

SNIGGERS WITH ATTITUDE

Ironic joke or a tragic collapse of sartorial standards? Scarheart is papped trying out his new look

PLUS:

What did you do in the war, granny?

Maria Hackemann uncovers some surprising truths about her nanna's WWII experiences

Isabel Burton

The astonishing tale of the feisty gentlewoman behind eccentric Victorian explorer Sir Richard Burton

Love thru a lens

Curé Michael Silver tries to explain why he volunteered for a primetime ITV dating show

The New Sheridan Club

Newsletter

LIV • April 2011



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 Editor Writes

By coincidence, this issue has a feminine slant to it, featuring both Maria Hackemann's biographical tale of her grandmother's adventures in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force during the war, plus Sara Bridgman-Smith's profile of Isabel Burton, plucky wife of tough but slightly loopy Victorian explorer and linguist Sir Richard Burton. Whether Fr. Michael Silver's account of his experiences on the ITV dating show *Take Me Out* is of especial interest to the ladies is not for me to say, but I hope anyone who has ever felt there is not enough for the fairer sex in the Newsletter is satisfied...

The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 6th April in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 8pm until 11pm. The Earl of Essex will raise our eyebrows with *The Duke and Duchess of Windsor: Nazi Collaborators or Misunderstood Patriots?*, a crowd-pleaser featuring lots of pictures of the Windsors high-fiving with Hitler and Goebbels. I don't know what the content of the talk is but I've seen all the pictures as I was putting the presentation together for Essex and I can tell you that it features a cast of thousands including various knights and lords, Anthony Blunt, Charles and Fern Bedaux, a couple of chateaux, a couple of suspicious foreigners, Alfred de Marigny and

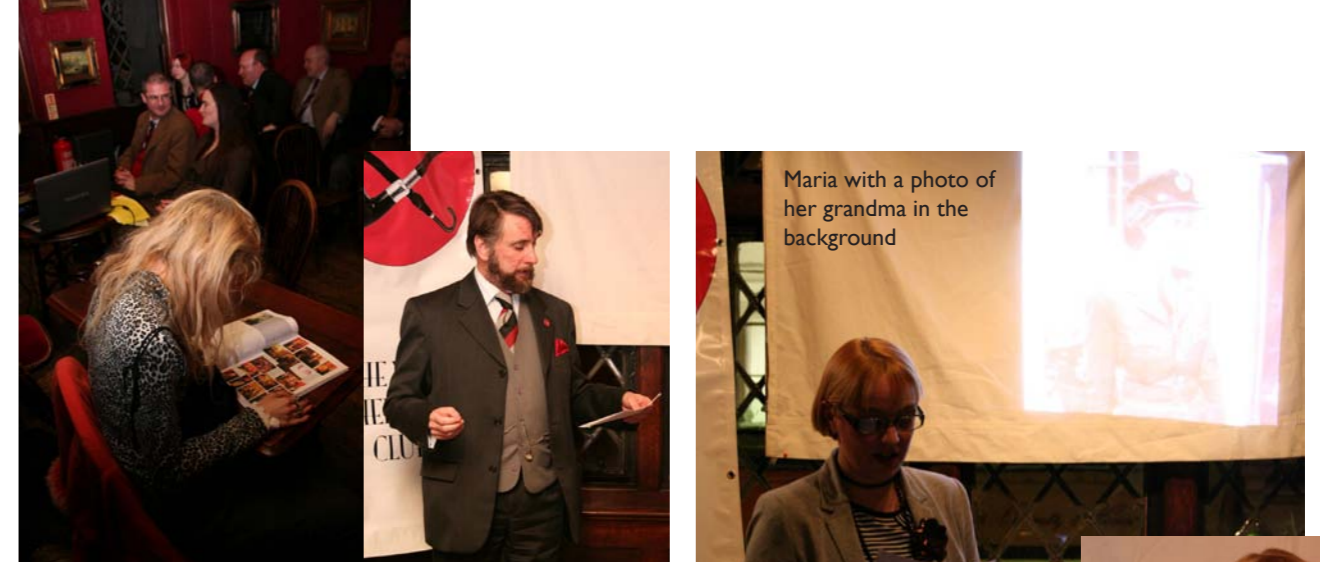
Ricardo Espirito Santo, a yacht and a vacuum cleaner. Is your curiosity piqued?

The Last Meeting

At our March meeting Mrs Maria Hackemann gave us a very personal talk about the life of her grandmother Margaret, things she had only relatively recently learned about her granny's former life—from the time she ran away from home at 17 to join the WAAF during the Second World War, the various men she went out with, and her subsequent life in civil aviation. These are all things the old lady didn't reveal while she was alive: but she wrote it down in journals for Maria. For example, until she read the journals Maria herself had not known that her grandmother had actually been engaged at one time to a man other than Maria's grandfather.

I also thought it was striking that although, in the WAAF, Margaret rose to an officer rank, and was responsible for maintaining aircraft and readying them for take-off, when the war ended her role in civil aviation seemed a bit of a come-down, essentially an air hostess. It seems that despite the vital role played by women in the war effort, these times were a long way off from women's lib and it was business as usual when the war ended.

Maria presented her talk with photos from family albums. Many thanks to her for sharing this part of her family's history. You can find an essay version of the story on page 4.

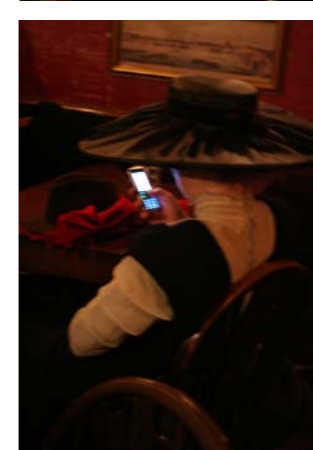


(Above) Eugenie is engrossed in the NSC Newsletter; (right) Torquil delivers his introduction



(Above) Robert, David, Matthew and C-B, a picture of bonhomie; (right) Maria's audience attend; (below) a rare appearance by Mrs H.; (left) a sign of the times...

(Below) Mrs Palmer-Lewis is drawn to this lady's splendid Edwardian hat



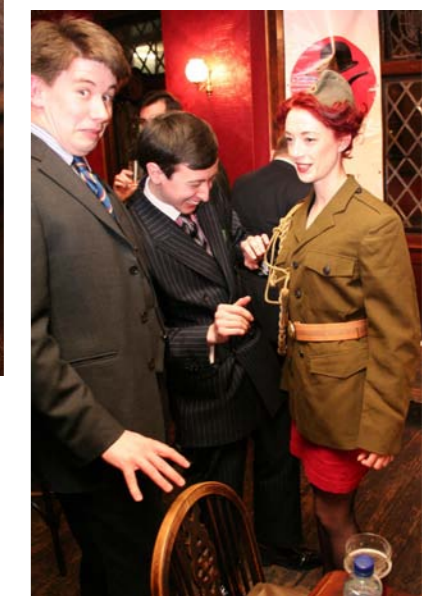
(Below) Jessie signs in; (bottom right) Oliver and C-B, caught red-handed adjusting a lady's embellishments



(Above) Smoker's Alley



(Left) Helena tells a fishing story. "It was this big..."



WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WAR, GRANDMA?

ONE WOMAN'S LIFE INSIDE THE WOMEN'S AIR FORCE DURING THE WAR AND EARLY POSTWAR CIVIL AVIATION

By Maria Hackemann

SOME GRANDPARENTS ALWAYS seem old. It's as if they were born like it, the white hair, the wrinkles. My grandmother fascinated me, the way she always dressed in blue, the things she said and the way she spoke, with a cut-glass 1940s BBC accent.

So when she would hint at things that happened to her when she was young, about running away from home at seventeen to join the WAAF and her life during and shortly after the war, flying, I was determined to know more. In the early 1990s I gave her a notebook journal to write in. Something in which she could record her memories to pass on to future generations.

Over the years I would ask her if she'd ever written anything in the journal. She simply replied with "a few notes but nothing to read yet". It was only after her death that I was returned the journal, along with her photo albums and flight logs.

I found it fascinating to delve into the journal and photos to discover a young woman's life and a wealth of undiscovered experiences. I don't even think my father and his brothers knew half the story.

So in the words of my grandmother Margaret Atkin: "On a bright July morning in 1941 Lawrence—my brother—gave me £5

and put me on the train at Nottingham for Edinburgh—where I was to start a new life."

She had been inspired to volunteer for the WAAF by the romantic stories about Amy Johnson and "The Few" who flew. And at a time when parents were to be obeyed she found the courage to make the decision. Leaving behind her life in Nottingham, the night-time bombings, Anderson shelters and her job at the John Player's cigarette factory. In Edinburgh she stayed with family friends and, after volunteering, she waited there eagerly for her call-up papers.

During this time she met Hal, a charming Canadian sergeant who took her out to dinner for Wartime Restricted meals and drinks. She later noticed a delay in her papers arriving and discovered that he had delayed their being processed so that he could spend time with her. She soon managed to rectify the situation and reported to the WAAF recruiting depot at Bridgnorth, Shropshire on 2nd Jan 1942.

Things she recalls:

- Sleeping in freezing cold Nissen huts with 29 other female recruits
- Learning to make a bed the right way
- Double the sheet allowance given to the men
- Flannelette pyjamas
- Learning to march—the terrible blisters!
- Tying a tie, hours of practice, and the separate front and back studs for collars [Nothing mysterious in that for NSC Members—Ed].
- Enlightening lectures on hygiene and VD



- Being made to do FFIs—Free From Infection parades

For a small town girl only used to the privacy of her own bathroom it was quite a shock to be taking ablutions with 29 other women.

"And so it was, after two weeks training at RAF Bridgnorth I left Shropshire feeling rather conspicuous with my new uniform and kit bag to get a train heading for Wiltshire and RAF station Boscombe Down."

Working closely with the MT drivers my grandmother was aware of some of the awful accidents and remembers girls in tears when pilots they had driven were killed. Margaret had kept in touch with Hal but their relationship faded. He did visit once and had to stay in a police cell as there was no local accommodation.

At Boscombe Down she worked as a clerk (special duties) in the flying control tower listening out for radio transmissions from aircraft in distress. Margaret's first "May day" call was on night duty. She was knitting while the sergeant pilot had a catnap. Quickly she and the sergeant were responding and had runway lights switched on for a Wellington Bomber to land. The plane was unable to get back to base in Lincolnshire. My grandmother fondly remembered the

warm glow she experienced, having helped them land safely.

Being near Salisbury Plain they often received invitations to dances at Bulford camp. Sergeant's mess dances always provided the best dancers. The army would send a truck for the WAAF to be partners. One late pass per week 23.59. All other days 22.30.

At Boscombe Down she got to know a very popular Jesuit priest, Padre Egan, 1st Parachute Brigade. And it was through him that she was confirmed at Salisbury Cathedral. Padre Bernard Egan also started a WAAF cricket team for which Margaret was a keen player.



Padre Egan is known for his bravery when he was captured at Arnhem Bridge—A Bridge Too Far—where he injured his leg.

It was at one of the camp dances here that she fell for the CO of 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment C Company. His name was Major John Ross. A Black Watch officer. In October 1942, John took Margaret for dinner for her 21st Birthday and their relationship blossomed.

However, in November 1942 he went off to action in Tunisia and July 1943 he was dropped into Sicily. As the Americans were not used to flak they changed course and dropped them in the wrong position.

Having seen so many girlfriends with broken hearts Margaret never thought that she would go through the same thing. Her letters to John were returned “Missing believed killed”.

There are a few pictures in my grandmother’s albums with friends but this man particularly interests me. John, although missing, was not

In London (far right) in 1947

actually killed; he was captured and then transferred to Stalag VIIA where he was very active on the escape committee. For his bravery in the North African campaign he was awarded the DSO (Distinguished Service Order) at only 21 years old. Later after his liberation and further activities he was awarded the MBE.

Saddened by her returned letters, Margaret decided to focus on her work as much as she could. She took exams to become an Aircraft Woman First Class.

She moved from Boscombe Down to Gloucester, then in Autumn 1943 she was billeted to Fountain Court near Victoria Station in London. This was Margaret’s first encounter with full-on bombing raids. She recalls the steel helmets and woollen coats over her PJs going down into the air raid shelters.

1944 she was promoted to Corporal and worked at RAF Abbey Lodge and lived in a flat off Baker Street, not far from Regent’s Park.

Part of her role was to give aptitude tests to would-be aircrew, to sort them into different



Margaret with a Mosquito from RAF Blackbushe at RAF Blackbushe 1946



Margaret with her friends on Oxford Street London 1947



Margaret with one of the Mosquitoes used for the Nuremberg trials in 1946

skills. The men had FFI in the famous Long Room at Lord’s Cricket Ground. Squads of WAAF were drilled by my grandmother at Lord’s. During her work here she was recommended for commission.

Most weekends she hitchhiked or cycled out of London. She took her bike everywhere, thanks to RAF she had access to a bike everywhere she was stationed offering a new-found freedom for her.

She went to Oxford for the Codes and Cipher Course, lasting a month. “It was all so secret I really never knew its name, but the instructors were marvellous and dedicated.” Could this be Bletchley Park?

She also learned to touch type on the Typex machine. At the commission board she chose to work in Codes and Ciphers. She always remembered that careless talk costs lives.

She was given two months in the Lake District training as an officer cadet at WAAF

Officer Cadet Training Unit. Once an officer she was given £55 for 2 new uniforms made by Gieves of Savile Row.

At this time she heard from John’s mother that he was alive and in Stalag Luft III.

In October 1944 she was commissioned as Assistant Section Officer, Codes and Ciphers branch. She was involved with the 24th March 1945 Crossing the Rhine campaign, the last airborne action of the war. She didn’t know until afterwards.

Once the Germans surrendered the work at Codes and Ciphers seemed to fade away. John Ross returned to England. During the months that followed it became clear that things had really changed for both of them. John had been through so much as a POW and was not used to the status my grandmother had gained becoming an officer. Sadly they parted and Margaret signed up for another year in the WAAF and transferred from Codes and Ciphers to RAF station Bramcote to become Traffic Officer.

In September 1945 she reported to RAF Blackbushe, 160 staging post, transport command near Camberley in Surrey. It was used as a transit mess for passengers, RAF and Army. My grandmother said that many planes flew from the Nuremberg trials back to England via Blackbushe. She recalled daily flights of Mosquitoes bringing the latest diplomatic papers. While at Blackbushe she learned to load Dakotas with fuel, passengers and freight and make them ready for flights. My grandmother's own first ever flight was in a Dakota—to a dance in Broadwell.

She soon became an Air Quartermaster and was stationed at RAF Hendon. Then in 1946 she was demobbed. While she was working at Blackbushe one of the RAF passengers offered her a job as an air hostess. So once demobbed she went straight into Civil Aviation.

In 1947 she joined the Lancashire Aircraft

Margaret after the war, as an air stewardess and selling tickets for pleasure flights in Blackpool

Corporation—selling tickets for pleasure flights in Blackpool. Eager to fly, she went on to Aquila Airways where she was able to fly a lot more, this time in Sunderland flying boats. She recorded that hazards included a passenger opening one of the emergency exit hatches thinking it was an air vent.

As one of the first air hostesses she travelled to Aden, Kenya, Gibraltar, Madeira, Egypt. She once met Churchill on one of his trips back from mainland Europe.

In 1947 she met my grandfather James Trevis in a queue at the tea wagon in Bovingdon Airport. They lost touch but in 1949 met again and began their journey together. She became mother of four boys, and grandmother to many.

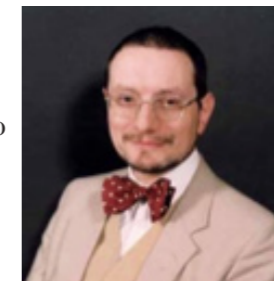
IT WAS A GREAT honour to share this insight with the New Sheridan chaps and chapesses, and I am particularly grateful for the chance to get more knowledge in certain areas of the presentation from the history, military and world war two experts in the NSC.



Love Thru a Lens

MICHAEL SILVER TRIES TO EXPLAIN HIS INVOLVEMENT IN TAKE ME OUT

WHATEVER MADE ME take part in a dating show? My multi-layered response could be summarised thus: my life has been steadfastly opposed to modern, so-called “popular-culture”. (I am still looking for someone whom I can sue for the 1960s.) But if you can't beat modernity try to subvert it.



Another motive derived from my recurring anxiety about my end—in the unlikely event that an obituary might be published, it could conclude with those dreaded words: “He never married.” How open to misinterpretation is that? Such imaginings may not be a solid basis for entering upon an entertainment involving 30 “orange women” on national television. Nevertheless, if one has to have a mid-life crisis, where better place to have it?

What was most scary? The two worst moments were waiting for that lift-contraption to descend, and attempting a harpsichord recital (under-rehearsed) before some ten million viewers. The instrument, incidentally, was a modern, handmade, hand-painted, reproduction of a French eighteenth-century harpsichord and worth £14,000–15,000. There were “contrasted” views about my music—they won! My playing was so poor that I took comfort from the thought that they would dub it, but the blighters didn't.

As for the date itself, once in Tenerife, we lads got serious about the male-bonding. It surprised me that chaps far fitter than I could be so jittery about dates. The other three kept analysing their choices and the perceived reactions of the lovely girls. Television, I kept insisting, should not be confused with real life. It seemed most unlikely to me—in this “hot-house” pressurised atmosphere—that the defining romance of our respective lives would overwhelm such copper-bottomed bachelors. Having said that...

my date, Julie, was such a lovely, natural and genuine person that my cynicism seemed churlish indeed. Moreover, she blossomed forth, transformed from studio Seville-orange (a disguise necessitated by lighting technicalities) into the charming English-rose she had always been. Without Julie (plus a safety net from Zsa Zsa) my appearance would have ended in the humiliation of walking off “all by myself”.

Despite the confidence-boost of having two women bid for my attention, I loathed, ultimately, having to make that choice. Among the words edited out were my protestations that, “I have never had to do anything so ungentlemanly in my life.” But there were no doubts about my choice and I never cease to be thankful for Julie's warmth and kindness.

To a lesser, but no less real, extent I am grateful to everyone else who—despite their bemusement—have been so supportive since the broadcast. I could have ended up viewed as an even sadder man than usual, yet I actually



Show host Paddy McGuinness with some of the Orange Women

seem to have got away with it? Julie and I have met a couple of times since we returned to these shores, and I am certainly glad whenever I hear from her. A nagging phrase about elephants in rooms somehow floats to the surface. Please allow me one last call upon your patience, dear reader. We all crave romance—or we believe that we do—but lately I have come to recognise that genuine friendship is not a second-best to it. An enduring friendship is surely worth infinitely more than a fleeting holiday fling? Yes, Grandad, you have this comfy chair while we fetch your warm milk and tartan rug.





To celebrate her birthday, Miss Minna kills a dog



A Day of Birthdays

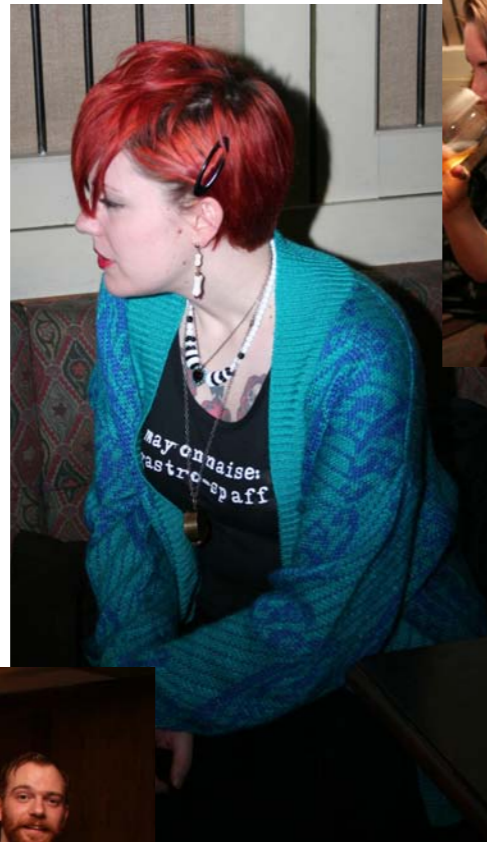
AND SOME VERY RUM GET-UPS

SATURDAY 12TH MARCH found itself the victim of two rather different birthday parties within the Club. During the afternoon Miss Minna presided over a relatively refined gathering at a local pub, where elegantly turned-out vintage aficionados nibbled canapés in the sun. Apart from the bit where Minna butchered a dog (see picture opposite).

The evening, however, saw Artemis Scarheart's "hipster" party, where guests were invited to dress as the sort of self-consciously, painfully cool types who drift around the trendy Hoxton and Shoreditch areas of London. The range of interpretations was fascinating as you can see here...



(Top to bottom) (l-r) Simon Pile, Robert Beckwith and the Honourable Compton-Bassett; Scarheart with Mrs Palmer-Lewis, Edward Marlowe's odd take on the theme; Tim Kennington in a T-shirt I suspect he's had some time; the in-crowd



(This page, clockwise from above) Will Smith and Annika Caswell; the Earl of Essex—getting down with the kids by taking his tie off—and Mrs H.; the strange-looking group (no idea where the Reichsmarine outfit comes in); my own get-up with the specially minted VIP pass. (Facing page clockwise from top right) C-B raises his hipster rating by getting ink done; Scarheart and Ellie Halley; Chris Choy dressed, for some reason, as Jack the Ripper; Simon, Ellie, Annika and Will



(Above) Tabitha Maynard-Addersley with a directional haircut; (above left) David Hollander's T-shirt is actually rather cute



I was driving through Shoreditch the other day and saw a chap whose pork pie hat was pushed so far back on his head that I swear it must have been held in place with Kirby grips





Behind Every Great Man... Part 1: Isabel Burton



A WRITTEN VERSION OF THE TALK
DELIVERED AT OUR FEBRUARY MEETING

By Sara Bridgman-Smith

ISABELLA ARUNDELL WAS BORN in 1831 to parents who represented two of the great families of England: the Arundells of Wardour and the Gerard family. It was said that, as a baby, her

I wish I were a man:
if I were, I would be
Richard Burton. But
as I am a woman, I
would be Richard
Burton's wife.



face had “the intelligent, curious expression of a kitten” and this may have been why she was thereafter known to her close family as “Puss”. To those outside her family, she chose to be known as Isabel.

Isabel grew up in a strict, but caring environment, in a wing of Wardour Castle, the ancestral home. The children were brought up with “good, but plain” food, lots of walks, and “a head nurse, and three nursery maids”. They were allowed downstairs only for dinner (at 2pm) and for dessert, if their parents were dining alone or with friends.

After spending six years at school in a convent and being returned to her parents, who had now moved to Essex, Isabel started to read books such as Disraeli's *Tancred*, which inspired the growth of a passion for the East, and developed an interest in “gypsies, Bedawin Arabs, and everything Eastern and mystic”. She spent a lot of time by herself, contemplating and “forming her character”.

At the age of 17, Isabel was taken to London, to debut and have her “first season” in what she calls “the matrimonial market”. She seems to have been genuinely intrigued by all of this, being interested in how both men and women behaved. She gained a reputation as a bit of an eccentric by purposefully sitting out of some dances to watch people and, in her autobiography, she has harsh words for both



genders, talking of how the women were overly-eager to “throw mud” at others who made mistakes and, of the men:

Lots of men, or mannikins, affected the season, then as now, and congregated around the rails of Rotten Row. I sometimes wonder if they are men at all, or merely sexless creatures—animated tailor's dummies. Shame on them thus to disgrace their manhood! 'Tis man's work to do great deeds! Well, the young men of the day passed before me without making the slightest impression.



Richard and Isabel's official wedding portrait

Meeting Richard

In August, the season was over, and Mr. Arundell decided to take his family to Boulogne-sur-Mer in France for “masters and economy” (lessons for the children and cheap living for the entire family). After London, Boulogne was quiet and seemed to lack charm. There was a small community of “half a dozen aristocratic English families” who kept to themselves. Still strictly controlled by their mother, Isabel and her younger sister Blanche felt drawn to rebel (which they did by sneaking cigars from their father's box) and were generally disappointed.

Isabel later wrote:

I have learnt since that often in a place one dislikes

there will arise some circumstance that will prove the pivot on which part, or the whole, of one's life may turn, and that scene, that town, or that house will in after-years retain a sacred place in one's heart for that thing's sake, which a gayer or a grander scene could never win. And so it was with me.

One day, Isabel and Blanche were walking along the Ramparts—as one did in the early afternoon—when the pivot appeared.

He looked at me as though he read me through and through in a moment, and started a little. I was completely magnetized; and when we had got a little distance away, I turned to my sister, and whispered to her, “That man will marry me.” The next day he was there

again, and he followed us, and chalked up, “May I speak to you?” leaving the chalk on the wall; so I took up the chalk and wrote back, “No; mother will be angry”; and mother found it, and was angry; and after that we were stricter prisoners than ever.

This man was Richard Burton. At twenty-eight, he had already served with the Army in India and was back

The Ramparts of Boulogne-sur-Mer, where Isabel and Richard first met





visiting his family in France. He wasn't one of the aforementioned "half a dozen" exclusive families and so wasn't in Isabel's social circle, but she appears to have been instantly smitten; being powerless to do anything more than to watch him from afar, this she did. They met once more on the Ramparts, when Isabel—much to her dismay—found Burton flirting with her cousin, Louisa. She heard his name at this point, which caused her to start, as a gypsy, Hagar Burton, had given her a prophecy a few years earlier that had said that she would "bear the name of our tribe, and be right proud of it".

Whatever you may think of a gypsy's prophecy, Isabel was certainly to face a number of obstacles before she could reach her destiny. She appeared to conquer the strict social structure at Boulogne once more, when she met and danced with Richard at a party. Not long after this, violence against the English in the town and the aftermath of bereavement for her younger brother convinced Isabel's father to take his family home. It would be four years before she would see Richard again.

She read all of his books and followed his journeys in the newspapers; all of this only strengthened and deepened her feelings and respect for him.

Around this time, she turned down a number of financially advantageous proposals, which puzzled her mother (who obviously didn't see anything of her daughter's diaries). And when Burton went to the Crimea, she tried three times to become a nurse under Florence Nightingale, but was told that she was too inexperienced. Undeterred from somehow fighting the same cause as Richard, she and her friends founded the 'Stella Club': a group of young women who delivered help for the families of the soldiers in the Crimea.

When Burton returned, he immediately started to plan an expedition to Africa to discover the source of the Nile. One day in August, he was walking in the Botanical Gardens in Hyde Park with Louisa (Isabel's cousin, who was now married to a naval Captain), when he met Isabel once more and,

this time, they were able to talk for one full precious hour.

The following day, Isabel and Blanche returned to the gardens and found Richard sitting writing poetry (and, we may assume, waiting for them). They continued to meet for the following fortnight, and Isabel noted that Richard's attitude gradually altered towards her. At the end of the fortnight, he stole his arm about her waist and asked her if she could ever give up civilisation, marry him, and go to live abroad. Given how long she had waited to hear such words, it's understandable that Isabel hesitated whilst her heart skipped a beat or two, but Richard, who assumed that he had asked too much too soon, then apologised, at which she hastily reassured him. Somehow, despite their different circles, years of Richard having adventures abroad, and what essentially amounted to their having been in one another's

I feel that we women simply are born, marry, and die. Who misses us? Why should we not have some useful, active life? Why, with spirits, brains, and energies, are women to exist upon worsted work and household accounts? It makes me sick, and I will not do it.

presence for less than two weeks, Isabel & Richard had found their perfect complement.

A perfect complement
Although they shared a passion for the East, learning, and exploring, Isabel and Richard differed in ways that meant that, together, they were greater than apart. Isabel

had greater social status—in Austria, she was permitted to visit the Court as a Countess (her family's title not being recognised in England) and Richard wouldn't have been allowed to visit at all, had she not demanded it. She also had a good deal more patience for society than her husband, building friendships with the constant hope of aiding Richard's career, and, when they lived abroad, wrote regular letters to people in England defending him from malicious rumours and highlighting his achievements.

A woman who believed strongly in the benefits of a comfortable home, Isabel had a talent for creating one wherever they went, even though this frequently changed and they were often in places that seemed to have little to offer in the way of comforts. She also became an expert in wrapping up homes: when they were ready to move on to another area of the world,



Syria. Far from complaining about the challenges of such trips and despite what the remaining formal portraits of her may suggest to modern eyes, Isabel relished this kind of adventure and the fact that she could share it with her husband. In Palmyra, she took to dressing as

Richard would give her the instruction to “pay, pack, and follow”; whilst he immediately set off for their next location, Isabel was trusted with settling their accounts, gathering their things, and following her husband as soon as she could.

Despite these differences, Richard and Isabel also shared many interests such as fencing, which Isabel took up after they got engaged, in

order to “defend Richard, when he and I are attacked in the wilderness together”. Richard being a renowned expert, he later tutored her himself and they both fenced regularly until their health stopped them. For most of their lives, they were both very active and took many trips to explore the parts of the world that they worked in, including climbing a volcano in Brazil, and visiting the tribes in and around

“Richard’s son”, as this made it easier for the two of them to travel together; although the “masculine garment had its drawbacks, for [she] always used to forget that they regarded [her] as a boy, and [she] never could remember not to go into the harîms.”

Isabel also shared her husband’s fondness for both reading and writing

books. Richard encouraged her to publish travel books such as *The Inner Life of Syria, Palestine, and the Holy Land* and they often worked in the same room, each on their own project. She wrote introductions for some of his.

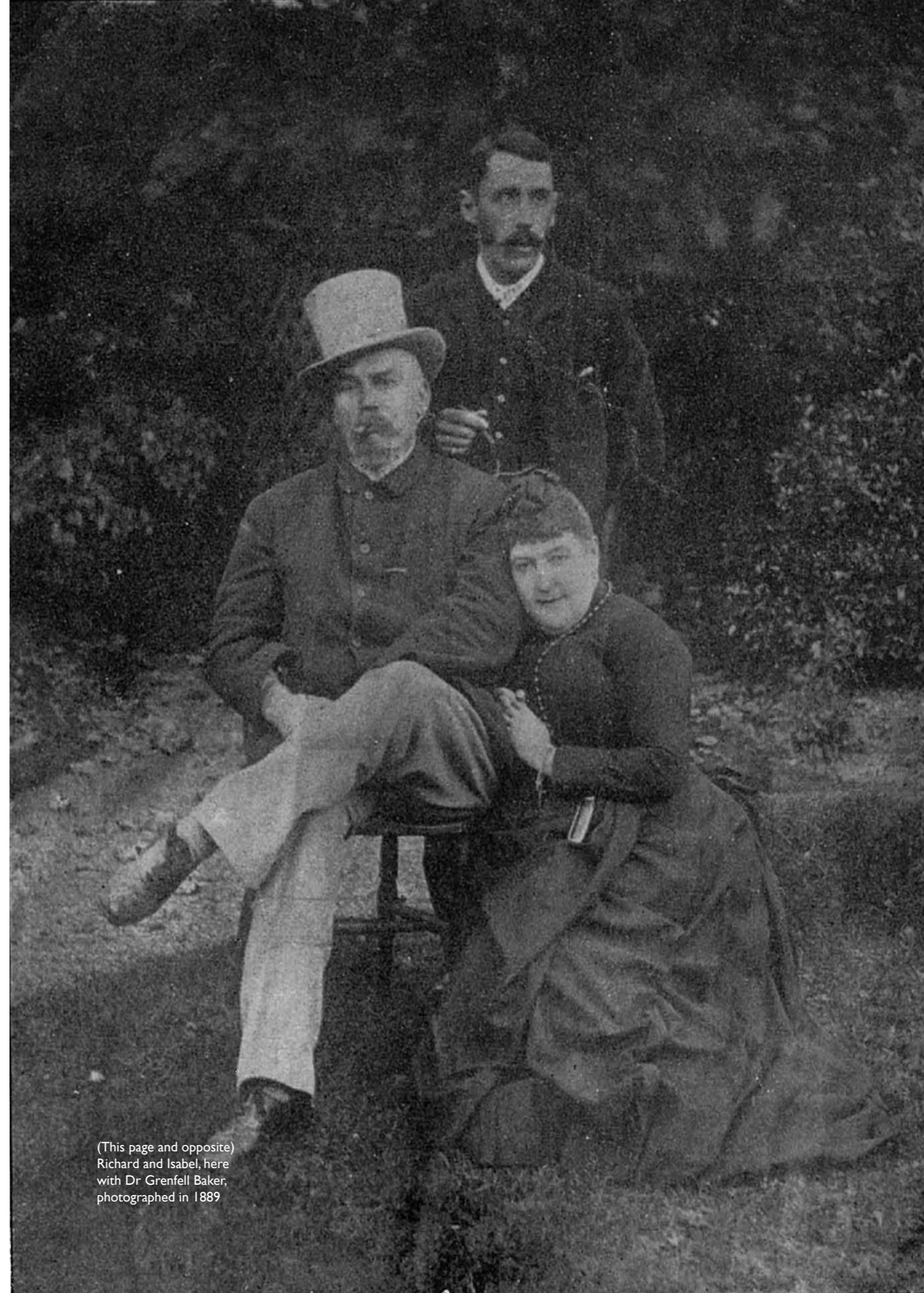
Isabel Burton was a strong, passionate and intelligent woman who was absolutely devoted to her husband. Speaking about her, Richard said, “I am a spoilt twin, and she is the missing fragment.”

Rules for my Guidance as a Wife

Let your husband find in you a companion, friend, and adviser, and confidante, that he may miss nothing at home; and let him find in the wife what he and many other men fancy is only to be found in a mistress, that he may seek nothing out of his home.

Improve and educate yourself in every way, that you may enter into his pursuits and keep pace with the times, that he may not weary of you.

Be prepared at any moment to follow him at an hour’s notice and rough it like a man.



(This page and opposite) Richard and Isabel, here with Dr Grenfell Baker, photographed in 1889

The Cocktail Cabinet

Wherein Members babble bibulous banter

Shooting the Breeze

by David Bridgman-Smith

Those who know me will be aware that I have a particular interest in what I call “efficiency drinks”: cocktails that have been thoughtfully pre-mixed and bottled to a precise formula. This saves the drinker time and leaves them safe in the knowledge that they can pour the perfect drink, time after time. While ready-made Martinis and Manhattans may be a rarity (but not unknown), there is one range of “efficiency drinks” that is extremely popular with the nation’s youth—The Bacardi Breezer. So in a spirit of egalitarianism and fair play I assembled a judging panel to test the full range of these bottled drinks: **Judge 1** Mrs B.; **Judge 2** David Bridgman-Smith, your roving reporter on all affairs alcoholic; **Judge 3** Mr Arthur Smitherington, a student of international affairs; **Judge 4** Miss Catalina Harrison, a robotonist. It falls to her to analyse androids and teach them to play chess.

To give them a fair chance, the drinks were presented at their best in flattering glassware. To cleanse and refresh their palates the judges

were given Cheddar Thins and plenty of Sunny Delight. Here are the panel’s notes:

Lemon

J1 Can I have some more Sunny Delight?

J2 Like a sugary lemonade, reminiscent of its chief competitor, Smirnoff Ice.

J3 Reminds me of sticky sherbet lemons that have been in a car glove compartment for four years.

J4 Cloyingly sweet and yet bitter at the same time; I hope the rest are better.

Mango

J1 Very colourful, although I think I’ve accidentally been given a box of Umbongo.

J2 I am transported to a tiki island with bongo drums and coconut bikinis. (Within the context of this tasting) I’m in Heaven.

J3 Reminds me of the tropical flavours of the colonies, especially New Zealand.

J4 I feel slightly sick.

Raspberry

J1 A vibrant red, almost unknown in nature. A flavour reminiscent of raspberry jam or tuck-shop cherryade.

J2 After the initial sweetness, I am brought back to earth by a bitter twang.

J3 Tastes like someone has microwaved a gigantic pile of Jammy Dodgers with some Fizzy Strawberry Strips that someone has



sucked the sugar off.

J4 I can feel the enamel being stripped from my teeth.

Watermelon

J1 Quite revolting.

J2 Watermelon is usually luscious and juicy, but this isn’t. It has a sticky smell and a stickier taste.

J3 Tastes how I imagine brightly coloured paint would; possibly created by liquidizing bags of watermelon jellybeans.

J4 Ideally, I would let this evaporate before drinking it and then consume it in homeopathic quantities.

Orange

J1 Smells like orange, but doesn’t taste like it. Notable for its defined meniscus.

J2 Brings back childhood memories of illness (Orange Calpol) and the cheap weak orange squash we used to get on school field trips.

J3 If Tango was made of vintage (read: “out of date”) oranges, it would taste like this.

J4 Tastes like orange fibre tablets.

Pineapple

J1 I love pineapple juice, but this isn’t even close. J2 The flavour of the worst pre-package juice and far, far too sweet.

J3 Oh! This is the last one? Thank goodness for that! I always thought fizzy pineapple was a sign the juice was going bad.

J4 Almost impossible to drink due to the smell of severely over-ripe fruit. A real low-point in the tasting; that really is saying something.

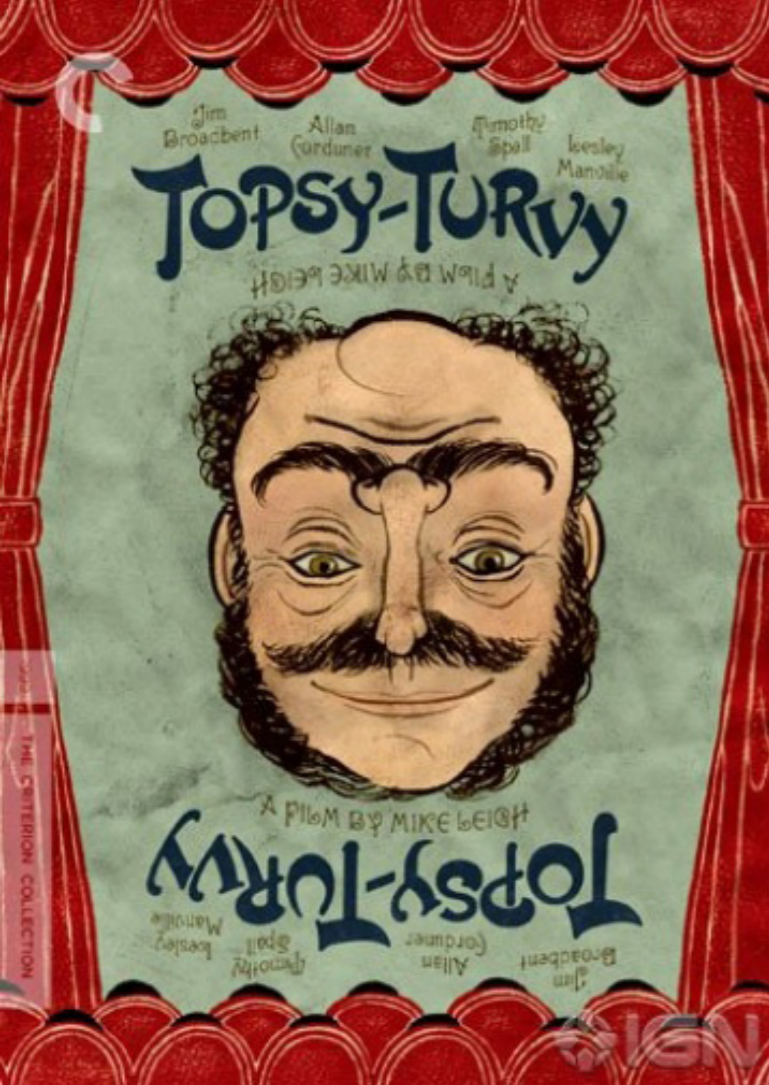
Sadly, these rum-based efficiency drinks did

not really sit well with the panel and the following ranking reflects the order in which they were bearable: 1 Mango, 2 Lemon, 3 Orange, 4 Raspberry, 5 Watermelon, 6 Pineapple.

If you do want to try a decent “efficiency drink”, I suggest the canned Jack Daniels and Ginger or even the Jack Daniels and Coke, which is passable in a pinch.

For more musings on booze, see the NSC’s **Institute for Alcoholic Experimentation**





NSC Film Night: 'Topsy Turvy'

ON THURSDAY 14TH APRIL the New Sheridan Club is having another of its Film Nights, this time presenting *Topsy-Turvy*, Mike Leigh's 1999 drama about Gilbert and Sullivan, focusing on their creation of *The Mikado*, but delighting along the way in a wealth of period detail and the lives, characters and woes of the members of the cast and G&S themselves. It seems a particularly appropriate choice of film given some of our own Members' recent involvement in a production of *Princess Ida* at King's College London—the original production of which, not considered a great success at the time, is the starting point for the film.

Curating the event is Evadne Raccat, who writes: "I invite anyone who likes G&S, Mike Leigh, Timothy Spall, theatre history, well-observed costumes, great acting, singing, etc., etc., to come along. And those who don't—come too, it's free and the venue serves very good food and drink. I've not seen this on a screen bigger than a computer monitor, so I am jolly excited. I plan to start the screening at 8pm. You'll be out in time to catch the Tube home."

The venue is The Compass, a friendly gastro-pub at 58 Penton Road (corner of Chapel Market), Islington, London N1 9PZ (020 7837

3891). The nearest tube is Angel. We are screening the film in the upstairs room, but the venue prefers us to dine downstairs, so if you'd like to eat it is best to allow time to do this beforehand.



CLUB NOTES

New Members

AS THE POPULATION of Blighty stumbles as one, blinking into the sunshine of spring, and doubtless immediately decides to strip to the waist and bask in it until we turn scarlet, I would like to offer the factor-50 sunblock of collegial geniality to the following pale and interesting arrivals, all of whom have stepped towards the dazzling light of New Sheridan Club Membership in the last month: Sadie Doherty, Ryan Pike, Algernon Bertram Wilberforce Woods, Gwyn Tudur ap Walford Davies, Timothy Eyre, Mark Beecroft-Stretton, Percy Flage, Bunty Flint and St John Fenwood.

Chap Olympiad Date

A LITTLE BIRD tells me that *The Chap* magazine's annual celebration of gentlemanly conduct, The Chap Olympiad, will be on Saturday 16th July. Modelled, not very closely, on the Olympics, it features a series of games designed to test a fellow's élan, savoir-faire, loucheness and several other foreign-sounding words, games such as the Martini Relay, in which a team constructs a Martini cocktail in stages; Cucumber Sandwich Discus; Hop, Skip and G&T, in which the player executes a triple-jump while clutching a gin and tonic, and is scored simply on how little he can spill; or Bounders, in which a line of men approach a line of women and compete to be the first to get slapped in the face.

The New Sheridan Club's own Summer Party will almost certainly take place in June, probably on either Saturday 11th or Saturday 25th—this has not quite been finalised. The theme will be the Great British Seaside Holiday (though the party will be in London as usual, rather than near any actual sea). Expect knotted handkerchiefs, sandcastles, deck chairs, donkey rides (well, maybe not literally, though tradition dictates a donkey shoot, at least), fish and chips...



Forthcoming Events



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

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

🍷 NSC Club Night

Wednesday 6th April

8pm–11pm

Upstairs, The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB

Members: Free

Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)

See page 2.



Tricity Vogue's Naked Ukulele

Thursday 7th April

7.30pm–10.30pm

Positively 4th Street, 119 Hampstead Road, London NW1 3EE

Admission: £5 in advance (email theredroom@tricityvogue.com to reserve) or £6 on the door

The uke-wielding siren Tricity Vogue is back in Positively 4th Street's cosy cabaret cellar for

more naked ukulele, with her special guest, the coruscating troubadour Mr Nigel Burch. “Naked” as in no microphones and no PA, of course. That’s not to say you won’t get to know two of the ukulele scene’s best-loved performers a whole lot more intimately than you ever have before...

NSC Film Night: *Topsy Turvy*

Thursday 14th April
7pm–11pm
The Compass, 58 Penton Road (corner of Chapel Market), Islington, London N1 9PZ
Admission: Free
See page 22.

Die Freche Muse

Friday 15th April
10pm–4am
A secret Dalston location
Admission: £9 in advance, £10 on the door
Dress: 1920s–40s

A retro/speakeasy/lounge sort of affair, described by host Baron Von Sanderson as “in the great tradition of European cabaret, irreverent, decadent, sexually ambivalent”. Performers this time include Mr Pustra, clown Dott Cotton, singer Matilda and burlesque from Millicent Binks, plux disc jockeying from Richard Adamson. As it is a private venue the Baron needs a full guest list, so even if you are

intending to pay on the door, RSVP to die.freche.muse@gmail.com and you will be informed of the location.



Rachel and Andrew Downer

Memorial Service for Andrew Downer

Saturday 16th April
3pm–6pm
St Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, London EC2 6AU
A memorial service for Club Member Andy Downer, aka Northumberland. Afterwards there

will be a wake at Ye Olde Watling, a pub some 30 seconds walk from the church. If you’re on Facebook see the event here.

The Candlelight Club

Saturday 16th April
7.30pm
A secret central London location (venue will be revealed when you buy your ticket)
Admission: £15 in advance
Dress: 1920s dandies and swells, gangsters and molls, degenerate aristos and decadent aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know

A clandestine pop-up cocktail bar, in a tucked-away, candlelit den with a 1920s speakeasy flavour. Each event offers a one-off bespoke cocktail menu and there are special themes and featured ingredients, masterminded by Will Sprunt, plus vintage DJing from the Club’s own MC Fruity and live performances.

This time it’s a nod to Weimar cabaret, featuring live swing jazz from the Shirt Tail Stompers plus Teutonic cabaret crooning from the mysterious Schmidt.

White Mischief presents
Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea

Saturday 16th April
9pm–4am
Scala, 275 Pentonville Road, King’s Cross, London N19 9NL
Tickets: Available in advance from Ticketweb from £10
Dress: Steampunk, Jules Verne, HG Wells, Victorian visions of the future, Georges Méliès’ “A Trip To The Moon”, silent movies, astronauts and cosmonauts, the Industrial Revolution, the steam age, gaslight romance...

Monumental club night with burlesque/circus leanings, though be prepared for modern-day pop music. Created by “tribal pop” band Tough Love and music video directors Lot 49 Films. It’ll be rammed. More details are at www.whitemischief.info.

The Fitzrovia Radio Hour on Tour

Saturday 16th April
7.30pm
The Point, Leigh Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 9DE
Admission: £12

Fresh from a sell-out Edinburgh Festival run, The Fitzrovia Radio Hour recreates the unique spirit of 1940s radio plays, evoking a dinner-jacketed age of casual imperialism and stiff upper lips, and mixing the chauvinist attitudes of 1940s Britain with sharp contemporary humour. Sound effects are created live to great comic effect.

The Hendricks Lectures present
In Search of the English Eccentric

Tuesday 19th April
6pm–9.30pm
The Last Tuesday Society, 11 Mare Street, London E8 4RP

Is the English eccentric under threat? Henry Hemming describes his thought-provoking quest to discover the most eccentric English person alive today, unearthing a surprisingly large array of playfully outspoken, original and inspiring characters along the way.

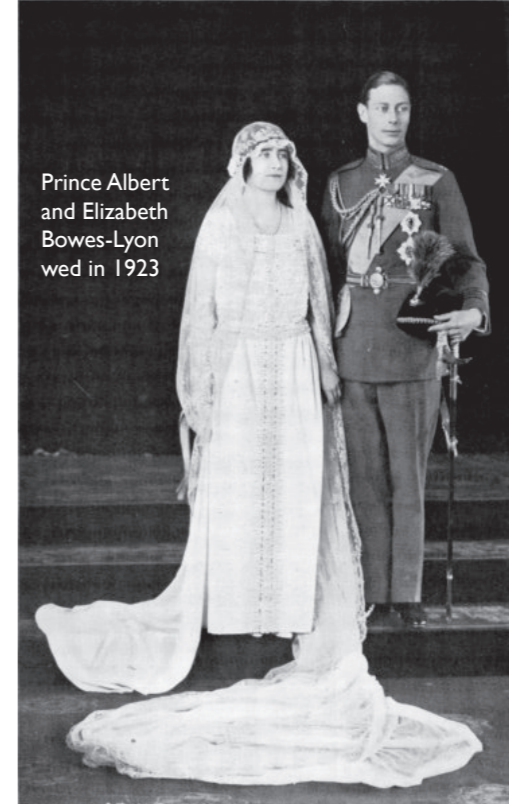
The Three-Pipe Problem

Tuesday 19th April
8–11pm
The Selkirk, 60 Selkirk Road, Tooting, London SW17 0ES
Admission: £2

A monthly comedy storytelling night organized by the NSC’s own Tabitha Maynard-Addersley (aka Helena Stroud). This time you are offered: Sara Pascoe (from TV’s *The Thick Of It*, *Being Human* and forthcoming *Campus*); H. Anthony Hildebrand, a cohort of Tim Minchin; Tom Toal; Al Cowie; Padraig Ryan; Jo Ogden; Jojo Georgiou and Helena herself. There will also be biscuits.

Double R Club

Thursday 21st April
8pm–11.45pm
Bethnal Green Working Men’s Club, Pollard Row, London, E2 6NB (020 7739 2727)
Admission: £10
A night of “Lynchian” (as in David) cabaret



Prince Albert and Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon wed in 1923

and burlesque packaged with music described as “twisted rock and roll, sinister jazz and wailing junk blues”—and recommended by our Chairman Torquil Arbuthnot. The availability of tables is released to a mailing list one week before the event. To join the mailing list simply email therrclub@gmail.com with “mailing list” in the subject line.

The Grand Garter Lounge Show

Monday 25th April
7.30–10.30pm

Leamington Assembly, Spencer Street, Leamington Spa
Admission: £20 (for sale online)

If burlesque is your thing and you find yourself in the Leamington Spa area this show offers ten acts plus compère Joe Black.

London Burlesque Week

Tuesday 26th–Saturday 30th April
Various London locations
And if burlesque is your thing but you don’t like to leave Town, then Chaz Royale’s annual tasselfest may be right up your street. For details of this multi-event, multi-venue extravaganza see the London Burlesque Week website.

The Candlelight Club Royal Wedding Special

Saturday 30th April
7.30pm
A secret central London location (venue will be revealed when you buy your ticket)
Admission: £15 in advance
Dress: 1920s dandies and swells, gangsters and molls, degenerate aristos and decadent aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know

See above. This event celebrates the marriage in 1923 of Prince Albert and Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, the future George VI and Queen Mum. Serving celebratory cocktails from the era. Expect bunting and cheesy souvenir mugs.
At time of writing tickets are still available.



Sean Rillo
Raczka and Mai Moller
captured at the Candlelight Club

© michael s marks
See more of Michael's atmospheric snaps of the
Candlelight Club at michaelm.zenfolio.com/candlelight

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.

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