

A black and white photograph of two motorcycle riders on a dirt track. The rider in the foreground is leaning forward, wearing a helmet and goggles, with a large cloud of dust kicked up behind them. The second rider is visible in the background, also on a motorcycle. The track surface is uneven and dusty.

**'I need a drink NOW!'**

The benefits and pitfalls of  
pre-mixing your cocktails

# **KINGS OF THE CINDERS**

The Golden Age  
of Speedway

**My pyjama hell**

Mark Gidman on the  
agony of celebrity

**Shaggy dog stories**

More of Torquil's animal crackers

# **RESIGN!**

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • ISSUE 90 APRIL 2014**





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 April in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm. Mr Mikhail Korasch will bend our ears on the subject of *Bowtieology: The Essence of the Bow Tie*. Bow ties may indeed be fashionable with the hipster set, and endorsed by none other than Matt Smith's version of Dr Who, but Mr Korasch, who has recently started a business making and selling bow ties, has gone further to make a study of how different tie shapes work with different types of face.



Mikhail in his bow tie atelier

**The Last Meeting**

Our March meeting featured a lecture by Mr Stephen Myhill entitled *Thrilling the Million: The Lure of the Speedway*. "No brakes, no gears, no fear," Mr Myhill explained by way of introduction. "I will entertain with stories of the early days of the dirt track. Motorcycle

speedway racing in the UK is nearing its 90th birthday. In the boom years either side of the war, speedway riders were among the highest-earning sports stars. So drop your clutch, twist your throttle and go elbow-to-elbow with the kings of the cinders." Mr Myhill was true to his word, and we learned all about the birth of the sport (in Australia, where a promoter desperate to get the punters in to his athletics events decided to include some motorcycle racing) and the specifics of the bikes—engines that run on methanol at absurdly high revs with only really two speeds (on and off) and prone to exploding. We heard about the high-earning stars with unlikely names (Split Waterman, Sprouts Elder, Acorn Dobson, etc.), and the chap who arrived at the track fresh from Savile Row in new bespoke threads but couldn't resist showing off on a bike—with his suit jacket billowing over his head he inevitably crashed, ruining the outfit. Many thanks to Mr Myhill for his oration. An essay version begins on page 4.



Edward and Kellyanne O'Callaghan



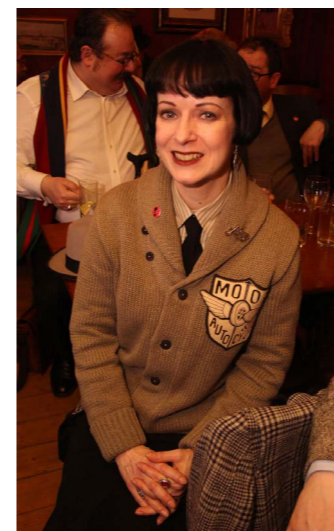
A rare sighting of Compton-Bassett (r); the Curé looks as if he's enquiring earnestly after C-B's moral wellbeing...



Scarheart hurriedly scours the latest *Resign!* for material for his introductory address



(Above) Mr Luke Wenban begins to notice the Quaaludes someone slipped into his drink; (above left) journalist Hope Whitmore is writing a feature on the appeal of vintage; (left) Stephen begins with the basics



(Left) Pandora, aka "Pandora Pitstop", is in her motorcycling element; (right) Stephen's audience is in good humour; (below) the merry gang in Smoker's Alley



(Right) The Curé and Maximillion Conrad discuss ecumenical matters





**S**PEEDWAY—PERHAPS THE MOST basic and visceral form of motorcycle racing in the world. Four riders battling elbow-to-elbow on an oval dirt track in intense minute-long races using 500cc bikes with no brakes. It's the Ben Hur chariot race without the sandals. Now something of a minority sport with limited media coverage, speedway enjoyed a boom period before and after the Second World War that saw it rival football as the nation's sporting attraction of choice. This article will look at the sport's birth and introduce a few of its early and most colourful stars.

Despite there being reports of dirt track racing in South Africa as early as 1907, speedway's year zero was 1923. In West Maitland, Australia, a showman and promoter called Johnny

S. Hoskins was looking at ways to draw the crowds into the fair and show grounds he was running. He came up with the idea of staging motorcycle races on the athletics track and in a short space



Johnny Hoskins (l) and Jack Hill-Bailey, 1929

in February 1928 when Jack Hill-Bailey of the Ilford Motorcycle Club staged a meeting at High Beech in Epping Forest. Hill-Bailey hoped to attract maybe 3000 people to the dirt track behind the King's Oak pub in the forest. But with glorious weather (and not much on the telly), an estimated crowd of 21,000 souls converged on High Beech. The resulting chaos can barely be imagined in today's health and safety conscious world. Spectators lined both the infield and the perimeter of the track, effectively creating a corridor of humanity for the riders to race through. Scores of people climbed into the trees around the circuit, with many reportedly falling out at various times during the afternoon.

Despite all this (or perhaps because of it), that first meeting captured the public's imagination

and the demand for more racing simply grew. Promoters, with the now British-based Hoskins and Hill-Bailey leading the way, were quick to satisfy that demand and within weeks, speedway was



# THRILLING THE

of time he realised he had a hit on his hands. A thrill-hungry public took to this new spectacle, particularly when riders began to develop the technique of broadsiding—sliding sideways through the bends using their left leg for balance and steering. Racing was soon taking place on a regular basis at venues all over Australia, with big crowds watching and stars being made.

A number of British motorcyclists witnessed this new phenomenon and many returned to the UK with the desire to stage speedway at home. The plans finally came to fruition

taking place all over the country.

A major step in the sport's development was the introduction of team racing. With two riders from each squad squaring up in every heat, the rivalry between clubs added a new dimension to racing. League and knock-out cup competitions gave the fans—and the riders—a new focus and helped to keep the turnstiles clicking. Clubs designed colourful crests to be worn on race jackets over the riders' leathers and team nicknames became an essential part of the overall package—Wimbledon Dons, Belle Vue

# MILLION

**Stephen Myhill** on the early years of speedway racing

Aces, Glasgow Tigers, New Cross Rangers (and, bizarrely reflecting the local fishing industry, Yarmouth Bloaters).

Team racing also brought the chance to stage test matches between England and Australia. Always popular, tests brought the people in by their thousands. In 1932, with the series tied at two wins each, the final match at Wembley Stadium attracted a crowd of 84,000. Live radio commentary on the BBC also brought the action into homes across the country and for many involved in the sport from the start, this

was the night that speedway went from being a circus side show attraction to a legitimate, established sport. (For the record, England won that final match and took the series 3–2.)

While the public had their teams to support, they also had their individual favourites to idolise and some of the riders quickly became high-profile super stars—with the income to match. Vic Huxley and Sprouts Elder, for example, were thought to be among the highest paid sportsmen in the world. In the early thirties, when the average weekly wage was



An early race meeting at High Beech: not at home to Mr Health and Safety



around £3, Huxley and Elder could command £100 appearance money (yes—just for turning up). On a successful evening, they could easily add £50–£75 from race wins and they were doing this perhaps three times a week during the March–September season.

On-track they may have been dirty and cinder-stained, but away from the racing they lived, dressed and were treated like film stars. They, and their rivals, featured on cigarette cards and further boosted their earnings through advertising and product endorsement. “Cyclone” Billy Lamont, for example, was at one point the face of Ovaltine, claiming it gave him an abundance of pep.

Lamont, one of the

top Australians, featured in one of the wilder stories from the track. With no intention of riding, Billy popped into a training session at Wimbledon one day, resplendent in a new Savile Row suit and handmade shoes. In an effort to settle an argument with Vic Huxley over the performance of the latter’s new machine, Lamont jumped on said bike and began riding at race speed in his “civvies”. This lasted for a couple of laps before his unbuttoned jacket



A team race between England and Australia, probably at New Cross around 1950

billowed over his head, causing him to crash. The suit, shoes and shirt were destroyed and Lamont picked up a couple of black eyes as well. History does not relate the state of Huxley’s bike or his reaction.

Another big earner was Yorkshireman Frank Varey—and by his own admission he was in it for the money. Having lost his father in the war, Frank’s work at the Scott motorcycle factory supported him, his mother and five siblings. When his mother was diagnosed with cancer, Frank was told that the only hope was expensive radium therapy. Varey’s response was to take up speedway in an effort to earn enough money to pay for the treatment. After a slow and unsuccessful start, Frank began to win races and earn some cash. Through perseverance, he became one of the top stars in the North and brought in enough money to help prolong his mother’s life. His devotion to her was somewhat at odds with his on-track persona, where he would ride a hard and physical race and happily swap punches in the pits if rivals took exception to his tactics. Varey went on to be a star in Argentina (where his red sweater earned him the nickname “Red Devil”) and after retiring from racing, he became one of the sport’s most respected team managers.



Race jacket for the Wimbledon Dons



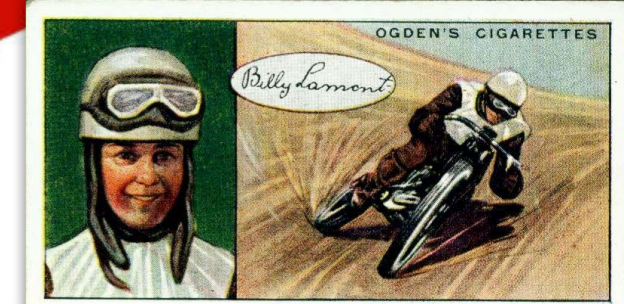
Race jacket for the West Ham Hammers



Race jacket for the New Cross Rangers



Race jacket for the Belle Vue Aces

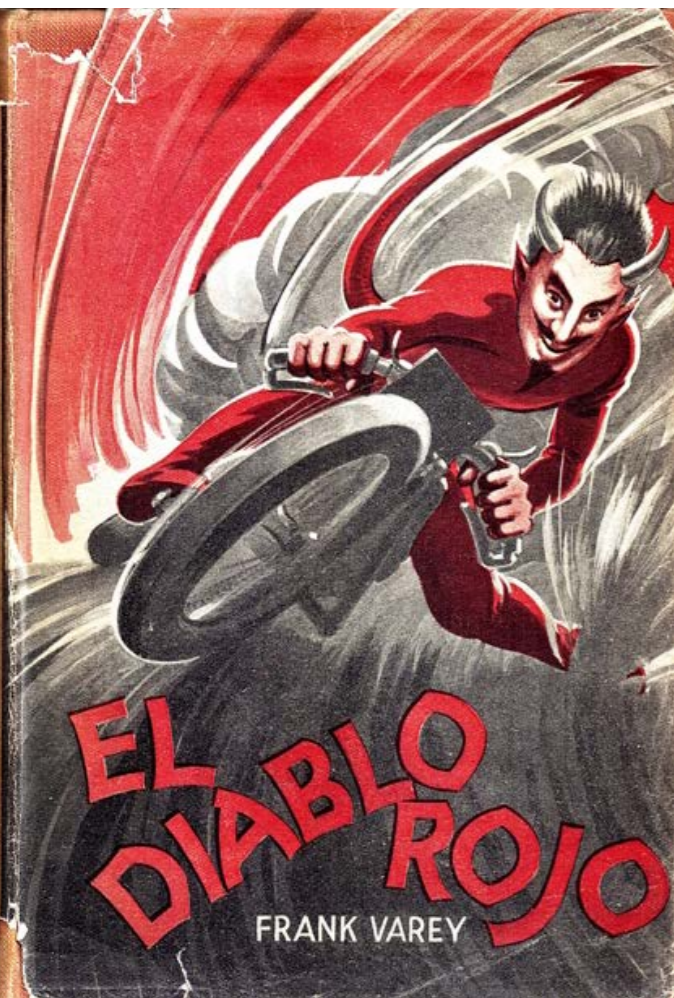


Cigarette cards celebrating speedway idols Vic Huxley and Billy Lamont

Always with an eye to pulling in more punters, speedway promoters were quick to introduce new attractions, and female racers were initially seen as a welcome addition to the programme. The most successful female rider was Fay Tylour, an already accomplished motorcyclist before she took to the dirt track. She raced on equal terms with the men and also against a small band of female rivals. However, the general standard of female racing wasn’t felt to be overly high and male competitors tended not to want to race against the women (the explanation was they didn’t want to cause them to crash, but a fear of being beaten by a girl was more likely to be the cause). When a female rider fell and broke her collar bone on the parade lap before a meeting, the authorities seized on the opportunity to ban women riders.

Tylour switched to car racing through the rest of the





(Above) Poster celebrating Frank Varey during his years as the "Red Devil" in Argentina

(Right) Split Waterman looking suitably rakish



(Right) *Speedway*, 1934, by Sybil Andrews (1898–1992), clearly influenced by the Futurist and Vorticist movements of the era, celebrating the technology, movement and energy of the modern age

Billy Lamont writes:



"I HAVE come to regard 'Ovaltine' as a necessity, for its beneficial effects upon the system play a great part in helping me to maintain a high standard of physical and mental fitness.

"Taken regularly as a beverage I find it fortifies the body and tones up the nerves, creating an abundance of 'pep' which, combined with the self-confidence which naturally follows, assists me so materially in my efforts on the Speedway."

**OVALTINE**  
For Strength, Vigour and Vitality

Prices in Gf. Britain and N. Ireland, 1/1, 1/10 and 3/3.

"Split" Waterman. Split had his first rides in Italy when the army staged some race meetings to entertain the troops. On his return to the UK, Split (so nicknamed after what today might be described as a wardrobe malfunction in the racing leathers department) quickly established himself as one of England's top performers, regularly representing his country and twice taking the silver medal in the world championships. His transfer from Wembley to Haringey in 1950 attracted a record-breaking £3000 fee. Waterman's racing career ended with retirement in 1962. He was, however, back in the headlines in 1968 when he was sentenced to four years in prison for bullion smuggling and firearms offences.

Since those heady days, speedway's fortunes have fluctuated somewhat. Currently it is something of a minority sport that has struggled to attract money, people and media interest. Tellingly not one club remains in London. However, if you know where to look, speedway continues to produce brave (to the point of recklessness) and colourful characters who risk life and limb to dish up thrills and spills on the dirt track.

1930s and after being interned during the war (for supporting Mosley's Blackshirts) she went to the USA and continued a successful career on four wheels. She was once quoted as saying that if she found a man who was harder to handle than a car, she would give up racing. She never married.

The current world champion—Britain's Tai Woffinden—won the title despite breaking his collar bone twice during the season and riding through the pain barrier. As the speedway adverts say—no brakes, no gears, no fear.

Along with every other aspect of "normal" life, speedway was interrupted during the war, with the exception of regular racing at Belle Vue, Manchester. The immediate post-war years brought yet another boom period for the sport and created more headline-grabbing riders. One such star was Squire



Faye Tylour (l) and Eva Asquith at Wembley in 1929



# THE BROGUES GALLERY

WITH ARTEMIS SCARHEART



In which a Member of the New Sheridan Club is asked to introduce themselves to other Members so that those at Home and Across the Seas may all get to know fellow Club Members. No part of this interview may be used in court or bankruptcy proceedings.



## Pandora Harrison

'Style over speed'

### Name or preferred name?

Pandora Harrison, aka Pandora Pitstop, or just 'Panza'. (Yes, the German tank reference is intentional. Something to do with humour, or so I'm told...)

### Why that nickname or nom de plume?

Several years ago, when I tasked myself to learn

to ride a motorcycle, I had an idea for a character loosely based upon Penelope Pitstop of *Wacky Races* and created a website chronicling her adventures. Pandora Pitstop is the slightly mad, older sister and true heiress of Pitstop Patented Pistons. Company accountant Sylvester Sneekly (and underworld crime lord aka The Hooded Claw) had her committed when she refused his advances. He now pursues Penelope. Read the full cast of characters at [www.pandorapitstop.com](http://www.pandorapitstop.com)

### Where do you hail from?

Buffalo, New York, which coincidentally is where one of my literary heroines, Mame Dennis, hails from. Apparently she too left Buffalo as she had everything to offer it but it had nothing left to offer her. I have lived in England for almost 30 years.

### Favourite Cocktail?

A Singapore Sling, although any gin-based nonsense does the trick.

### Most Chappist Skill?

I look good in hats.

### Most Chappist Possession?

A copy of a 1935 lady's tweed suit that I made for the 2012 London Tweed Run, for which was bestowed upon me the top prize of 'Most Dashing Dame'. One of the best moments of my life.

### Personal Motto?

'Style over speed', which is the motto I use for my Pandora Pitstop website. It refers to my choice of machine, a Royal Enfield '65 which, although not known for its speed, certainly has plenty of style.

### Favourite Quotes?

'Life is a banquet and most poor bastards are starving to death.'  
—Mame Dennis, from the book *Auntie Mame* by Patrick Dennis

### Not a lot of people know this about me, but...

I am legally allowed to travel under three different identities.

### How long have you been involved with the NSC?

Approximately four years, perhaps more by accident.

### How did you hear about the Club to begin with?

I seem to recall being 'carded' by a member at some occasion or event.

### What one thing would you recommend to fellow Members and why (cocktail, night out, tailor, watchmaker, public house, etc.)?

I recommend the possession of something custom-made be that an item of clothing, a website, a piece of jewellery, a portrait or even just a monogram or logo. To have a skilled craftsman create something just for you is a wonderful thing.

### Your three chosen dinner party guests from history or fiction and why?

Mame Dennis, David Niven and Croesus, King of Lydia. Mamie would bring the

As Pandora Pitstop



hooch, David would supply the wit and Croesus would pick up the tab.

**Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?**  
Artemis Scarheart. [Why was this answer already filled in on the form? I'm loath to alter it in case it is considered bad form or causes ill luck...]

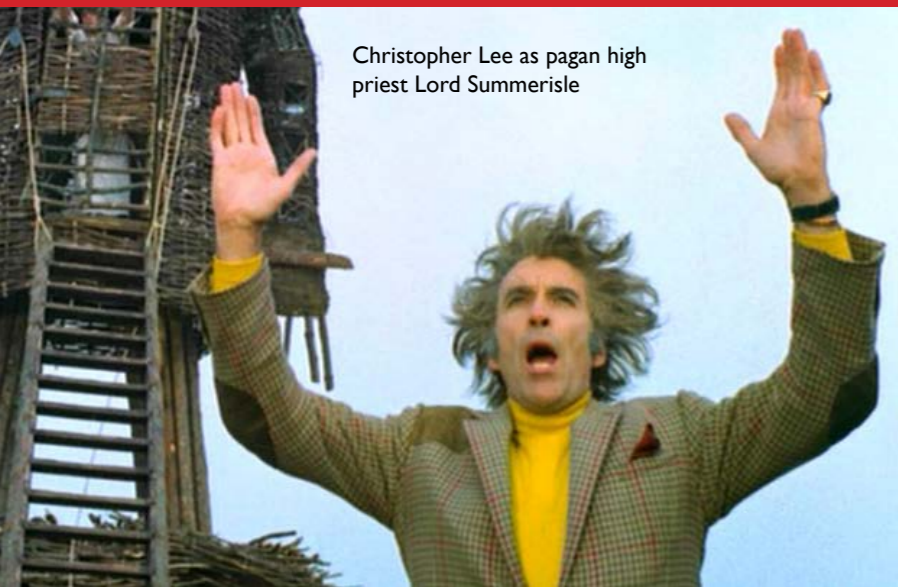
### Have you done a Turn yet? If so what was it on, if not what are you planning to do?

Yes. I believe I possibly hold the record for the longest talk given (over 2 hours) on the subject of corsetry and foundation garments. My thanks to all who managed to stay awake and not miss their trains.

*Thank you for allowing yourself to be interviewed in the palatial surroundings of the NSC Club House. On behalf of the Members may I respectfully ask you to resign.*







Christopher Lee as pagan high priest Lord Summerisle

Film magazine even voted *The Wicker Man* the sixth greatest British film of all time.

Music features heavily, whether it is pagan chants or Britt Eckland's dreamy song (famously accompanied by nude dancing)—at one point director Robin Hardy informed the crew they were making a musical—and various rock bands have released covers of some numbers.

Sadly the studio didn't know what to do with the oddity, cutting chunks off it, suggesting a re-edit with a happier ending and eventually putting it out as a B-movie supporting *Don't*

*Look Now*. In 2001 a Director's Cut was stitched together from recovered footage, adding 15 minutes, and it is this version we will be watching, the longest currently available.

## NSC FILM NIGHT

### *The Wicker Man (Director's Cut)* (1973)

**Sunday 27th April**

7pm–11pm (screening from 8pm)

The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)

Admission: Free

Only a few days before May Day, it seemed apt to show this classic British horror movie concerning ancient pagan practises like those still observed on May Day in places like Padstow, Cornwall, where the whole town turns out in prescribed outfits and processes through the town singing a traditional song.

The plot concerns a devoutly Christian Scottish policeman, played by Edward Woodward, who is sent to investigate the disappearance of a child on a remote island. He is horrified to realise that the only religion practised on the island is a form of paganism: and with spring coming the locals feel the need to make a blood sacrifice to bring fertility back to the soil.

The louche, tweedy boss of the island, Lord Summerisle, is played by Christopher Lee. Keen to escape the gory Hammer stereotype in which he felt trapped at the time, Lee was a great champion of what he considered a more literate type of horror film, performing for free and even paying for tickets to encourage critics to see it. Out of his 275 films he considers this the best. *Total*



(Above) a hobby horse character in the procession in *The Wicker Man*; (below) a real 'Obby 'Oss from the ritual still practised in Padstow on May Day every year. It is said that if the 'Oss catches a woman under its skirts it will boost her fertility



anything claustrophobic.

Towards the end a folk song is sung, and this triggers a memory in Gretta: a long-forgotten beau used to sing it to her, a young man who loved her so much he allowed himself to die for her. As she tells this story to Gabriel he reflects what



## Night of the Dead

OUR MARCH FILM NIGHT finally saw what was originally intended to be the second part of our February Valentine's-themed double bill. The film was *The Dead* (1987), proposed by Chuckles Youngusband, and it couldn't have contrasted more with the Harold Lloyd comedy we showed the previous month.

An adaptation of a James Joyce short story, the longest in the collection *The Dubliners*, the film follows an Epiphany party thrown in 1904 by two elderly sisters, focusing on their nephew, the quiet academic Gabriel Conroy and his wife Gretta. Much of it is gently comic, observing the hostesses' concerns over the running of the party, carriage drivers who don't know their way around Dublin, the behaviour of Freddie, browbeaten by his mother and turned to drink, and Gabriel's nerves over the speech he must make at the end of dinner. As Chuckles himself observed, not much really happens. Apart from a few scenes in carriages at the beginning and the end, the whole film takes place inside the sisters' house, giving it a warmly enclosed feeling, rather than



Chuckles delivers his introductory address

a small and unexciting role he has played in her life, and considers his elderly aunt's all-too-imminent passing. "Better to pass boldly into the other world in the full glory of our passion than to fade and wither dimly with age. I've never felt that way about any woman." All over Ireland snow is falling on the living and the dead, faintly, "like the descent of their last end". It is worth noting that the director John Huston, better known for masculine action films such as the *Maltese Falcon* (1941) and the *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948), was himself dying as he made it.

Thanks to Chuckles for suggesting the film.



Let's not forget the key supporting role played by the Tea House's famous cakes



# The Cocktail Cabinet

Wherein Members gab about giggle-water

## Thinking ahead

By David Bridgman-Smith

At a recent vermouth launch catering for more than 60 people, I was interested to note that all of the cocktails for the event had been pre-batched. Essentially many, if not all, of the ingredients were mixed up in the correct proportions but large quantities—you know those wine glasses that hold a whole bottle? Well picture a cocktail glass that holds a litre of liquid... Of course, the glasses in use were actually of a normal size, but when a customer ordered a drink, the staff simply poured out a ready-mixed portion then stirred or shook it with ice and served.

This is not a new idea: even Jerry Thomas, creator of probably the first ever cocktail book in 1862, described how to do this. Indeed, this is part of the concept of a bar that opened last year in Hoxton, The White Lyan, where all cocktails are pre-batched. They are also pre-diluted with specially filtered water and chilled, so there isn't even the need for ice.

I first tried pre-batching drinks when I had agreed to run a bar for a 50th birthday party with about 50 guests in tow. Even with a short cocktail list, making each cocktail from scratch on the night would have been a little too much for me to tackle—after all, I'm a lush, not a bartender!

Mrs. B is also a fan of a pre-mixed Rob Roy, kept in the freezer and then poured into a chilled glass, which produces a drink that she describes as a flavoursome delight with a wonderful texture.

Given all these thoughts, I decided to do a little research on which classic cocktails work well made as pre-batches (working hard so Club Members don't have too!). The results of this study are given below.

N.B. The drinks were mixed and then bottled for 24 hours before tasting. In the spirit of White Lyan, they were all served chilled from

the fridge, without ice.

### Dry Martini

5 parts dry gin, 1 part dry vermouth

Despite the sentiments of Bernard DeVoto—"You can no more keep a Martini in the refrigerator then you can keep a kiss there"—I think this actually works quite well. You can see why the likes of Gordon's were making premixed Martinis (mostly in miniature bottles) up until the 1980s. The drink comes across a lot "wetter" (i.e. you can taste more of the vermouth) than a fresh one. While this is ultimately no match for a freshly made Martini, it is, at a pinch, a reasonable substitute.

### Negroni

Equal parts dry gin, red vermouth and Campari

This seems surprisingly sweet in bottled form, although I used my standard recipe. A little disappointing, actually. Given that this drink is very easy to make, I think I would recommend sticking to the fresh version.

### Manhattan

4 parts rye whiskey, 1 part red vermouth, orange bitters

Lovely: the flavours of the whiskey and vermouth become well-integrated after their time marrying in the bottle. It also has a very smooth texture and hints of chocolate, plus a touch of nuttiness. Superb and a rival to a freshly made Manhattan.

### Old Fashioned

6 parts bourbon, 2 parts water, 1 part Sugar Syrup, dash of Angostura Bitters

The Old Fashioned is another whiskey cocktail that works well pre-batched. It is also the best commercially bottled cocktail that I have tried. My version had both sweetness and dryness to it, with complex notes from the whiskey and quite a lot of spice from the bitters. Not too sweet.

### Louched Absinthe

Absinthe verte with ice water added until it "louches" (turns cloudy)

I've never seen this done before, but it actually really works; is there a market for a ready-to-drink absinthe that is pre-louched? Maybe. This still has a lot of complexity and, apart from the ceremony and ritualistic aspects of preparing absinthe, it is pretty close to the freshly prepared drink.

### Blue Cardinal

2 parts dry gin, 2 parts grappa, 1 part blue curaçao

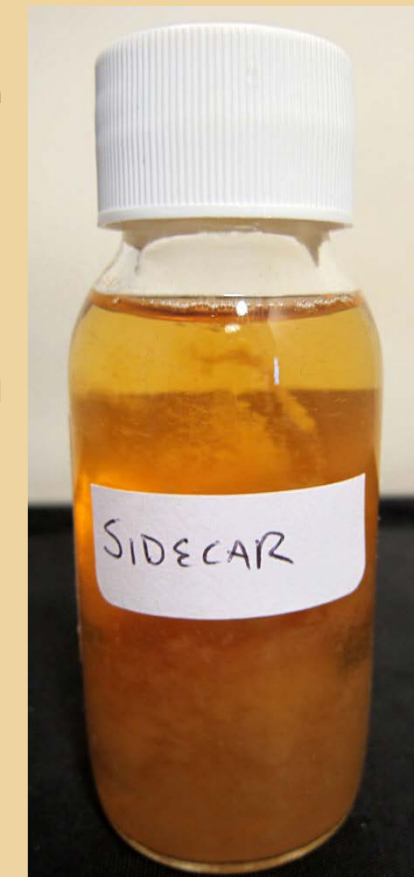
This was an experiment to try a drink that didn't taste so hot on its own, but that may benefit from a little time to marry in the bottle.

Well, it appears that my best hopes were unfounded: the gasoline aspect of the grappa persists in a pre-batched version (I think my bottle of grappa was sub-par, having been given to me by a family member who seemed to be glad to be shot of it). This is an awful drink. Enough said.

### In Conclusion

Whiskey cocktails seem to have the greatest success when premixed; as well as the additional convenience, the ingredients seem to benefit from having a few hours to marry together in the bottle.

One note of caution: using perishable fresh ingredients, such as lemon juice, is not recommended. I attempted to make a batch of Sidecars (Cognac, Grand Marnier and lemon juice), but, after an hour in the bottle, it became rather unappetising (see picture). It is possible to rectify this by shaking the bottle with vigour and the result was drinkable. But I'd rather have a Manhattan.



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





# The thoughts of Chairman Torquil

## Schwips

By Torquil Arbuthnot

IN 1982 MY FATHER was posted to Vienna to be manager of a British bank, as he spoke fluent German. The bank overlooked the Kärtnering. I saw Pope John Paul II in his Popemobile drive down the Ring, and my Austrian friend dryly remarked, “Adolf had a better turnout.”

Vienna, in the 1980s, was the go-between country if one wanted to deal with Comecon and the Western World (and the Third World, though both sides harrumphed and covered that bit up). My father had to expand the branch which meant involving himself in the tedious business of Austrian employment and banking law. (I will, of course, be re-issuing my lengthy monograph, through the Club, with Hartley & Hutchinson, Scotney-Le-Cheyne addenda, *Sundry Thoughts on the Austrian Banking System, 1982–1983*. The *Times Literary Supplement* said it was a “rip-snorter of a read that gripped like a hangman’s last handshake”)\*

The bank needed a legal advisor, Austrian banking law being as much fun as one can imagine without taking one’s trousers off. I once looked at a book about Austrian banking law, and then went out into the garden (still in Vienna) and threw sticks into several walnut trees. So the bank appointed an avuncular old bloke called [um, I know his name, and he’s dead, but his wife isn’t, so I shall call him] EG.

EG invited my family to his hunting lodge about an hour’s drive from Vienna. They had a dog, Schwips, a hairy dachshund, and they had to let him out of the car just before the lodge, so he could bark at a particular tree. Then he’d hustle back in the car. EG’s wife looked perplexed and said, “I don’t know why he does this.” Austrians don’t like irrational behaviour.

EG’s hunting lodge was typically Austrian, with the ground floor a big open-plan living area

and the upstairs the sleeping quarters. There were lots of antlers speckled over the wall. My father’s joke while noticing an “eight-pointer”, that he must have been going a heck of a speed to get through that wall, was met with the Teutonic ice-breaker, “So! An English joke!” EG said he was a recognised “culler” and sometimes he got rung up in the morning by the local deer-culler (there is probably a loooooong German word for this quasi-autonomous profession) and asked to shoot a deer. So he’d get up in his pyjamas, chambered a round into his Mauser (he said he kept it in the wardrobe), and plugged a deer; and then got back to bed.

I browsed his bookshelves, as I do, and most of the books were the 1970s Penguin orange-spined P G Wodehouse, and a smattering of John Mortimer’s *Rumpole* stories. I commented on them, and EG said when Austria had been under 4 power control after the war, he’d been in the British zone. He praised, particularly, the British officer’s wife’s Yorkshire puddings. EG said he read Wodehouse for fun. When he wasn’t shooting medium-sized animals in his pyjamas.

My sister, Caroline, has Down’s syndrome. Caroline was very taken with the daft dog Schwips. Two days later a parcel arrived at my father’s office, addressed to Caroline, a toy Schwips, from EG and his wife, with a label round the cuddly toy in English, “I am Schwips, will you be my friend?” Very sweet.

Later I said to my father, “EG and his wife seemed very nice.” My father told me EG had been commander of an *Einsatzgruppen* in World War II.

*\*Available from all good bookshops in Soho that have an orange sign. And a badly-spelled card that says, “Large French chest for sale.” Pop downstairs and ask for Maltese Dave. Ignore his query, “Was it special bondage, sir?” and reply, “Special Constable Compton-Bassett to you, young feller-me lad.” When he gives you the “book” with its special bookmarks, don’t say, “This £50 note is still wet...” as Maltese Dave will then have to ask Three-Fingered Harry to give it another spin in the dryer. Don’t forget to give Clayton “Panther/Meerkat/The Shadow” Hartley of the Yard his cut.*



## Pyjama Games

by Mark Gidman

PRESS RELEASE

RUMOURS HAVE BEEN swirling around for some time now regarding my appearance on the BBC, rumours which I can, after talking to my legal representatives, now confirm.

After receiving numerous messages, (including from people that I have not seen or heard from in about four years, as well as people approaching me at club meetings and the pub) I have decided to issue this photo release of my endeavours.

Needless to say, before negotiating my fee with the producers, I asked that my evening wear should be styled in NSC club colours—they agreed! I believe this photo is a fitting tribute to the NSC and demonstrates amply how the Club’s Members (and colours) have infiltrated into the BBC! I am especially impressed at Claudia Winkleman taking a keen interest in the attire (or is it me? we shall never know).

Over the course of the next few months, I shall be releasing yet more photos of previous endeavours as I cannot (or will not?) contain my fame any longer.

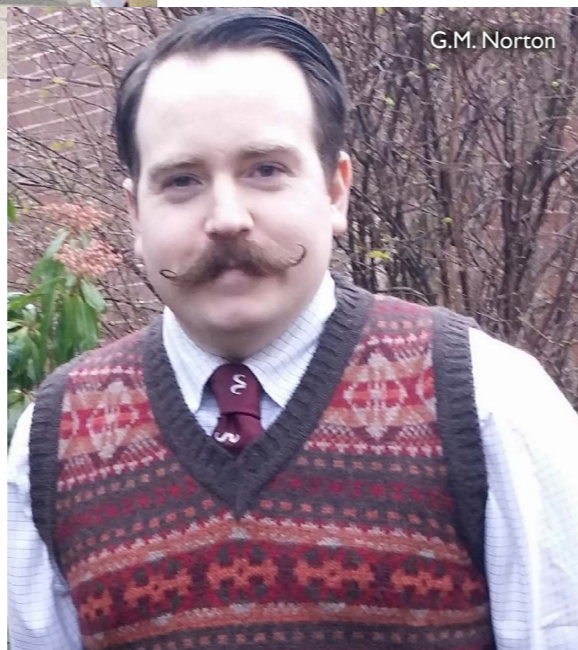
Mark C.J. Gidman







Jonathan Rooke



G.M. Norton



CLUB NOTES

Club Tie Corner

JUST THE ONE Club Tie spot this month, but it confirms Royal patronage, no less. This snap above of HRH Prince Charles the Duke of Wales in Qatar was submitted by Mark Davies (who appears to be undercover in Bangkok at the moment—don't worry, we won't blow your cover).

New Members

THE GREEN SHOOTS of recovery spotted last month have been sprouting verdantly, as we welcome three new Members who have all joined up this month: Rannick Yaczynski-Henk from Leiden in the Netherlands, Jonathan Rooke from Quedgeley, Gloucestershire, and G.M. Norton, protagonist of Norton of Morton.



Rannick Yaczynski-Henk. He's an archaeologist, I believe, rather than a grave digger



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](http://www.newsheridanclub.co.uk) plus our Facebook page and the web forum.

🎩 NSC Club Night

Wednesday 2nd April  
7pm–11pm  
Upstairs, The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB  
Members: Free  
Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)  
See page 2.

Cakewalk Café

Every Wednesday  
7pm–1am (swing dance classes 7–8pm, 8–9pm)  
Passing Clouds, 1 Richmond Road, Dalston, London E8 4AA  
Admission: £8 for the dance class, £4 for the club (discounted if you're doing the class)  
Dress: 1920s/1930s preferred

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

Lucky Dog Picture House

Thursday 3rd April  
7.30pm, show from 8pm  
The Teahouse Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL  
Admission: £10 from [www.teahousetheatre.co.uk](http://www.teahousetheatre.co.uk)

A film night with a difference: Lucky Dog only show silent movies, presented with a live musical accompaniment by their in-house band (featuring music from the era in which the films were made, I believe). This time featuring Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid* (1921) and Laurel and Hardy's *The Lucky Dog* (1921)—the film from which the Picture House gets its name.

The Candlelight Club:  
Sakura in Old Tokyo

Friday 4th and Saturday 5th April  
7pm–12am  
A secret London location  
Admission: £20 in advance  
Dress: Prohibition dandies, swells, gangsters and molls, decadent aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know

The Candlelight Club is a clandestine pop-up cocktail party with a 1920s speakeasy flavour, in a secret London venue lit by candles. Each event offers a one-off cocktail menu with special themes, plus live period jazz bands and vintage vinylism (sometimes from the New Sheridan Club's own DJ MC Fruity). Ticket holders get an email two days before revealing the location.



April is the festival of cherry blossom (*sakura*) in Japan: acres of fruitless trees are planted just for their beauty at this time, and *hanami* blossom-viewing parties are popular. In the 1920s this love of nature and tradition mingled with a surge in modernisation and social change—women suddenly had more freedom, the urban young embraced Western fashion, Art Deco, even jazz—to create a unique hybrid style, visible in the movies of the time (we'll be projecting a few of these). Cocktails came to be seen as the height of sophistication. At our party there will be live music from Benoit Viellefon's Hot Koto Ensemble—Benoit's wife is Japanese and the band will all be playing in full kimono.

**Bethnal Green Affordable Vintage Fair**  
Sunday 6th April



11am–4.30pm (earlybird 10.30am)  
York Hall, 5 Old Ford Road, London E2 9PJ  
Admission: £2 (earlybird £3)

One of the Judy's chain of events around the country, Bethnal Green's Affordable Vintage Fair has been running since 2006, with a specific remit to be accessible and affordable.

Auntie Maureen presents

### **Vintage-a-Fair**

Sunday 6th April

11am–5pm

Orford House Social Club and Institute, 73 Orford Road, Walthamstow Village, London E17 9QR

Admission: £2 on the door (£1 concs), under-15s free

Our own Auntie Maureen presents her own vintage fair. The stalls will be accompanied by a tea room run by Aura Rose Cakes & Patisseries and vintage beauty parlour by Ruth Coutinho, plus a bar, a real flea circus and gramophone music. If you would like to trade at the fair email Maureen at ask@auntieaureen.info.

Lipstick & Curls presents

### **Hair and Makeup**

#### **Academy**

Sunday 6th April

11am–6pm

Rosemary Branch Theatre, 2 Shepperton Road, London N1 3DT

Admission: £120

Vintage styling team Lipstick & Curls offer this full-day course, covering basic techniques such as pin curling, a range of classic hair styles, such as the victory roll, the poodle and the French pleat, plus a run-through of vintage makeup styles from the 1920s to 1960s. Includes lunch. For more details see lipstickandcurls.net.

### **Spin-a-Disc Social**

Monday 7th April

8–11pm

The Nag's Head, 9 Orford Road, Walthamstow Village, London E17 9LP

Admission: Free

A music night organised by Auntie Maureen: you bring your favourite discs (33, 45 or 78 rpm) and she spins them.

### **The Excelsior Club**

Saturday 12th April

7pm–12am

A secret London location

Admission: £20/25 in advance

Dress: Prohibition dandies, swells, gangsters and molls, degenerate aristos and decadent aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know

Everyone's favourite speakeasy Candlelight Club presents a new incarnation. Not all speakeasies were makeshift dives in basements: some were luxurious affairs that operated quite openly, thanks to ownership by a wealthy

gangster and the patronage of a corrupt Chief of Police. The Excelsior Club is an attempt to recreate the grand night clubs of the 1920s and 1930s, with an emphasis on service and splendour. For our opening night there will be dancing to Benoit Viellefon's Big Band and a dazzling floor show from six-piece dance troupe the Bee's Knees. More details to come...

### **Alex Mendham and his Orchestra at St Pancras**

Sunday 13th April

Midday–2pm

The concourse, St Pancras International railway station, Pancras Road, London N 1W 2QP

Admission: Free

Part of a year-long series of free concerts at the railway station (facilitated, I suspect, by the fact that there is a piano on the concourse), given by Alex and his 11-piece orchestra, recreating the music of the big dance orchestras of the 1920s and 1930s.

### **Tails and Twirls**

Friday 18th April

7pm–12am

The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL



Admission: £10 from WeGotTickets

Dress: Glamorous romantic, black tie for men

Tails and Twirls is a monthly dance event for ballroom and swing dancers. Dancing is mainly to period records, but there will also be a pianist/singer. There's a licensed bar and most drinks are £4. There will be a free beginner's ballroom dance lesson from 7.15 pm to 8.15 pm, with the main dancing from 8.30. The dances will be mainly quickstep, foxtrot, swing, slow and Viennese waltz, tango, rumba, jive and some cha cha. There will be some activities, like 'Excuse Me' dances, 'Bus Stops' and four taxi dancers, two male, two female, available free of charge. Any questions phone George Tudor-Hart on 020 8542 1490.

### **Paul Gunn & Worsted**

Tuesday 22nd April

Doors 6.30, show 7.30

The Pheasantry, Pizza Express, 152–4 Kings Road, London SW3 4UT

Admission: Tickets £15 from 020 7439 4962 or 0845 602 7017—NSC Members get 2-for-1

Paul Gunn's band Worsted—"Noel Coward meets the Buena Vista Social Club"—tread the boards once more, featuring English tea room/Latin dance band riffs on Chappist topics including hat doffing, tea and trouser selection, including some lyrics penned by Chap editor Gustav Temple himself. If you order tickets by phone and mutter "I am a Member of the New Sheridan Club" when doing so then you will be able to purchase two tickets for the price of one.

### **NSC Annual St George's Punting Trip**

Saturday 26th April

Assemble at the Turf Tavern from 10.30am; punting begins midday

Oxford

Admission: A contribution to the punt hire, around £20

Dress: Waterproof!

Like the turning of the seasons and the inevitability of a pauper's grave, the annual Club punting trip is approaching over the flooded fields of Oxfordshire in time for St George's Day. So join us in this most august of traditions and come punting. Someone has fallen in every year we go which is statistically impossible, so now we have an annual

sweepstake with the winner sweeping the pot into their boater and buying themselves another drink. They may even buy one for the poor sod who was the sacrifice to The River Gods this time. We assemble at the Turf Tavern for a sharpener around 10.30 then on to Magdalen Bridge boathouse for 12.00 where we cast off for a few hours in punts, rowboats and assorted contraptions. There follows a shared picnic, then we punt back and head into the fleshpots of Oxford for the evening. Jolly boating fun. More details to follow. See the Facebook event for late-breaking news.

### **NSC Film Night**

*The Wicker Man (Director's Cut)* (1973)

Sunday 27th April

7pm–11pm

The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)

Admission: Free

See page 12.





A heart-warming still life  
from our last meeting



### CONTACTING US

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FOR THE LATEST information on what the Club is up to, who has been arrested, etc., have a squizz at [www.newsheridanclub.co.uk](http://www.newsheridanclub.co.uk). For more photos of Club events go to [www.flickr.com/sheridanclub](http://www.flickr.com/sheridanclub). You can even befriend us electrically at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).