

The New Sheridan Club

Newsletter

LXVII • May 2012

PLUS:

Wheels of steel

The Earl of Waveney's paean to London's trams and trolleys

Just deserts

Film Night sees Bogey win the day in the parched Sahara

The Club Tie: a new generation

The Mark 2 is unveiled

The Club takes a punt on the weather—and is lucky once again

Messing' about in boats



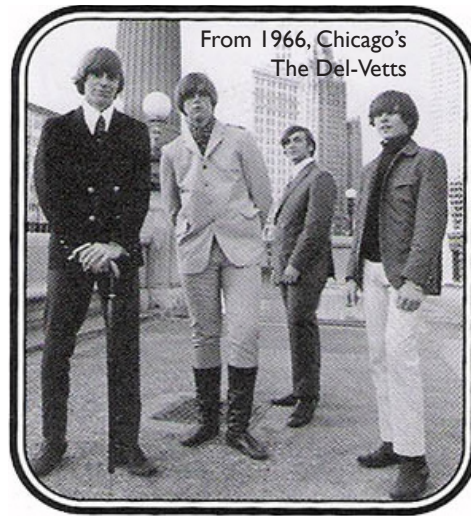


The New Sheridan Club traditionally meets in the upstairs room of The Wheatsheaf, just off Oxford Street. The Wheatsheaf is one of Fitzrovia's historic pubs, a one-time haunt of Dylan Thomas, George Orwell, Augustus John and Julian Maclaren-Ross. In fact Thomas met his wife Caitlin in The Wheatsheaf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

The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 2nd May in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm. Mr Sean Longden will get our mojos working with *Popular Music Artists (1950 to the Present Day): Lessons for the Modern English Gentleman*.

The lecture will be a study of those individuals in popular music who have ignored the fashions of "youth culture", instead dressing and behaving in a manner that might have gained them entrance to the New Sheridan Club. Expect it to be a combination of the mainstream and the obscure (such as the 1960s US garage band The Scarlet Henchmen who wore cravats, smoked pipes and sang a curious ditty about Crystal Palace). Expect also a 1980s video that includes London buses, red telephone boxes, chess, college scarves, umbrellas, fencing and a tricorn hat.



The Last Meeting

At our April meeting the speaker was the Earl of Waveney, addressing us on a topic close to his heart—vintage public transport. This year in

fact marks both the 60th anniversary of the last tram to run in London and the 50th anniversary of the last trolleybus, so these were Waveney's subject. London's trams ran on rails along the city's streets, getting their power from overhead electric wires (and discharging into an electrified rail sunk into a conduit). Trolleybuses were free of rails, much like diesel buses, and took power from a pair of overhead wires. At the time electricity

was cheaper than diesel and the electric vehicles were also quieter in use and produced no fumes. But the infrastructure had to be installed—it's hard to picture but back then all the routes would have had a spider's web of overhead cables slung from poles. When the Blitz came it also became clear that trams were not very adaptable: damage the rails and they can't run at all. But Britain led the world in this

sort of public transport and when the end came huge crowds turned out to wave goodbye. Many ex-London vehicles ended up serving in places like Spain and South Africa. Later this year there will be a unique gathering of all the extant London trams and trolleybuses in the country—see the events page. An essay version of this talk begins on page 4.



(Right) the Smiths share a joke with the Curé; (left) checks or stripes? Paul Fletcher and Richard Evans go head to head



(Above) The guest on the right seemed to be a public transport enthusiast who put some sharp questions to Waveney, and is here seen greeting Eugenie and the Curé; (above right) does anyone else thing this looks like an album cover? (right) Waveney makes his point; (below right) a slide showing an early trolley bus;



(left) Oliver was keen for his outfit to be immortalised and distributed photographically across the Empire; (below left) smokers lurk outside; Luke Wenban stokes his briar; this young lady will henceforth be nicknamed "Two Drinks" if I have anything to do with it



Many young people today probably don't know what a tram or trolleybus is, yet there was a time when London led the world in these electrical forms of public transport — clean, quiet, powerful, yet demanding of a rigid, centralised infrastructure that rapidly slipped out of fashion.

The Earl of Waveney takes us through the reasons for...

THE LAST DAYS OF LONDON'S TRAMS



Westminster Bridge in LCC days

FROM THE DEPTHS of Victorian gloom, dirt and smoke emerged a wonder of the age that transformed municipalities throughout the length and breadth of the land—electricity. This new form of lighting and power became dominant in local transport matters from the end of the 19th century through to the 1960s, be it in the form of trams or trolleybuses. As ever, London, with its vast

population spread over many square miles, became the leading light for the provincial municipalities to follow.

Before the formation in 1933 of the London Passenger Transport Board (LPTB), better known as London Transport, competing companies tried a range of experiments. On the tram front, both the Underground Group and the London County Council Tramways

(LCCT) were seeking to modernise their trams, which had not progressed that much since the Edwardian-era. A number of tramcars still had open tops, seating on the whole was wooden slatted seats and the interiors were gloomy due to the dark wood in use. The newly emerging motor-bus was proving a real threat—while it still had a long way to go in technological development and reliability, its interiors were generally more appealing and seats were cushioned, although this was to compensate for the rough riding at the time.

which would suit the needs of Londoners, and the result was the new tram that was launched into service on 1st February 1931 on the Cricklewood to Finchley route. The cars were of the rear-entrance/front-exit pattern; they rode on maximum-traction bogies and had high cabs, which some thought looked less pleasing than the ones on the earlier car. The cars were constructed by Union Construction & Finance Co. (UCC) at Feltham—the name that would quickly be adopted for them. In total, a hundred “Felthams” were built, and their construction

Charles Spencer, Tramways Manager of the Underground Group, went about modernising his trams in the new post-WWI world. In the autumn of 1919 he was part of a deputation that visited cities on the East Coast of the USA to study their transport systems, and returned with his head full of ideas. He was taken with the American approaches to passenger flow through the cars by the use of separate entrance and exit doors. Combining these with powerful motors and air or hydraulic brakes made for modern, efficient and flexible public transport.

A rare insight into Spencer's thoughts regarding the “Modernising of Tramcars” is given under this title in an article he contributed to *The Electric Railway and Tramway Journal* of 17th July 1925: “Under the deluge of criticism levelled against tramcars, the public have almost lost sight of the fact that the modern tramcar ... is a very different vehicle from its pre-war brother. This is not surprising, because there has been generally no noticeable alteration made as regards external appearance, and although the equipment has been vastly improved, the only visible difference internally has been the use of white paint.”

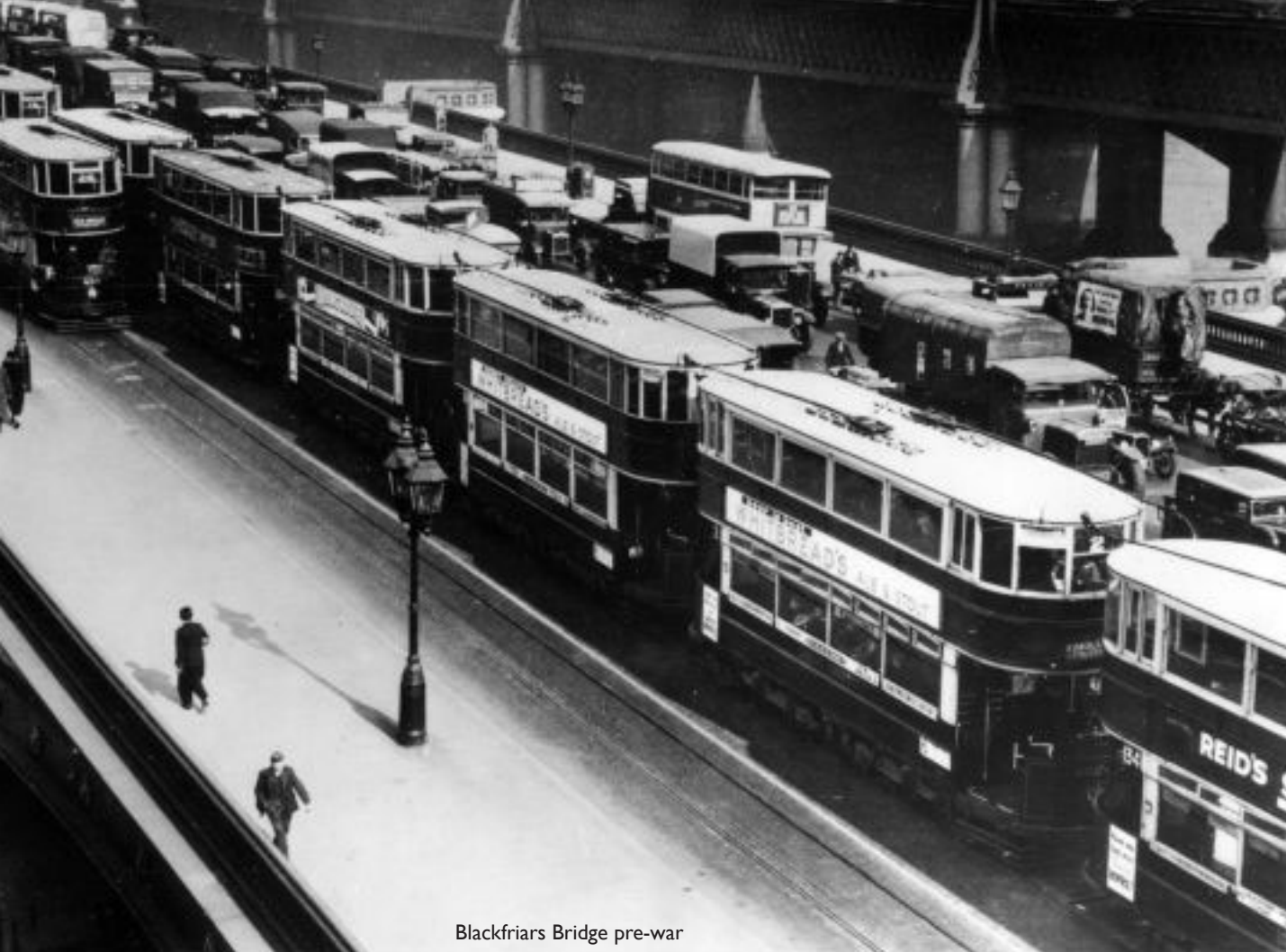
During the 1920s Spencer undertook many experiments to design a modern tramcar

was soon justified.

Meanwhile, Joshua Bruce of the LCCT was watching Spencer's experiments and was equally aware of the need to modernise. Unlike Spencer, Bruce formed a plan to update his existing tramcar fleet rather than design a completely new tram. The improvements would consist of upholstered seats, interiors on both decks painted white, with improved lighting, and a new red and cream livery. Trams so treated would be described as “Pullman” cars, and the process of improving them thus termed “Pullmanisation”. Public reaction to the first two cars to be Pullmanised was favourable, and it was decided to assess the tramcar fleet for its suitability for the same treatment. Out of around 1,800 cars, only 200 were deemed unsuitable, mainly due to their age. Accordingly,



A “Feltham” tram—note the separate entrance and exit doors



Blackfriars Bridge pre-war

between 1926 and March 1930, 1,450 LCC tramcars were Pullmanised.

But what of the trolleybus at this time? The trolley was like a motor-bus but powered by electricity from overhead wires, like a tram. The first trolleybus system brought to London was

by the Underground Group's company London United Tramways Ltd (LUT) on Saturday 16th May 1931 on a short, 2½-mile stretch of road between Twickenham and Teddington in the south-western suburbs. It was recognised at the time that while the Felthams were doing much to bring back passengers to trams, maintaining trams on lighter-used routes would be difficult. As such, the trolleybus was viewed favourably. Their quietness and

speed was a great advantage over the motor-bus, and they were able to carry a similar number of passengers as a tram, approximately 70, compared to a motor-bus's capacity of 56. Furthermore, the conversion of tram to trolleybus would mean the retention of the

electrical infrastructure that would otherwise have to be scrapped.

The success of this new mode of transport was instantaneous, so much so that it became virtually inevitable that the LPTB, which took over responsibility for the provision of public transport in the capital on 1st July 1933, would lose little time in widening its sphere of trolleybus operation, rather than switching to motor-buses. Spencer himself considered and costed both options, and although

A newly delivered and still unlicensed 24 is photographed from above to show the experimental choke coils intended to counter radio interference. They proved successful and it was not long before all vehicles were similarly fitted. The modified front fitted from No.9 onwards, incorporating two vertical banks of grilles, contains a central headlamp in this instance.



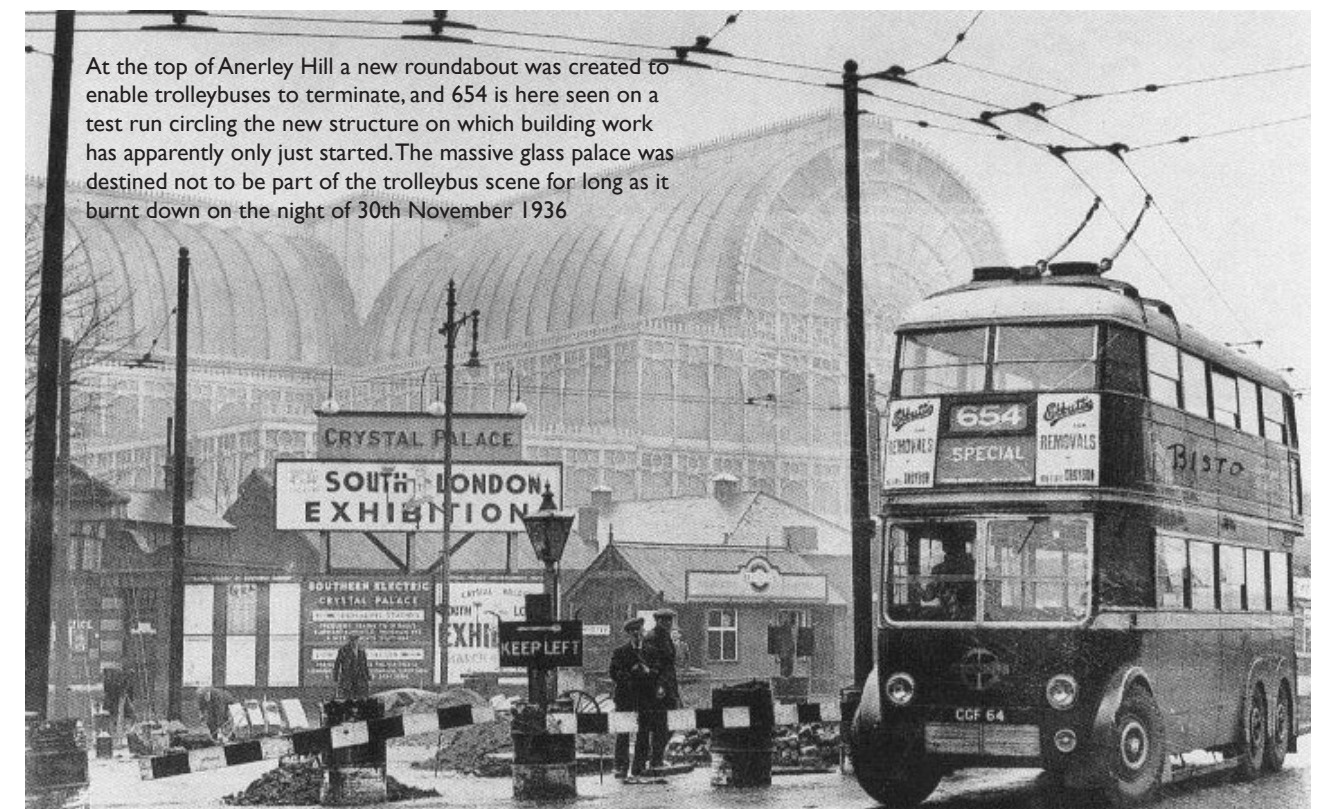
he found that conversion to motor bus would be superficially cheaper, he recommended trolleybuses for the reasons above—along with the severe financial penalties attached to breaking long term contractual arrangements for the purchase of electric power. When the question was asked in Parliament why London Transport could not replace its trams by diesels, the reply came that no less that £13,000,000 worth of electrical equipment and plant was invested in the tramways and that these assets could be further utilised with the introduction of the trolleybus. Finally came the lower wage rates paid to tram and trolleybus workers together with their more flexible working arrangements which were to the Board's benefit.

Frank Pick, CEO and vice-chairman of LPTB, while accepting the strength of these arguments, was always quick to point out that the costs of operation between the two modes of transport were roughly equivalent; that insofar as capital expenditure was required the situation favoured motor buses; and that with regard to the flexibility of route and service the motor bus was also superior. Whilst accepting the inevitability of conversion to trolleybuses in most circumstances, the tone of Pick's pronouncements and of contemporary correspondence appears to indicate that his



A new roundabout was constructed at Hampton Court in time for the start of the 667 whose wires lead off towards the camera. Air-brake-equipped Diddler 60 is seen circling the new wiring at the start of a Wimbledon journey on the 604

commitment was not entirely wholehearted and it would appear to have been Lord Ashfield (Chairman of LPTB) rather than Pick who was keen to push the trolleybus concept forward. However nothing has come to light to indicate that either of them considered trolleybuses to be more than a one-generation phenomenon designed to meet the particular exigencies of



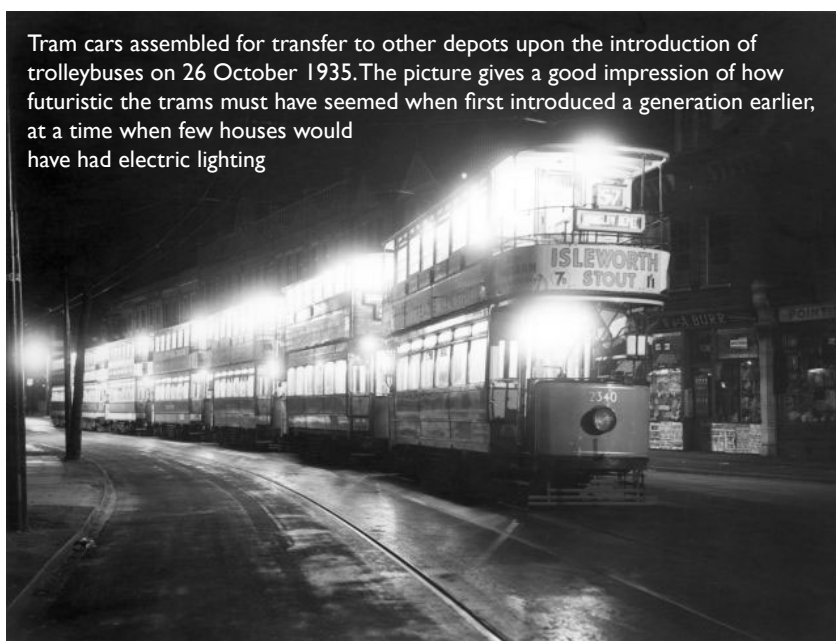
At the top of Anerley Hill a new roundabout was created to enable trolleybuses to terminate, and 654 is here seen on a test run circling the new structure on which building work has apparently only just started. The massive glass palace was destined not to be part of the trolleybus scene for long as it burnt down on the night of 30th November 1936



A time of transition. Route 654 is currently working only between West Croydon and Sutton, and at the former point no.73 squeezes past former Southmet tramcar 45s newly arrived from Crystal Palace. The contrast between the brand new trolleybus and the British-built four-wheeled open-topper of 1906 could hardly be greater.

the time. At the same time Theodore Thomas, Tramways Manager of LPTB, said: "I do not think it would be right to anticipate the early disappearance of the trams, as a whole, as many are new or in good condition, but I think the Board is alive to the situation and to the need for making changes in a number of places... It must be obvious to anyone that the outlying parts of London's tramway system must be changed to something more suitable. In some districts the tramways are in very poor condition. On the other hand some routes—such as the Embankment—are satisfactorily served by trams. It is a big problem to tackle."

A Bill to permit the conversion of tramways to trolleybus operation gained the Royal Assent on 31st July 1934, and the first conversion, of three former LUT tramway routes in North London, took place on 27th October 1935. The conversion of the tramways serving Enfield on 8th May 1938 marked a turning-point in this programme, for it gave London more miles of trolleybus routes than it had miles of remaining tramway routes.



Tram cars assembled for transfer to other depots upon the introduction of trolleybuses on 26 October 1935. The picture gives a good impression of how futuristic the trams must have seemed when first introduced a generation earlier, at a time when few houses would have had electric lighting

Theodore Thomas was also true to his word with regard to some of the tramcar fleet, especially the ex-LCC cars. Many of them were "new or in good condition", and, between April 1934 and July 1935, 13 tramcars were "rehabilitated" at Charlton Works. This work amounted to almost a rebuilding, certainly for the bodies, which received new panels and styling, windscreens, plus refitted interiors and new seating. The upgrade was deemed a success, and between November 1935 and October

1936 a further 152 cars were rehabilitated in a similar manner.

In five short years London Transport built up a massive and complex trolleybus network. When war brought development to a halt, London's trolleybuses had outstripped the trams both in vehicle strength and in route mileage. The twenty-eighth and last conversion on 9th June 1940 resulted in an operational fleet of 1,671 trolleybuses compared with the 1,127 trams, and the trolleybus route had grown to 256 miles while the tram mileage had shrunk to 102. Though few of the millions who yearly used London's trolleybuses would have realised it, they were travelling on the largest trolleybus network in the world. Its vastness is best illustrated by the fact that the next largest British



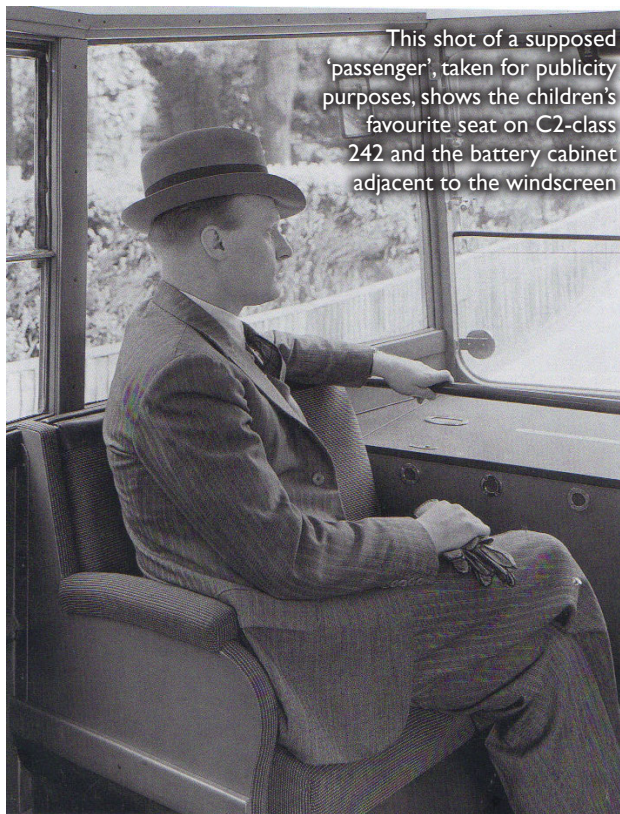
The trolleybuses excelled whenever huge crowds needed to be moved swiftly and efficiently. Tottenham Hotspur's football matches presented a major challenge on occasions when the first team played at home. All available local trolleybuses were put to use, and at busiest times vehicles were brought across from many other depots to run as extras with their destination screens set to blank. One of these can be seen in the background. Near the camera on 16th October 1948, Stamford Hill depot's K1A-class 1128A has just terminated at Snells Park and now stands under the layby wire to load up while the driver adjusts the destination blind to LIVERPOOL STREET. Holloway's L1-class 1368 passes by on the 627, whilst next in the queue are three typical Edmonton vehicles, H1-class 888 on route 679, K1-class 1078 on 649, and K2-class 1193 on 659



A second new class introduction of March 1938 found J1 AECs such as 930 allocated to Finchley depot. Trolleybuses now ran in the City of London for the first time, and the Prince Consort statue which impeded their movements somewhat was subsequently resited, partly at London Transport's expense

system, Belfast, had a fleet of only about 245. London, at its maximum, had 1,764.

The Board's first post-WWII annual report referred to the "urgent necessity for replacing trams in South London by a more modern and attractive form of transport," and in 1946 it was announced that immediate steps were to be taken towards introducing motorbuses in substitution. Explaining the change in policy from pre-war years, when the trolleybus had been the favoured mode, the Board pointed out that the balance of advantage had swung against the trolley vehicle. The amount of power station equipment that would become redundant with the reduction in the road transport load had diminished, while wage differentials between bus and trolleybus crews, which had made operation by trolleybus cheaper than by bus, had decreased. Moreover,



This shot of a supposed 'passenger' taken for publicity purposes, shows the children's favourite seat on C2-class 242 and the battery cabinet adjacent to the windscreen

"technical advances in bus design are rapidly narrowing the difference in performance between the latest oil-engined bus and the trolleybus". By now the financial advantage of the trolleybus over the diesel had declined to such an extent as to be negligible. On the other hand, the motorbus possessed the advantage of superior flexibility, which facilitated a wider co-ordination of services, while post-war town planning

and development made it essential "to select a means of transport not rigidly tied to existing routes".



Westminster Bridge on a murky afternoon in January 1946. Not a tram is in sight, but imaginary trolleybus overhead wires have been superimposed to show the relative unobtrusiveness of trolleybus installations. It was intended that trolleybuses would follow the normal traffic flow at this location whereas the tram rails, both north- and southbound, were located on the far side of the bridge. Even as this montage was being prepared, elsewhere within London Transport the abandonment of south London trolleybus plans was being actively investigated

In some areas, too, the factor of civic amenity loomed. Conversion to trolleybuses would have entailed a new network of overhead wires in places where they had never appeared before, including some environmentally-sensitive locations. "The erection of trolley piles and overhead wires," British Transport Commission chairman Sir Cyril Hurcomb explained, "would have to include Westminster Bridge and the Embankment in close proximity to the Houses of Parliament, and would involve a serious lowering of civic amenity in the heart of the Capital."

Tram abandonment recommenced in 1950, not in favour of trolleybuses but motor-buses. Operation Tramaway witnessed the last tram to operate in London on 5th/6th July 1952.

The trolleybus system continued, but it was obvious that their days were numbered and it was a matter of just waiting for the inevitable. In 1959 the trolleybus abandonment programme came into operation with the last trolleybus operating on 8th/9th May 1962. It is amazing to see that in a matter of a couple of decades, such a vast network could have sprung up, been considered at the forefront of electric transport development and then abandoned. Such is the way in an ever changing world.

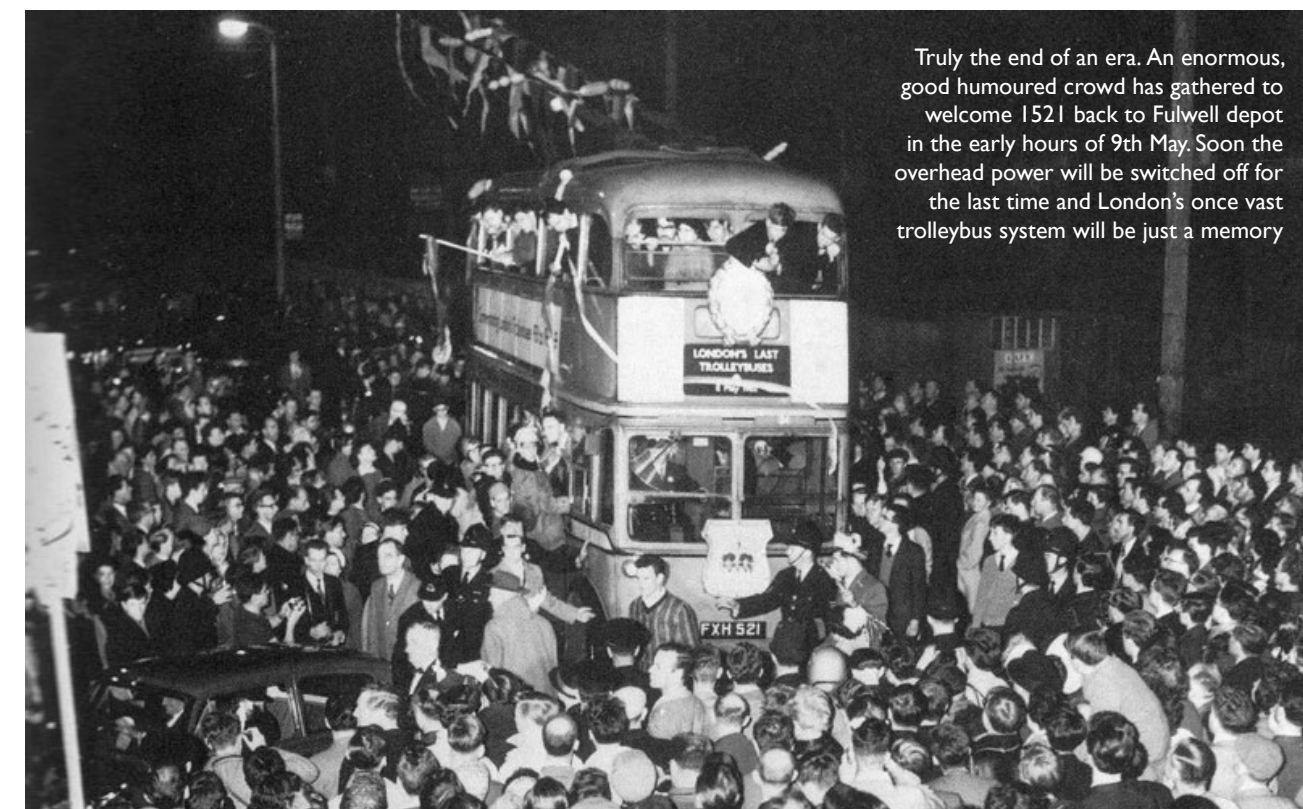
However, a number of trams and trolleybuses have survived into preservation. If you'd like to sample some of these marvellous vehicles the East Anglia Transport Museum in Suffolk will be holding a special event on Sunday 6th and Monday 7th May to commemorate 60 years since the end of London trams and 50 years since the end of London trolleybuses. It will be a once-in-a-lifetime occasion—the greatest number of trolleybuses ever assembled since the closure of the London system, including London Transport's first trolleybus, "Diddler" No.1, which has only operated once in preservation back in 1992 and will probably never run again.



Leyland has shepherded 77 members of its factory staff into the almost complete body of an unidentified F1. The occasion was a stress test on the steel framework which was supported at just two points (marked by arrows), one under each main bulkhead



Tram No. 1987 on route 46 to City & Southwark via Eltham negotiating a peculiar turn-out, coming out of the Beresford Square loop around the corner into Woolwich New Road. The building with the gun behind the trolleybus is The Royal Arsenal Gates, which still stand. The trolleybus is on either route 696 or 698



Truly the end of an era. An enormous, good humoured crowd has gathered to welcome 1521 back to Fulwell depot in the early hours of 9th May. Soon the overhead power will be switched off for the last time and London's once vast trolleybus system will be just a memory



The calm before the storm: Sheridanites assemble at the Magdalen Bridge Boatyard ready to set off. That's Hartley in the grey Homburg. Notice how dry he is at this stage

THE PERFECT STORM

IN A TEACUP

The annual Oxford Punt, Picnic 'n' Plunge. By Artemis Scarheart

AS IS TRADITIONAL, the St George's weekend hove into view in April. As is also traditional at this time of year a Sheridan party left the confines of their Club Houses, tea rooms, rotting garrets, debtors gaols and wards and descended on Oxford for punting, picnicking and plunging. This event predates the NSC and is one of the most enjoyable events of the year, despite the cold, hard and wet fact that every year without fail someone falls in.

That is every year for six or seven years on the trot. I am told that statistically this is impossible but Sheridanites would never let something so mundane as maths and facts get in the way.

In the week up to the punting the weather had been Scandinavian—hail, light snow, high wind and rain, rain, rain. But we knew that we would be untrammelled on the most dangerous part of the trip (the punting, which has maximum exposure time) as God has consistently proved he loves the NSC by never letting it rain on our parade. Anyhow, at ten in the morning I, along with Blah and Lord Rupert, found ourselves on the step of the Turf Tavern hammering for entry ready for a day out. The pub didn't open until 11 so as more

of the party arrived to hail-fellow-well-mets, I finished a rather fine cigar then had time for a swift pint before a spot of shopping.

When I returned with the traditional pies, fizz and ale we were all in attendance so there was a move to Magdalen Bridge to pick up our craft for the day. The sky was still clear, although somewhat bruising, but one of our party was from Brazil and we could not let on that the Ox(?) [*that's the Cherwell to you, mate—Ed*] was

scary when compared to the Amazon so we assured him that it would all be fine.

At the bridge we were told that it was impossible to punt to our normal haunt (where last year we were approached by Professor Richard Dawkins) as the rain had been so intense the river had swollen, the flood gates had been opened and the current was too strong to punt against.

"Fie my lord!" we declared, "we shall not be dictated to by the River Folk and upon this hallowed day of all days! We shall punt where we always punt,

God rot your soul!"

The nice man said that was fine but if we could manage to punt the usual stretch (even our star punters blanched at the prospect), when we returned we would be hurled by the current



Craig-oh at the helm, having flashbacks from his punting days in New Zealand. The horror! The horror!



(Left) Scarheart enjoys an early morning pint and cheroot; (right) Robert Beckwith, probably the most skilled punter among us, poles Laurence and Catherine along; (below) Seonaid and Master William share a punt with Curé Michael Silver and his splendid blazer; (below right) Viscount Rushen and his burgeoning family; (bottom left) Suzanne Coles and her Brazilian companion; (bottom right) Laurence tries out a comedy moustache straw; (opposite page, top) Craigho starts to flag as he punts against the current; (middle) the sight that greeted us at the rollers; (bottom) in fact we ended up with rather a nice picnic ground; note the toy sea mine—how apt!



into the bridge and all of us would go in and the punts would probably sink. After a quick conflag it turned out there was a back door, rather like on Endor. We could still get to the same place but by a different route. As we had arranged to meet some of our party, who were on foot, at the same place as usual, this seemed like a perfect



situation. We threw ourselves into four punts and a rowboat and took off upstream. The first part was deceptively calm and Craigho soon proved that his time punting and singing professionally in New Zealand was time well spent as our punt zipped up river. All was merry, corks were popped and we chattered like birds as the sun came out. A quick stop to allow the others to catch up and away we scudded once more. It was here that Poseidon took against us however, after having lulled us into a false sense of security. Slowly, the current grew stronger and the river deeper. The party began to split up and several punts were flipped around more than once. Auxiliary paddling was necessary on a continual basis and all contact was lost with the rowboat. After a herculean effort we managed to moor three of the punts temporarily on a stretch of river that was slightly sheltered from the current and we took stock. No sign of two boats at all and we were still not even at the rollers—where one must disembark and physically haul the punts up to a higher level of water (it was here that the floodgates had been opened). Exhaustion was setting in among those doing the work. Others of us were suffering more though, as we had had to watch these poor devils punting and rowing so furiously, while making sure the boat loads were lightened by drinking as much fizz as we could. No, we were not heroes, we just did our bit. Contact was then made with the first punt and they had terrible news—they had reached the rollers, but the area was entirely underwater.

Thanks to Suzanne Coles, Dr Blah and that devil Scarheart for the photos

Further travel up river was impossible so we decided to stay where we were. After a farcical ten minutes which included punt poles being lost, near fallings-in, and a hunt for a bridge, we set up camp and the feast began. Pies, puddings, pâtés, cakes, sausages, birds, beasts, fowls, chocolates, homemade and bought, quiches, baps, buns and sandwiches were consumed with gusto. As always we had far too much food but the sharing is very much a part of the experience and after two hours our jaws were sore from eating, laughing and talking.

The weather was starting to look a little more sinister and so the call went up: “Sauve qui peut! Back to the boats! Get off the river bank if you want to live!”

(I have been watching rather a lot of *Saving Private Ryan*, *Band of Brothers* and *Pacific* recently so was channelling these as motivational motifs.) With an organisational skill worthy of Operation Dynamo we were soon all back on board and ready for the off.

(Incidentally, the row boat crew had finally turned up during the picnic, but had abandoned their boat due to the current being impossible to force through. As per NSC doctrine they had burned



(l-r) Cyril Browne, Viscount Rushen, Oliver Lane, Dr Blah, the Earl of Waveney



Lord Rupert looking impish

her to the waterline and sunk the remainder with heavy stones.)

Just as we were loaded up—and still no one had fallen in—the sky opened. A brief ten minutes, a light shower, but we were more than ready for it by then and umbrellas and cagoules were ready. A stirring rendition of Jerusalem cleared the clouds away and as the rain stopped we headed downstream.

This time the current was with us and we glided with ease (I imagine, I was enjoying a Romeo

& Julieta cigar at the time) back towards the boat house for a full evening of ale at the Turf Tavern, which—very conveniently—has a real ale festival on the same weekend as the punting each year.

But something was gnawing at us, especially those of us in the last punt. Unless someone ahead had already done the decent thing and gone into the water, one of us was next. As we came around the last bend we could see the throng assembled on the shore and no one was sopping wet.

“Well, maybe the curse is lifted?”

It was not to be and this year the gods demanded an even greater sacrifice as, coming in to place the punt in the right position, we

were hit by the current the grizzled old river folk had told us about earlier and the last punt slammed into the bridge. The result? A Member of the Glorious Committee—Clayton Hartley—went in. As it isn’t deep he was able to scramble ashore, jump in a taxi and be back at the Turf Tavern in black tie in less than an hour, but the tradition had been fulfilled and an iPhone possibly ruined.

At the Turf the carousing went on until late and as some of us slipped back to Town it had been another successful year. Our thanks to all those who came and made it such fun, to the new faces which came along, Hartley for taking it like a brick and the gods for keeping most of us mostly dry despite the weather forecasts those charlatans at the Met Office had been hawking around in the previous week.



After his dunking, the only clothes Hartley had left were black tie, so that is how he spent the evening in the pub

Bogey does his bit

The movie at our April Film Night this time came courtesy of Isabel Spooner-Harvey and Fruity Hatfield-Peverel, both fans of the film who bonded over one particular scene where a Frenchman describes his perfect meal. The film concerns a US tank crew in the Libyan desert. Cut off and largely surrounded they make a dash to safety, hoping to rejoin their unit. On the way they pick up a group of Brits (conveniently representing all parts of the British Isles, though with rather unconvincing accents), a Frenchman, a Sudanese with an Italian prisoner and then a German pilot whom they have shot down. Low on water they head for a well, only to discover it is virtually dry. While they wait for their canteens to fill with the last drips a German force approaches and



they try to bluff that they are a bigger number than they are and also that the well is full, offering water if the Germans lay down their weapons. Needless to say they end up capturing most of the enemy and killing the rest, although all the non-American good guys get killed as well. If the film was meant to persuade the American people that the fight was a good one, it made no bones about the likely cost. Interesting is the characterisation of the enemy: the Germans are villainous aryan, evil to the core, while the Italian is likeable and ends up sacrificing his life to try and help the Allies. He even describes his people as peace-loving and good-natured but somehow misled by Mussolini. Thanks to Isabel and Fruity (especially Isabel—Fruity didn’t actually turn up!)

If you’d like to curate a Film Night do get in touch: clayton@newsheridanclub.co.uk



Scarheart (l) and Hartley. Little does Hartley know what lies ahead

The Cocktail Cabinet

Wherein Members get a little obsessive about drink

The Negroni Code

By David Bridgman-Smith

Breakfasting on the Isle of Wight, our conversation turned to Negronis and whether the order in which you add the ingredients affects the flavour of the drink. As a Negroni is “built”—the ingredients added individually to the glass, rather than stirred or shaken together with ice then strained into the serving glass—I thought that this was plausible.

The Negroni was invented, so the story goes, by Count Camillo Negroni around 1919–20, when he asked his barman to pep up his Americano with gin: it contains three ingredients in equal measures: dry gin, Campari (a bright red bitter aperitif) and red vermouth. With the help of my in-house mathematician I came up with the Negroni Numerator. On with the experiment....

Prediction

The order in which ingredients are added to a Negroni will have a noticeable impact on the flavour and texture of the drink. The reason for this is that different ingredients have different specific gravities and so the way in which they layer in the glass will impact upon the flavour.

Methodology

A drink of equal parts SW4 Gin, Martini Red Vermouth and Campari will be added to a glass, the order in which they are added will be determined by the Negroni Numerator.

Two pieces of standard issue ice will be added (1 inch³) and the drink stirred five times anti-clockwise using a chopstick.

Results

#1 GRC

Bitter smell but the taste is actually quite sweet and the Campari takes longer to come through and seems overwhelmed. The drink lacks balance and is a bit flat flavour-wise. On the plus side, it is very smooth.

#2 GCR

Intense with a good balance between the bitter and sweet aspects of the ingredients. Full flavour with a long finish—a very typical, rather textbook Negroni. Delicious.

#3 CGR

Quite smooth with the flavours moving from red vermouth to Campari and then gin. A very dry Negroni with some bitterness. A long finish with earthy bitter notes and a hint of dark chocolate.

#4 CRG

A very well rounded flavour with a pleasant texture. Sweet and herby with big fruit flavours too. It does lack a little when it comes to bitterness with the alcoholic strength coming through at the end rather than Campari’s bitterness.

#5 RGC

A lot of bitterness to start and then a syrupy, sickly sweetness. All the herbal and spicy complexities of the vermouth and gin are lost.

#6 RCG

A good balance between the bitter and sweet but the flavour doesn’t hang about for long and the gin is lost. The sweet, bitter and herbal notes are rather separate and don’t blend well together.

Conclusion

It was surprising how much the order in which the ingredients are added had an impact on the flavour and texture of the Negroni cocktail. My top tip would be to not put the red vermouth in first as this ruins the balance of the drink. As for the top formula for the ingredient order, I would say that the laurels go to this order:


1st gin – 2nd Campari – 3rd red vermouth

For more cocktail recipes, product reviews and musings on booze, see the New Sheridan Club’s **Institute for Alcoholic Experimentation**

The Institute of
Alcoholic Experimentation's

Negroni Numerator

1	G	R	C
2	G	C	R
3	C	G	R
4	C	R	G
5	R	G	C
6	R	C	G



LEGEND

G = GIN C = CAMPARI

R = RED VERMOUTH



Savile Row Feels the Wrath of the Tiepins

By Russell Newlove
Pictures by Hanson Leatherby

ON A TYPICALLY overcast St George's Day, a small but determined, and impeccably turned out, band of men and women stood cufflink to cufflink outside No.3 Savile Row to protest against the opening of a branch of Abercrombie and Fitch in the building behind them.

There are few places sacred to an Englishman. The white cliffs of Dover. The inside edge at Lords. Savile Row; the undisputed, unequalled home of bespoke tailoring. That an American chain, specialising in mass-produced hoodies and tee shirts, should even have its name whispered in this hallowed corridor brought the people out in defiance.

"Savile Row has been the heartland of English tailoring for two hundred years," said Gustav Temple, editor of *The Chap* and



organiser of the protest. "It's supposed to be a street devoted to a single trade. One day I might be able to afford a bespoke suit and it would be nice to think that when I do, Savile Row will be exclusively devoted to bespoke tailoring and I can come here knowing that there will be a street full of tailors to choose from. Abercrombie and Fitch is a large American chain store and



I think it has no place on the Row. And it's not just Abercrombie and Fitch: if they open this shop the flood gates will be opened."

As the press gathered to take photos (no doubt to be referred to later as definitive style guides), and a cheer met the Chief Inspector of Savile Row Constabulary's remark that "In all honesty, this is the best dressed demonstration I have ever seen," the party advanced toward Burlington Gardens and the site of an existing Abercrombie and Fitch store. "NOT UNTIL YOU CAN SEE THE WHITES OF THEIR SOCKS!" was the cry, before mellowing into a chorus of "Give Three-Piece A Chance", further mellowing into a post-mortem at the French House.

The demonstration is unlikely to achieve anything, sadly. Westminster Council are yet to receive any objections to the proposed opening, despite an online petition gathering steam. But... surely as long this many elegantly attired folk can be mustered at 9am in the morning to protest, there is hope yet for the preservation of the noble (if pricey) art of bespoke tailoring.





CLUB NOTES

Behold the Mark 2 Tie

REALISING I WAS down to my last half a dozen Club Ties, I knew I needed to order another batch. But the company from whom I had commissioned the last two consignments were a bit of a pain to deal with, so I thought I'd do a bit of shopping around to see if anyone else was able to offer the same sort of "shadow weave" technology that lies behind the subtle repeating



Mark 1



Mark 2

OK, the difference is subtle

NSC logo along the black stripe. Trawling the Internet I came across a Chinese company who, judging by some of the sample designs on their website, may well have been the ones who actually made the previous batches. I was naturally a bit nervous about dispatching funds to a lawless fiefdom on the other side of the world, but everything seemed to go smoothly. What with endless transaction fees to three different banks and the import duties levied by HMRC I didn't really save much money, but the

ties themselves are pleasing. Compared to the Mark 1, they are plumper in construction and made from a sort of grosgrain silk, as opposed to smooth satin silk. I mention all this in case completists wish to own one of each version or, if you currently have neither but prefer the old style, this is your chance to get a Mark 1 before they all sell out. For your convenience, I here present photographs of both versions. Either tie may be had for £15 plus delivery (and may be worn only by NSC Members, naturally).

New Members

AS I WRITE it is May Day, a pleasingly pagan sort of day when strange timeless rituals are enacted in small villages across the country, Morris Men dance, Queens of the May are crowned, sinister May Poles are danced around and mysterious, and faintly threatening, hobby horses chase maidens through cobbled streets. If you're a Celt it is Beltane, if you're a Roman it is the festival of Flora, if you're a Germanic horde it is Walpurgisnacht. And if you're Sean Rillo Raczka it's International Workers Day. But everyone sees it as a special, rejuvenating day. Perhaps it is appropriate that the list of new Members we welcome into the Cult of Sheridan this month seem to have been drawn particularly widely from around the world this time: Gary McCann from two streets away from me in Greenwich, Alexei Orlov from Murmansk, Russia, Gianluca Attoli from Monza, Italy, Björn Persson Fälth from Vasteras, Sweden, and C.W. Westinghouse from Chobham, Surrey.

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 plus our Facebook page and the web forum.

🍷 NSC Club Night

Wednesday 2nd May

8pm-11pm

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

Members: Free

Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)

See page 2.

Cakewalk Café

Wednesdays 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th May

8pm-1am (swing dance classes 7-8pm and 8-9pm)

Passing Clouds, 1 Richmond Road, Dalston, London E8 4AA

Wednesday 2nd May The Salisbury

Period Venue - Fine Ales - Sterling Fare - Vintage Dancing
That Swing Ensemble of Repute ...



1920s 30s 40s dance music
silverghosts.co.uk



Free for students of
8.00pm swing dance course.
For details, contact Gaia:
vintagedancing@gmail.com
or visit:
mouthfulojam.com

9.30pm
£6 / £3 with this flyer

THE SALISBURY PUBLIC HOUSE & HOTEL
1 Grand Parade, Green Lanes, N4 1JX
020 8800 9617

Admission: £5 (£3.50 if you're in 1920s/1930s clobber) or £8 including a dance class; £12 including both.

Live swing jazz every Wednesday featuring Nicholas Ball, Ewan Bleach and chums, with optional dance classes from Swing Patrol.

The Silver Ghosts

Wednesday 2nd May

From 7.30pm

The Salisbury Pub, 1 Grand Parade, St Annes Rd, London, N4 1JX

Admission: £6, £3 with flyer, (above) free to those attending the preceding swing dance class

Seven-piece swing ensemble play at the home of Gaia Facchini's various dance classes.

Détente

Thursday 3rd May

7pm till late

The Player, 8 Broadwick Street, London W1F 8HN

Admission: Free before 11pm

Dress: Strictly mid-century Jet Set/Secret Service

Johnny Vercoutre and Count Indigo form an uneasy alliance to bring you a new club night, shot through with realpolitik and cool soundtrack jazz. "The Cold War just got hot!"



The venue is the perfectly styled The Player, where they take their cocktails seriously (thanks to help from cocktail guru Dale DeGroff).

The Tweed Run

Sunday 6th May
Afternoonish

A route through central London
Admission: Places are very limited and awarded by lottery, but I'm not clear if it costs you to take part

The annual vintage bicycle rally returns, in which elegantly attired cyclists parade en masse along a prescribed route. Registration opens at midday on 10th March: see tweedrun.com for more details.

A Vintage Afternoon Picnic

Sunday 6th May
midday-6pm

Regents Park, London NW1 4NR, meeting near the bandstand
Admission: Free, but bring food, drink, parasols, petanque, etc.

Amanda from Lipstick & Curls has proposed a "scene-wide" vintage get-together in Regents Park. What's not to like? For further developments see the Facebook event.

London Tram and Trolley Event

Sunday 6th & Monday 7th May
10.30am-5pm

East Anglia Transport Museum, Chapel Road, Carlton Colville, Suffolk. NR33 8BL (01502 518459)

Admission: £7.50

A commemorative and unique event to mark the 50th anniversary since the demise of London's trolleybuses (electric buses using overhead power lines) and the 60th anniversary since the end of trams. Visitors will be able to ride on the museum's own working tram and three trolleys, including the very last trolley to run in London. The museum will also be unveiling a newly acquired fourth London trolley, which has been a captive in Paris for nearly 50 years, most of that time in storage and unseen by the public. There will be a free bus service (mostly using vintage buses) between Lowestoft railway station and the museum, another to Beccles and possibly further tours using visiting London buses. See www.eatm.org.uk to keep abreast of developments.

Chapology Cabaret

Monday 7th May
7.30pm

Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton BN1 1AF



Admission: £10 (£9 concs), available in advance; not clear if you can pay on the door

A rare live performance of the *Chapology* songbook from the humorous combo Worsteds whose oeuvre includes lyrics by Gustav Temple, I believe.

Swing at the Light

Mondays, 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th May

From 7pm
Upstairs at The Light Restaurant and Bar, 233 Shorditch High Street, London E1

Admission: £8 for class and club, £3 just for the club night after 9pm
Dress: Vintage/retro appreciated

Weekly vintage dance night in a venue with a wooden floor and its own terrace. Beginners classes from 7.30, intermediate classes from 8.15, and "freestyle" from 9pm.

The Candlelight Club:

Viva Italia!

Friday 11th & Saturday 12th May
7.30pm-12am

A secret central London location
Admission: £15.75 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 clandestine pop-up cocktail party with a 1920s speakeasy flavour, in a

ANOTHER TERRIFIC WORKSHOP BY THE MERRY BOBBINS

Be Your Own Butler

with Jo Poole
The Dress Doctor

emergency mends anatomy of tailoring practical clothes care and more...
talks demos practicals tea

**SAT 12 MAY
2 - 5 PM**

at: TIME FOR TEA
110 Shoreditch High St
London E1 6JN

limited places - £40
[book online:](http://bookonline.beyourownbutler.eventbrite.co.uk)

beyourownbutler.eventbrite.co.uk

secret London venue completely lit by candles. Each event offers a one-off cocktail menu with special themes, plus live period jazz bands and vintage vinylism from the NSC's own MC Fruity. This time, we're a bit Italian: Italy's role in subverting Prohibition is undisputed, what with the strong links between the Mafia and the Italian-American mob. But her contribution to the art of the cocktail goes further than that—without Italian vermouth we wouldn't have the Manhattan or the Martini. For this party we'll be offering up a menu of Italian

cocktails, such as the Negroni, Venice's local drink the Spritz, and Harry's Bar's most famous creation the Bellini. Live music will come from the part-Italian jazz combo Pronto Jazz.

The Merry Bobbins present

Be You Own Butler

Saturday 12th May
2-5pm

Time for Tea, 110 Shoreditch High Street, London E1 6JN
Admission: £40 from beyourownbutler.eventbrite.co.uk

A three-hour workshop from Jo Poole, "The

Dress Doctor" and theatrical costumier, consisting of a talk on why bespoke tailoring is best and how to get the most out of it, followed by a show-and-tell where those in attendance





Herne Hill Velodrome

produce a favourite item of clothing for discussion about composition and care, then some guidance on how to clean, iron and look after clothes, and finally a masterclass in mending. A break at 4pm for tea and cakes.

Mouthful O' Jam

Saturday 12th May
From 7.30pm
The Salisbury Pub, 1 Grand Parade, St Annes Rd, London, N4 1JX
Admission: £5

Gaia Facchini's regular swing DJ night, with a swing dance lesson from Gaia at 7.30pm.

Saturday Night Swing Club

Saturday 12th May
7.30pm–2am
City Firefly, 18 Old Bailey, London EC4M 7EP
Admission: £12 (includes a £3 drinks voucher)

Three dance floors playing swing, R n' B and rock n' roll music from the 1920s to the 1950s, with resident DJs Dr Swing and Simon "Mr Kicks" Selmon, plus guest DJs this time Miss Aloha, Swingdem, Groove Jackson. On the middle floor there are dance classes from 8.15 till midnight, this time including a special guest Boogie Woogie workshop from 10–11pm from Melanie Stocker (World Boogie Woogie Champion, apparently) and Derek Hartley and Claire from London's Pineapple Dance Studios teaching From Tap to Swing.

Art Deco Fair

Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th May
10am–5pm
Eltham Palace, Court Yard, Eltham, Greenwich, London SE9 5QE
Admission: £9.60 (includes entrance to the house and grounds) or £6 (fair only)

Once again the spectacular setting of Eltham Palace—parts of which are medieval, parts of which are delicious Art Deco—plays host to a high-quality antiques and collectibles fair focusing on the Art Deco period. The house itself, formerly the home of the Courtaulds and their pet lemur, is well worth seeing.

Vintage-Cycle Race Meeting

Sunday 13th May
Racing commences at 12.30pm
Herne Hill Velodrome, Burbage Road, London SE24 9HE (020 7737 4647)
Admission: Free for spectators, £4 for entrants

Count Martindt Cally von Callomon is on the committee of the Vintage-Cycle Club, who are organising this grand day out. "The venue is one of this country's oldest open-air cycling velodromes with antique stands and fully-banked circuit. It is situated not far from Dulwich, an easy ride from anywhere in London. We plan to start racing there at 12.30pm. There will be many stalls, a beer tent, cycle jumble, some serious historical racing and some not so serious—I have proposed at least

one race on 'roadster' type machines where points and prizes are awarded for attire and a creative adaptation of the rules. All the races are open to non-V-CC members: perhaps the NSC can muster a turn-out of members to attack this one particular race? I would envisage a mass-picnic on the grass in the centre of the track, followed by the race itself. All over by tea time.

"To enter the race one needs only a helmet (of sorts) and a one-off insurance payment of £4 that gets you into any or all of the races depending on eligibility of the machine. For instance, there will be an all-comers race at the end where Ordinaries can do battle with lightweights, tandems and trikes, etc., plus a grand parade around the beautiful track at the end for free, for everybody. The venue is safe, secure and ideal for children." If you would like to get involved, perhaps it is best if you contact Cally directly: cally@antar.cc.

The Double R Club

Thursday 17th May
8pm
The Bethnal Green Working Men's Club, 44–46 Pollard Row, Bethnal Green, London E2 6NB
Admission: £10 in advance

An evening of mystery and nightmares inspired by the films of David Lynch, featuring a parade of cabaret and burlesque performers. Comes highly recommended by our Chairman. More at www.thedoublerclub.co.uk.

The 1940s Relived

Saturday 19th May
10am–5pm
Brooklands Museum, Brooklands Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0QN
Admission: £11 (£9.90 students and OAPs, £6.05 children)

Celebrating the best of the 1940s against the historic backdrop of Brooklands Museum's 30-acre site. The Wellington Hangar is a reminder that Brooklands was an important

centre of aircraft production during WWII, when both Hawker Hurricane Fighters and Vickers Wellington Bombers were built on the site. Add in a pill box, air raid shelters, the original Clubhouse plus other period features and you have outstanding surroundings for this event. The organisers are also looking for re-enactors, both military and home front, period vehicles, traders plus of course the music and dancers to help make this family event special and to celebrate all aspects of the 1940s. They are particularly interested in Home Guard re-enactors, as Brooklands had its own HG detachment. Contact: Neil Sinclair neilsinclair@brooklandsmuseum.com 01932 857381 ext. 244.

Victorian Railway Weekend

Saturday 19th May
10am–5.30pm
The Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster Station, Comberton Hill, DY10 1QX
Admission: £19

Vintage transport enthusiast the Earl of Waveney is looking to raise a posse to check out this festival of steam. For more details of the tickets and what is happening see www.svr.co.uk. To see Waveney's Facebook event click here.

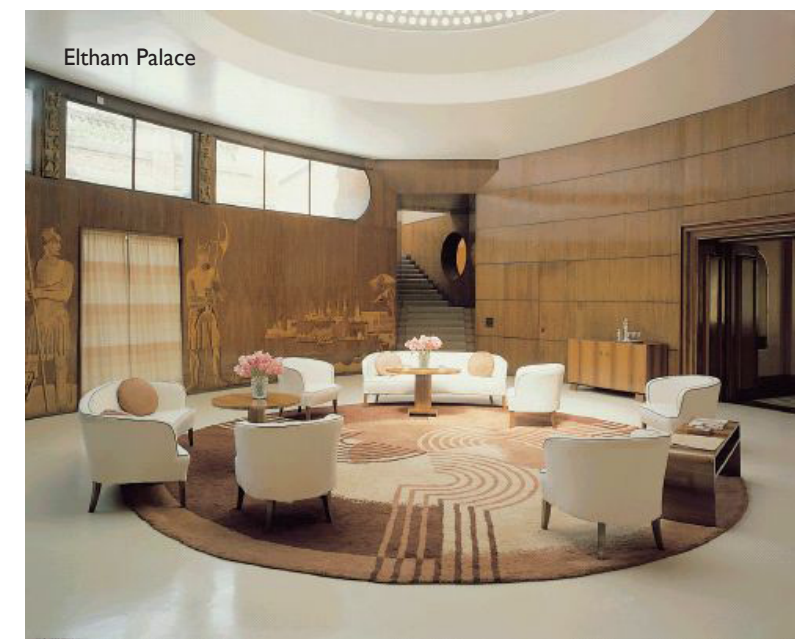
The Candlelight Club:

An English Country Garden
Friday 25th & Saturday 26th May
7.30pm–12am

A secret central London location
Admission: £15.75 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 time, with the Chelsea

Flower Show around the corner we bring you a cocktail exploration of the scents and flavours of the Great British outdoors in the summer: strawberries, cucumber, flowers, honey...



Gustav Temple, editor of *The Chap* (right), and Michael "Atters" Attree at the recent demonstration on Savile Row. See page 20.



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.



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