting of the first *stasimon* (choral number) of Euripides's play *Orestes*, in which the chorus reacts to his and his sister Electra's impending doom: he has just bumped off their mother at his sister's instigation due to her murder of their father Agamemnon, which she justified as retaliation for his sacrifice of their daughter in order to get the winds to blow—a regular episode of *Eastenders*—and now an angry mob is forming (Fig.7). Find a performance here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUPGpX_X2tA&t=103s.



Fig.7

κατολοφύρομαι, κατολοφύρομαι
ματέρος αίμα σάς, ὁ σ' ἀναβακχεύει,
ὁ μέγας ὄλβος οὐ μόνιμος ἐν βροτοῖς,
ἀνὰ δὲ λαίφος ὡς τις ἀκάτου θοᾶς τινάζας
δαίμων
κατέκλυσεν δεινῶν πόνων ὡς πόντου
λάβροις ὀλεθρίοισιν ἐν κύμασιν

I cry, I cry:
thy mother's blood,
which maddens thee;
joy, fleeting to mortals,
like the sail of some
swift ship which a
god
Plunged down and
about with awful
troubles into the
ravenous, deadly
waves of the
sea.

(transl. SSMM)

The creepiness of the musical setting is entirely in accord with the subject

matter, and indeed what we know of Euripides: he had a reputation as being rather avant-garde, and indeed Aristophanes the comic poet often “takes it out of him” (to use another common phrase) in these terms:

[Clatter of anvil, screaming cat]
[Enter some bloke]
“What's up?! It sounds like a play by Euripides!”

Thus, while this fragment is dated to the 3rd century BC, there is no reason to think the melody is not authentic Euripides from a century earlier.

Let us consider another surviving musical piece (Fig.8), this time inscribed on a grave stele from the 1st or 2nd centuries AD at Tralles, near Ephesus. This was discovered in 1883 by Sir William Mitchell Ramsey; then either lost and rediscovered in Smyrna in 1922, or kept in possession of Edward Purser, the owner of the building firm which was constructing a railway next to Aydin. It has been reported that in 1893 the by-then-uneven base was sawn off straight so it could stand as a pedestal for Mrs Purser's flowerpots, which most likely cost us at least half a line of text.

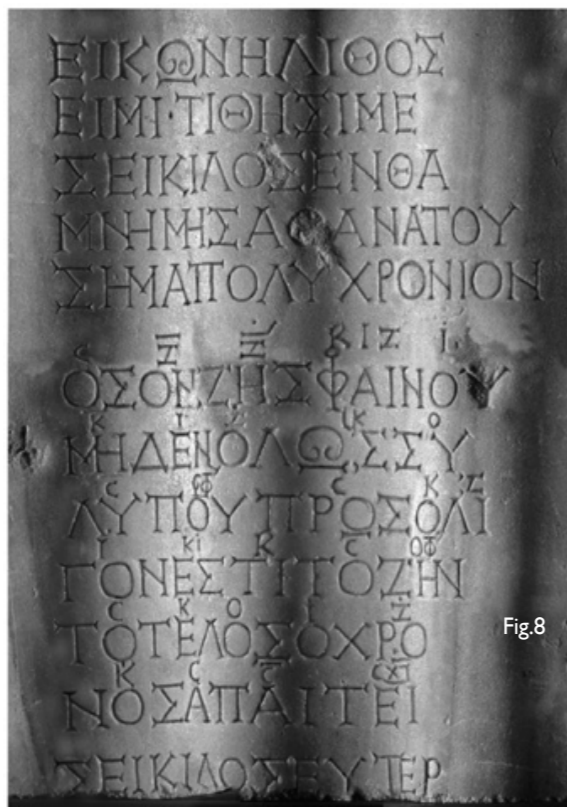


Fig.8

The object then made its way to Copenhagen via the Netherlands, where it is located today. One can observe the musical notation inscribed over the Greek text (more on that later). Find a performance at: <https://bit.ly/3zqNW17>. A transcription is on the facing page (Fig.9):

Be radiant while thou livest,
Grieve thou not at all:
Endureth life but a short

C Z̄ Z̄̄̄ KIZ Ī K̄ I Z̄ ĪK̄ O C̄ OΦ̄
 Ὅσον ζῆς φαί νου μη δέν ὄ λως σύ λυ ποῦ
 C K Z Ī K̄ ĪK̄ C̄ OΦ̄ C K O Ī Z̄ K̄ C̄ C̄ X̄ Ī
 πρὸς ὀ λί γον ἐσ τι τὸ ζῆν τὸ τέ λος ὀ χρο̄ νος ἀπ αι τεῖ.

Ὅ - σον ζῆς φαί - νου μη δέν ὄ - λως σύ λυ - ποῦ πρὸς ὀ - λί - γον ἐσ - τι τὸ ζῆν τὸ τέ - λος ὀ χρο̄ - νος ἀ - π αι - τεῖ.

Fig.9 Εἰκὼν ἢ λίθος εἰμί. τίθησί με Σεκίλος ἔνθα μνήμης ἀθανάτου σῆμα πολυχρόνιον.

while,
Demandeth time his toll.
I am an image, or a stone. Seikilos set me
up here as an enduring representation of
undying memory.

(trans. SSMM)

One final piece of music for us to consider for the moment is Mesomedes's *Hymn to the Sun*. This piece of ritual music, written by a Greek *kitharode* of the 2nd century AD and favourite ex-slave of the Emperor Hadrian, was preserved with some others through the manuscript tradition (Fig.10 shows another of his pieces in situ), these works being popular enough that he was built a cenotaph by Caracalla about 50 years after his death—though he had died with Hadrian's immediate successor having gained substantially reduced his pay. This manuscript survival of musical notation (i.e. through the continual copying of monkish scribes throughout

the centuries) is rather rare, which will be understood when it is remembered that by the 6th century knowledge of the old musical system had degraded to the point at which no-one knew what those funny symbols meant. Find a performance here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JKNqnDYwj0>. The manuscript on which this was preserved was published after being presented by a certain Signor Girolamo Mei to a Signor Vincenzo Galilei (the more famous one's pa) in 1581.

Χιονοβλεφάρου πάτερ Ἄοδς,
ρόδοεσσαν ὄς ἄντυγα πώλων

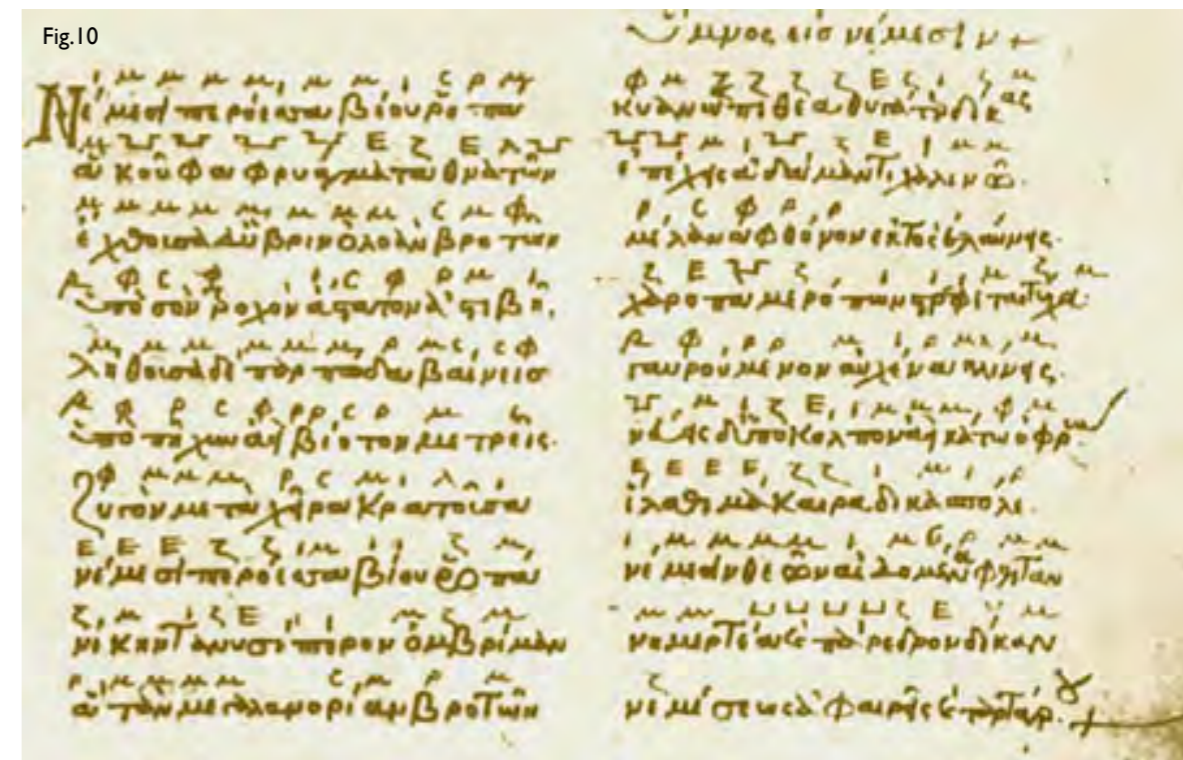


Fig.10

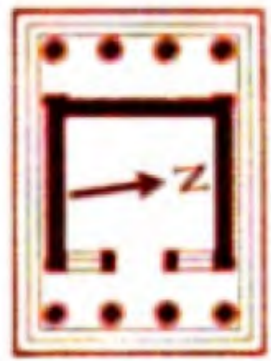
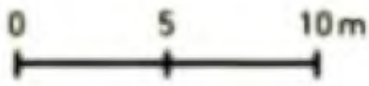


Fig.13

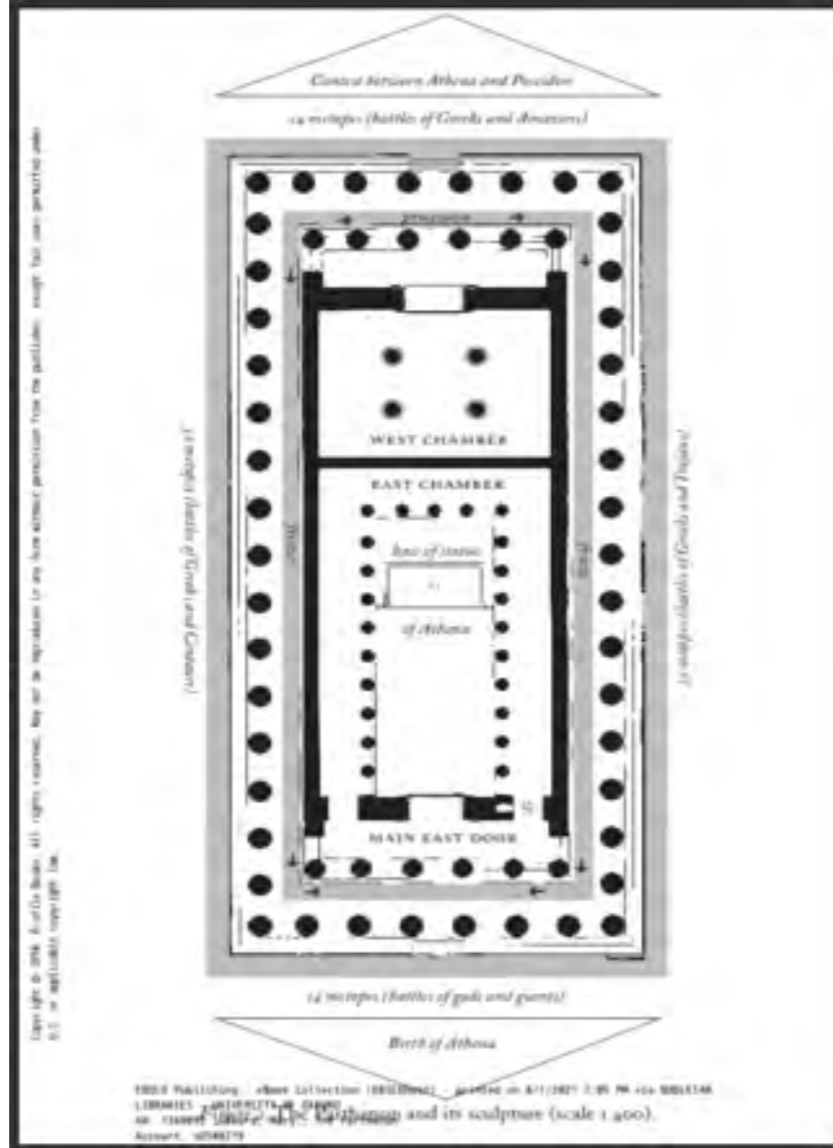
Fig.14



a “Peripteral” (Figs 13 and 14).

The second of these is of course the Parthenon; but a comparison of the two will show that their component parts are entirely identical: the Peripteral layout can be broken down into two Amphiprostyle ones placed back-to-back and surrounded by an additional colonnade.

There was an even more basic layout called a temple *in antis*, which was effectively the central room of the Amphiprostyle layout without any columns. Thus, buildings were constructed out of these schematic “building blocks” in much the same way as melodies were constructed from their underlying theoretical system. It was the judicious and imaginative applications of these systems that allowed for creative expression, in an attitude that was arguably preserved in architecture and music until at least the 20th century—most likely on account of the potentially catastrophic consequences (if not fatal, at least very painful) of any application of either going wrong. Thus, to return to the question of ancient Greek music and its position in the classical zeitgeist, we can see that the



striking and at times seemingly quite extravagant expressions of its underlying theoretical system in no way cancel out the order and proportion of that system itself.

But what became of the music of the ancient Greeks? To approach this question, we may listen to one final piece of music, preserved on the papyrus fragment P.Oxy. XV 1786 (Fig.15). This was dug out of an ancient Greco-Egyptian rubbish dump near the city of Oxyrhynchus in 1918 by B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt—two more wielders of very fine moustaches (Fig.16). It dates from the 4th–5th century AD, and is the earliest known example of a Christian hymn. Though its resting place may seem rather inauspicious, ancient rubbish



Fig.15

dumps in hot and dry areas are in fact archaeological goldmines: artefacts can therein languish, preserved by the heat and dryness and safe from idiots who would saw lumps off them (*pace*, Mrs Purser)—or, in this case, scrunch them up and use them to light their Woodbines (*pace*, NSC).

Take a listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDUAVMjmktc>.

...together all the eminent ones of God...
 ...night] nor day (?) Let it/them be silent. Let the luminous stars not [...],
 ...[Let the rushings of winds, the sources] of all surging rivers [cease]. While we hymn Father and Son and Holy Spirit, let all the powers answer, “Amen, amen, Strength, praise, [and glory forever to God], the sole giver of all good things. Amen, amen.”
 (trans. Wikipedia)

Though this piece of music is in many ways reminiscent of Mesomedes’s hymns, it perhaps sounds more modern, even mediaeval. This observation is warranted, as it does not only sound very reminiscent of Latin church chant, but has been described as failing to conform completely to the older Greek musical theory, perhaps bridging that and the later theory recorded by Boethius. Thus, one might wonder if this is not a transitional piece of music between two eras—though it must be remembered that the evidence at this time is so unimaginably sparse that any such conclusions



Fig.16

should be taken with an entire salt cellar.

We may still finish, however, with the monks of Timadeuc Abbey (Fig. 17) singing the chant which properly begins midnight Mass on Christmas Even, if only as an illustration of how well this Oxyrhynchus Hymn accords with the established chant tradition. Marvel therein, however, with one final caveat: any musician will agree that there is more to a performance than may be recorded on a page; and though we may have notes and rhythms, we can know nothing of style, of the little traditional techniques of execution which were passed down from master to student, decade after decade. Even the singing style of the Timadeuc monks was only systematized in the 1920s, while the piece here is at least High Mediaeval. In one sense, we know no more about the style in which this piece was intended to be performed than that of the Oxyrhynchus Hymn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMy188bQ7K4>.



Fig.17

TO MARK THE 150th anniversary of Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* our Christmas party this time had a Verne theme. As you might deduce from the event's title, "Journey to the Centre of Vauxhall", our venue was once again Hal and Grace's Teahouse Theatre, which comes ready with a fairly Victorian clutter about it.

The theme was an open invitation to unleash your inner steampunk, and there were certainly plenty of cogs and brass goggles in evidence, but we also had a goodly helping of explorers, mountaineers and general Victorians. Special mention must go to the Mitchells for their usual attention to detail and to Rachel Effeny's ingenuity in coming as a squid—CDs for eyes. Genius. (Kids, ask your grandparents what CDs are.)

In addition to the usual buffet meal, the internationally famous Grand Raffle and the traditional Christmas Lucky Dip (essentially a dustbin filled with shredded newspaper, hidden

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF VAUXHALL

in which are some "prizes" that would fail quality-control in a Chinese cracker factory), we had three games with which to amuse the members and stimulate their etiolated competitive spirit.

Our first game was "Around the World in 80 Seconds". The idea was to steer a balloon around the room, passing the four corners of the earth, before landing it on the roof of the Reform Club, all within 80 seconds. After batting around the idea of using a leaf-blower to propel a helium-filled balloon, we eventually settled on the thoroughly modern idea of a remote-controlled drone. I had planned to attach a conventional balloon and tiny doll's-house basket to the top of the drone for visual effect but I encountered two problems: firstly the drone was much smaller and lighter than I had imagined and the balloon and basket weighed as much as the drone did. Secondly, I discovered that a balloon filled with air is heavier than air, so the balloon inevitably sagged to the point where it interfered with the rotors,

which promptly shut down. So we made do with the drone on its own and players and spectators just had to imagine the majesty of a hot air balloon in its place.

The corners of the earth were represented by poles with flags but the room presented many more obstacles than that. For the drone to stabilise it had to be on a completely level surface when switched on, which is practically impossible, and players did struggle to control it in flight. In fact no one managed to travel all the way round the room, though our winner, James Rigby, did make it three quarters of the way before crashing into a Christmas tree. Crashing was in fact how most attempts ended: to give you an

idea, the drone came with a clip-on plastic guard to protect each rotor, and by the end of the game all four had been smashed off and lost somewhere in the Teahouse. At one point the drone disappeared under the stage and we feared it was lost forever, until the cunning intervention of Mrs Partington-Plans, who fished it out with a walking stick.

The Teahouse's cat seemed both attracted and repulsed by the drone, on the one hand



Rachel's outstanding squid costume



James Rigby and his mysterious moustachioed manservant



Ivan Debono prepares to descend to the centre of the earth



Laura Whitehouse and Bruce Chopping



Mrs H. and Miss Minna



Some of the Grand Raffle prizes



Curé Michael Silver, oblivious to the orgy of acquisitiveness behind him at the Lucky Dip bin

instinctively seeing it as something to be hunted, while on the other hand jumping out of its skin every time the drone took off.

Our second game was another variation on the hook-a-duck concept that we have used with such sublime success in the past. This time players were given a pole on the far end of which hung a plastic pterodactyl with a hook attached to its feet. Its prey were the doughty adventurers making their way across a Lost World prehistoric plateau. (In case you're wondering, the adventurers were 28mm lead figurines from the "Rugged Heroes" and "Rugged Archaeologists" collections by North Star). Each figure had a loop of wire on the top into which the skilled operator could insert the dinosaur's hook, thus enabling the pterodactyl to carry its victim away into the antediluvian skies. (Scarheart independently decided that the victims were then dropped into the volcano depicted in the backdrop.) A time limit of 60 seconds was set and we did have two contestants who both managed two kills in this time, leading to a tie-breaker that was won by Mrs Morley—making the Rigby/Morley household something of a power couple.



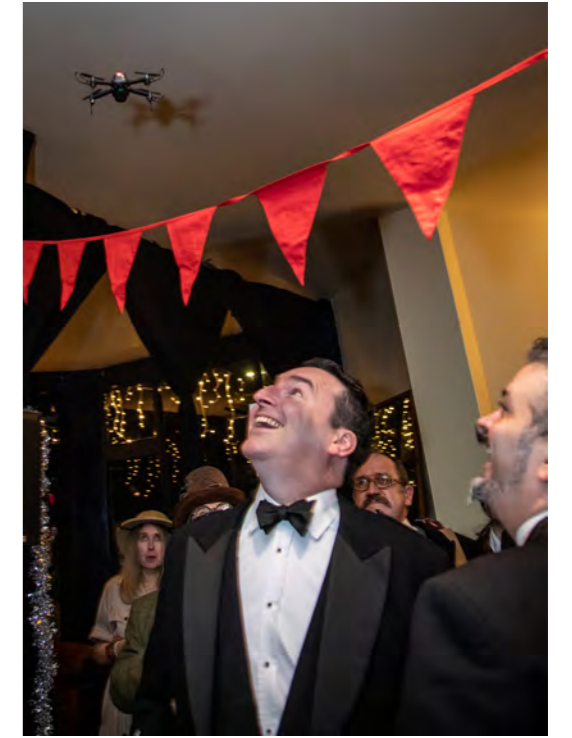
The Mitchells in their steampunk finery

Our final game was running in the background throughout the party, and contestants were simply invited to use the felt tips and crayons provided to create a cover image for a new edition of a Jules Verne story. We handily supplied a printed list of all his works, which numbered far more than most people probably realised, including such tales as *Keraban the Inflexible* (1883), *Propeller Island* (1895) and *The Will of an Eccentric* (1899).

Many thanks to all who came along—a remarkably good turn-out considering the Covid blight under which the event took place.



This page: "Around the World in 80 Seconds", our first game, in which players steer a drone around the four corners of the earth and land it on the roof of the Reform Club



(L-R) Mark Christopher, Emma and Liam Craik-Horan, Oliver Lane



Francis Giordanella and companion



Thanks to Mrs H. for the Reform Club recreation (with dog)



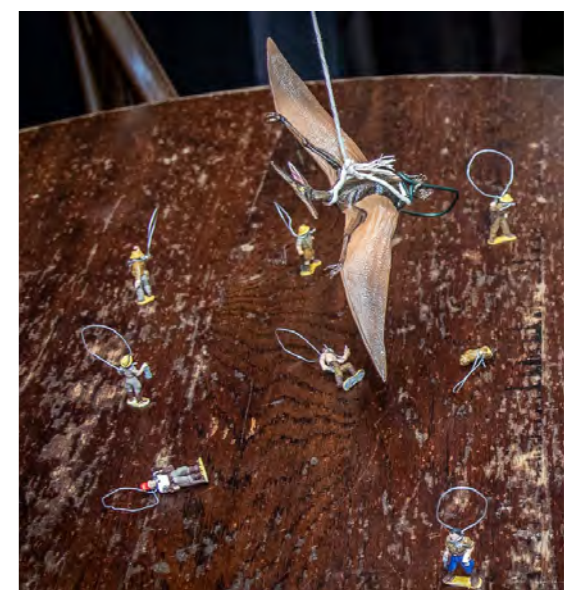
Walters, Haart and Blah, attorneys at law



Adrian Prooth



This page:
Our second
game, "When
Pterodactyls
Attack!"



Chairman Torquil
with Bruce
Partington-Plans



Priya Kali



The man they
call Craigoh

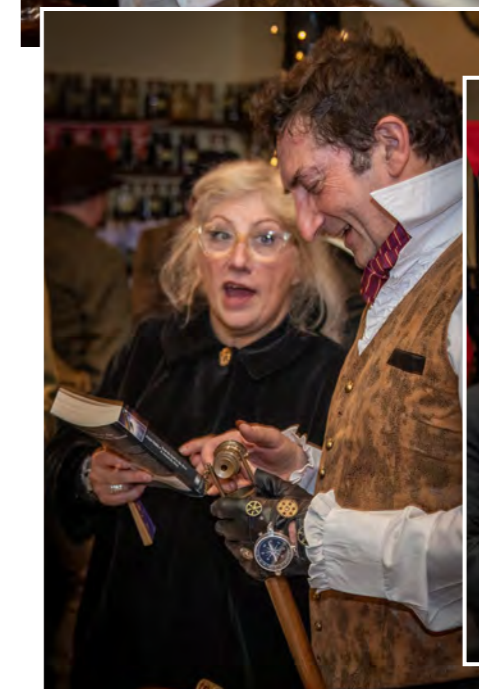


Miss Minna
with
Josie Thomas



The long-suffering Lucky Dip bin. New things
are added each year, but no one can remember
what might still be lurking down there





(Above) Our third game asked the guests to create the book cover for a new edition of one of Verne's works.

(Left) The Grand Raffle begins, in which Oliver Lane won the splendid *Wonder Book of Aircraft* (mid- to late 1930s) and Craigoh won the *Wonder Book of Empire* (in which his own homeland of New Zealand doubtless gets some small mention)

See more photos from the event on our Flickr account at <https://bit.ly/32XBRUZ>



(Top left) Liam wins these splendid real brass and leather goggles by Halcyon; (top right) Stuart wins a walking stick with a fold-out telescope (see detail in the image below); (above middle right) the Earl of Essex wins a copy of *The Lost World*; (above) the assembled throng; (above left) Tim wins the cuddly squid, probably the star prize; (left) clash of the titans, as the squid locks tentacles with Bob the Lobster (a previous raffle prize)

JOSEPH ROTH

By Torquil Arbuthnot

JOSEPH ROTH HAS been described as “the great elegist of the cosmopolitan, tolerant and doomed Central European culture that flourished in the dying days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.”

Roth was born in 1894 in Brody, Galicia, part of Austria-Hungary (now in Ukraine). Brody was a remote border town of peasants, smugglers, traders, merchants and Jews, many of them refugees fleeing the pogroms in Russia. Roth was brought up by his mother, his father having disappeared before he was born. Roth himself made a practice of concealing or transforming much biographical information about his early years. It is known that he studied at Lemberg (now Lviv, Ukraine) and at the University of Vienna and then served in the Austrian army from 1916 to 1918, possibly in some journalistic/censorship capacity.

After the war Roth returned to Vienna, where he launched his

“Domestic interior design is a fraught affair. It makes me hanker for the mild and soothing and tasteless red velvet interiors in which people lived so indiscriminatingly no more than twenty years ago. It was unhygienic, dark, cool, probably stuffed full of dangerous bacteria, and pleasant.”

— *What I Saw: Reports from Berlin 1920–1933*



journalistic career at mostly left-wing papers (he was known as Rote Roth; “Red Roth”) before leaving for Berlin. There he became a noted feuilletonist with the bourgeois newspaper *Frankfurter Zeitung*, reporting from France, Italy, Poland, Albania, and the Soviet Union, among other places. According to his main English translator, Michael Hofmann, “He was one of the most distinguished and best-paid journalists of the period, being paid at the dream rate of one Deutschmark per line.” During this period he wrote several novels, including *Radetzky Marsch* (1932; *The Radetzky March*), considered his best novel, a portrait of the latter days of the Hapsburg monarchy. As in much of his writing, the novel mourns the passing of an age of stability Roth saw represented by the last pre-World War I years of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

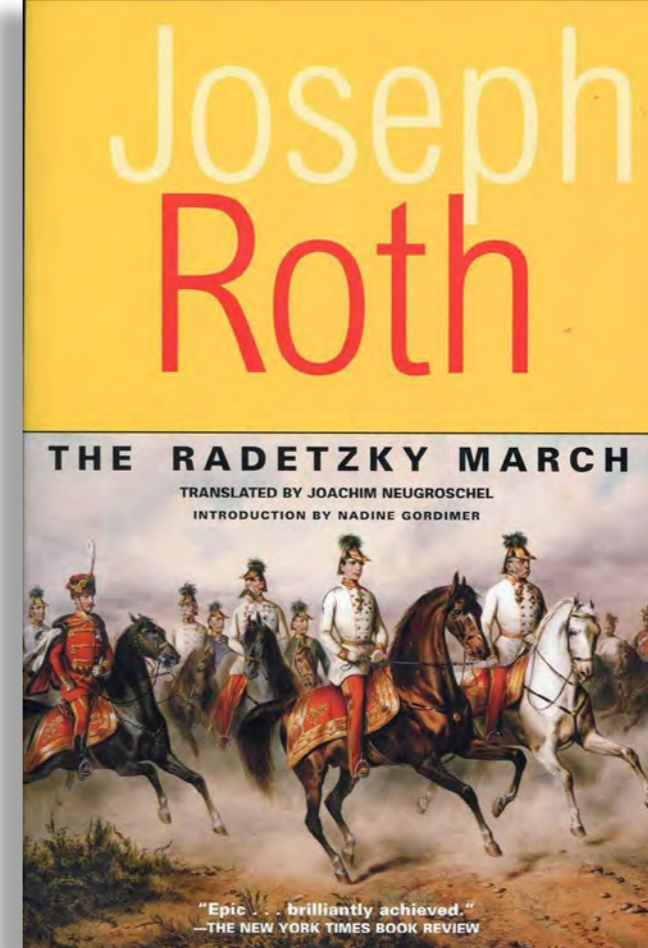
He married Friedl Reichler in 1922, and in

1929 she succumbed to schizophrenia. For most of that year she was bedridden, psychotic, and suicidal, “barely alive,” as Roth put it in a desperate letter to his friend René Schickele. When a brief stint in the care of her parents failed to improve her condition, Friedl was admitted to a psychiatric hospital outside of Vienna. She was later murdered (involuntary euthanasia) under the Nazis’ Aktion T4 programme.

Roth later lived with the German journalist Manga Bell and her children by her previous husband, a Cameroonian prince. That relationship failed due to financial problems and Roth’s jealousy. Later he was in a relationship with the exiled German writer Irmgard Keun.

In January 1933, on the same day that Hitler was appointed chancellor, Roth got on a train from Berlin to Paris and never set foot in Germany again. Roth was under no illusion about what was happening to Germany: “The barbarians have taken over,” he wrote to Stefan Zweig in February 1933. “Do not deceive yourself. Hell reigns.”

A selection of Roth’s writings about Berlin were published in 1996. In *What I Saw: Reports from Berlin, 1920–1933*, these articles about life in Berlin together create a vivid and nuanced portrait of the city during the Weimar Republic. “It is a simplification but not much of one,” Michael Hofmann wrote in his introduction, “to say that Roth hated Berlin but permitted it to exercise him.” In his writings Roth documents the contradictions of the German capital. The hedonism (familiar from the myriad number of novels, films or television series set in what became known as “Babylon on the Spree”) mixes with the rise of nationalism and the uncertain fates of the exiles that had come to Berlin, many of whom were Jews.



Roth’s last years were difficult. He moved from hotel to hotel, drinking heavily, and becoming increasingly anxious about money and the future. With the exception of those few short years in Berlin, moving from hotel to hotel was how he lived from the end of the First World War until his death. In a 1929 article titled “Arrival in the Hotel”, Roth wrote:

The hotel that I love like a fatherland is situated in one of the great port

cities of Europe, and the heavy gold Antiqua letters in which its banal name is spelled out shining across the roofs of the gently banked houses are in my eye metal flags, metal bannerets that instead of fluttering shine out their greeting.

And as other men may be happy to be reunited with their pictures, their china, their silver, their children and their books, so I rejoice in the cheap wallpaper, the spotless ewer and basin, the gleaming hot and cold taps, and that wisest of books: the phone book.

A selection of his inter-war journalism is aptly titled *The Hotel Years: Wanderings in Europe between the Wars*. “Confronted with the truly microscopic, all loftiness is hopeless, completely meaningless,” he wrote in 1921. “It’s only the minutiae of life that are important.”

For the last six years of his life Roth lived in Paris, still making a living from his journalism. In Paris, he emphasized that he did not consider himself an emigrant but a citizen of free Austria. He adopted extremely conservative positions and believed that only the Hapsburg emperor or the Pope could oppose Hitler. Roth died in Paris in May 1939.

“I paint the portrait of the age,” he wrote in a letter to his editor at the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in 1926. “I’m not a reporter, I’m a journalist. I’m not an editorial writer, I’m a poet.”

The Annual Christmas Moot

OUR TRADITIONAL PUB gathering just before Christmas took place under the shadow of Covid and, although there were no rules banning such get-togethers, all the pubs I passed on my way to the venue—the Rising Sun on Cloth Fair, just off Smithfield meat market—seemed to have about two people in them. In fact our own pub had just two people in it downstairs, but we had reserved the upstairs and the joint was jumping. In fact it was probably the only convivial conclave in the City and several strangers came up to share the craic. There is no structure to these meetings, barring an attempt at a group photo, just some booze-swigging and chin-wagging to lay the old year to rest before we all go our separate ways for Christmas itself.



(Left) Hosting our Moot was the Rising Sun on Cloth Fair, where we've been holding these events ever since our original venue, the Dover Castle, was closed down and turned into a bistro; (right) the Curé makes his entrance



(Above) Wary of Covid (rightly so, as it turned out) Matthew Howard spent most of the evening outside; (left) Floyd Toussaint and Baron Von Rukavina



(Above left) Frances dials up Christmas to 11 with this reindeer bun and these pudding-heeled shoes; (above) Lord Hare there; (left, l-r) Luigi Sbaffi, Mike Reynolds, Francis Giordanella, Mark Christopher (in the background) and the Earl of Essex. See more photos at <https://bit.ly/3HtR5Qw>



The traditional group photo





CLUB NOTES

New Members

OUR RECRUITMENT SURGE continues into the new year, with four new bugs. Liam and Emma Craik-Horan, friends of members for some years, have finally taken the plunge, and you can see photos of them at our Christmas party earlier in this magazine. David Alton, who hails from Bournemouth, gives his favourite cocktail as a “virgin cucumber gimlet” (where do you find a virgin cucumber in this day and age?) and his special area of expertise as “hellfire preaching”. Finally Austin Grenville Burn joins us from Old Windsor. A dab hand at moustache twiddling, he also appears to be a recipient of the Royal Victorian Medal, an honour bestowed in return for personal service to the Queen. Did he take an assassin’s bullet? Dispose of a blackmailer? Avert an international incident through expertly diplomatic after-dinner speaking? Perhaps one day we will find out.

Last month I also mentioned David Robertson, who has since completely the necessary paperwork and been accepted into the club. As part of this process we learn that he also goes by the name Heraldo von Sanchez and enjoys a Gibson cocktail. Finally, Michael Sheridan, who joined last month, sends us a photo of himself enjoying a crafty snifter.

Club Tie Corner

FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE from top left: A. Marchesan, a vintage store in Sweden, seems to have a Club tie in stock, spotted by Giles Culpepper; Thomas Pink reduced to barefaced copying, from the Earl of Essex; the Committee’s private humidior runs into difficulties while fleeing a “misunderstanding” over import duties, from Ivan Debono; James Stewart sporting Club silk in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), from Col. Cyrus Choke; snap of Johnny Rotten from Stephen Myhill—



Austin Burn



Heraldo von Sanchez



Michael Sheridan



supporting my theory that all Chaps are punks at heart (and in Mr Lydon’s case the reverse seems to be true too).





(Clockwise from top left) Torquil notes the Club tie around Burt Lancaster's neck in *Tough Guys* (1986); Tony Reid asks if one of the Glorious Committee has been caught here canoodling with Christina Hendricks (caught? What do you take us for?); Debono discovered these Club socks, while Actuarium cannot satisfactorily explain how he came to be staring into this sportswear abyss; Adrian Prooth, on the other hand, need offer no explanation for how he found Club pyjamas in a pattern actually named after me; Natalie Portman in *V for Vendetta* (2005), from Mark Christopher



Home / MEN'S PYJAMAS & BOTTOMS / Men's Brushed Cotton Pyjama Trousers - Hartley

MEN'S BRUSHED COTTON PYJAMA TROUSERS - HARTLEY
Collection : [MEN'S PYJAMAS & BOTTOMS](#)

£59.00
Product Code: JM54 HART XL

Size
 XL XXL

Size Guide

Quantity

ADD TO CART

IN STOCK | Free UK Delivery and Returns

Description
Our men's brushed cotton pyjama trousers are the perfect loungewear for relaxing evenings and laidback weekends.

(Clockwise from top left) Col. Choke seems a bit obsessed this month, offering this poster for *Blonde Venus* (1932), these dancing ladies and this sybarite so exquisitely pampered that her clothes are falling off; William Cole has stumbled across the Committee's *other* private humidor; Col. Choke takes his eye off the ladies long enough to spot Desmond Tutu offering the secret handshake to this Clubman; Luigi Sbaffi was charmed by this 1795 portrait of a Romantic Sheridanite by François-Xavier Fabre





Forthcoming Events



BOTH OFFICIAL NSC JAUNTS (NSC) 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 5th January

7pm–11pm

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

Admission: Free

See page 2. Our first meeting of 2022 will see Adrienne Hess, Duchesse De St Gènes, intrigue us on the subject of *The Mysteries of the Lutenist Life: Historic Memories of the Most Delicate Instrument Ever*. As usual we will be attempting to livestream the talk (very much at the mercy of the pub's wifi connection). The link to watch that is <https://youtu.be/7BfjpbwGINc>. There is also a Facebook event at <https://www.facebook.com/events/216941230620584>.

Mildmay Jazz Club

Tuesdays 11th, 18th and 25th January

8pm–12am

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

Admission: £10 or £20 with lesson from www.designmynight.com; £15 on the door

Weekly jazz night, featuring a swing dance lesson plus dancing to a live band. All are welcome and the drinks are cheap but if you want to learn to dance there

Relive the visceral thrill of a real live pub quiz, virtually, with Tony Reid on the 19th

is an introductory swing dance lesson for total beginners at 8pm—no need to bring a partner—followed by social dancing from 8.30pm. Band sets at 9pm, 10pm and 11pm.

Peckham Slavage Yard

Sunday 16th January

11am–6pm

EartH (Evolutionary Arts Hackney), 11–17 Stoke Newington Road, London N16 8BH

Admission: £1

Located within Peckham's Copeland Park & Bussey Building, Peckham Salvage Yard is host to over 50 traders plus restaurants, cafés and bars, run by Hackney Fleamarket. Expect 20th-century furniture, salvaged French homeware, vintage clothes, collectables, kitschenalia, reclaimed industrial fixtures/electricals/lighting, and unexpected oddities.

Bishopsgate Swing

Sunday 16th January

7–10.30pm

Bishopsgate Insitute, 230 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 4QD

Admission: £12

Monthly swing dance night in partnership with Swing Patrol, this time featuring live music from Benoit Viellefon's Hot Club. Prebooked



The Wassailing of One Tree Hill Allotments

Saturday 22nd January

2pm

10 Walters Way, London SE23 3LH

Admission: Free, but bring snacks and apple-derived drinks to share

An annual invitation from Club Member Ian White. Wassailing apple orchards is an ancient tradition in cider-making parts of the country and is a way of blessing the orchard to ensure a good crop. It involves making a noise to scare off evil spirits, pouring libations of cider on to the roots and

consuming a certain amount of it too. More details at ianwhite.info/Wassail.html.

Interested parties can gather at Ian's house at 2pm (till 2.30) before the wassailing of the site begins at 2.45. From 3.30 there will be scoffing of jacket potatoes and quaffing of mulled apple juice and cider, before retiring back to 10 Walters Way.

Guests are requested to bring noise-making instruments and snacks and apple-derived drinks to share. In addition to the "pagan" dress code, guests are advised to dress warmly and wear suitable footwear, bearing in mind that the going can be wet and slippery in such an agricultural setting.

tickets only, from <https://www.swingpatrol.co.uk/events/bishopsgate-swing/16-01-2022>. It sounds as if they are still being pretty cautious re. Covid, so read the T&Cs on the website.

NSC Virtual Pub Quiz

Wednesday 19th January

7.45pm

Online via Zoom

Admission: Free

Despite the return to monthly corporeal meetings at the Wheatsheaf, there is still an interest in the virtual pub quizzes held during lockdown, so for now we will continue them on a monthly basis, on the third Wednesday of the

month (balancing our Club Nights which are on the first Wednesday). Your genial host this time (see graphic opposite) is Tony Reid.

You'll need the (free) Zoom app installed, which should launch automatically when you click on the meeting's weblink. (You can go directly via Zoom: the meeting ID is 823 9082 9321 and the passcode is 979725.) 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.

The Jake Leg Jug Band



Catch the Jake Leg Jug Band at the Candlelight Club

The Candlelight Club

Saturday 22nd January
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.

So start 2022 as you mean to go on—with a blast of cocktail-swigging, Charleston-dancing speakeasy hijinks. This time live music will come from the Jake Leg Jug Band, appearing at the Candlelight Club for the first time. The band brings you the authentic jazz and ragtime sounds of 1920s and 30s America, songs of liquor, gambling, betrayal and murder—

everything you need for a cracking Saturday night out.

Leading the revels as ever will be our host with the most Champagne Charlie and when the band aren't playing the Bee's Knees will be spinning vintage vinyl for your dancing pleasure.

In the basement tarot reader Lucius will be on hand to share what 2022 holds for you, or you can peruse the sparkly wares in Michelle's vintage jewellery shop. Why not enjoy the private courtyard garden, where you can puff on a quality smoke from the Rum, Absinthe & Cigar Bar?

"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*

A Splendid Evening Out

Saturday 29th January
7.30pm–12am

The Hothouse, Devonshire Road, Morecambe, Lancashire LA3 1QT

Admission: £20

A steampunk soirée featuring Madam Zuri Arrosa, Aldous Pinch and more TBC, with DJ Dog finishing off the evening. Seems to be a slimmed-down version of A Splendid Day Out (ASDO), a regular event brand, though troubled in recent years by health issues of the organisers, which describes itself as "a pure celebration of all things steampunk, Victorian, and silly! It is an event full of variety and entertainment. A mixture of music, mayhem, merriment and a themed market, it is all of those and more." Tickets are £20 per person by PayPal to rose-roberts@sky.com, so I'm guessing she can give you more info if you need it.

Open Day at the Forties Experience

Sunday 30th January
10.30am–4pm

The Forties Experience, Lincolnsfield Children's Centre, Bushey Hall Drive, Bushey, Hertfordshire WD23 2AX

Admission: £5 (children £3)

A hands-on WWII living-history attraction located in Bushey, Hertfordshire, at the site of the operational HQ of the USAAF 8th Fighter Command during the war. Join them for their monthly public open day—no need to book. See their 1940s rooms and play with the collection of 1940s toys and games. Visit

the military museum and Dig for Victory garden. Pop into the Airman's Club to see live band The Mustangs. Experience a guided tour of a bombed out street scene with an air raid warden.

Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair

Sunday 30th January
11am–5pm

Freemason's Hall, 60 Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5AE

Admission: £5 (£3 for students) from Eventbrite

The Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair returns to Covent Garden 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 and, owing to restrictions on numbers, you may be asked to wait before entering. For this reason it may be a good idea to buy your ticket in advance.



Stuart Mitchell in full steampunk gear, attempting to steer a pterodactyl. See our Christmas party report on pages 14–21

