



The New Yorker Club

News

LVII • July 2011

PLUS:

Hanna Reitsch
Daredevil lady test pilot
and record-breaking
aviatrix. Oh, and
unrepentent Nazi. Damn

Camel Tow
Stewart Waller takes his
jalopy on an expedition
to Outer Mongolia

A Wet Waterloo
Lord Compton-Bassett
reports on the annual
re-enactment of how we
thrashed the French

**'I am not a
number...'**
Ian White gets the
Freedom of the
City of London

High Times

Will Smith's birthday treat.
(No, that's not what
you think it is)



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 6th July in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm, when Isabel Von Appel will fascinate us on the subject of *Norton I, Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico*.

"Who?" You might well be asking yourself. "You are probably aware that San Francisco has a reputation for eccentricity," Isabel explains, "but you might not realize that the city is the home of America's first emperor. No one is really sure when Joshua Abraham Norton was born. A plaque on his coffin said he was 'about 65' when he died in 1880, and his obituary in the San Francisco *Chronicle* suggested he had been born in 1814. The first half of his life was fairly unremarkable, but when a bad business deal bankrupted him, he left the city for several years: there aren't any records of what he got up to, but he returned in 1858, 'a bit odd'. He issued the following proclamation to all the main newspapers in the city:

"At the peremptory request and desire of a large majority of the citizens of these United States, I, Joshua Norton, formerly of Algoa Bay, Cape of Good Hope, and now for the last 9 years and 10 months past of S. F., Cal., declare and proclaim myself Emperor of these U.S.; and in virtue of the authority thereby in me vested, do hereby order and direct the representatives of the different States of the Union to assemble in Musical Hall, of this city, on the 1st day of Feb. next, then and

there to make such alterations in the existing laws of the Union as may ameliorate the evils under which the country is laboring, and thereby cause confidence to exist, both at home and abroad, in our stability and integrity.
—NORTON I, Emperor of the United States.

"Thus began Emperor Norton I's 21 year reign over America. He added the 'Protector of Mexico' later on."

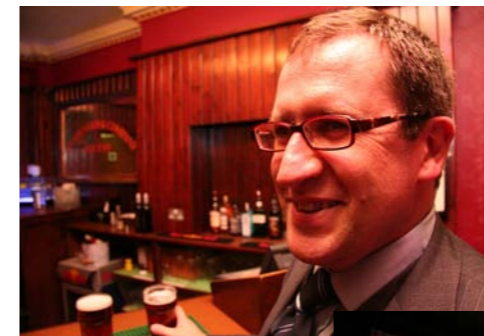
The Last Meeting

At our June meeting "Chuckles" Younghusband delivered a polished and fascinating talk on Hanna Reitsch, the pioneering aviatrix and fearless test pilot—surely a suitable subject for heroine-worship? The only problem was that she was also an unrepentant Nazi. Chuckles' talk was not only full of hair-raising anecdotes and fascinating facts, but also embodied the philosophical question of whether the negative aspects of Hanna's life and personality should cancel out the laudable ones. It was interesting to see who in the room was willing to raise a toast to Hanna at the end...

Reitsch was the first woman to fly a helicopter, a rocket plane and a jet fighter, and set over forty aviation altitude and endurance records, several of which stand to this day. She test-flew a manned version of the V-1 and landed a light aircraft in the middle of Berlin as the Red Army was overrunning it. Up to her death in 1970 she continued to wear the diamond-encrusted Iron Cross that Hitler had given her. (See page 4.)



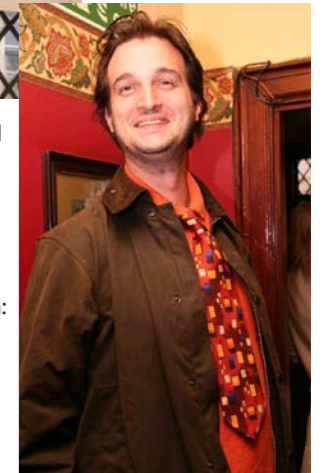
(Above) Mark Gideon talks about his charming companions' vintage night. Lovely ladies? Oh, look there's Torquil too...; (below) Manfred seems to like his Punishment Tie



(Above) Craig Young is happy as long as he has beer within arm's reach; (below) a goodly throng gathers: (bottom) Smoker's Alley, outside



(Above, left and top) Chuckles with images of Hanna Reitsch; (below) the suicide squadron's oath: rather cheekily, the youth in the picture is actually the future Pope



(Below) This is not a parlour trick: Scarheart has managed to drop a box of matches into his drink; (bottom right) the Curé and Baron Von Gregory are rapt



Hanna Reitsch

IT IS, PERHAPS, comforting to learn that during the very depths of the Last Great Unpleasantness, while the fields and cities of Europe were awash with the blood of millions as the Allied powers struggled to wrest the Continent from the grim tentacles of Fascism, one person at least was enjoying herself hugely.

That person was a diminutive German woman named Hanna Reitsch.

History is written by the victors, we understand, and it is unfortunate for Hanna's memory that she happened to be enjoying herself on the

losing side. As a result, she is perhaps less well-known than she deserves.

But such was the strength of her personality, such the level of her bravery, and such her remarkable skill that accounts of Hanna's feats have survived. It is with Hanna's life and deeds that this simple essay concerns itself.

Hanna was born to a professional, middle class family in Hirschberg, Silesia on 29th March 1912. Her Papa was an ophthalmologist and her Mama probably wasn't, as I expect Wikipedia would have mentioned it otherwise. It appears Hanna just mooched about for the first twenty or so years of her life, as she seems to have done nothing of any note in that period. Conserving her energy, perhaps. Her parents were keen for her to become a doctor, and Hanna, a bright young woman, potted somewhat half-heartedly off to



By "Chuckles" Younghusband

medical school, the better to pursue this aim.

Now then—it's about time I mentioned the reason why Hanna was to become so very famous and successful in Nazi Germany. It wasn't for her medical skills, for she very soon abandoned her studies. No, gentle reader, Hanna rose to prominence due to her remarkable proficiency as a pilot; or, to be a touch more specific, as a test-pilot, which is a demanding and risky job at the best of times, but which was positively bowel-meltingly dodgy

when testing the sort of aircraft which the Nazi boffins were to come up with in the 1940s.

There is, as far as I can tell, nothing to suggest that Hanna did much by way of flying until she was roughly twenty. At this stage, in 1932, she began flying gliders, which was pretty much all one could fly in Germany in those days, as the Allies had been

very strict in not allowing the Germans to form an air-force, for fear that they might go off on one again and starting attacking folk. But gliders were allowed, and many of the German fighter aces of the Second Great Unpleasantness cut their teeth on gliders—a very good grounding for all kinds of flying. Hanna's parents weren't too keen on the flying, but Hanna came up with the wheeze of pretending to them that she intended to become a flying doctor in Africa, in which case a pilot's licence would be vital.



The Stuka dive-bomber, tested by Reitsch

One year after beginning her training in gliders, Hanna threw her medical text books in the bin and devoted herself full time to flying.

It appears that Hanna fairly zipped through her training, and soon came to the attention of the authorities who by this time were paying no heed to the restrictions on their having an air force. They loved Hanna because she loved flying, and they loved her because she loved flying really dangerous things for the greater glory of the Fatherland, and possibly because she was young and fun and blonde. In 1938 she performed nightly demonstration flights of an early helicopter—the FW61—at the Berlin Motor Show. Indoors. Around the same time she acted as a test pilot for the infamous Stuka dive-bomber and the Do17 bomber.

But these early exploits were little more than warmer-uppers for the redoubtable Hanna, who went on to act as a test-pilot on the most secret, the most advanced, and the most dangerous of Germany's warplanes. She tested, amongst many others, the beautiful and very fast Me262 jet fighter—and the tremendously powerful and tricky Me163 Komet rocket plane, which had no wheels to land on and whose fuel has the nasty quality of dissolving the pilot should the fuel tank rupture. It was while landing one of

these blighters, following a technical fault which made the aircraft even more difficult than usual to control, that Hanna crashed, the impact driving her face into the instrument panel and breaking two of her vertebrae. She insisted on writing her report before collapsing, and spent several months recovering, during

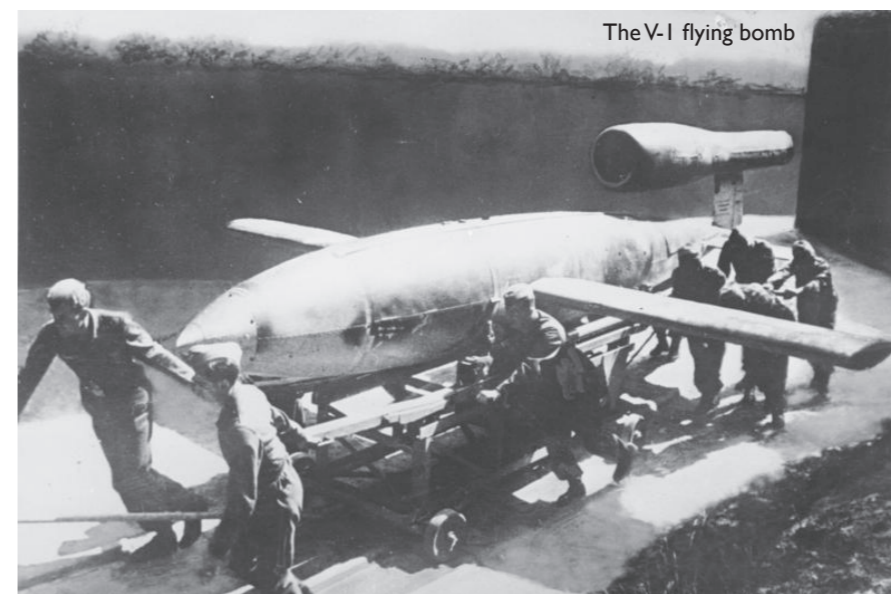
which time she was fitted with an artificial nose. This put her off flying not one jot, and she was, in her own words, "burning with zeal" to get back to her natural habitat—the cockpit of an experimental warplane. Not surprisingly, she was a darling of the Nazis and in particular of



Hitler, who personally presented her with the Iron Cross First Class after her recovery from the Komet crash. She was one of only two women to receive such an award.

Hanna appears to have been one of those people who really do have no fear. If she was

apprehensive, she showed no sign of it with her next move, which was to test-fly a machine—one can hardly call it an aeroplane—which wasn't designed to carry a pilot at all, and indeed was designed to fly only once. This was the Reichenberg, which was essentially a V1 "Doodlebug" flying bomb. The outlook for



The V-1 flying bomb



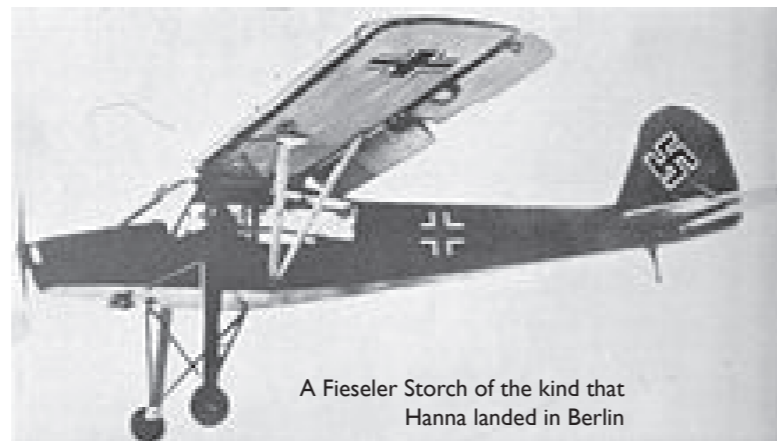
Germany had deteriorated markedly as the war progressed, and they were desperate for anything that could halt the Allied advance. The V1 was a powerful bomb, but horribly inaccurate. If only, it was thought, one could aim it more precisely, the better to attack Allied forces? Why, simple—add a cockpit, allowing the pilot to aim the thing at its target, set it on an accurate course, and then—erm—just hop out at the last minute, right in front of the air intake of the pulse jet engine.

Simple. Hopeless. Near-suicidal. Who could the Germans find to test such a machine?

Why, Hanna, of course. Hanna, who hopped happily into the cockpit of several of these craft, the better to test their handling characteristics. She never practised hopping out of the cockpit, however, but simply flying a machine which was not built to be handled in such way—and which was not intended to land at all (so that it could be used again and again to train its suicide pilots)—was remarkably dangerous. The Reichenberg project, however, was eventually quietly abandoned. Out of it, though, grew the notion of a German suicide unit, the Leonidas squadron, in which Hanna was instrumental. Hitler's initial lukewarm reception of the proposal, partly on the grounds that suicide missions were un-German, slowly changed as things became more desperate, and in the end seventy volunteers—Hanna being the first—were recruited. Very few suicide missions were flown, and those that were, in a jumbled assortment of aircraft, met with little success.

In April of 1945, as the Allies advanced on Berlin, Hanna was still beavering furiously and loyally away in the service of the Reich. By now all her derring-do, skill, relentless cheerfulness

and blonde hair had snagged her a gentleman friend, in the formidable form of high-ranking Luftwaffe officer Colonel-General Robert Ritter von Greim. Hitler, deep in his bunker and by now utterly snooker-loopy, had asked Von Greim to pop in for a chat—which meant flying in very low in a flimsy Fieseler Storch over a city swarming with Russians. Hanna came along for the ride and took the controls when von Greim was shot in the leg, landing the tiny plane on a rough airstrip near the Brandenburg Gate on 26th April. Down in the bunker, Hitler promoted von Greim to Field Marshall and appointed him head of the Luftwaffe in place of the disgraced Göring. He also gave von Greim and Hanna vials of potassium cyanide, which both happily accepted. On 28th April, at Hitler's command, Hanna and von Greim flew out again amidst a storm of gunfire from the Russians, who were convinced that the plane carried a fleeing Führer. Hitler shot himself two days later, and Hanna and von Greim were captured by the Americans shortly afterwards. During interviews with American intelligence



officers, Hanna and von Greim repeatedly used the same phrase: "It was the blackest day when we could not die at our Führer's side." Reitsch added, "We should all kneel down in reverence and prayer before the altar of the Fatherland." When asked just what she meant by this, she appeared astonished: "Why, the Führer's bunker in Berlin," she replied. Her lover von Greim used his poison capsule a few weeks later, fearing his being handed over to the Russians. It wasn't a good summer for Hanna: Germany was defeated and in ruins, her beloved Führer and her partner had committed suicide, and her father shot her mother, her sister, and her sister's children before killing himself. And no-one

would let her fly dangerous aeroplanes any more.

She was released after eighteen months and proceeded, utterly undaunted, to live a rich and enjoyable life, full of flying—only chiefly gliders again, as once more powered flight was greatly restricted in Germany. At the behest of Nehru she set up a gliding centre in India, and later she established the first all-black school of gliding in Ghana, where she lived for several years. In 1961 she was a guest of JFK at the White House, and she continued to break women's gliding records left, right and centre, all over the world, right up to the year of her death.

During an interview conducted in the 1970s, Hanna, who spoke very good English, said: "And what have we now in Germany? A land of bankers and car-makers. Even our great army has gone soft. Soldiers wear beards and question orders. I am not ashamed to say I believed in National Socialism. I still wear the Iron Cross with diamonds Hitler gave me. But today in all Germany you can't find a single person who voted Adolf Hitler into power. Many Germans feel guilty about the war. But they don't explain the real guilt we share—that we lost."

Do you detect a hint of back-peddalling there? No, neither do I. There is no avoiding the fact that Hanna Reitsch, apart from being an exceptionally brave and skilful pilot, was a Nazi to her core to the very end of her life. But, as Shakespeare had it, "Use every man after his



desert, and who should 'scape whipping?'" Let us, I suggest, blink an eye at the backdrop to Hanna's life, and remember instead a remarkably courageous, skilful and pioneering woman—always full of zest and energy, with a keen eye for the future and a love of adventure.

Hanna Reitsch never married, and died of a heart attack on 24 August 1979, aged 67. She is buried in Salzburg.





“I Am Not a Number. I Am a Free Man.”

By Ian White

ON THE 6TH APRIL 2011 I became a Freeman of the City of London. I was nominated by an existing Freeman, a Director of the company for which I work. It was a proud day for my parents who attended along with my partner and daughter and my Nominator.

The granting of the Freedom of the City of London is one of the oldest surviving traditional ceremonies—it is believed that the first Freedom was presented in 1237. The medieval term “Freeman” meant someone who was not the property of a feudal lord, but enjoyed privileges such as the right to earn money and own land. Town dwellers who were protected by the charter of their town or city were often free—hence the term “Freedom of the City”. The Freedom is closely associated with Membership of the City Livery Companies, successors to the ancient guilds.

Until 1835 the Freedom of the City, together with membership of one of the guilds, was essential to anyone who wished to exercise a trade in the City. A number of ancient privileges are associated with the Freedom, although they are more a product of collective memory than of documented evidence, and are no longer granted to modern Freemen. They include the right to herd sheep over London Bridge, to go about the City with a drawn sword and, if convicted of a capital offence, to be hanged with a silken rope. Other advantages are said to have included the right to avoid press-ganging, to be married in St Paul’s Cathedral and buried in the City, and to be drunk and disorderly without fear of arrest—apparently the Freeman should instead be bundled into a taxi home. The latter no doubt appeals to some of our readers!

Today there are not many criteria for qualification: you can apply if you have served a full apprenticeship to a Freeman, if you are a member of a Livery Company, if you are the child of an existing Freeman or just if you have been on the City of London electoral roll for more than a year. Alternatively people of any nationality can be Nominated by two sponsors who must be Common Councilmen of the City of London, Aldermen or members of a Livery Company. Honorary freedom is sometimes bestowed upon someone who has made significant contribution to society. The

application is presented to the Court of Common Council (the City of London’s governing body) for approval. I am not sure how many (if any) get turned down!

It is not just reserved for men as there is a long-standing tradition of admitting women, who used to be called ‘free sisters’. These days most of the ancient



In the past Freemen were given wooden caskets such as the one shown right, in which to keep their Freedom Certificate, as it was a document they were expected to carry around with them, like a driving licence today. Mind you, a modern Freeman does get to buy these cufflinks, and there is also a tie, tie pin and some brooches for Free Sisters



Mr White, on the far right, receives his Freedom Certificate. Note the NSC tie

reasons for becoming a Freeman of the City have gone, but it nevertheless remains as a unique part of London’s history. The City of London maintains the Freedom as a tradition and these days the City Freemen are a broad cross-section of the population.

The ceremony is a straightforward affair lasting about 15 minutes taking place in the Chamberlain’s Court at The Guildhall. As a prospective Freeman I was invited to read the ‘Declaration of a Freeman’, that is swearing an oath that I should be “good and true to our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth the Second; and that I will be obedient to the Mayor of this City”.

I also signed the Freeman’s Declaration Book and I was given a parchment document to show that I have Freedom of the City, together with a copy of a book called Some Rules for the Conduct of Life, which is attributed to Sir John Barnard, Lord Mayor 1737–8. This book guides apprentices and workers in their behaviour in their working life, with biblical quotations encouraging the reader to prayer, obedience, honesty, industry and other Christian virtues, and warning against dangers of temptation of

all kinds! The rules in this day still hold true in various ways although the manner in which some are written gives rise to some amusement.

For information on the Freedom and how to apply, see the City of London website.

The Declaration of a Freeman

“I do solemnly swear that I will be good and true to our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth the Second; that I will be obedient to the Mayor of this City; that I will maintain the Franchises and Customs thereof, and will keep this City harmless, in that which in me is; that I will also keep the Queen’s Peace in my own person; that I will know no Gatherings nor Conspiracies made against the Queen’s Peace, but I will warn the Mayor thereof, or hinder it to my power; and that all these points and articles I will well and truly keep, according to the Laws and Customs of this City, to my power.”



Mission to Mongolia



AN NSC MEMBER BRAVES
11,000 MILES OF STEPPE IN A KIA RIO

By Stewart Waller

ON JULY 23RD 2011 John Sussum and I, along with three other fellows, will be embarking on the 2011 Mongol Rally to raise money for Help For Heroes, Christine Noble Children's Fund, Iain Rennie Hospice, Macmillan Cancer and The Prostate Cancer Charity.

We will be driving two unsuitable small Korean cars from Goodwood all the way to Ulan Bataar in Mongolia, a journey of 11,000 miles across deserts, mountains and vast steppes along the silk routes of antiquity.

Our route takes us through Europe into



Turkey along the Black Sea coast to Trabzon—the last outpost of Byzantium. From Erzurum we head east to Iran (where all gin supplies will have to have been consumed if we wish to avoid a lengthy stay) and we are hoping to visit Alamut—the citadel of the infamous assassins of Hassan-I-Sabbah—before we cross the Alburz (on an as yet unfinished road) to the Caspian Sea and Turkmenistan, home to notorious slavers and raiders of trade caravans.

Travelling along this route, it should take us two weeks to reach Ashgabat. Then it's Uzbekistan, to visit Bukhara, the final resting place of Colonel Charles Stoddart and Captain Arthur Conolly, executed by Emir Nasrullah in 1842 following the news of the British catastrophe in Kabul. Should we make it through unscathed, we then drive to Sarmarqand, the pearl of the east, famous for its stunning mosques, and then to Tashkent. But if the locals are still killing each other we may not drive through the Ferghana Valley and Kyrgyzstan. From Bishkek and Almaty in Kazakhstan we drive through Semey, one of the most irradiated places on earth and home to the Soviets' Cold War nuclear weapons tests. Let's hope we're not suffering too much from

radiation sickness before we hop over the border into Russia to avoid the worst of the Altai mountains before our final border crossing into Mongolia.

Our trusty and somewhat battered granny-mobiles will now be on the final off-road leg of the voyage through the largely unspoiled wilderness of Mongolia and upon reaching the finish line we donate both cars and all our equipment to The Christine Noble Children's Fund, who auction it all off to the locals to raise precious funds. Our journey home involves flying back to Europe in a "vintage" ex-Soviet death trap, so we may find that driving through Central Asia was not the most dangerous part of our voyage.

With good luck and the wind behind us it should take eight weeks to complete the journey, but once we leave the relative safety of Iran we shall be driving upon not only the worst roads on the planet but through some of the most inhospitable terrain known to Englishmen. We have each just 10 kilograms of luggage allowance so I have decided to leave all my double cuff shirts at home, thus negating the need to take a weighty selection of cufflinks and therefore doubling my tobacco weight limit.



(Above) the Ark fortress in Bukhara; (left) typical Mongolian yurts; (below) just some of the hazards that Messrs Waller and Sussum will almost certainly encounter on their expeditions



Messrs Waller and Sussum in their natural environment—last year's Chap Olympics

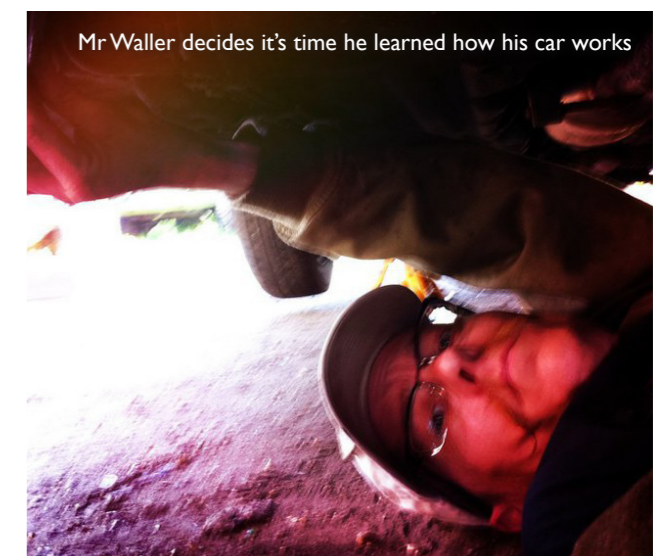
We will need to think carefully about our clothing and equipment as we shall be facing temperatures during the day that will melt the binding glue in our guide books and at night negate the requirement for ice in one's gin. I have invested in a linen safari outfit, a multitude of suitable hats and a box of linen shirts, and will pack a fairisle slipover for the chill of high altitudes. John will discover just how long a linen suit will last unwashed before the dry cleaning bill far exceeds the value of the suit itself. Exactly how many packets of baby wipes would be sufficient to maintain the personal hygiene of five Englishmen for eight weeks? Which brand of moustache wax holds out best at 50 degrees Celsius? How long will I last without gin in an Islamic state before I start on the petrol? Which calibre of pistol is best against Turkomen slave raiders? From which country do I purchase a wife—and do I choose beauty over brute strength? With luck, all these questions and a lot more will be answered along the way and should we return to Blighty it will make an interesting talk for the club.

None of us has any previous mechanical knowledge other than what we have had to learn to make our vehicles ready, so if the cars misbehave it should prove interesting repairing them in 50-degree heat while lying in a nest

of scorpions. We are having to live out of the vehicles for eight weeks, camping in tents and hammocks; long weeks of hardship, suffering and dysentery are something I'm beginning to wish I had not signed up for, but I shall try to keep a stiff upper lip and remind myself that we do this to benefit worthy charities.

Please support us and follow our progress via the Facebook group Camel Tow & Camel Two, The Mongol Rally 2011 or via the Adventurists website where you can find the Just Giving links to donate to our charities.

I look forward to telling you all stories of high adventure from Central Asia upon our return.



WATERLOO SUNSET

Lord Finsbury Windermere Compton-Bassett on the annual re-enactment

REGULAR READERS MAY remember that in June last year I went over to Belgium for a long weekend re-enacting the Battle of Waterloo, camping and “fighting” on the actual battlefield. Well, after the splendid experience I had last year there was no question that I would be there again this year—so

from 16th–20th June I spent another memorable weekend running around a big, muddy field in the middle of a very rural part of Belgium.

There were a few differences from last year however, and a good few new experiences too. Last year my role was that of an Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to the



Compton-Bassett, second from left in the front rank. Gone is the cushy officer job of last year...

general of C Division, running messages around the battlefield and trying not to be ridden down by French cavalry; this year I served in the ranks of the unit that adopted me, the 92nd (Gordon) Highlanders as a “Gentleman Volunteer”—more of which later. So instead of being a Richard Sharpe lookalike waving a sword around heroically, this year saw me in a red tunic, kilt and ostrich-feather bonnet, hauling around a .75 Brown Bess musket!

This year I was also lucky enough to have a companion, in the form of my girlfriend Aleksandra, a member of the NSC and, like me, supremely keen on all things Regency and Napoleonic. I mentioned some new experiences—one was the two of us being at the top of the Lion Mound when an extremely heavy hailstorm broke out. We got rather soaked; but Belgian weather being what it is, about twenty minutes later the sun came out and we dried off in no time.

We all camped under canvas in the grounds of the Chateau de Hougomont—so atmospheric at night, but ever so slightly chilly too: even in June Belgium can be damned cold!

One afternoon we also held a memorial service to those who fought at Waterloo, 196 years ago to the day. It was held inside the walls of Hougomont Chateau, something (for whatever reason) we weren’t allowed to do last year, so that was quite an experience in itself. It is all very much hallowed ground.

As with last year, we fought two battles over the course of the weekend; one on Saturday afternoon and one on Sunday morning. Now I was in the line, and not one of the officers, there was a significant amount of hanging-around waiting for something to happen—particularly



C-B shares a bowl of gruel with Aleksandra Ugelstad Elnæs

for Saturday’s battle, it seemed as though everyone except the Grenadier Company of the 92nd Highlanders was being used and running around having lots of fun whilst we waited. And waited. And waited...

But we eventually got into action, and the Allied army did an extremely good job of thrashing the French like only we know how—the sensation of being in the line when the order to “Make Ready...Present!” and fire a volley, or when seeing

French cavalry charging towards one and being ordered to “Form Square!” is a real “hairs-on-the-back-of-your-neck” moment!

The Sunday battle at the village of Plancenoit was much more fun, and happened in two parts; the first in a field outside the village, and the second in the village itself. We were charged by cavalry (“Form Square!” being echoed along the line many times: the French charging over and over again seemingly to annoy us) and infantry, and fired lots of volleys of musketry at each other.

Sadly, it was during this battle that a French cavalryman came off his horse, and the horse itself apparently died of a heart-attack soon after the incident. This reminds one that in this hobby, one still has to be careful: people and animals can and do get hurt from time to time. Furthermore, during the battle in the village the French unit directly opposite us were very close—and when very close you are supposed to fire high so as not to endanger the people opposite. This the French did not do—and

C-B wound up as a corpse (not sure if this is him, though)



after one volley I felt several pieces of very hot black powder hit me very hard in the face. Not good, and certainly not safe. But such is re-enacting, and it’s another memory to bring away with me!

As to my status as a “Gentleman Volunteer”, this was a rank of the period



(Right)
"Gentleman
Volunteer"
Compton-
Bassett's
moment of
glory...



Most of these photos are courtesy of **Phil Thomason**—for more of his work see his website. The rest are by Aleksandra. My thanks to them both





(Above) Aleksandra; (bottom left) the Duke of Wellington plans his strategy

given to young men considered suitable to be officers, but who lacked the funds to purchase their commission, or lacked the patronage to gain promotion through friends and family. They would serve in the ranks; drilling with the men and doing the things they would be ordered to do—but as, effectively, “potential officers” they would socialise and generally keep company with the other officers of the regiment.

However, the workings of the British Army in the re-enactment world are slightly different! It was suggested I serve in the ranks in order to learn how it all works from the basic level: how to Left Face, Right Wheel, Left Shoulders Forward Counter March, Change Arms; the correct posture for Stand At Ease; doing a Right About Face without taking my left foot off the ground, and so forth. Even the generals today all started off as ordinary soldiers—it’s fair on everyone, and is the way it should be.

However I was rather delighted when, on the final evening, one Lieutenant-Colonel, two Generals, and one Field-Marshal (His Grace the Duke of Wellington no less!) decided formally to award me a commission as an Ensign (today’s Second-Lieutenant—the most junior officer rank in the British Army) and a position on the Staff of my beloved C Division. And yes, though it’s all acting to a certain extent, there are real responsibilities and things you must be able to do to be appointed to a particular role—a great amount of behind-the-scenes organisation goes in to making things happen for a weekend of re-enacting. So it was rather a big deal for me to be promoted, and something of which I am extremely proud.

Monday morning came along, and as always I was extremely sad to have to pack up, help



(Above) A French Imperial Eagle is captured, rare in real life and rarer in re-enacting. “At re-enactments this is only done with the agreements of both sides,” says Phil Thomason, who took the picture, “due to the sensitive nature of the artefact in question and the risks involved with cavalry and infantry at close quarters.” (Below left) The memorial service at Hougoumont Château; (below) C-B, second from the far right

take down tents, make everything clean and tidy (as much as one can do in a muddy field in Belgium!) and leave. But I was most certainly glad for that nice hot shower and comfy, warm bed on Monday night! So, until next year..!



The Cocktail Cabinet

Wherein Members distil knowledge of the Way of Grape and Grain

Drink Like James Bond

by David Bridgman-Smith

I've recently started writing on the subject of James Bond drinks for the website The James Bond Dossier. With the release of the new James Bond novel, *Carte Blanche* by Jeffery Deaver, I thought I'd share some of his wisdom so that you, too, can drink like 007.

James Bond Gin & Tonic

From the book *Dr No*

Recipe

Take a large glass. Cut a lime in half, squeeze the juice of both halves into the glass and then add the spent lime shells. Pour in a double measure of gin. Add lots of ice and top with tonic water.

This drink is incredibly refreshing and it's not hard to imagine why James Bond chooses it to cool down. You might think that the high proportion of lime juice (equivalent to half the amount of gin) would overpower the drink, but I was pleasantly surprised by how well-balanced the drink is. Ian Fleming certainly knew his stuff.

Make sure you use a glass big enough to fit all of the ingredients in; plenty of ice is essential.

Vodka Martini

From the book and the film *Dr No*, et al.

I covered The Vesper in last August's Cocktail Cabinet, but it is the Vodka Martini that is more prevalent in the movies. Bond first drinks one of these, "shaken not stirred", in the book *Dr No* and does so in the 1962 film version. That phrase is now probably the most famous drinks-related instruction in the world, much to the chagrin of uppity bartenders and drinks snobs who maintain that a Martini should always be stirred. After extensive testing, I personally like my gin Martinis stirred and vodka ones shaken—I like the latter to be ice-cold and shaking achieves this.

I think this drink became so popular partly because it was pushed by vodka sponsors such as Smirnoff, and partly because it made drinkers feel "in the know" and made them their own James Bond. With luck they enjoyed the drink too.

Bond likes his Martini medium-dry and, while there is no official scale, I'd estimate this as a ratio of between 4:1 and 6:1.

Recipe

50ml Vodka
10ml Dry Vermouth
(I like Noilly Prat or Dolin, both available in Waitrose)

Add ingredients to a cocktail shaker, add plenty of ice and shake thoroughly until there is a frost on the outside of the shaker. Strain and pour into a cocktail glass (preferably pre-chilled) and garnish with a thin piece of lemon peel.

My favourite vodka brand for Martinis is Stolichnaya and, in particular, Stolichnaya



Gold; it's the perfect balance of flavour and smoothness and is less than £20. I think some other good vodka brands (for Martinis) include Russian Standard, Grey Goose & Green Mark.

Carte Blanche

From the book of the same name

This is the new book's answer to the Vesper. It is a twist on an Old Fashioned, with the sweetness coming from the orange liqueur rather than a sugar cube.

Recipe

Pour a double measure (50ml) of Crown Royal Canadian whiskey into a tumbler with ice then add half a measure (15ml) of triple sec, two dashes of Angostura Bitters and a slice of orange peel. No mixing is specified.

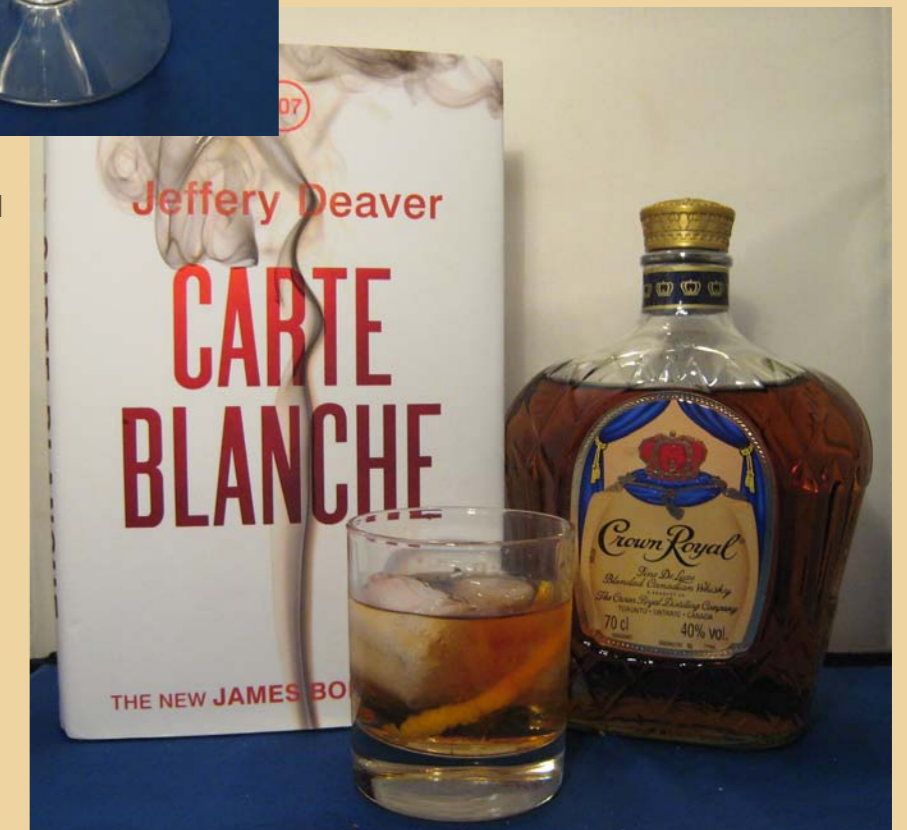
Having tried the drink unmixed, it doesn't really work: the Bitters just hang there and the Triple Sec creates a bit of a slick. My solution was to just swirl the drink round in the glass a couple of times with the end of a teaspoon or swizzle stick; it didn't need a lot, but it was an improvement.

The drink is smooth with some background warmth. I like the combination of the sweet orange from the Triple Sec and the bitter oils from the orange peel. The Angostura Bitters acts as a catalyst for the flavours.

As you drink the cocktail and the ice melts, the *Carte Blanche* changes and gradually mellows out.

Although this is quite a good drink, for my money, I'd rather have a Traditonal Old Fashioned or Sazerac—it's no Vesper.

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





CLUB NOTES

Rash of Birthdays

JUNE ALWAYS SEEMS a popular month for being born, and this time there were plenty of celebrations within the Club. Both Will Smith (see the front cover—no, apparently that’s just an ordinary cigarette stuck into the cake) and Fleur de Guerre marked turning 30, while our Glorious Chairman himself turned *coughmumble* and shared a party with Fleur and Bethan Gwenllian Garland.

Lord Rupert Extends Media Empire

LAST SATURDAY’S *GUARDIAN WEEKEND* newspaper supplement featured a profile of our own Lord Rupert, revealing how, after a hard day’s work as a pipe fitter, he comes home, peels off the loathsome jeans and T-shirt he is obliged to wear, and relaxes into a stiff collar and tie. He eloquently sums up the New Sheridan Club “for nostalgic dandies. We’re retro revivalists, a preservation society, keeping alive traditions that would otherwise be forgotten”. He ably



(Above) Lord Rupert kicks back after a hard day fitting pipes

illustrates the point that NSC Members are a broad-minded, creative and curious lot: “I’m a heavy metal enthusiast, and can often be found at gigs. Obviously, the uniform there is black leather and metal spikes, so people spot me dressed all in tweed, come up and say, ‘That’s really impressive, but do you know you’re in a rock club?’” You can read the whole article here.

New Member

AS THE RAIN-SOAKED festival turf of a wilfully disposable material culture merges oozyly with the overflowing Portaloo effluent of a “Me Generation” expecting rights without responsibilities, we calmly offer the Wellingtons of NSC Membership to Mr Per Norström who signed up on 18th June.



(left or right) Fleur de Guerre, Torquil Arbutnot and Bethan Gwenllian Garland



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

Jitterbugs Summer Party

Wednesday 6th July
7–10pm
Stern Hall, 33 Seymour Place, W1H 5AU
Admission: £10 (£7 concs)
Dress: Retro/seaside
Jitterbugs swing dance club holds its annual Summer Party. Lesson from 7–8pm, followed by live music from King Candy and the Sugar Push from 8.30pm, plus hula competition and cabaret.

Cakewalk Café

Wednesdays 6th, 13th, 20th and 27 July
7pm–1am
Passing Clouds, 1 Richmond Rd (Behind the Haggerston), Dalston, London E8 4AA
Admission: Free
Night of live jazz led by Ewan Bleach and Nicholas D. Ball, featuring an open mic session from 7pm, live band from 8.30 and a late jam session from 11pm. If you would like to join in email ewanbleach@gmail.com.

Present Laughter

Tuesday 5th–Saturday 9th July
8pm



South London Theatre, The Old Fire Station, 2A Norwood High Street, London SE27 9NS
Admission: £5
NSC Member
David Hollander is involved in this production of Noel Coward’s play about Garry Essendine, a rather attractive

yet self-absorbed actor about to embark on a tour of Africa, perhaps to stave off a mid-life crisis. As he tries to tidy up his affairs in preparation for the trip, he has to throw out a wide-eyed fan, deal with his long suffering secretary, placate his ex-wife and escape the attentions of an aspiring playwright. A fast-paced whirl of intrigue, love affairs



Joan Crawford smoulders in *Glamour of the Gods* at the National Portrait Gallery

and thwarted ambition, Present Laughter is Coward at his most autobiographical—and irrepressibly funny. Tickets may be reserved over the phone (020 8670 3474) in David's name. If you fancy making a block booking or need any other information contact David at dave.hollander@gmail.com.

Glamour of the Gods: Hollywood Portraits

7th July–23rd October
10am–6pm (Thursdays and Fridays till 9pm)
The National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, London WC2H 0HE (020 7306 0055)
Admission: £6 (£5.50 concs)

A celebration of Hollywood portraiture from the industry's "Golden Age", 1920–1960. From Greta Garbo and Clark Gable to Audrey Hepburn, James Dean and Marilyn Monroe, there are more than 70 photographs, most vintage prints displayed for the first time, drawn from the extraordinary archive of the John Kobal Foundation. The exhibition demonstrates photography's decisive role in creating and marketing the stars central to the Hollywood mystique.

The Candlelight Club's Mad Hatter's Tea Party

Saturday 9th July
7.30pm–12am
A secret central London location
Admission: £15 in advance
Dress: 1920s dandies and swells, gangsters and molls, degenerate aristos and decadent aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart



Join the Candlelight Club for a gin-fuelled Mad Hatter's Tea Party...

Set In the Know
The Candlelight Club is 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 the NSC's Will Sprunt, plus vintage DJing from the NSC's MC Fruity and live 1920s jazz music. The location of each event is only revealed to ticket-holders two days before the event.

Live music this time comes in the form of the quirky tones of the Original Rabbit's Foot Spasm Band, playing original swing jazz, currently touring their new album and fresh from Glastonbury. In honour of the surreality of their name alone, we have declared this event to be a Mad Hatter's Tea Party, with cocktails inspired by the works of Lewis Carroll.

The Martini Relay event from last year's Chap Olympiad



The Soho Festival

Sunday 10th July
12–6pm
St Anne's Garden, Wardour St, London W1
Admission: £5

To raise money to stop Soho being bought up by soulless corporations, the Soho Society runs this annual fayre. They are keen for Chappist types to saunter along—there may be a mini Chap Olympics, and certainly some dancing and boozing. Have a gander at the Society's website where I'm sure, in due course, details will be revealed.

The Chap Olympiad

Saturday 16th July
From 12pm
Bedford Square Gardens, Bloomsbury, London WC1
Admission: £15 in advance

The annual festival of foppish tomfoolery, where games include the Martini Relay, Cucumber Sandwich Discus and Umbrella Jousting, where trying is frowned upon and cheating is encouraged. Organised by *The Chap* magazine, this is a highlight of the Chappist calendar. See www.thechapolympiad.com for further details as they emerge.

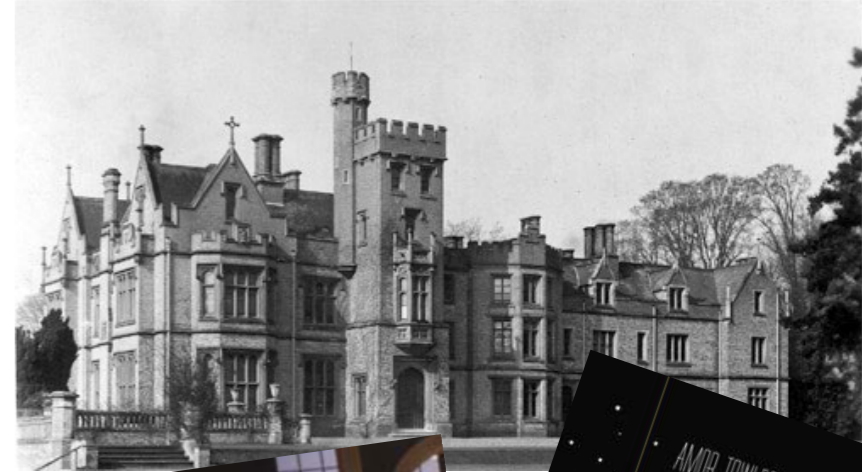
The Second Liverpoolian Tweed Run

Sunday 17th July
11am–2pm
Liverpool city area
Admission: Free, but you'll need a bicycle, I'll warrant

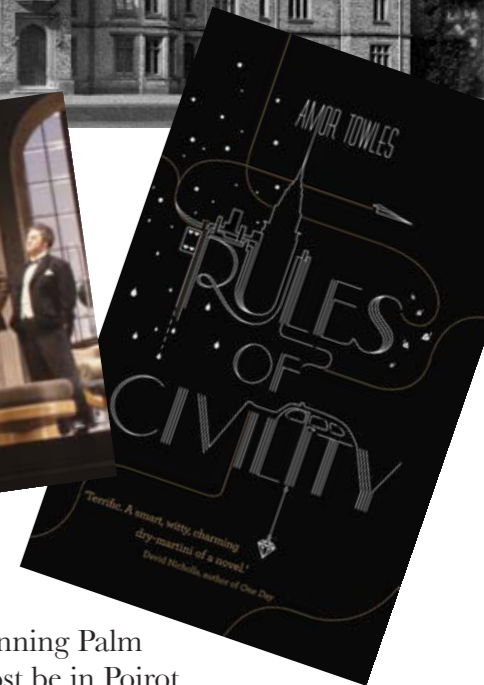
Pull on your tweed plus-fours, grab your grandfather's trusty bicycle and join this group pedal around the Liverpool area, starting at the Pier Head and taking in the riverfront, Otterspool, Sefton and Princes Parks and winding up back where you started. More details at this webular page.

Cakewalk Revival

Sunday 17th July
From 6pm
The Palm Court, Alexandra Palace, Wood Green, London N22 7AY
Admission: £5
Dance to live swing-era jazz music inside



...or for a gin-fuelled Country House Weekend



Alexandra Palace's stunning Palm Court. You could almost be in Poirot. Enter via the Phoenix Bar.

The Candlelight Club's Country House Weekend

Friday 29th and Saturday 30th July
7.30pm–12am
A secret central London location
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

The Candlelight Club is a clandestine pop-up cocktail bar with a 1920s speakeasy flavour, lit entirely by candles (see above).

As an experiment, this time the party is arranged over two nights, and is themed around the country house weekend. Live music will come from the Shirt Tail Stompers on Friday night and the Dixie Ticklers on Saturday, with extra surprise entertainment on top. There are separate tickets for the two nights, though of course you are welcome to come to both. And for a little bedtime reading for the weekend we have ten copies per night to give away of *The Rules of Civility*, a new novel by Amor Towles set in the Jazz Age, published that very week by Sceptre.

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.facebook.com or even www.myspace.com/newsheridanclub.

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