

This sporting life

A peek into the very particular world of Charles Tsua

'Is That a Real False Beard?'

Lobby Lud unleashes his 'long-awaited' long-player

Swakopmund

A little piece of imperial Germany in the Namibian desert

Teatime hero

How eccentric Victorian Robert Fortune risked all to bring us a cuppa



RESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • ISSUE 93 JULY 2014



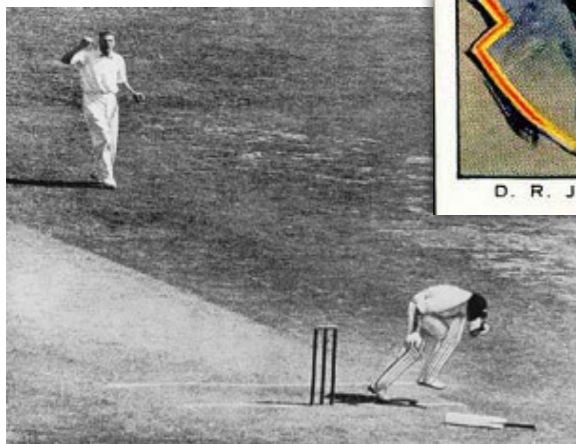
The New Sheridan Club traditionally meets in the upstairs room of The Wheatsheaf, just off Oxford Street. The Wheatsheaf is one of Fitzrovia's historic pubs, a one-time haunt of Dylan Thomas, George Orwell, Augustus John and Julian Maclaren-Ross. In fact Thomas met his wife Caitlin in The Wheatsheaf 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

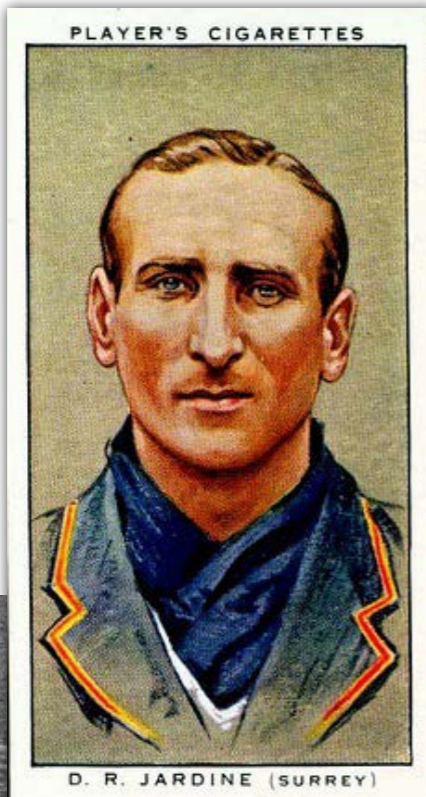
The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 2nd July in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm, when the Earl of Essex will pull no punches on the subject of D.R. Jardine, the England cricket captain who was able to wrest The Ashes from the clutches of Australia during the infamous "Bodyline" Tour of Australia in 1932-3, but very nearly lost the Dominion from the Empire in the process.

The Last Meeting

At the June meeting our speaker was Eugenie Rhodes, whose subject was the



(Above) D.R. Jardine—hero or villain? (Left) Bert Oldfield gets a ball in the face courtesy of Harold Larwood



Victorian botanist-adventurer Robert Fortune. She had originally been planning to cover Reginald Farrer as well, another eccentric plant-hunter, but she found Fortune quite fascinating enough to fill a whole talk.

Fortune is best remembered as the man to whom you owe your cuppa—before him, tea had to be traded from the Chinese, who guarded its secrets closely. Fortune risked his life (at a time when venturing more than a day's journey from the treaty ports meant a death sentence for foreigners) going under cover, disguised as a mandarin, to collect specimens of tea plants in China and bribed local experts to advise the British on setting up their own tea plantations in India—with the result that the price of tea plummeted in Blighty, bringing it within reach of the common man. Fortune himself, pretty much a self-made man, managed to live up to his name and make himself rich by selling the other exotic specimens he collected on his travels.

Many thanks to Eugenie for her talk. An essay version begins on page 4.



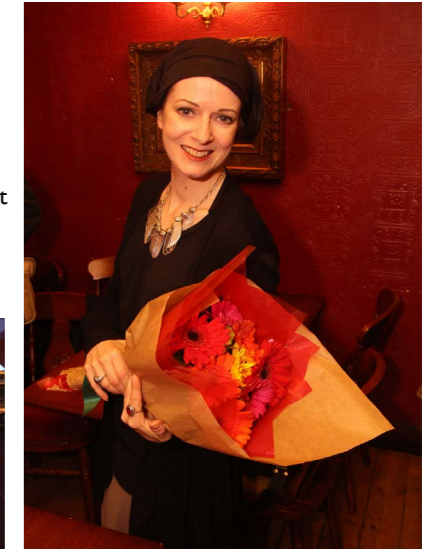
(Above) Eugenie with an image of Fortune in disguise as a mandarin and (right) with a camellia sinensis—a tea plant to you; (below) Mikhail can't resist giving an impromptu lesson in tying a bow tie



(Above) Mr Gary Grønnestad; (left) look carefully and you'll see that Scarheart has subtly changed his look; (below) Eugenie's rapt audience



(Right) Pandora with a bunch of flowers given to her by Mikhail as a thank-you for putting him up to the Tweed Run—at which event he won to prize for best-dressed gent



(Right) Dorian poses a question from the floor; (below, left to right) Simon smokes a particularly noxious brand; Edward and Kellyanne O'Callaghan; Eugenie with Oliver in a riot of patterns



Robert Fortune

HERO OF THE BRITISH CUPPA

Eugenie Rhodes on the eccentric daredevil who brought tea to the masses

ROBERT FORTUNE HAD a splendidly apt name. In Latin there is a saying, *nomen est omen* (the name is the sign) and Robert Fortune really was a person who took a most adventurous and daring approach to life, who seized Fortune by the scruff of the neck and pushed his luck as far as it would go. Hailing from a small town in Scotland, he ventured to far-flung parts of the world not seen by Westerners since Marco Polo's day, doing many wonderful, extraordinary and sometimes wicked things.

He is a hero to me; I am madly keen on tea and just as Henry Ford had a vision that one day every American would own a car, at a time when a motor car was only for the rich, Robert Fortune's gift was to make good or reasonable quality tea available to most people in Britain as something they could afford. A wise philosopher once said that there was no trouble so great that it could not be lessened by a cup of tea and Queen Victoria's first words on ascending the throne were reputedly, "Bring me a cup of tea and *The Times*."

Tea was first drunk on these shores during

the reign of Charles II. At the time it was a great luxury, only for the wealthiest of the wealthy. It came from China and obviously in the days before steamships it had to travel for months across perilous waters, making its supply extremely limited. Charles loved tea so much that he drank 30 cups a day. Mind you, it was not drunk from big mugs as it is today, but out of a small bowl as you might find in a Chinese restaurant today. It was served quite weak and without milk and sugar, which were added later as a way of making the tea go further. By the 19th century, when the British ran India



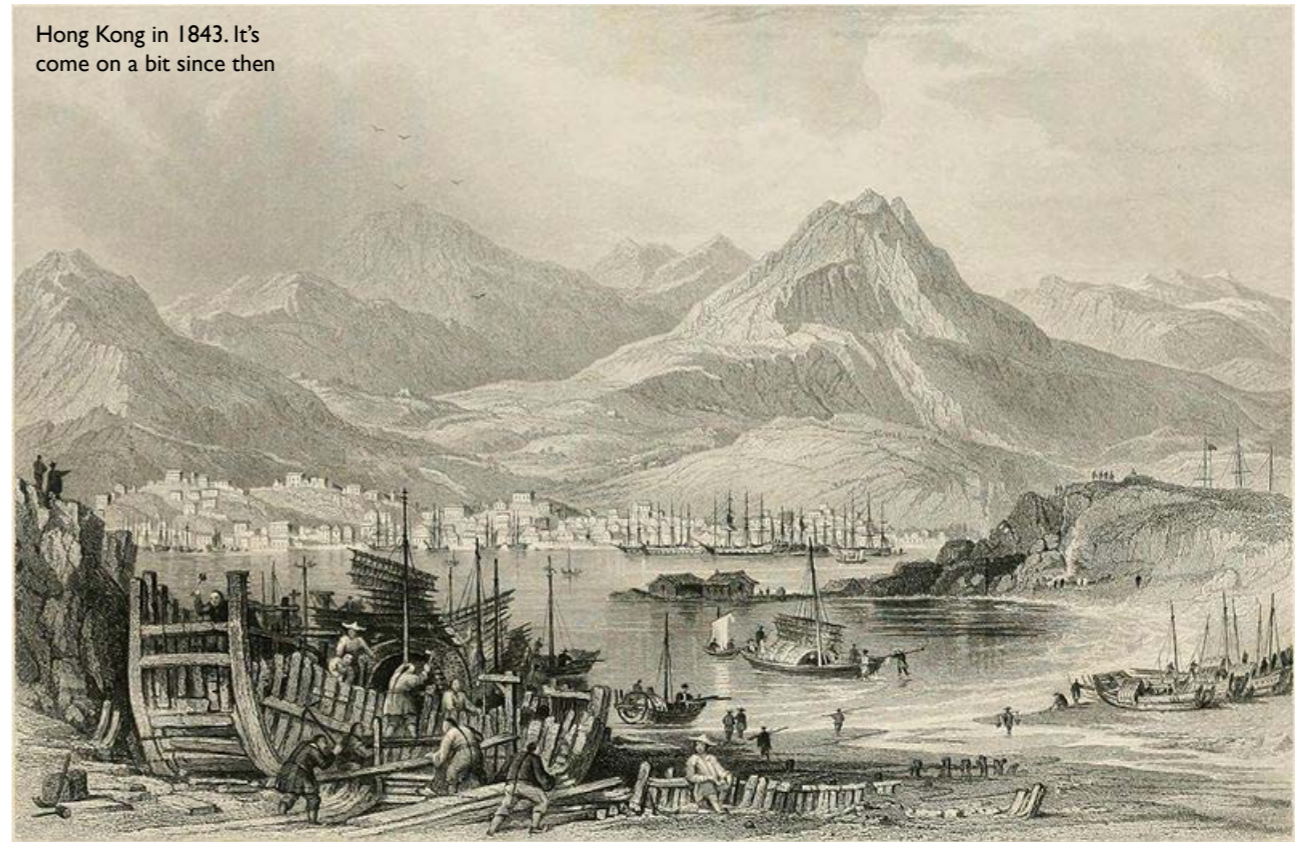
Robert Fortune

through the East India Company, most tea had become much cheaper, but mass-market tea was of poor quality. So let us go to 1812—more precisely 16th September 1812, the date of Robert Fortune's birth.

Fortune's background was humble. His father and grandfather were nurserymen and his parents had only married ten weeks before his birth. (Later, for the sake of propriety, Fortune officially postponed his birth to 1813.) But thanks to talent, tenacity and a lively mind, Robert rose quickly. He trained at the botanic gardens in

Edinburgh and served his apprenticeship under famous botanist William McNab. In 1838 he married Jane Penny and went on to have six surviving children. In 1842 he was successfully recommended by McNab for a post at the Royal Horticultural Society's gardens at Chiswick,

Hong Kong in 1843. It's come on a bit since then



where he studied under Charles Linley.

In the autumn of that year the Society offered him £100 plus expenses if he were to go to China and bring back wonderful specimens with which to enrich Britain. There were tales of Imperial peaches that weighed two pounds each and blue flowering peonies.

In the early industrial age botanical investigation would have been the equivalent of Microsoft R&D in the 21st century. Fortune was eager to grasp this spectacular opportunity to advance his career but he did point out that the salary was meagre. He was sharply rebuked by the Society—the honour and glory of his task were meant to compensate for any deficiency in remuneration. (Most Victorian botanists were men of private means, so it was easy for them to adopt this attitude.)

Fortune reached Hong Kong, his first taste of China, in 1843. Britain had just won the first Opium War and this victory was a crucial factor in making his mission possible. For many years China has pursued a policy of splendid isolation and xenophobia, and it was only military defeat that obliged her to change this. The Treaty of Nanking ceded Hong Kong island to the British who were also allowed access to several ports. Prior to that British merchants' access was limited to warehouses on the seafront 200 yards

from the walls of the city where the Chinese lived.

Fortune found Honkers "a barren island with only a few huts upon it... I fear Hong Kong will be a failure." He may have got that wrong, but in fairness when he visited again in 1848 he was impressed by the change, how it was flourishing and starting to bustle.

What we know about his expedition to the Middle Kingdom comes from the book Fortune subsequently published about it, *Three Years' Wandering in the Northern Provinces of China*. It was a huge success and turned him into a celebrity. In it he paints himself as a man of resourcefulness, bravery and valour, particularly in his tale of an encounter with pirates. The Chinese seas were infested with fierce and cruel pirates whose brutality was exacerbated by the knowledge that if they were caught they would be crucified and sliced to death. Fortune relates how, while laid low in his cabin with fever, he realised that a black-flagged vessel was bearing down on the ship. Staggering to the deck, he managed with his pistols and rifles to terrify the enemy into retreat. Chinese pirates travelled in packs, so scarcely had he seen off the first ship when another approached. But with a combination of ingenuity and audacious bluffing he succeeded in getting the second convoy of pirates to cower



Some fierce Chinese pirates of the ilk allegedly fended off by Fortune himself

before him. In gratitude for saving the day, ‘The captain, pilot, passengers and crew came and knelt before me as if to some superior being.’ Whether he really was as plucky as he claims I leave to your discernment, as there was no one around to contradict his memoirs when they were printed in Britain.

Fortune was promoted to curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden, which provided him with a secure and comfortable livelihood. But a greater opportunity was to come his way. In *Three Years’ Wandering* he had devoted two chapters to what he had observed about the cultivation and processing of the tea plant, secrets jealously guarded by the Chinese. Although the Emperor prohibited foreigners from visiting areas where tea was cultivated, Fortune had managed to see the green tea gardens near one of the treaty ports. It was this that led the next proposal to come his way.

In May 1848 Dr John Royle, a botanist working for the East India Company, had seen its monopoly on trade in the Orient dwindle; despite still being the de facto government of India under British influence, its powers were

waning. Like a modern-day firm that, though a behemoth, is at risk of being overtaken by competitors, it needed something new that would revitalise its fortunes with a bang. And the East India Company believed that its salvation lay with the tea plant.

Fortune was invited to mount an expedition. This time he would be handsomely rewarded: he would receive £500 per annum and all his expenses would be covered. Moreover, with the exclusion of tea, he would have the rights to everything he collected—he would be able to make a huge amount of money from selling curiosities and exotica at auction. But in return he was to do something highly dangerous and strictly illegal. He was to smuggle tea plants, seedlings and seeds out of China, stealing the best he could obtain; he was to ferret out China’s knowledge of planting, growing, processing and packing tea; and he was to formulate tea recipes. The East India Company intended to grow tea plants in India, then export the produce to Britain and the rest of the British Empire. They knew they were on to a winner.

The first India tea for the British market had been grown in Assam in 1815, but it was chewed rather than drunk and was of low quality, originating from inferior plants from the Cantonese black market. The East India Company needed something people would relish.

In Shanghai Fortune recruited two Chinese men, Wang and “The Coolie”, from celebrated green tea growing districts. He had learned to speak (though not read or write) Mandarin, but his educated Chinese was incomprehensible to the Coolie. With Wang he could communicate via pidgin. These two men were to be his porters, interpreters, guides, cooks and bodyguards on his dangerous journey into the interior.

Fortune was protected by European law within the treaty ports, but beyond them he fell under the jurisdiction of the Emperor of Heaven—and it was the death penalty for foreigners to venture beyond the demarcated boundary. His servants insisted Fortune disguise himself as a Chinaman. Dressing in a mandarin’s flowing robes, he had his forehead shaved high and a pigtail grafted on to his head. Assuming the name Sing Wa (Bright Flower), when asked his provenance, this secret

agent replied that he was Chinese, from “a distant province beyond the Great Wall”. Despite the fact that he was nearly a foot taller than his compatriots and his features and colouring quite different, Sing Wa was believed because Chinese outside of the treaty ports had no idea what Westerners looked like.

The distinguished mandarin managed to inspect a tea factory and discovered that green tea was not a different species from black tea, as had been supposed, but was simply processed differently.

Westerners were hitherto clueless about how tea got from a leaf on a plant to a brew in a pot. Fortune also discovered that the green tea for export was “enhanced” with colourings to make it conform to Western expectations of what green tea should look like—colourings that were in fact poisonous. When this subsequently became known to the British public at the Great Exhibition, green tea’s popularity plummeted.

Sing Wa journeyed into the interior and stayed with Wang’s family who, though poor,



What it was all about—the tea plant

were literate. After a few months of picking and collecting plants, Sing Wa returned to Shanghai where he personally escorted 10,000 tea seeds and 13,000 young plants packed in Wardian cases (portable greenhouses that enable plants to survive long sea crossings) to Hong Kong, whence they were to be shipped to the Calcutta Botanic Garden. Through a series of misfortunes, only a tiny proportion of the first consignment survived.

Then it was the turn of black tea. Sing Wa embarked on journey to the black tea hills of Fujin, travelling for nearly three months by boat, sedan chair and foot. He had sent Wang home to collect more seeds and recruited a new servant, Sing Hoo, who had a proud, dignified bearing and had been in the service of a mandarin affiliated to the Imperial family. As a relic from those days he possessed a small triangular flag bearing the arms of the Imperial court, which he would unfurl and display as a sort of get-out-of-jail-free card.

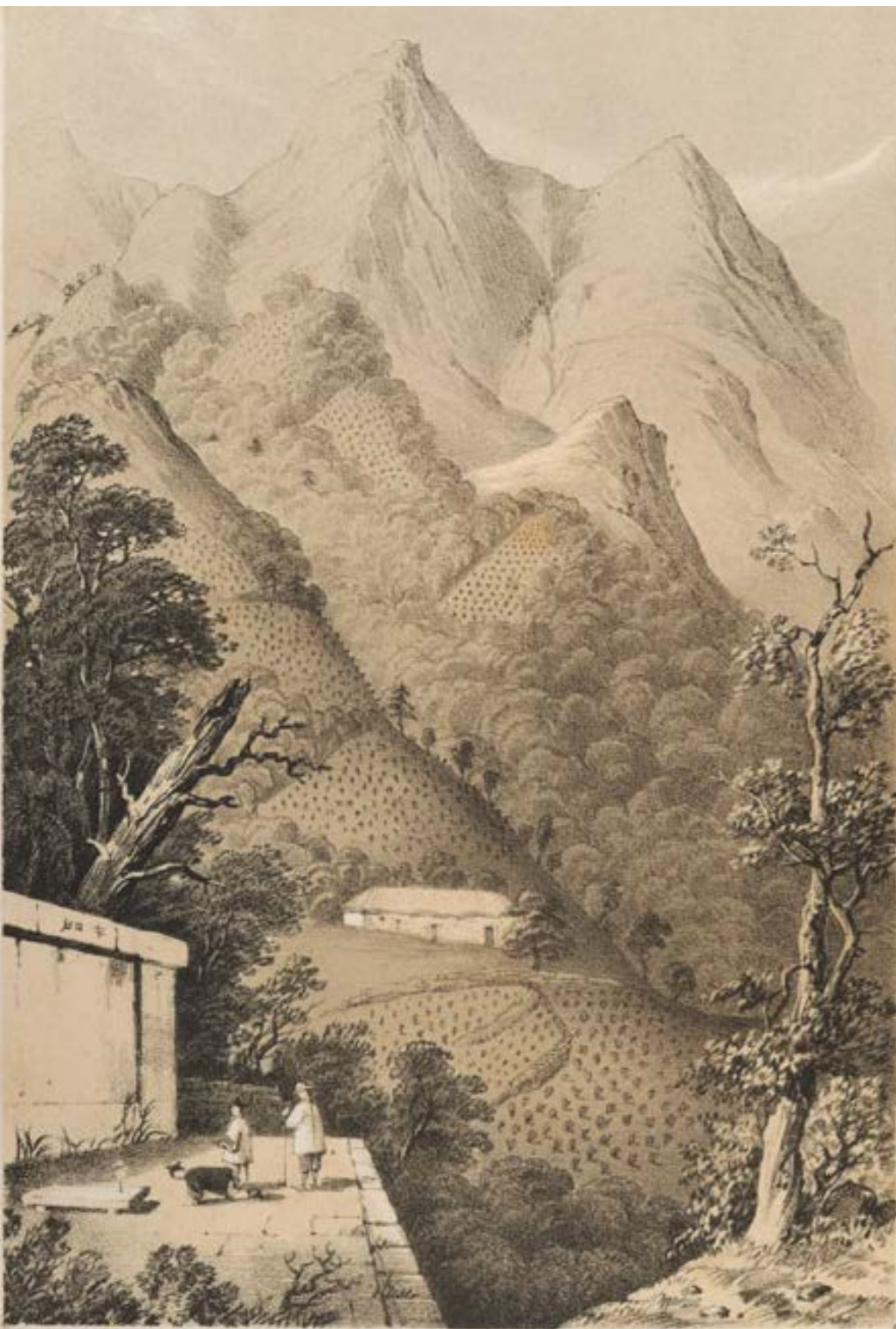


Fortune in disguise as “Sing Wa” the odd-looking mandarin

Sing Wa studied the conditions and techniques required for growing and processing black tea, and collected specimens. Meanwhile Sing Hoo was concocting ever more dazzling stories about his master's prestige—Sing Wa gradually evolved into a great and rich man with many wives, a respected leader, venerated warrior, friend of the Emperor and even a descendant of Genghis Khan.

Fortune's second tea shipment was successful and the new stock meant it became possible to produce Himalayan tea of vastly superior quality to what had gone before. He also

The frontispiece to Fortune's first travel book



managed to smuggle tea experts out of China. This was highly illegal and Fortune's details of how he did this are vague. The experts wept as they left China, not only because they were to be parted forever from their loved ones but also because they were convinced that tea, one of the seven necessities of life according to their culture, could not grow outside their country.

Robert Fortune came home to his wife and family and produced a second travel book before returning to China once more in the service of the East India Company, with a mandate not only to expand his tea investigations and lure black tea experts out of the country, but also to spy on opium farms and smuggle out samples of opium poppies. He was strangely silent about his drug-related activities when he published his third travel book.

Hardly had Fortune arrived home than the Second Opium War erupted and the Indian Mutiny broke out. The East India Company was dissolved after the mutiny but Fortune found a new employer in the American government: he was asked to do for the American tea industry what he had done for the British Empire.

His final journey to the Far East was as a self-employed individual. He visited Formosa (modern-day Taiwan) and Japan and learned about the production of silk and rice. He returned with many plants and treasures which he was able to sell for a fortune.

He spent the last years of his life at Kew and died in 1880. We know almost nothing about his private life, as his wife burned all of his papers and even his clothes after his death. Which perhaps tells you something.

THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB SUMMER PARTY

THE CURSE OF PHARAOH SHERIDAN

Saturday 26th July
7.30pm–1am

The Adam Street Club, 9 Adam Street,
London WC2N 6AA

Admission: Free to Members, £5 to guests

The New Sheridan Club invites you to flee in terror from the wrath of long-dead rulers of the Upper and Lower Nile. Join us as we explore a long forgotten tomb complex, try not to become cursed by a disgruntled Pharaoh and loot as many priceless treasures for the British Museum as we can before heading back to the terrace for sundowners served on the Rosetta Stone. Explorers, archaeologists, Egyptian princes and princesses, forgotten deities, French linguists, curators, sinister locals, occult orders sworn to protect ancient secrets and the cream of Egyptian society are all welcome.

There will be silly games, such as Shoot the Nose Off the Sphinx or our Interactive Tomb-Raiding Experience! There will be live music from members of that league of fez-wearing funsters Top Shelf Jazz! There will be the

traditional free Snuff Bar! And there will, of course, be

our Famous Grand Raffle (free entry, Members only, including any joining on the night)! Prizes this time include: a genuine ancient Egyptian faience scarab • a pith helmet • a fully functional shisha (hookah) pipe • a lifesize King Tut mask • some hieroglyphic fridge magnets • a chocolate sarcophagus • a Rosetta Stone jigsaw • Ali Baba's bucking camel game • a beaded headdress • Ancient Egypt Top Trumps • a King Tut rubber duck • **BOOKS:** a history of ancient Egypt • *Asterix and Cleopatra* • a biography of Howard Carter • *Tin Tin: Cigars of the Pharaoh* • DVDs: *Abbott and Costello Meet the Mummy* • *The Mummy* (modern) trilogy • *The Mummy* (1932) • *OSS 117: Cairo Nest of Spies* • *Dr Who and the Pyramids of Mars* • *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* • *Carry on Cleo* • *Five Graves to Cairo* • *Ice Cold in Alex* • *Death on the Nile* • *Stargate* • plus a CD of *Walk Like an Egyptian* by the Bangles!



Desert Deutschland

Dr Tim Eyre on a mysterious hangover of Imperial Germany on the coast of Namibia

IN THE SOUTH-WESTERN coast of Africa cold, angry waves lash at desert sand dunes that extend for hundreds of miles along a lonely shoreline. This is the location of the Namibian town of Swakopmund, built at the mouth of the ephemeral Swakop river. Surrounded by one of the world's driest deserts, a less European setting could hardly be imagined. Yet here in this town of 42,000 souls the traveller can find an unexpected vision of Germany as it might have been in the early 20th century.

Germany colonised south-west Africa from 1884 until South African action in the First World War led to the demise of their power in 1915. Germany's short rule gave a foretaste of the horrors that Germany would inflict upon Europe in the ensuing decades; rebellion by locals was countered with wholesale genocide in the Herero Wars and other atrocities. Fortunately this former territory is now fully independent and enjoys majority rule as the state of Namibia, named after the Namib desert. However, Namibia still has some highly visible German legacy and a population of around 30,000 ethnic Germans out of a total population of around 2 million.



(Above) The flag of Imperial German South-West Africa; (below) a sign in Swakopmund's museum shows the division of territory between two competing imperial powers



Harbouring a Sludge

This German legacy is especially visible in Swakopmund. The town was founded by Captain Kurt von François as the main harbour for the German colony in 1892. The coast twenty miles south at Walvis Bay was much better suited for a harbour but this area had already been occupied by the British Empire in 1878, specifically to frustrate German ambitions in Africa. Instead, the German colonists anchored their cargo ships out at sea and used native African labour to transport goods to

shore in smaller boats. In 1899 work started on an artificial harbour basin, built of stone and concrete and extending almost a quarter of a mile out to sea. This enormously expensive construction came to be known as the "Mole" and was opened by Governor Friedrich von Lindequist in February 1903. Unfortunately, within two years the harbour had silted up with sand carried by the Benguela Current so a wooden jetty was built to handle shipping instead. Today both edifices act as focal points for the town.

Despite these travails, shipping in Swakopmund thrived and many trading companies set up branches in the town. This in turn led to the construction of numerous Germanic buildings. As we all know, most of the old buildings in Germany were flattened by the RAF but here in Swakopmund they still stand. So completely German is the commercial centre of Swakopmund that while walking through it one could be forgiven for thinking one was in an outdoor German folklore museum. Furthermore, this is a living German culture;



Formerly a colonial hospital, this building is now a hotel





(Top to bottom) German-language books on sale at an antiquarian bookseller; Swakopmund is well supplied with decidedly northern European shops; some colonial street names survive on private buildings



many of the shops in Swakopmund could just as well be found in a sleepy Saxony village. A stamp shop supplies local philatelists, there is an antiquarian bookshop, a haberdasher's and a bric-a-brac shop selling piles of German kitsch.

I was entirely unable to locate native African food in central Swakopmund but German dishes such as sauerkraut and wiener schnitzel were widely available at restaurants with names like Bistro Zum Kaiser.

Swakopmund's surreal vibe received international recognition when the American televisual company AMC used Swakopmund as the location for its re-make of Patrick McGooohan's cult classic *The Prisoner*. The original 1960s series was filmed in the Italianate Welsh holiday village of Portmeirion. Swakopmund managed to fill the role while being a real living town. Admittedly this did involve some careful editing, most notably to avoid filming the sea.

High German, High Culture

The German enthusiasm for high culture persists in Swakopmund. The town has no fewer than three art galleries, one of which is housed in the imposing Woermannhaus. There are two well-stocked libraries, one of which is run by the local Scientific Society. The Scientific Society also runs Swakopmund's museum, said to be one of the best in Africa. During my stay at the modest but gloriously-named Hotel Prinzessin Rupprecht Heim (formerly a German hospital), I witnessed a rehearsal by a local chamber music group consisting of a flautist, a clarinetist and a pianist. One of them lamented to me with grave seriousness that there was only one cellist in the whole town.

Many of Swakopmund's colonial street names survive on private buildings, which are mostly owned by ethnic Germans. Among these my favourite is the main drag of Kaiser Wilhelm Straße, now named Sam Nujoma Avenue after the first president of independent Namibia. The modern street names are also interesting, not least because many of them sport special characters to indicate the various clicking sounds used in the indigenous Nama language. Untainted by the evils of Nazism, *fraktur* script is still popular among Namibia's ethnic Germans and is used to write many of the informal street names. Within my hotel I enjoyed a bath in a room marked **Bad**.



(Below) The remains of the Mole, an artificial harbour that silted up shortly after being built; (above) the jetty, built to replace the Mole, and now a picturesque promenade spot



Holiday in Namibia

Today Swakopmund is one of Namibia's most popular holiday destinations for domestic and international visitors. It primarily aims at the upper end of the market, as a staging point for safaris and suchlike. By way of example, the actors Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie stayed in the nearby Burning Shore lodge while expecting their first biological child in an effort to avoid media attention. However, Swakopmund also attracts backpacker types who do vulgar things such as rent quad bikes to drive up sand dunes and sand boards to slide down them.

On paper Swakopmund's climate looks ideal for holidaymakers: lying just north of the Tropic of Capricorn, the town's average temperature ranges from 15°C to 25°C with less than an inch of rain per year. However, cold air from the Benguela Current meets with



The author after spending a day hiking in the dunes

warm air from the interior of the country to form thick banks of fog that frequently envelop the town and surrounding desert. One result of this peculiar climate is the presence of some interesting wildlife. Of particular note is the fog-basking beetle, which survives in the desert by



(Top to bottom) A German homestead in a rich suburb; children playing in a poor native African suburb; not the sort of architecture one expects to see in Africa

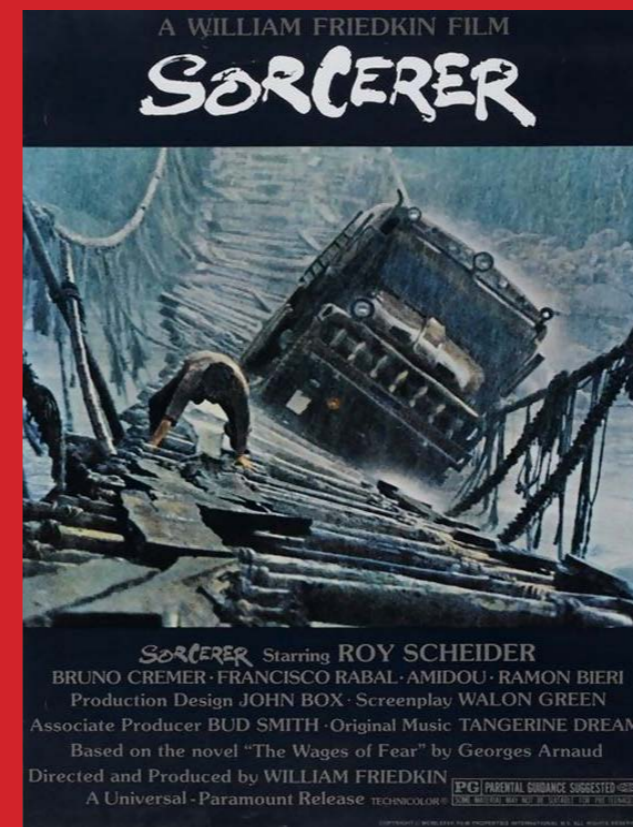
collecting moisture from the fog on its raised abdomen and converting it into drinking water.

Rich Germans own opulent houses in the affluent suburbs of Swakopmund. Further north lie the much poorer suburbs occupied primarily by the native African population. This physical separation originates from the period before 1990 when Namibia was under the control of apartheid South Africa. As well as this geographical divide, Namibia as a whole has a large economic divide, with the highest level of economic inequality in the world. Indeed, the impression I received while I was in Namibia was of two economies running in parallel in the same physical space rather than of a single national economy. Inevitably, this inequality leads to crime and so one source of employment for the poor is guarding the property of the rich.

Swakopmund is not the only Germanic town in Namibia. A few hundred miles further south along the coast lies Lüderitz. This town is famous for the feral desert horses found nearby and for the large diamond mining region of Sperrgebiet. By all accounts, Lüderitz is as German as Swakopmund, but unfortunately its remote location and my refusal to drive automobiles meant that I was unable to visit. Windhoek, Namibia's capital, also has many German colonial buildings but the natural growth of the city means that it cannot offer Swakopmund's unified German atmosphere.

Members of the New Sheridan Club who would like to read more about Namibia can download a free eBook version of my travelogue *Sun, Sea, Sand and Fog:*

Two Weeks in Namibia from my website at www.nihilist.org.uk. Alternatively, ask me for a paper copy in real life and I'll gladly give you one for free.



NSC FILM NIGHT *Sorcerer* (1977)

Sunday 27th July

7pm–11pm (screening from 8pm)

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

Admission: Free

Our July Film Night will be curated by relatively new Member Darcy Sullivan, presenting *Sorcerer*, which he describes as a “thinking man’s action film. What William Friedkin made after *French Connection* and *The Exorcist*. And it killed his career.” The plot concerns four men (played by Roy Scheider, Bruno Cremer, Francisco Rabal and Amidou) who, for various reasons, are exiled from their native countries and are hired by a US oil company to drive trucks full of nitroglycerin through the South American jungle. It is based on Georges Arnaud’s 1950 novel *Le Salaire de la peur*, which had already been made into *The Wages of Fear* (1953), though Friedkin rejected any suggestion that his film was a remake. Both films summon nail-biting tension from the

plot, but Friedkin’s adds an existential angle.

What started as a side-project with a \$2.5 million budget swelled to a monster costing \$22 million—money it never came close to recouping. Some attribute the film’s poor reception on release to the fact that it came out at the same time as *Star Wars*, a contest that has been marked as the turning point when the bold, edgy, thoughtful and frequently bleak “New Hollywood” school of the 1970s died and the industry succumbed to dumbed-down blockbusters. Others have suggested that *Sorcerer* was let down by its title—fans of *The Exorcist* might have been annoyed to find there is no actual sorcery involved. (The title is actually the name of one of the trucks: scouting in Ecuador Friedkin had noticed how truckers named and personalised their vehicles. The original working title had been *Ballbreaker*.)

Sorcerer’s reputation grew with time, to the point where it has been called “the last undeclared masterpiece of the American ’70s”. It is certainly Friedkin’s favourite of his own films. He feels that, where *The Wages of Fear* was about a group of people who hate each other being forced to work together to survive, with *Sorcerer* he wanted to explore also the role of fate in our lives—whatever the truck drivers do there is still a large element of chance in whether they survive or not—something that he felt dogged by in his own success or failure. Others have pointed out the similarity with Werner Herzog’s *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972), also a film about what greed and crazy determination can bring men to. Friedkin recently likened himself to the insanely driven central character in another Herzog film, *Fitzcarraldo*, about a man who built an opera house in the Brazilian jungle.



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.



Charles Tsua

'He has no cause to part from it.'

Name or preferred name?

Charles Tsua (pronounced 'choy'; don't ask why it's spelt like that...), but I have used many pseudonyms in my time, such as Charles Wolfenbloode.

Why that nickname or nom de plume?

Wolfenbloode is an amalgamation of the surnames of Lord Wolfenden and Peter Wildeblood, two pivotal players on the road to the legalization of homosexuality in the UK. It also has a nice ring to it.

Where do you hail from?

Birmingham (it's in the Midlands, not 'opp norf').

Favourite Cocktail?

Anything with gin in it (my favourite gins are Death's Door, Old Raj and Ish).

Most Chappist Skill?

I do the odd bit of tailoring, robemaking and repairs to old silk top hats.

Most Chappist Possession?

A silk top hat made by Truefitt (before they merged with Hill) and also a *chapeau bras* that was part of a set of court dress that belonged to Geoffrey Bird (1878-1937) who was High Sheriff of Warwickshire in 1931, one of the sons of the founder of the Custard Factory in Birmingham (still standing and now housing a number of vintage/retro shops).

Personal Motto?

Causam cedare non habet eo which roughly translates to "He has no cause to part from it". It comes from a line in the Book of Rites 『士無故不撤琴瑟』 which means "The gentleman does not part with his musical zithers without good cause."

Favourite Quotes?

"Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that

we have to alter it every six months."
- Oscar Wilde

"He incarnates the strangeness of old-style *qin* play; his own students have called him less-than-talented, and in the *qin* world this is not necessarily a bad thing at all. What does talent do but distract from substance?"
- S.C. Walker on Master Liu Shaochun

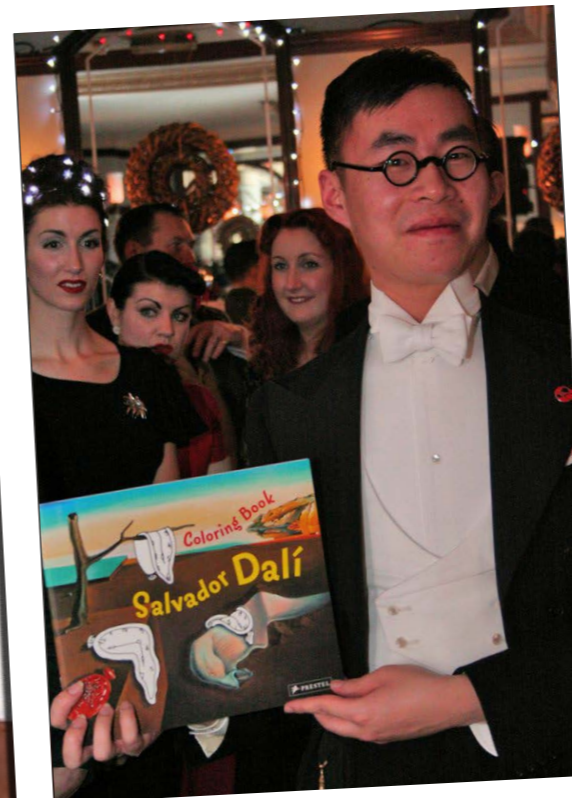
"I haven't liked Russia since they killed the Tzar..."
- Felix Glass, NSC member

"The woman of erotic apathy is remedied to be classy."
- random piece of Chinglish

Not a lot of people know this about me, but...
Once, I almost decided to become an architect but decided I didn't want to undergo the seven years training to draw a few lines (nor be held responsible for any deaths incurred afterwards)...

How long have you been involved with the NSC?
Roughly five years give or take.

How did you hear about the Club to begin with?
Memory of this is lost in the mists of time but it might involve me stumbling on



something in the digital realm.

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

For white tie, although you may get the coat and trousers off-the-peg or vintage, always get the waistcoat made from scratch by a tailor with a full back cut in a unique style so you will not look like you've just hired/bought the waistcoat from the same place as everyone else in the room.

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

Stephen Fry (for obvious reasons), Tom Hiddleston (for obvious reasons) and Sir Ian McKellen (just so I can hear him say "you shall not pass!" when someone offers to pass the salt).

Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?
Artemis Scarheart, The Eternal and Glorious People's Democratically Elected Dear Leader of the Committee of Public Safety and Supreme Head of the Department of Information Retrieval. [You have them well trained now - Ed.]

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

I've done three so far: academic dress, top hats and the *guqin*. I'm planning a fourth on the art of lacquer. Don't know what the record for most turns done by an individual member is...

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.

The Cocktail Cabinet

Wherein Members bicker about liquor

Moonshine Madness

By David Bridgman-Smith

Once the realm of clandestine folks constantly on the lookout for “the revenue” or “the law”, moonshine and its variants have gone legit. But isn’t “legal moonshine” an oxymoron? If the definition of moonshine is that it is illicit, how can it take the straight and narrow path of legalisation?

To answer this question, I took a look at illicit distilling in three countries.

Ireland

Starting close to home, Irish poteen or poitin has been legal since 1997, and although products came on the market shortly after, it is only in the last two years that the category has really taken off.

“Irish poteen” has a Geographic Indicative Protection, i.e. it must be made in Ireland. However, it does not yet have any rules that define what it is. But these are the conventions:

1. Poteen is a high strength spirit, over 50% alcohol by volume and typically falling between 55% and 70%, although some go up to 90%.

2. It can be made using spirit from grain, whey (milk) or potatoes (the latter is surprisingly rare). Other base spirits are allowed, but these three are seen as traditional.

Knockeen Hills (with versions at 60%, 70%, and 90% alcohol by volume) is a whey-based poteen. In addition, the 90% ABV makes a great base for bitters.



Part of the Knockeen Hills poteen range



FEW's high quality white whiskey

USA

Over the pond, there seem to be two categories of 'shine: sugar shine, which, unsurprisingly, is based on cane sugar, and white whiskey, which is essentially unaged whiskey. While illicit distillers have existed across the country for many years, especially during Prohibition, a hotbed for moonshiners has always been in the Appalachian Mountains. They usually use pot stills and it is here that the Discovery Channel's *Moonshiners* is set. Is this a realistic show? Well one of the characters is called “Tickle” and he is neither orange, nor does he have long, gangly arms.

Sugar shine is quite a “rough 'n' ready” product, typically similar to a cross between vodka and rum. White whiskey can be full of complexity and I

like to think of it as a “vodka for whisky drinkers”, those who want more character in their Harvey Wallbangers or Kamikazes.

The white whiskey market has been driven by new small and independent distilleries, largely as a source of cash flow while they wait for their whiskey to mature. However, today Jim Beam, Buffalo Trace and Jack Daniels have all released a “white whiskey”, or “white dog” as it is also known.

Despite its lack of ageing, white whiskey can have a great complexity and, in a good example, the subtle notes of the base grain shine through. Essentially, it is flavoursome vodka, making it both good on its own and in mixed drinks. One brand of particular note is Few White Whiskey from Evanston, Illinois, which can add a new dimension to a whole array of classic cocktails with its notes of corn and spice.

With moonshine's popularity comes, inevitably, the flavoured versions. Apple pie moonshine, a mix of apple juice, 'shine and spices, is quite a traditional variation. One recent US spirits judging had a category for it, with at least six entrants.

There are also some products with less traditional flavours. One example that I've tried is key lime pie, which was actually quite tasty, despite its radioactive green colour. Others include peach cobbler and Margarita.

The Crimea

Finally, we move to where Europe meets Asia at the Black Sea. Samogon is Crimean moonshine but, unlike the other 'shines which are based on grain or sugar, this is based on grapes and does indeed have a grappa-like quality.

Drinking 'Shine

Drinking legal moonshine can be a tasty experience and how you use it depends a lot on its base spirit.



Crimean grape-based samogon

Grain-based white whiskies work well with vermouth in Martinis, Manhattans, and even with tonic. Crimean moonshine works well in vodka or brandy drinks. Irish poteen is tasty if you put a drop in Baileys and the 90% ABV variety makes a great bitters base. Here are some recipes.

Few White Martini

5 parts Few White Whiskey
1 part dry vermouth

Stir with ice, strain and garnish with a twist of lemon.

Crimean Sidecar

2 parts grape-based moonshine (grappa in a pinch)

1 part triple sec
1 part lemon juice

Shake with ice, strain and garnish with an orange twist.

Grapefruit Bitters

100ml Knockeen Hills (90% ABV)
½ tsp coriander seed

2 tsp juniper berries

Peel from half a pink grapefruit

Infuse ingredients in the poteen for 24 hours before straining and bottling.

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



Left to right: a Manhattan with grapefruit bitters; a white whiskey Martini; a Crimean Sidecar

Is That a Real False Beard?

Those of you who attended our Never Mind the Jubilee party in 2012 may remember the strange musical performance by Club Member Lobby Ludd and his Luddites. Lobby has now produced a long-playing record, *Is That a Real False Beard?*, which may be purchased from the website of his Lud-O-Phone Recording Co. Ltd (www.lud-o-phone.co.uk).

In fact the Luddites are a fairly non-specific band and none of them performs on the album itself, all parts of which are rendered by Lobby. "I do indeed play, scrape, bash, parp and tootle all the instruments heard on the album," he explains, "and they are all real, mostly half-unplayable vintage ones at that...wheezing harmoniums, leaky saxophones, an ancient pea shooter trumpet and two unmatched halves of a trombone collection. I'm particularly proud of the glass armonica improvised in the kitchen and of course the actual hookah pipe that caused so much trouble with the Customs and Sergeant-at-Arms when trying to reboard a ship somewhere in the Middle East [the subject of one of the songs]. Some of the instruments appear on the cover in the room where the most recent stuff was recorded. Other places used to record the album include the QE2 (cruising the Mediterranean Sea; I managed a few moments on the famous Queen Mary Art Deco piano before I was turfed off but it was captured on a camera and the audio extracted eventually), several other boats, the Channel Tunnel, hotel rooms in various corners of the world, and anywhere else I found myself with time on my



hands and anything able to produce noises.

"Apart from the radio tuning noise on *The Wireless*, electricity was only used to capture these noises (as opposed to powering amplifiers or—God forbid—programming or synthesisers) and knock them into shape a bit afterwards. It is otherwise all acoustic and a trying business for those poor souls around me, particularly when it is woodwind or brass. Alas, it does make it bally tricky to reproduce this stuff live (as you have witnessed) but I am forever on the lookout for musicians prepared to make fools of themselves on stage—I mean join in the fun. They are sometimes a scruffy lot but I'm working on it. The last drummer I used had to make do with carrots for drum sticks but since he had such a splendid hat it didn't matter that much."

Officially this is Lobby's second album, but the first, a concept album named *The End of the Pier*, though 25 years in the making is nowhere near completion. It was a health scare last year that made Lobby realise there was a danger of his expiring without having committed any of his oeuvre to vinyl/wax cylinder/digital ether, hence the record we have. Musically it is similar territory to Mr B but without the hip-hop (more Bonzo Dog Doo-Da Band) and a bit more ramshackle.

If nothing else, do check out Lobby's website, www.lobbylud.com, where there are some most amusing animations.



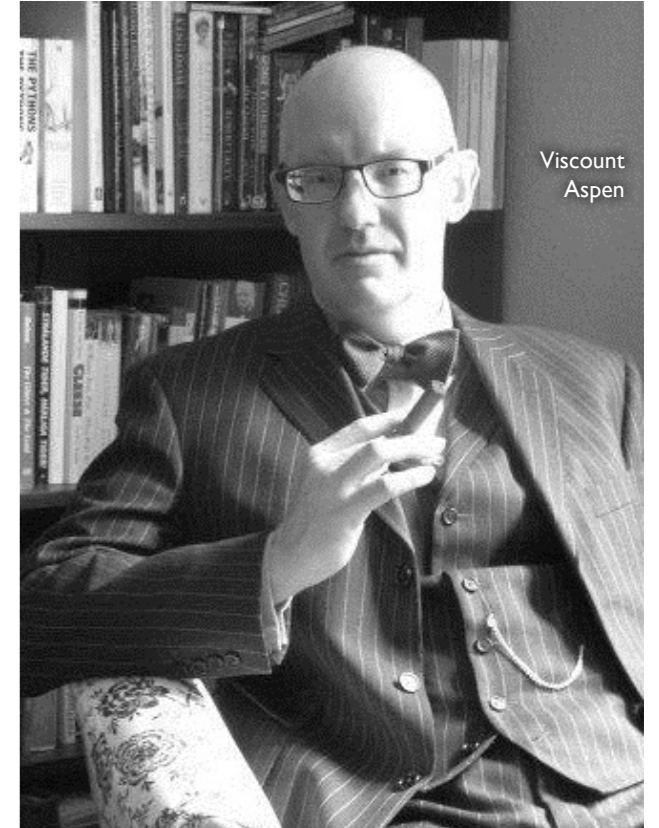
CLUB NOTES

New Members

JUST IN TIME to be cursed into death or insanity at our summer party (see page 9), the following plucky naifs have all signed on to the great NSC expedition in the last month: Leo McAuliffe and the Contessa di Campari from London, Stewart Lister Vickers from Reading, Bucks, and Viscount Aspen from Stockholm, Sweden.

Club Tie Corner

WE MAY ALREADY have had Basil Fawlty, but here he is again in an NSC tie, courtesy of Dorian Loveday, who also brought us loathesome spotted BNP reptile Nick Griffin both in the tie and seemingly in a Club rugby shirt on the bizarre cookery video he released teaching poor men's wives how to make honest British stew from cheap ingredients. Finally, we have Ernie Samat to thank for these NSC swimming trunks from an advert on eBay.



Viscount Aspen



Leo McAuliffe





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 July

7pm–11pm

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

Members: Free

Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)

See page 2.

A History of the Bowler Hat

Wednesday 2nd July

6pm

Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn, London EC1N 2HH

Admission: Free

An icon long associated with the City of London, the unmistakable bowler hat was an essential part of every City worker's uniform. By the 1950s, businessmen wouldn't be seen in the Square Mile without one. Timothy Long, Curator of Fashion & Decorative Arts at the Museum of London, explores the history of this fascinating hat, in a free lecture put on by Gresham College.

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 July

7.30pm, show from 8pm

The Teahouse Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL

Admission: £10 from 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 Harold Lloyd in *Safety Last!*

The Golden Era of Jazz

Every Thursday from 3rd July

7pm

Jamboree, 566 Cable Street, London E1W 3HB

Admission: Free before 8pm, £4 between 8 and 9.30, £5 after that

A weekly (until 25th September) night of 1920s jazz and 1930s swing presented by clarinettist Ewan Bleach with various guests.

Teatime Wonder Game

Friday 4th July

7.30–9.45pm

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

Admission: Earlybird £15, general £20 (from www.teahousetheatre.co.uk).

Experience a taste of the surreal in a performance that draws upon an eclectic mix of sourced material: slices of *Alice in Wonderland*, a splash of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a lump or two of Dali's surrealism, a pinch of Peter Pan, all brewed together with a teaspoonful or two of *Monty Pythons' Flying Circus*. Be immersed in a dreamland and a secret tea party, play a game with unexpected rules or even, as it may sometimes seem, no rules at all... Teatime Wonder Game is an interactive performance game involving live music, storytelling, dancing and gambling. It aims to detach the audience and participants from the rush of their everyday lives, leave worries about the future and regrets of the past behind and be in the here and now, experiencing their surroundings with all their senses.

The Excelsior Club

Saturday 5th July

7pm–12am

A secret London location

Admission: £20/25 in advance

Dress: Golden Age of Hollywood, flapper socialites, elegant evening wear

Everyone's favourite speakeasy The Candlelight Club presents a new incarnation. Not all speakeasies were makeshift basement dens. Some were large, bright, glamorous and luxurious, and operated quite openly, thanks to ownership by an influential bootlegger and the protection of a corrupt Chief of Police. Welcome, sir and madam, to the Excelsior Club, where nothing but the best will do—a recreation of the grand, airy, palm-fronted nightclubs of the 1920s and 1930s, where uniformed attendants wait on guests in elegant evening wear. There will be fine cuisine with silver service, and a classic cocktail menu courtesy of Brian Silva (*The Connaught, Rules*), served from our specially built 30-foot bar. There will be two stages, with dancing to live music from a special eight-piece version of Albert Ball's Flying Aces and a floor show from six-piece showgirl troupe the Bee's Knees.

Spin-a-Disc Social

Monday 7th July

8–11pm

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

Vivacity Bliss Presents
Cabaret Roulette

Metamorphosis

Featuring
Duncan Donut
Drag King
Frank Sanazi
Extreme Cabaret
Pi the Mime
Mime Boylesque
Ginger Cupcake
Cheesecake Burlesque
Von Strumpet
Character Comedy
Calibre Blue
Bump and Grind
Kiki DeVille
Torch Song
Anna Lou Larkin
Chanteuse
Lolo Brow
Compere
Lou Safire
Stage Manager

WEDNESDAY JULY 9TH 2014
DOORS 7PM, SHOW 8PM | TICKETS £10 - £15
MADAME JOJOS, 8-10 BREWER STREET, LONDON
WWW.CABARETROULETTE.CO.UK

Admission: Free

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

Cabaret Roulette

Wednesday 9th July

8–10.30pm

Madame JoJos, 8–10 Brewer Street, London W1F 0SE

Admission: £10–12 in advance, £15 on the door

If cabaret and burlesque are your thing, this night at the legendary Madame JoJos offers eight performers, this time interpreting the theme of “Metamorphosis”...

The Zeppelin Club

Thursday 10th July

8pm–1am

Underdog, 51–55 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA

Admission: £4 on the door

Dress: Collar and tie or military wear. Ladies are officially not allowed, but a crude masculine disguise will suffice, apparently

Johnny Vercoutre's night of cabaret and vintage DJing, with a vague Germanic inflection, with host Eva Von Schnippish and pianist Lady Anna McNeil, this time also featuring music from the Blind Buffalo Trio and odd songs from Tom Baker of the Bohemianauts.

TEATIME WONDER GAME
INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL

Friday 4th July '14
7.30pm - 9.45pm
Tea House Theatre
139 Vauxhall Walk
Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens
SE11 5HL

slawarto

KASIA KASZOWSKA | SEBASTIAN DIRVYZ | KATIE FARQUHAR | HEIDI SEPPALA | ANDREW SYERS | PETER MCDWILLAN



(This page) Scenes from last year's Chap Olympics

The Chap Olympiad

Saturday 12th July

1pm-ish

Bedford Square Gardens, London

Admission: £20

The Chap Magazine's annual celebration of all things louche, languid and debonaire. There are usually some new events each year, but it typically includes such games as the Martini Relay, Umbrella Jousting, Butler Baiting, etc. Trying to win is frowned upon and creative cheating is positively encouraged. This year the NSC will be running a contest for the most ingenious smuggling of alcohol into the arena.



Ruritanian Ball

Saturday 12th July

7pm (royal entourage 7.45pm, dancing from 8.15pm), carriages at midnight

The Victoria Gallery and Museum, Liverpool University, L3 5TR

Admission: £14 (applications to vonflesing@hotmail.com)

Dress: Strictly 1880–1914 evening wear

An annual event that keeps its cards close to its chest, but if you're into the Victorian/Edwardian jag and you're in the Liverpool area it may be of interest. This year it is styled as a celebration of the coming of age of Crown Prince Harpik. More (though not much more) at <https://sites.google.com/site/crownprinceball>. See also the Liverpool League of Gentlemen and Extraordinary Ladies who, though not organising the event, seem a lot more organised...



Auntie Maureen presents

Walthamstow-on-Sea Vintage Fair

Sunday 13th July

12–5pm

Orford House Social Club & Institute, 73

Orford Road, Walthamstow, London E17 9QR

Admission: £1 (under-15s free)

Vintage clobber, collectibles, jewellery all under one roof in the charming ballroom of Orford House Social Club. Tea room hosted by Aura Rosa Cakes & Patisserie. Beer and refreshments at the club bar. Old-fashioned tombola, gramophone music and other summer fun. If you have something interesting and



unique to sell or promote please register your interest via the form here. For further enquiries please ring 07432430386 or email ask@auntiemaureen.info.

Tails and Twirls

Friday 18th July

Social dancing 8.30pm–12am

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

Admission: £10 from www.teahousetheatre.co.uk

Dress: Glamorous romantic, black tie for men preferred but not essential

Tails and Twirls is a monthly dance event for ballroom and swing dancers (the next event will be on 17th January). Dancing will be mainly to period records, but there will also be a pianist/singer. There's a licensed bar with a glass of wine just £4. There will always be a free beginner's ballroom dance lesson from 7.15 pm to 8.15 pm. The dances will be mainly quickstep, foxtrot, swing, waltz, tango, rumba, jive and Charleston.

7pm–11pm

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

Admission: Free

See page 15.

Alex Mendham and his Orchestra at St Pancras

Monday 28th July

5–7.30pm

The concourse, St Pancras International railway station, Pancras Road, London N1W 2QP

Admission: Free

Part of a year-long series of free concerts at the railway station (facilitated, I suspect, but 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. On the upper mezzanine by the Betjeman statue and Searcy's Champagne bar.

Memories of August 1914

23rd–27th July

Liverpool

Admission: Free, I assume

August 2014 marks the centenary of the start of the First World War—a turning point in world history. Working in collaboration with 14–18 NOW, Liverpool will host one of the government's commemorative events, a piece of street theatre which looks as if it will involve giant puppets moving through the streets of the city telling the story of “Liverpool's heroic past”.

The NSC Summer Party: Curse of Pharaoh Sheri-Dan

Saturday 26th July

7.30pm–1am

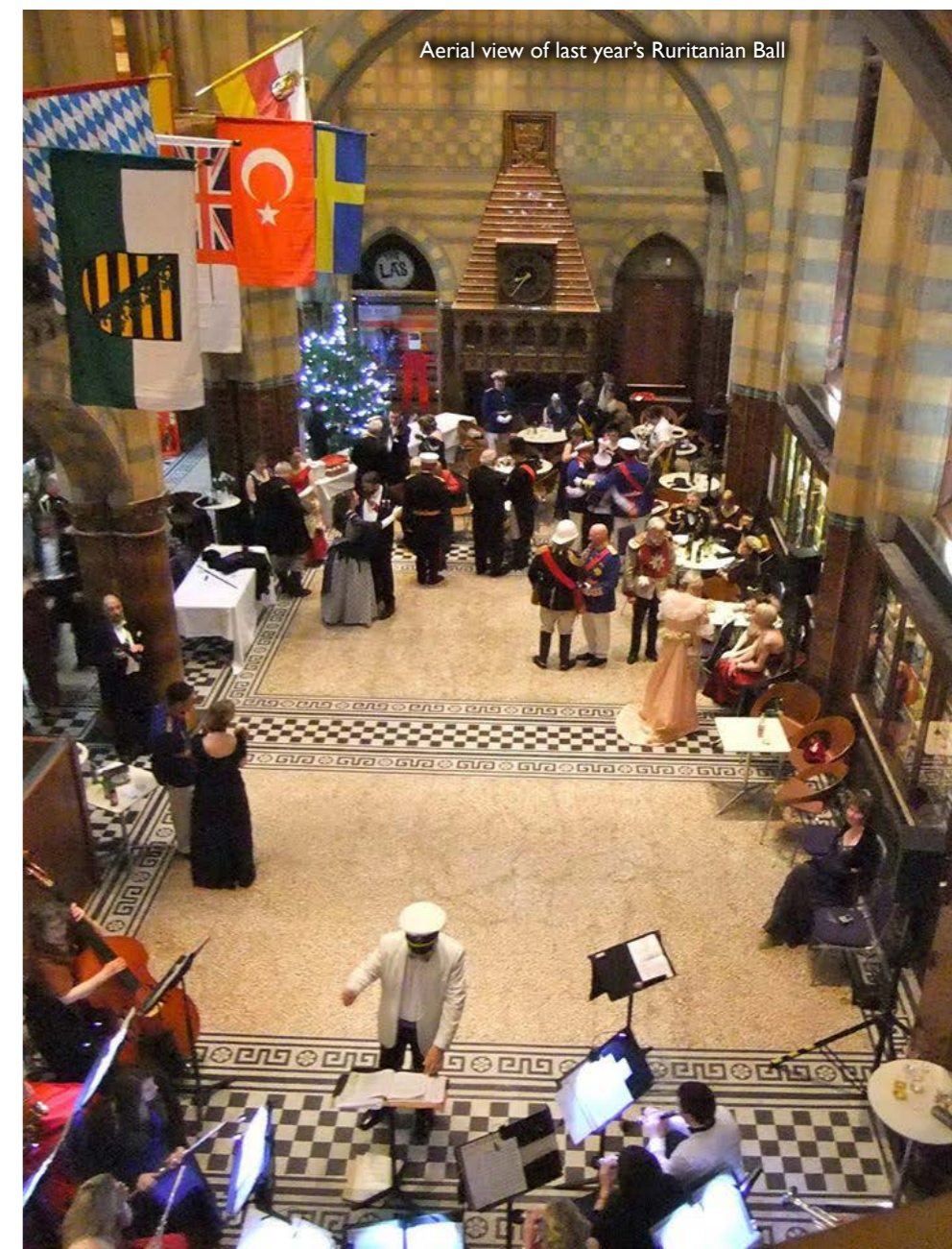
The Adam Street Club, 9 Adam Street, London WC2N 6AA

See page 9.

NSC Film Night

Sorcerer (1977)

Sunday 27th July



Aerial view of last year's Ruritanian Ball



Scarheart finally pays the price for those secret government experiments he volunteered for in the 1960s



CONTACTING US

telegrams@
newsheridanclub.co.uk
mrhartley@
newsheridanclub.co.uk
mrscarheart@
newsheridanclub.co.uk
mrhoward@
newsheridanclub.co.uk

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. You can even befriend us electrically at www.facebook.com.