

"HOW I FLEW THE ATLANTIC" BY CAPT. ALCOCK

The New Sheridan Club Newsletter

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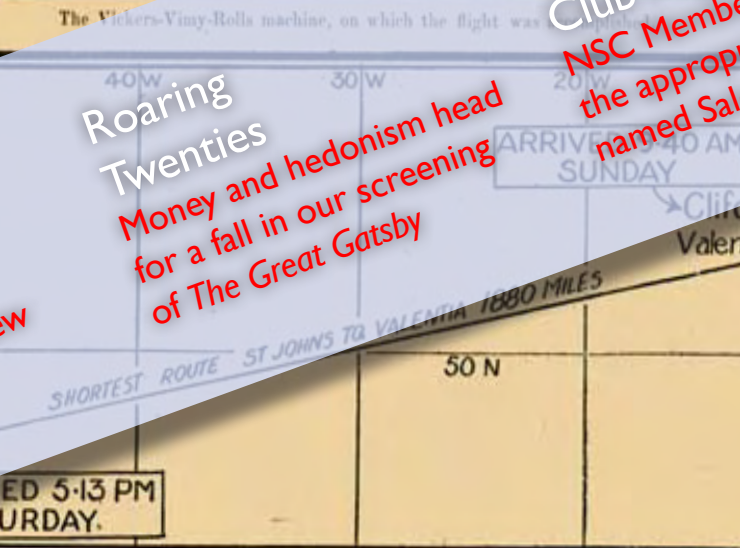
[16 PAGES.]

One Penny.

BRITAIN'S MAGNIFICENT ATLANTIC AIR TRIUMPH



How Rolls Royce aero engines conquered the world



Bleriot after his Channel flight in 1909.

The Vickers-Vimy-Rolls machine, on which the flight was made.

The Vickers-Vimy in the air.

PLUS:
Gadget Special
Strange inventions
that you never knew
you needed

Roaring
Twenties
Money and hedonism head
for a fall in our screening
of The Great Gatsby

Summer's New
Club Night
NSC Members launch
the appropriately
named Salon d'Été

CHOCKS AWAY!



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 2nd June in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 8pm until 11pm. Our guest speaker will be Club Committee Member Matthew "The Chairman" Howard, who will doubtless scandalise the neighbourhood with his address, *The Big Siam: Oriental Excess in the East Indies*, a talk he insists upon styling "The Second Lady Malvern Memorial Lecture". (Lady Malvern was introduced by P. G. Wodehouse in *Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest*—or Series 3, Episode 1 of the television series. She was noted for writing books such as *India and the Indians* after only the briefest of visits and hoped to write a companion volume on the United States after having spent less than a month therein, on the grounds that one of her friends wrote *America From Within* after a visit of less than a fortnight. Mr Howard's inaugural Lady Malvern Memorial Lecture, *The Manners And Customs of the Modern Egyptians (Revisited)*, was delivered in April 2008 after he had spent two weeks on the Sinai Peninsula the previous October, visiting Cairo for two full days.)

The Last Meeting

The room seemed to fill with the heady scent of aero fuel and the roar of engines as Mr Rob Loveday took to the podium at our May monthly meeting to address us on *A History of*

Rolls Royce Aero Engines. In the case of the roar, this was real—Mr Loveday didn't quite stretch to hauling an engine up the stairs and firing it up, but he did have some video footage of planes in action complete with sound. In fact this unabashed *Boy's Own* tone characterised the whole address, which focused not so much on "camshafts and cubic capacities", as he put it, as on tales of the derring-do that was enabled by the engines in question.

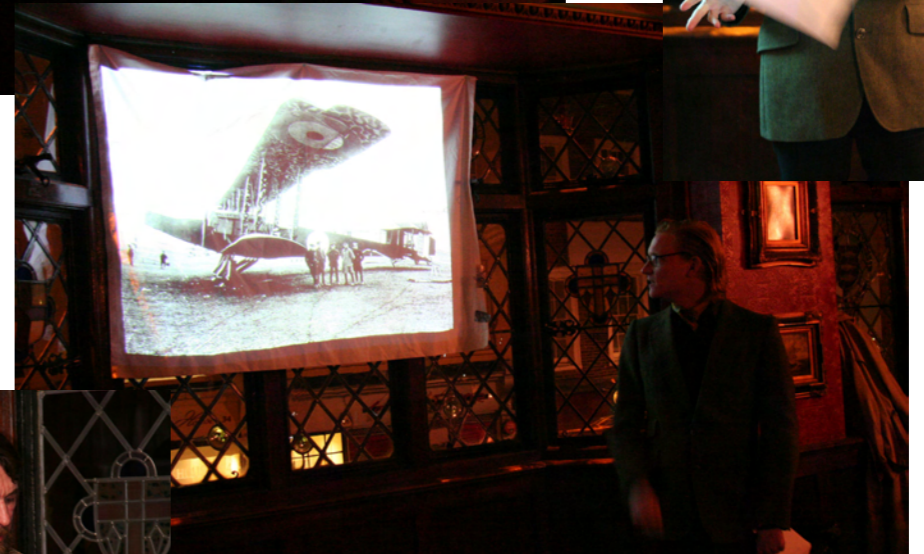
We learned about the early successes with racing seaplanes of the 1930s, of the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic, by John Alcock and Arthur Whitten Brown in a Vickers Vimy with Rolls Royce engines (16 hours and 12 minutes in an open cockpit so cramped that their shoulders were rammed together), and about the wartime exploits of the RR engines that powered such heroic craft as the Lancaster bomber—and, embarrassingly, some early German planes too, thanks to a trusting decision to lend the Krauts some of our engines to play with shortly before the war.

Owing to a cock-up by the management, who realised that they couldn't let us use the room on the Wednesday because builders would be in, we had had to move the event a day forward at the last minute; as a result the turn-out was lower than we have enjoyed in recent months. This was a great shame as Mr Loveday did a splendid job and delivered an exemplary lecture. An essay version of the talk begins on page 4.



(Above) Mr Rolls himself, known at school as Dirty Rolls, though Mr Loveday insists this was to do with engine oil and definitely nothing else.

(Above) Mr Loveday; (left) a Vickers Vimy with RR engines. Alcock and Brown made the first non-stop transatlantic crossing in one of these



(Left) Our Chairman Torquil Arbuthnot; (right) the cramped cockpit that Alcock and Brown shared



(Left) Krista eyes Sean suspiciously and checks she knows where her pint is



(Above) (l-r) Artemis Scarheart, Torquil, Luke Wenban; (left) (l-r) Julia Wakeling, Lieutenant D. Benjaminsson and Ernie Samat.



When Britannia Ruled the Skies

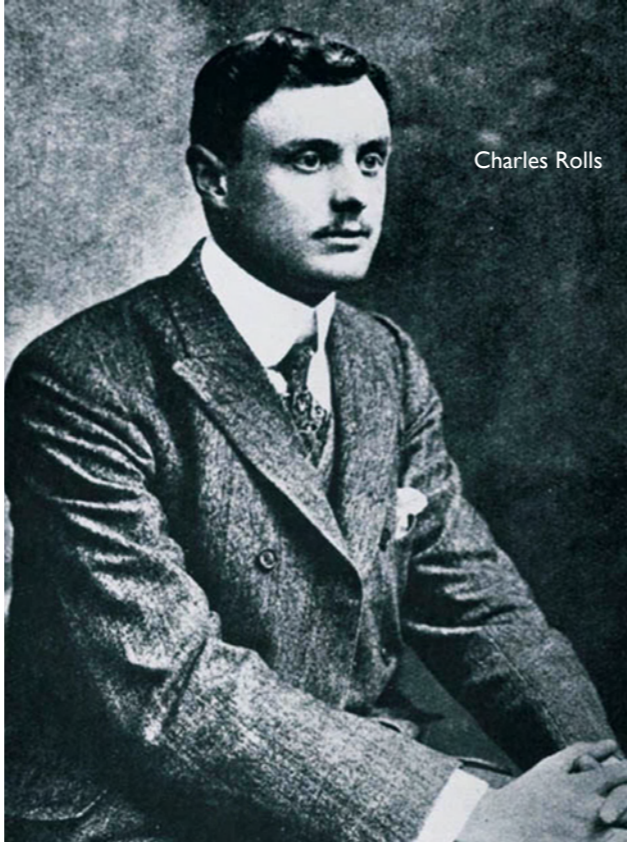


A HISTORY OF THE ROLLS-ROYCE AERO ENGINE

By Robert Loveday

TO MY MIND, there is no sound more exciting and evocative than the sound of a Rolls-Royce piston aircraft engine, preferably a Merlin on the front of a Supermarine Spitfire. Not merely because of its gut-shaking power and heart-snapping roar (you can hear it on the video on page 9), but because there's so much history stacked behind it—the brilliance of the engineers that built the engines, the exploits of the machines they powered and the tales of derring-do, pluck and bravery of the men that piloted them. And it tells a story that you could well argue has played a part in the history of this nation and indeed the wider world.

That story begins with Charles Rolls, who was born on 27th August 1877 in London, third son of the 1st Baron Llangattock. He was educated at Eton, where his love of things mechanical earned him the nickname “Dirty Rolls” (ahem) and later at Cambridge, where he



Charles Rolls

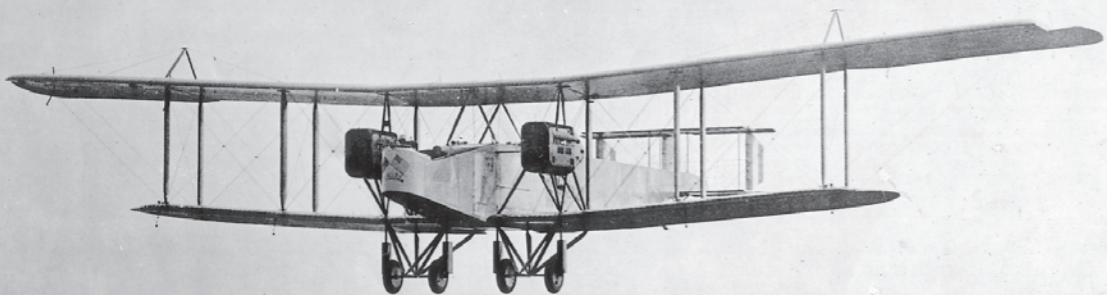
studied mechanical engineering.

He was a “Toad of Toad Hall” character—the archetypal rich *dilettante*. A founder member of the Automobile Club of Great Britain, he bought his first car at 18. In 1904, he founded Rolls-Royce with Henry Royce (the plan being that Royce would build the cars, while the more flamboyant Rolls would sell them).

But by 1906, Rolls’ interest in the business was already beginning to wane in favour of aviation, and he tried unsuccessfully to persuade Royce to design an aero engine. Rolls was a pioneer aviator and balloonist, making over 170 balloon ascents. He was also a founding member of the Royal Aero Club in 1903.

In 1909 he bought a plane and made more than 200 flights. Sadly, on 12th July 1910, aged 32, Rolls was killed in an air crash near Bournemouth when the tail of his aircraft broke off during a flying display. He was the first Briton to be killed in an aeronautical accident, and the eleventh internationally.

A Handley-Page 0/400, one of the first purpose-built heavy bombers, equipped with the RR Eagle engine



But during the global cataclysm that was the First World War, Rolls-Royce did start producing aero engines. Their first, in 1915, was the Rolls-Royce Eagle. (I should mention that all Rolls-Royce piston aircraft engines are named after birds of prey.)

This was a V12 liquid-cooled engine, delivering up to 350hp—and consuming 24 gallons of fuel an hour. The first aircraft it powered were the Handley Page “0” series of bombers—huge aircraft for their time (with a 100ft wingspan, comparable to a modern short-haul airliner), which were conceived as long-range bombers in 1915 after someone at the War Office asked for “a bloody paralysing of an aeroplane”.

They didn’t have much of an effect on the course of the war, but were nonetheless impressive because of their size. It was also used on the De Havilland DH4 two-seat bomber—often cited as the best aircraft of its type in the First World War, as it was faster and flew higher than anything the Germans had.

However, the most notable aircraft it powered was the Vickers Vimy. Also designed as a bomber, it entered service too late to see action in the Great War, but gained considerable fame by making record long-distance flights—the greatest perhaps being the first non stop crossing of the Atlantic in June 1919 (just ten years after the first crossing of the English Channel, by Louis Bleriot).

The flight was undertaken by two plucky Brits—pilot Captain John Alcock (aged 27 at the time), and his navigator Lieutenant Arthur Whitten-Brown (33). Both were war veterans, but both

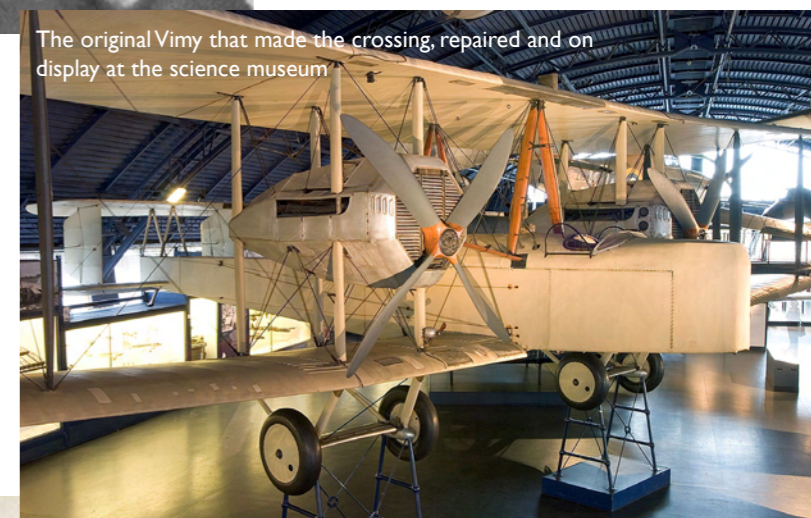
had been shot down and taken prisoner. This meant they had fairly limited flying experience, especially with so large a plane (Brown had been an observer, and had taught himself aerial navigation while a prisoner. He had almost no experience as a navigator before the flight of the Vimy).

The aircraft was modified with extra tanks that carried 865 gallons of fuel. And as it was made of wood and canvas (as were all aircraft of its time) you can imagine how flammable it was. Its top speed was around 100mph, and its cramped open cockpit was equipped with only the most rudimentary instruments, with practically

Alcock and Brown



The original Vimy that made the crossing, repaired and on display at the science museum



The rudimentary, cramped—and open—cockpit of the Vimy

none for blind-flying.

At 1.45pm on 14th June 1919, on a makeshift airfield outside St John’s, Newfoundland, Brown opened the throttles. Barely clearing trees at the end of the field, they looked ahead at almost 2,000 miles of ocean.

It was a flight from hell. Shortly after takeoff their radio broke down. Then one of the exhaust pipes on the starboard engine melted—



The Avro Lancaster

they could do nothing about it. The first few hours were uneventful—then at 5pm a fog bank appeared. They had to fly through it, and it was so thick they couldn't see their wingtips. Then they flew into a huge weather front. Visibility was nil—disoriented, they went into a spiral dive from 4,000ft, pulling out just above the waves.

“The salty taste we noted later on our tongues was foam,” Alcock was later to report. “In any case the altimeter wasn't working at that low height and I think that we were not more than 10 to 20 ft. above the water.” After their narrow escape, the pair grinned, ate sandwiches and drank a bottle of beer.

They flew on into the night—frozen. Brown had few opportunities to get a fix with his sextant, but got a star shot near midnight. At 3am it started to rain, which turned into snow, which filled the cockpit. Then ice started to form—a potentially deadly hazard. The only solution was for Brown to stand up in the cockpit, at 8,000ft, and chip the ice off vital instruments and controls. (Some accounts have him climbing out on to the wing, though this is slightly fanciful as Brown was partly lame, and it would have been difficult to clamber out on to the wing past the Vimy's propellers. A member of Charles Kingsford-Smith's crew did climb out on to the wing of a plane to fix an ailing engine during the first flight

across the Pacific—but that's another story...) ly after 7am the pair sighted land, and eased the aircraft down. They tried to land near Clifden, in Connemara, Ireland—in the middle of a bog—and they nosed over and crashed. They had flown 1,890 miles in around 16 hours.

Both received an immediate knighthood from George V. Sadly, Alcock died in an air crash just six months after the flight. But their aircraft has been repaired—and you can go and see it at the Science Museum, London.

The next notable engine that Rolls-Royce produced was the Kestrel, from 1927 onwards. This delivered around 550hp and incorporated a number of technological advances such as supercharging (compressing air inside the cylinders to develop more power at high altitude) and a pressurised cooling system.

It was used on a variety of different aircraft—chiefly the Hawker fighter and bomber biplanes of the 1930s, the mainstays of the RAF at the time. You can see a Hawker Hind and Hawker Demon flying at the Shuttleworth Collection, Old Warden, Bedfordshire.

Ironically, it was also used to power prototypes of the Messerschmitt BF 109—chief fighter aircraft of the Luftwaffe and nemesis of the Spitfire during the Second World War—and the infamous Junkers Ju 87 “Stuka” dive-bomber, after Rolls-Royce loaned some engines to Nazi Germany in exchange for an aircraft to use as a test bed! Confirmation, if it were needed, of the perfidious nature of the Hun.

But by far the most impressive engine

constructed during the Interbellum period was without doubt the Rolls-Royce “R” series—R standing for racing. Another liquid-cooled V12, this monster had a capacity of 37 litres, consumed 3.5 gallons of fuel a minute, and was eventually tuned to deliver a staggering 2,800hp.

Their chief use was in the technologically advanced Supermarine “S” series of racing seaplanes (designed by R. J. Mitchell, who later designed the Spitfire), which were used in the Schneider Trophy races of the 1920s and 1930s.

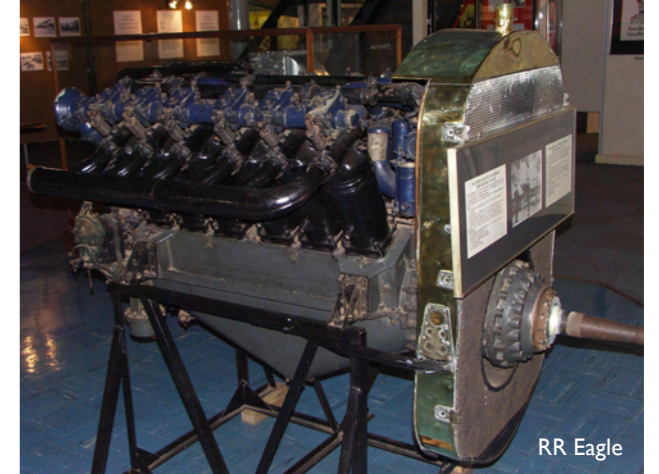
The Schneider Trophy was a prestigious international prize competition for seaplanes that first took place in 1913. At first held annually, it then went biannual. If a nation won three races in five years, they would retain the cup. Great Britain won the contest with the Supermarine S5 and S6 in 1927 and 1929, with the aircraft flown by the RAF High Speed flight. But due to the global economic depression, in 1931 the British government withdrew support.

However, a private donation of £100,000 from Lucy, Lady Houston allowed Supermarine to compete and win on 13th September at Cowes against only British opposition, with reportedly half a million spectators. The Italian, French, and German entrants failed to ready their aircraft in time for the competition. The aircraft, the Supermarine S6B, set a world airspeed record of 407.5 mph on 29th September 1931, the first aircraft to break the 400mph barrier. And once again, you can see it—and the Schneider Trophy itself—in the Science Museum, London.

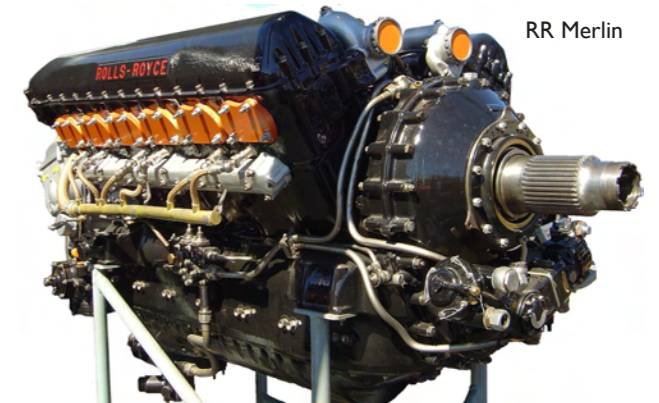
(You can get a decent idea of the Schneider Trophy races and the genesis of the Spitfire by watching the 1942 movie *The First Of The Few*. There are a few inaccuracies—R. J. Mitchell died of cancer rather than by working himself to death—but it does feature a splendid turn by David Niven as a raffish pilot.)

Anyway, the massively powerful R engine wasn't just used in aircraft—it was used by Sir Malcolm Campbell, and later his son Donald, from 1931 to 1951 in their record-breaking Blue Bird cars to set land speed records as well. Sir Malcolm managed 300 mph on 3rd September 1935 on the Bonneville salt flats in Utah and Captain George Eyston's massive Thunderbolt car used two R engines to achieve 357mph.

They were also used to break water speed records—twin R engines were used by Henry



RR Eagle



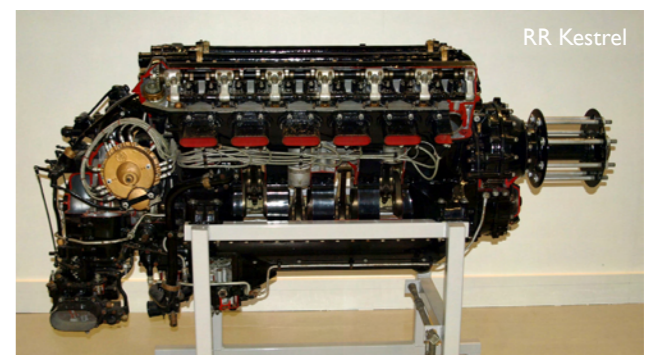
RR Merlin



The RR R on display at the Science Museum



The S6B racing seaplane



RR Kestrel

Seagrave in the powerboat Miss England II to travel at 100mph in June 1930—though tragically the boat capsized and he was killed in the attempt. Miss England III reached 120mph in 1932 using the same engines.

But perhaps the most important aspect of the R engine was the experience it gave Rolls-Royce's engineers, enabling them to build the company's most famous engine—the Merlin.

First running in 1933, and initially known as the PV12 (denoting it was a private venture, i.e. without government funding), the Merlin was once more a liquid-cooled V12 of 27 litre capacity. It originally delivered 1,030hp in 1938, but was eventually boosted to deliver 2,060hp in 1945 thanks to improvements in supercharging and fuels. In all, around 150,000 Merlins of all marks were constructed.

It was used to power the legendary Supermarine Spitfire and Hawker Hurricane fighter aircraft, whose exploits in the Battle of Britain and beyond are legion, as well as the Avro Lancaster and De Havilland Mosquito bombers, and the North American Mustang long-range escort fighter.

But not everything powered by a Rolls-Royce engine was a success. For example, the Fairey Battle was a three-seater single-engine light bomber developed to replace the Hawker biplanes of the 1930s. Although, as an all-metal monoplane with retractable undercarriage, it looked modern enough, by the time it entered service it was obsolete—too lightly armed (with just one machine gun for defence) and 100mph slower than the Me 109.

When Hitler invaded France, Battles were called upon to perform unescorted low-level attacks against the advancing German army. This put them at risk of attack from fighters and within easy range of anti-aircraft guns, and their losses were horrendous. In the first of two sorties carried out by Battles, on 10 May 1940, three out of eight aircraft were lost; in the second raid, a further 10 out of 24 were shot

down. Despite bombing from as low as 250 feet, their attacks had little impact on the advance.

On 11 May, only one Battle out of eight survived. The following day, five Battles attacked bridges to slow down the German advance; four of them were destroyed with the final aircraft crash-landing back at its base. Two Victoria Crosses were awarded—posthumously.

Two days later, in a desperate attempt to stop German forces crossing the Meuse river, an all-out attack was launched against the bridgehead at Sedan. The Battles were attacked by swarms of enemy fighters and were devastated. Out of a strike force of 63 planes, 35 were lost. In six weeks almost 200 Battles had gone down, with 99 lost in just six days. After the fall of France, the Battle was very quickly withdrawn from front-line service and relegated to training duties.

Even the Merlin itself had a few technical hitches. Its development caused regular problems until a Rolls-Royce engineer hit upon a brilliantly simple and brilliantly clever solution—they would take a random engine off the production line, run it until it broke down, and then whatever part had failed was immediately redesigned and improved.

A more immediate issue was the carburettor design. During the Battle of Britain in 1940, it became apparent that the Merlin-engined RAF fighters had a serious problem with their float-type carburettors while manoeuvring in combat. The negative G-force created by suddenly pushing the control stick forward and lowering the nose of the aircraft into a dive resulted in

the engine being starved of fuel, causing it to cut out unless pilots rolled inverted before diving. The opposing Messerschmitts, with fuel-injected engines, didn't suffer from this, and their pilots could escape by simply pushing the stick forward and diving away meaning the British pilots couldn't follow.

Salvation came in the form of "Miss Shilling's Orifice". Beatrice "Tilly" Shilling, a young engineer working at the Royal Aircraft Establishment

ENGINES IN THE FLESH

There are plenty of places to see these classic aircraft in action, as well as in static displays.

- The best perhaps for airshows is Duxford in Cambridgeshire. The museum features regular displays of classic aircraft throughout the summer, as well as a huge collection of static aircraft, including an American B52 bomber.

- On a much smaller scale is the Shuttleworth collection at Old Warden, Bedfordshire. It has regular airshows plus a collection of truly vintage aircraft, including the oldest airworthy British-built aeroplane, from 1912.

- A comprehensive static display can be found at the RAF museums, at Hendon and Cosford, near Birmingham.

- And of course, you can go and see Alcock and Brown's Vimy and the Supermarine S6 at the Science Museum, London.



Pure Merlin engine noise: click on this image to see—and hear—Spitfires in action at Beachy Head and Shoreham Air Show

at Farnborough, came up with a disarmingly simple solution. She introduced a simple flow restrictor: a small metal disc much like a plain metal washer. After it was fixed into the engine's carburettor, it was able to reduce the fuel starvation of the engine, and once again the RAF was back in the game.

Some of the Merlin's greatest successes were also engineering bodge-jobs. The Avro Lancaster was originally a two-engined design called the Manchester, and used two Rolls-Royce Vulture engines—these were one of the company's real duds, with an unenviable reputation for bursting into flames. So Avro engineers hurriedly stretched the wings a bit, fitted four Merlins—and they had a winner on their hands. The Lancaster went on to be one of the RAF's most capable aircraft, famously taking part in Operation Chastise—better known as the "Dambusters" raids—in 1943.

It was a similar story with the North American Mustang. This single-seat fighter from the USA was also a bit of a dud, performing miserably with its original Allison engine. When one was loaned to the RAF, Rolls-Royce engineers hit upon the idea of using a Merlin in it instead. The result was another world-beater—and the long-range escort fighter needed to escort the US daylight bomber

formations into Germany, gaining air superiority from the Luftwaffe and paving the way for victory in Europe. To quote Hermann Goering, head of the Luftwaffe, "When I saw the Mustangs over Berlin, I knew the war was lost."

In the jet era, the company was just as successful. So successful in fact, that in the early Fifties engines such as the Nene (all Rolls-Royce jet engines are named after rivers) were licence-built by the USA—and even the Soviet Union, after several were donated to Russia by the UK as a "goodwill gesture". In the same decade it produced the mighty Avon, which powered the English Electric Lightning, an interceptor with truly stellar performance—it could reach Mach 2 (twice the speed of sound) and fly to the edge of space (and still does; go to Thunder City in South Africa and for a few thousand quid you can take a ride in one). Currently, Rolls-Royce engines have around 40% of the global market, powering the Airbus A380 (the world's largest passenger aircraft), the new Boeing 787 Dreamliner and the RAF's latest fighter aircraft, the Eurofighter Typhoon.

So over 100 years of aviation, Rolls-Royce aero engines have been at the forefront of progress and innovation—and look set to continue to do so. You can imagine that Charles Rolls would have been very proud indeed.



Wonders of Technology

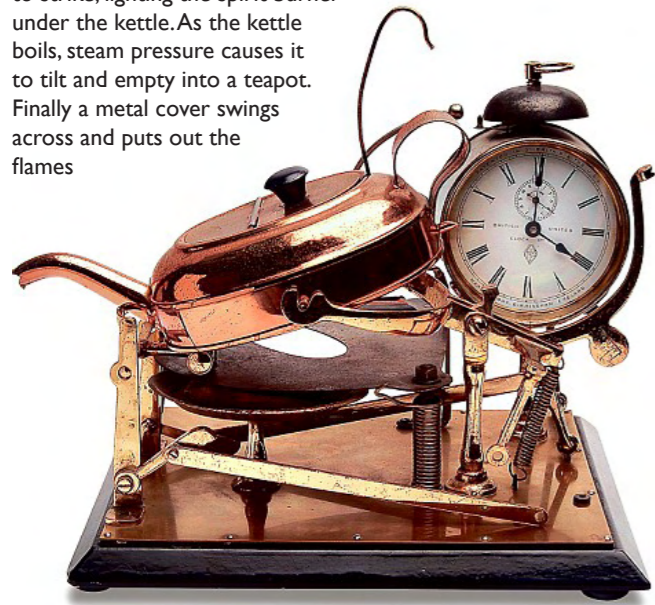


TIME-SAVING INVENTIONS OF YESTERYEAR THAT MYSTERIOUSLY NEVER MADE IT INTO PRODUCTION

IF YOU'VE EVER thought to yourself, "Isn't it extraordinary that in all the centuries of mankind's existence no one has invented a collapsible megaphone or periscope spectacles so that you can read a newspaper while lying on your back?" be prepared to have your astonishment erased: someone has. Both of these devices were invented and exist in the collection of one Maurice Collins, proud owner of some fifty odd inventions from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.

The collection was recently brought to the Club's attention by posts in the Chap Room. It was actually put on public display at the British Library, but I'm afraid that was in 2008 and I'm not aware of any current plans to show them. So instead enjoy these photographs. And if you want to see another vintage gadget that has recently been discovered by one of our own Members, turn to the next page...

An early attempt at the Teasmade, patented in 1902. The alarm clock actually triggers a match to strike, lighting the spirit burner under the kettle. As the kettle boils, steam pressure causes it to tilt and empty into a teapot. Finally a metal cover swings across and puts out the flames



A handsomely made, simple but effective clockwork burglar alarm from the 1870s: a spike on the underside grounds the wedge under your door and you raise the lever to set it. If an intruder opens the door it will push the lever and trigger the alarm



Of course! It's a megaphone that handily collapses down into the size of... well, a little smaller than a lady's head



The perfect defence against highwaymen in the late nineteenth century: seemingly a normal lady's purse, it also contained a secret compartment holding a single-shot derringer-style pistol. The robber demands your money, you naturally take out your purse—then let him have it between the eyes (remembering that you do only have one shot...)



Toe socks (or rather "toe sox") were designed to sit over your big toes, under your normal socks, protecting the latter from wear and reducing your "hosiery bill" by some 80%. Alternatively you could cut your toe nails, I suppose



Periscope spectacles enable you to lie down while reading the newspaper comfortably



These 1930s spectacles, on the other hand, come with small, lamps, evidently powered by batteries so big they had to be carried elsewhere on your person, judging by the long cables



Why smoke just one cigarette at a time? This double-barrelled cig holder was alleged to have been inspired by a cigarette case belonging to the fictional character Bulldog Drummond, which held Turkish on one side and Virginian on the other. Is the suggestion that you smoke one of each simultaneously on days when you just can't make up your mind?



Before satnav came this wrist-mounted device: of course it doesn't actually know where you are, but simply offers a handily-positioned scrolling map of the route. Just don't take any detours

You may have seen Edwardian moustache cups, with a built-in tash-guard to hold your whiskers up out of the way while you drink—this is a portable clip-on version Quite handy, really





TRINKET OF DREAMS!

“Browsing through my late father-in-law’s possessions,” writes Finnish NSC Member Lord Ochiltree, “I encountered this delightful little object, which seems to be a nose-shaper.”

Perhaps not quite a “Trinket of Dreams” but, as Lord Ochiltree suggests, the very fact of its existence is appealing. It has been lovingly made, with a padded interior that looks like leather and decorative etching or tooling on the brass exterior. Phisick.com, a website for medical antiques, has this to say on the subject of the Zello-Punkt: “A remarkable contraption



designed to correct nasal deformity or septal deviation. It was completely ineffective and had only a brief window of popularity in France in the early 20th century. The metal device was held in position over the head and nose with an elasticated band and the screws were then tightened so as, in theory, to correct any deviation from the midline. A rather beautifully engraved folly from medical history.”



The Sound of Custard

CLUB MEMBERS' NIGHT OF MUSIC AND WORDS—AND A SPECIAL CELEBRATION

A JUBILANT EVENING was had on 14th May, as the Cirque de Crème Anglaise rolled into town. It had been, for some reason, a difficult bill to schedule, getting the right combination of acts to agree to be in the right place at the right time, but the gods of louche fop-rock prevailed.

We had the marvellous poet Niall Spooner-Harvey as our MC—good timing as he had become engaged only that very morning, prompting much hearty congratulating and indeed a poem from Niall about the experience. Both Niall and his fiancée Isabel are NSC Members so expect full coverage!

Next up was the extraordinary Tim Ten Yen: dressed as a salaryman (as Niall put it), off stage he is mild-mannered and self-effacing, but on stage he erupts into a frenzy of angular dancing, dramatic attitudes and sweeping gestures. His music is subtle, intelligent pop that works perfectly yet seems unlike anything else. Imagine the bastard offspring of David Byrne and Trevor Horn. The Furbelows next lumbered on stage, hosts of the Cirque and purveyors of very English cabaret-rock.

Then came The Android Angel. I'd previously seen main man Paul as a solo act, using a looping pedal to build up layers of synthesiser drone, guitar, percussion and voice; it was a fragile but effective and cheery



(Above) Tim Ten Yen invites the audience to stroke his stuffed cat; (right) Niall introduces The Teeth

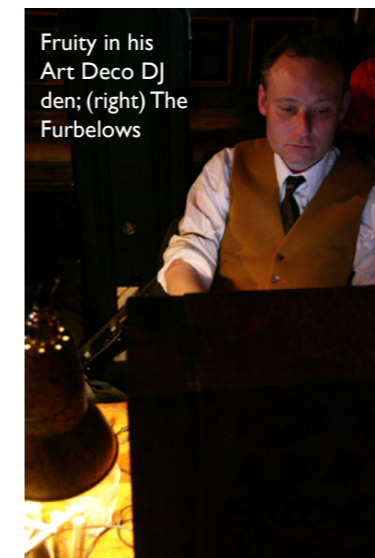


construction from a man sitting surrounded by maracas, bell trees and other oddments. This time he had a drummer and bass player with him, and the music was more Rock. But there were still the quirky touches—glockenspiel riffs and a bit where the audience are invited to join in on cowbell, djembe, woodblocks, etc. If something can be epically quirky, then this is it.

Our final live act was a band called The Teeth, who indeed wear necklaces of Teeth on stage along with matching silver jackets and, for one song at least, a range of rubber masks. As if subverting pop clichés, they sing mostly about sex (“One review described this next song as ‘satire’,” explained Bobby Champagne Jr of their number *I Want to Go Where the Sex Is*. “It’s not satire: The Teeth really think this way.”) and themselves—they have a habit of making pronouncements in the third person, high-fiving each other between songs before asking, “Who loves The Teeth?” As Bobby launches into a guitar break he yells, ‘Watch me, girls!’

And of course, our resident DJ MC Fruity was there, sculpting his strange but effective blend of evocative tunes from many decades and continents. He should really get some cards

printed, as audience members are forever going up to ask about tracks he’s playing and where else he might be appearing. Thanks, finally, to all the guests, who lingered dancing till they hosed us out at 2am.



Fruity in his Art Deco DJ den; (right) The Furbelows





Jazz Odyssey



CLUB FILM NIGHT CONSIDERS A TRAGIC CHRONICLER OF A DOOMED AGE

OUR MAY FILM NIGHT, curated by the Earl of Essex, featured the 1974 version of *The Great Gatsby*. He also provided some short introductory addresses and he has kindly given me written versions which I thought might be of interest to Members who were not able to make the screening.

By the Earl of Essex

FLAPPERS AND THE 1920S

BEGINNING WITH PROHIBITION and ending with the Wall Street Crash, the 1920s have been described as one long party following the desolation of the Great War. They were known at the “Roaring Twenties” or the “Jazz Age”.

The term “flapper” had actually been used in previous generations: in 19th century Britain it had meant a very young female prostitute. But now it came into fashion to describe young women who showed disdain for conventional dress and behaviour. The American journalist and commentator H. L. Mencken wrote, “The

To Live in the 1920s... seemed to revolve mainly around drinking and smoking. Click on the images for links to the two short films that were screened on the night



flapper of 1915 has forgotten how to simmer; she seldom blushes and it is impossible to shock her.”

There were even flapper dictionaries: one, published in 1922, defined the flapper as, “The ultra-modern girl, full of pep and life, beautiful (naturally or artificially), blasé, imitative and intelligent to a degree, who is about to bloom into the period of womanhood and believes that her sex has been, and will continue to be, emancipated to a level higher than most mortals have been able to attain.”

Others were not so sure. A Harvard psychologist reported that “flappers had the lowest degree of intelligence” and constituted a “hopeless problem for educators”, while in Britain Dr Murray-Lowe referred to them as “the social butterfly type, the frivolous, scantily-clad, jazzing flapper, irresponsible and undisciplined, to whom a dance, a new hat or a man with a car, were more important than the fate of nations”.

The nickname was a literal reference to their unbuckled shoes. Flappers went to jazz clubs and speakeasies at night, where they danced provocatively, smoked cigarettes through long holders, snorted cocaine (which was then legal) and dated freely. The defining element of the flapper’s womanhood was to subvert the pre-war norms of society by smoking and drinking in public and having premarital sex. Flappers rode bicycles, drove cars and flew aeroplanes. They had “petting parties” where “making out” became popular. They danced the “Charleston”, the “Shimmy”, the “Bunny Hug” and the



(Above and right) Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald

“Black Bottom”.

They invented their own slang: “snugglepup” was a man who frequented petting parties, “I have to see man about a dog” meant you were going out to buy whisky, “handcuff” or “manacle” was a wedding or engagement ring, “that’s the bee’s knees” or “the cat’s pyjamas” was an expression of approval, the “big cheese” was the top man, “to bump off” was to murder, “baloney” was nonsense and “hooch” was alcohol.

In the USA popular contempt for the prohibition of alcohol abetted the rise of the flapper and they were portrayed on the silver screen by actresses, initially by Olive Thomas in the 1920 movie “The Flapper”, then by Clara Bow, Louise Brookes and Jean Crawford.

The flapper’s dress was pioneered by the Paris fashions of Coco

Chanel, embodied by short “bobbed” hair, flattened breasts and straight waists, giving a boyish appearance, and, most significantly, removed the corset from female fashion.

Cloche hats were popular and tight skirts with hemlines just below the knee. Flapper dresses were straight and loose leaving bare arms and dropping the waistline to the hips. One woman, commenting on the New York fashions, talked about “a thin little flapper of a girl, donning a skirt in which she could hardly take a step, extinguishing all but her little white teeth with a dumpy bucket of a hat, and tripping down Fifth Avenue”.

Flappers wore heavy make-up compared to what had previously been deemed acceptable. They sported dark eyes, blusher and “kiss-proof” lipstick on “bee-stung” lips.

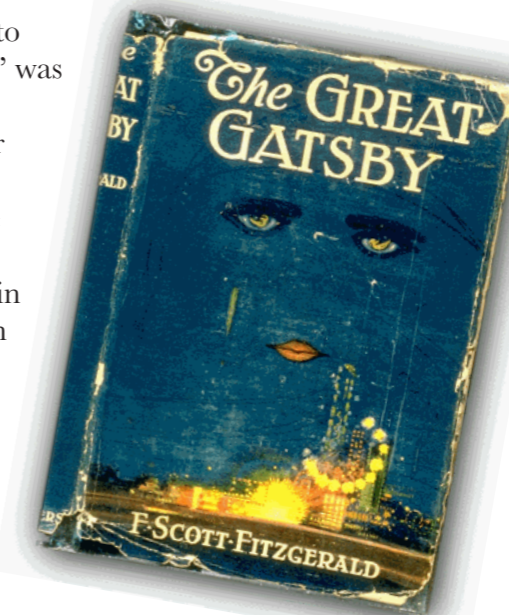
The flapper styled did not survive the Wall Street Crash on 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression. The Thirties brought a conservative backlash and religious revival, which set out to eradicate the liberal lifestyles of the 1920s.



THE GREAT GATSBY: THE NOVEL

First published in April 1925, *The Great Gatsby* defined that decade: in fact its author, F. Scott Fitzgerald coined the phrase “The Jazz Age”. Set on Long Island and New York City during the long, hot summer of 1922, it constitutes a critique of the American Dream and is now regarded as a paragon of the American novel and a literary classic.

But it was not always



viewed this way. Although his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, published in 1920, was a success and allowed Fitzgerald to make his living as a writer, *Gatsby* itself sold fewer than 25,000 copies in his lifetime.

Born in 1896 in St Paul, Minnesota, to a Catholic education that he later rejected, Fitzgerald became a chronicler of the 1920s and its excesses, and lived an opulent lifestyle with his eccentric wife Zelda. They moved between the fleshpots of New York, Paris and the French Riviera and were as famous then as a modern film star couple like Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are today. Despite this acclaim, Fitzgerald was constantly troubled by money problems and supplemented his income writing short stories for newspapers and magazines and film scripts for Hollywood, something he considered “whoring”.

Zelda became hospitalised with schizophrenia in 1930 and her emotional health would remain fragile for the rest of her life. Fitzgerald spent most of the 1930s “whoring” on scripts for MGM in Hollywood, while working on his, ultimately unfinished,



novel *The Love of the Last Tycoon*. An alcoholic since his college days, and a notoriously heavy drinker in the 1920s, he died in December 1940 from a massive heart attack, aged just 44; by this time he was estranged from Zelda, who died in a fire in a mental hospital in North Carolina in 1948, aged 48.

Jimmy Gatz to the rich, successful businessman, Jay Gatsby. His belief that he can recreate the past is ultimately a misplaced dream: Daisy has changed and is now merely a social gadfly, as she travels between homes with Tom, her well-heeled, well-connected but shallow husband. In turn Fitzgerald is saying that the spirituality of America is misplaced because of its obsession with material wealth. Like the mysterious green light shining at the end of Daisy’s dock, which Gatsby can ultimately never quite reach, American searches to find itself.

The Great Gatsby can be seen as an allegory of our times. On one level it is a timeless search by one man to recreate a lost love, for his pre-war sweetheart, Daisy Buchanan, who had since married another. On another level that man symbolises the American spirit by reinventing himself from his poor beginnings as

THE GREAT GATSBY: THE FILM

The 1974 film is actually the third attempt at bringing the book to the silver screen, all made by Paramount Pictures. The 1926 version was a silent film and is now considered to be “lost”. The little-known 1949 version, starring Alan Ladd, Betty Field and Shelley Winters, was

considered a failure.

The film rights were purchased in 1971 by Paramount’s legendary Head of Production, Robert Evans, from Fitzgerald’s daughter Scottie, who hoped never to see her father’s masterpiece on screen. Evans bought the rights as a gift for his wife, Ali McGraw, for her to play the female lead, Daisy Buchanan. However, after McGraw left him for Steve McQueen, Evans considered Faye Dunaway, Candice Bergen and Katherine Ross for the role, before it finally went to Mia Farrow. McQueen himself had been up for the part of Gatsby, as were Jack Nicholson and Warren Beatty (who actually wanted to direct Evans in the lead). However, Robert Redford was desperate for the role and, fresh from his success in *The Sting*, he won it.

Truman Capote was selected to write the screenplay, but his best efforts were considered incomprehensible by Evans, who then gave the job to Francis Ford Coppola. Coppola acknowledged his role in *Gatsby* in his credits, but later admitted that the director paid little attention to his work and that the script he wrote did not get made.

The little-known English director Jack Clayton, best remembered for directing *Room At The Top* in the 1950s, was given the job of recreating Fitzgerald’s homage to the Jazz Age. Sam Watterston, nowadays better known for his



SCENES OF A SARTORIAL NATURE

- Daisy’s appreciation of Gatsby’s Turnbull and Asser custom-made shirts
- Gatsby’s pink three-piece suit and cap

(Left and below) The costumes won an Oscar, but now seem a frankly very 1970s take on 1920s fashions



(l-r) Mia Farrow, Sam Watterston and Lois Chiles as Jordan Baker

work in television’s *Law and Order*, was cast as the narrator, Nick Carraway, and Bruce Dern as Daisy’s husband Tom.

Despite its lavish production qualities, the film was not best received at the time, with Redford’s performance judged as fairly wooden and Mia Farrow’s as pallid. But the film won two Oscars, one for costume design and the other for Best Music, by Nelson Riddle.

Time has probably been kinder to the final judgement of *The Great Gatsby*, but it’s noticeable for not having been remade as a major film production since.

GATSBY TRIVIA

- Mia Farrow was actually pregnant at the time of filming and is shot in flowing dresses and tight close-ups.
- Howard Da Silva, who played Meyer Wolfsheim, was also in the 1949 film.
- A young Patsy Kensit, then six, appears as Daisy’s daughter Pammy.
- Fitzgerald’s autobiographical novel *The Beautiful and the Damned*, first published in 1922, is now being made as a film with Leonardo Di Caprio as Fitzgerald and Keira Knightley as Zelda.



A Midsummer Night's Dream



CLUB MEMBERS LAUNCH A NEW NIGHTCLUB—'SALON D'ÉTÉ'

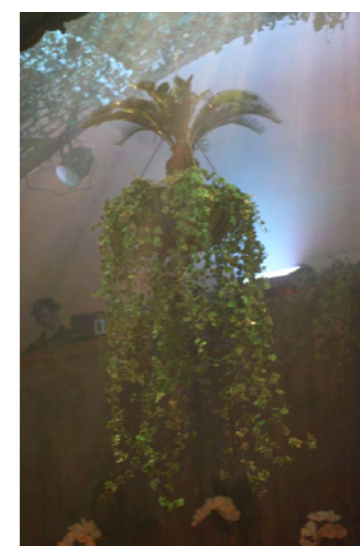
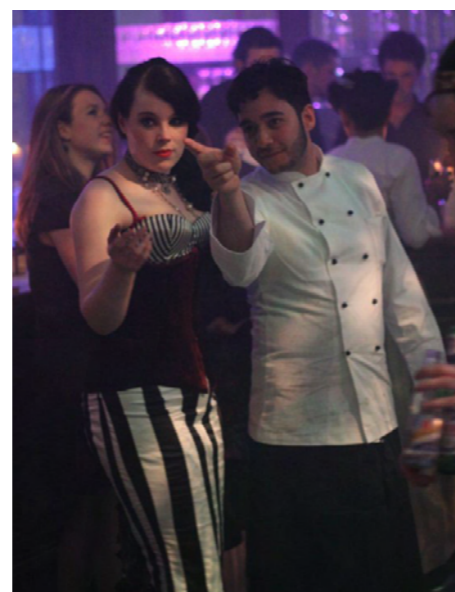
WITHIN THE DEMI-MONDE that the *Daily Telegraph* dubbed “retro-socialising”, there is nothing new about denizens launching club nights. But the event that took place on 21st May at L'Equipe Anglaise in London was more than that: it was not just the “night” that was new but the club itself. And NSC Members Ed Saperia and Willow Tomkins had put the whole thing together in just three weeks.

L'Equipe Anglaise has been on its spot opposite one side of Selfridges for years, its basement bar a haunt where a particular clientele alleviate the tedium of extreme wealth. The ground floor room had actually been closed since the 1980s, but the owners were wanting to open it up and had drafted Ed and Willow in to create something more stylish and edgy.

“It all took much more time and money that we'd expected,” says Ed. “The bar had basically disintegrated: when we filled a sink with water it collapsed through the rotted wood.” Fortunately funds were made available, which is just as well as the huge palms and trailing “living wall” of vegetation that make the most of the lofty ceiling, cost a fortune: and must now be kept alive! But the effect is like being in 1920s Shanghai. There is a purpose-built stage (with curtain, no less), stylish uniforms for the waitresses (designed by Willow, I believe) and busy kitchens—food is very much on the agenda (served till midnight) and I think Ed is going for a “supper club” feel. Best of all, the owners are actively seeking to attract well-dressed People Like Us—so for the time being all NSC Members get free entry to the club (normally £10).



(Top) Fetching waitresses in fetching uniforms; (above) Tom Baker and his Bohemianauts; (left) not sure if this couple were paid to fling themselves around but it was good to see; (below) Ed asks Willow, 'Has the crocodile escaped from its tank again?'



SALON D'ÉTÉ
Open Friday and Saturday (soon Thursday too)
8pm–1am
21–23 Duke Street, London
W1U 1LB
www.salondeteclub.com



(Above and left) vegetation dominates the high ceiling; (below left) the fully staffed kitchen is kept busy; (below) Santito Felipe and Denise; (right) who is this debonair fellow propping up the bar?



SPECIAL OFFER
NSC Members can gain **free entry** to the Salon d'Été (normally £10) **before 9pm**. Just show your Membership Card



CLUB NOTES

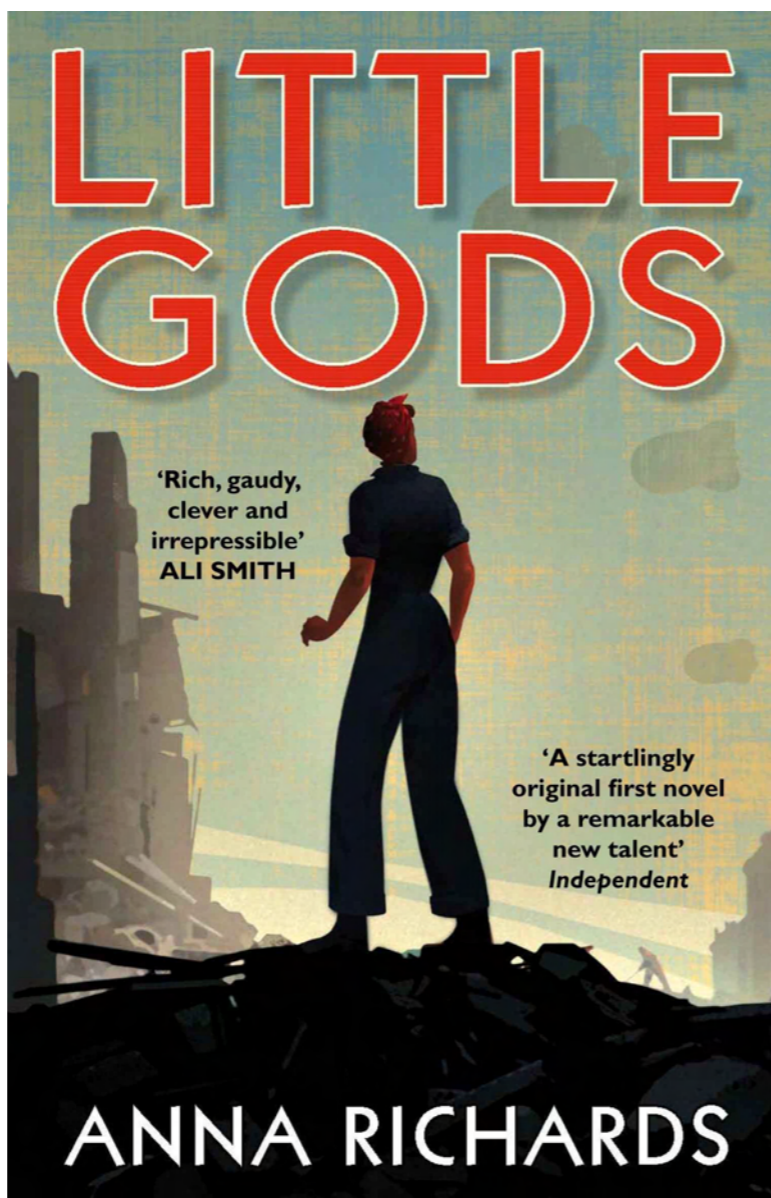
New Members

THROUGH THE IRRITATING wasp drone of modern life, I would like to like to drop the sun-softened ice cream blob of kindred spirit on to the slumbering shoulder blades of the following agreeable idlers, all of whom have joined the New Sheridan Club in the last month: Lieutenant D. Benjaminsson, Jeremy James Cook, Baron Alexander Leonard David Bjostrup, Craig Fraser, Lucy Deborah Fraser and James Michael Ward.

Club Book Offer

I WAS CONTACTED by a young lady from the publishing house Picador, to whom the NSC had been recommended by cheeky songstress Tricity Vogue who sometimes features in the listings on these pages. It was concerning a new novel, *Little Gods*, by one Anna Richards. The book is set during the Second World War (or The War Against Hitlerism, as I prefer to call it) which is why they thought it might be up our street. Anyway, for a time they are offering a 35% discount on the purchase of said book. (I'm not actually clear whether this offer is really being made specifically to us or whether anyone can get it just by going to the website.)

The story concerns a young lady of unnaturally great size, how she struggles to fit in and how it takes the chaos of the war to offer a possibility for this to happen. From the opening scenes of Blitz deaths and bloody births, to the journey to the seedier side of Hollywood, it's clear this is a book for those with a taste for the playfully grotesque (the language is quite odd too, in a hallucinatory way) rather than simply a sepia-tinted nostalgia for a seemingly glamorous period. This novel recognises just how devastating an upheaval the war was, as well as a source of opportunity for some.



Forthcoming Events

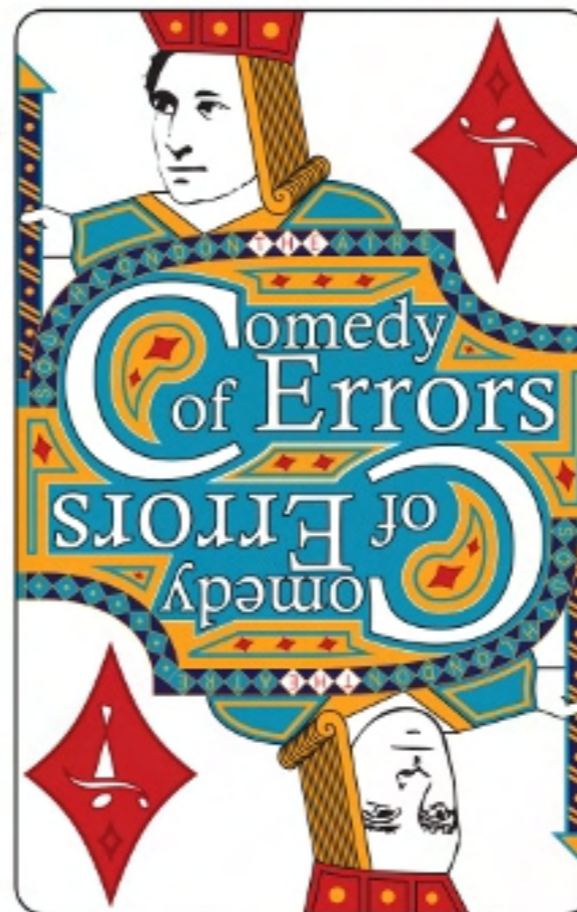


OFFICIAL NSC JAUNTS (🎩)
AND THIRD-PARTY WHEEZES WE
THINK YOU MIGHT ENJOY

FOR THE LATEST developments, see the Events page at www.newsheridanclub.co.uk.

🎩 NSC Club Night

Tuesday 2nd June
8pm–11pm
Upstairs, The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place,
London W1T 1JB
Members: Free
Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)
See page 2.



Performances: Tuesday 1st to Saturday 5th June, 2010 in Bell Theatre
The South London Theatre, 2a Norwood High St., London, SE27 9NS
Box Office: 0208 670 3474 Website: www.southlondontheatre.co.uk
SILT is a private members club. Tickets may only be purchased by members and their guests.

The Comedy of Errors

1st–5th June
8pm
South London Theatre, 2a Norward Street,
London SE27 9NS
Admission: £8 (£5 concs)
Box office: 020 8670 3474

NSC Member Mr Anton Krause, who has previously entertained us with talks and demonstrations on armed and unarmed combat, is directing this production. He writes: “*The Comedy of Errors* is unusual for a Shakespearean comedy in that, being one of his earliest plays, it sticks with just the one plot and one location and all takes place within a single day. With no extraneous characters or romantic sub-plots it pits one set of people against all the confusion and hilarity that fate can throw at them. It is Shakespeare’s shortest play and his most farcical, fast-paced and frenetic comedy.

“Antipholus of Syracuse and his servant Dromio arrive in the distant town of Ephesus for the first time, to find themselves being recognised by all and treated as old friends

by passing strangers. Meanwhile Aegeon, a Syracusan merchant, has been arrested and sentenced to death for entering the city. Syracuse and Ephesus are deadly rivals and each other’s citizens are banned from within their walls. Aegeon manages to gain a stay of execution by recounting the sad story of how his twin sons and their twin servants were separated by ship wreck at an early age...

“Can Aegeon raise his thousand mark ransom by the end of the day to avoid execution? Is his plight at all related to that of our confused travellers and the local citizens that they strangely resemble? Why has Adriana’s once faithful husband started to act so coldly towards her and declare love for her sister Luciana? And who is going to pay for the gold chain?

“Confused? You won’t be, after South London Theatre’s June production of *The Comedy of Errors*.”

Blitz Party

Saturday 5th June
From 8pm
The Village Underground, 54 Holywell Lane,
Shoreditch, London EC24 3PQ
Admission: £15 (telephone 020 7724 1617, go to www.blitzparty.co.uk)
Dress: 1940s

The venue is tucked away under railway arches and decorated like a WWII air raid shelter. I don’t have too many details at this stage, so keep an eye on the website. The date, incidentally, is a day away from the 66th anniversary of D-Day.

Trooping the Colour Picnic

Saturday 5th June
Midday–3pm (the ritual itself is from 10am–midday)
St James’s Park
Admission: Free, though you will need to bring picnicables

Lord Compton-Bassett is organising a picnic to mark this military pompfest. I gather it is the turn of the Grenadier Guards to Troop their Colour and the Duke of Edinburgh will be taking the salute (which I don’t think is a euphemism). Of course if it rains then the whole thing may be called off: for late-breaking details check the Facebook event.



Sentimental Journey presents
1942: A Night of Jump, Jive and Swing

Saturday 5th June
 7.30pm–12am
 Horton Kirby & South Darenth Village Hall,
 Horton Road, South Darenth, Dartford, Kent
 DA4 9AX
 Admission: £8 on the door (but reservations
 recommended)
 Dress: Allied uniformed or civilian dress
 Featuring “world renowned DJ” Terry Elliot.
 Tea and coffee are free but bring your own
 booze. For tickets and reservations telephone
 020 7987 6686 or email [sentimentaljourney@
 yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sentimentaljourney@yahoo.co.uk).

Wartime Weekend

Saturday 12th–Sunday 13th June
 10am–5pm
 Great Central Railway—Loughborough Central
 to Leicester North
 Admission: Not sure at this stage

I think the action focuses around a few of
 the stations on this route (which I believe is no
 longer a functioning part of the normal rail
 network). Last year they had football teams
 in period kit, a Vera Lynn style singer, fly-
 pasts by wartime aircraft and, celebrating the
 anniversary of D-Day and the fallen, a “poppy
 drop” in which half a million poppy petals were

dropped from vintage aircraft over Quorn and
 Woodhouse railway station.

There is a PDF programme of what is going
 on over the weekend. For more details see the
 railway’s website.

Torquil and Fleur’s Birthday Bash

Saturday 12th June
 7pm–12am
 The Punch Tavern, 99 Fleet Street, London
 EC4Y 1 DE (020 7353 6658)
 Admission: Free

Our very own Glorious Chairman Torquil
 Arbuthnot has joined forces with Miss Fleur de
 Guerre to celebrate their respective birthdays.
 Moreover, Fruity Hatfield-Peverel, whose
 birthday is the next day will be DJing (see page
 13). There is a Facebook event.

Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair

Sunday 20th June
 Trade 10.30am, public 11am–4.30pm
 The Urdang, The Old Finsbury Town Hall,
 Rosebury Avenue, London EC1R 4RP
 Admission £5 before 11am, £4 thereafter
 A relatively new vintage fashion, accessory
 and textile event, which *Time Out* apparently
 describes as “one not to be missed”. “Come and
 hand-pick your look from a fine selection of
 beautiful vintage clothes, shoes, handbags, hats,

gloves, textiles and jewellery from the 1800s-
 1980s,” they say. “Without costing the earth
 both financially and environmentally. Organiser
 Savitri is an award winning events organiser
 with 18 years international experience in the
 fashion, film, advertising and music industry.”
 There is a changing room, an alterations booth
 and a café.

David Benson Sings Noël Coward

Sunday 20th June
 7.30pm
 The Jermyn Street Theatre, 16b Jermyn Street,
 London SW1Y 6S
 Admission: £12 (£10 concs)

Following on from the Al Bowlly show at
 the same venue listed in the last Newsletter (a
 review of which will feature in the next issue),
 the Jermyn Street Theatre is hosting an evening
 of Noël Coward songs performed by David
 Benson. Of the Edinburgh fringe version of this
 show the *Daily Telegraph* had this to say: “David
 Benson, one of the best Kenneth Williams
 impersonators, has struck gold again, this time
 raiding Noël Coward’s songbook. He becomes
 the Master as he sings: dapper in tuxedo, he
 flutters his eyelids and delivers that clipped
 repartee to perfection.”

Odeon Fairs present

Art Deco Fair
 Sunday 27th June
 10pm–4pm
 Terminal Building, Shoreham Airport,

Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex BN43 5FF
 (01273 467373)

Admission: £3 (under 14s and OAPs free)
 Offering an opportunity to “step back in time
 and enjoy the unique ambience of the art deco
 era”. Can’t find out too much more, but there is
 an email address: scherz1@yahoo.com.

Classic Wings presents

Dragon Rapide UK Tour 2010

Sunday 27th June
 Goodwood
 Tickets from £79

Following the success of a similar wheeze
 last year, Classic Wings are taking their De
 Havilland Dragon Rapide biplane on tour to
 various locations other than their usual hang-
 out of Duxford. This route takes you over the
 racetrack, motor circuit, airfield and stately
 home on the Goodwood estate. Book your ticket
 online. Each trip carries eight people. Portly *bon
 viveurs* should note that passengers weighing in at
 over 20 stone are not allowed on the flight!

**Dulwich Vintage Fashion
 and Accessories Fair**

Sunday 27th June
 11am–5pm
 The Crown and Greyhound, 73 Dulwich
 Village, London SE21 7BJ
 Admission £2 before 12pm, free thereafter

Last Sunday in the month. Website is
 under construction but you can email [info@
 loveyourvintage.com](mailto:info@loveyourvintage.com) for more information.



A De Havilland Dragon Rapide, of the kind that could be
 flying you over Goodwood on 27th June

FOR THE LATEST information on what the Club is up to, who has been arrested, etc., have a squizz at www.newsheridanclub.co.uk. For more photos of Club events go to www.flickr.com/sheridanclub. Those of a technological bent can befriend us electrically at www.myspace.com/newsheridanclub or indeed www.facebook.com.

MR MOTIVATOR

Tim Ten Yen demonstrates some of his high-energy angular dancing at the Cirque de Crème Anglaise, as Fruity and Evadne Raccat look on

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