



**What's your
poison?**

A history of murder
by arsenic

High spirits

A Chap's guide to
holding a séance

**It's trim up
north**

An unexpected oasis
of Chappism in the
icy wastes of Finland

DON'T PANIC!

Nazi troops spotted in
Cambridgeshire!

RESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • ISSUE 95 SEPTEMBER 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 3rd September in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm, when Kellyanne O'Callaghan will consider *Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale*: though largely overlooked these days, she was arguably the last Pre-Raphaelite artist. "I argue that a feminist art history approach is needed when considering her work," Kellyanne explains, "the focus of most of which was women as strong characters and the retelling of stories in which, as depicted by other artists, women had been subjugated by men. I will consider the influence of the works of EFB alongside modern understandings of the role of women."



Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale at work in her studio

The Last Meeting

On a day hot enough to prompt some of the male Clubmen to remove their tweed jackets, the Club gathered, paper fans fluttering, to hear Mr David De Vynél talk to us about the history of submarines. Sadly

they were disappointed, because David decided to talk about the history of poisoning instead. His focus ran from Mary Blandy, whose trial for murdering her father by poison in 1751 caught the public attention because she was well-to-do, through the boom years of the 19th century, when arsenic trioxide was easily available and both deadly and unpleasant. Poison was almost exclusively a woman's weapon, presumably because they not only lacked the physical advantage for violence but also because they would usually be the one preparing food and so would have the opportunity to administer it. More disturbing, with the advent of Friendly Societies and Burial Clubs, effectively a cheap form of life insurance, there developed a nasty practice of producing children, insuring their lives then poisoning them for profit. When an Act banning the insuring of children's lives for more than £3 was passed, child mortality dropped off dramatically.

Many thanks to David for his talk. An essay version begins on page 4.



(Left) An unexpected visitation by Mendrick, who is supposed to be in Kuala Lumpur; (right and below far right) fans very much to the fore; (below) David with a picture of Mary Blandy



The Contessa di Campari and Stephen Myhill



(Left) Eugenie donates some copies of *The Spectator*



(Above) Mikhail translates a WWI-era letter from French for Pandora; (below) Matthew Howard practises his leer on Eugenie



Dorian Loveday



(Below) Eva's beau is handed a punishment tie but clearly does not know what to do with it (he's South African, you know); (right) David savours a well-earned post-lecture pipeful



The Golden Age of Arsenic

David de Vynél
on the rise and
fall of Britain's
top toxin

“**O**F ALL KINDS OF MURDERS, that by poison is the most dreadful, as it takes a man unguarded and gives him no opportunity to defend himself.” These are the words of the Counsel for the Crown in the 1752 trial of an accused murderess—Miss Mary Blandy.

Mary, like many women of the 18th century, was disfigured by an attack of smallpox in childhood, yet with her comely figure, a wit and charm to match, and a reputed dowry of £10,000 she had no shortage of suitors.

Her father, Mr Francis Blandy, however, would bat away any such suitor for failing to meet his high standards. After all, he was a prominent citizen of Henley upon Thames and a prosperous attorney. His love for his daughter, whilst cautiously protective, saw her “Educated with the utmost tenderness” and her mind was “impressed with sentiments of virtue and religion”. It is ironic then that the one suitor he did approve of would take the sentiments of virtue and religion and twist them to a grisly end.

Captain William Henry Cranstoun arrived on the scene some time around the summer of 1746. Pitted by pox, with an intellect that was by no means striking, the “mean-

looking ugly fellow” was a cad and a bounder in the truest sense of the word yet even he, a squinty-eyed freckle-faced wastrel of a gambler, could make himself seem appealing when £10,000 is on offer and soon Mary was yielding to his advances.

Mr Blandy too was able to see past the soldier's obvious failings as Cranstoun was a member of Scottish aristocracy and marriage would mean great social advancement for both his daughter and himself. When Cranstoun finally asked for the hand of Mary in marriage, Francis was only too pleased to acquiesce. It

was to ultimately be his undoing.

Before long it became apparent that Captain Cranstoun was already wed to a Scottish woman, with whom he had had a daughter only two years previous. Mary fell for his lies that the woman was nothing more than his lover but Mr Blandy's opinion of his prospective son-in-law turned sour and wedding plans were shelved immediately.

The dowry was now slipping through the fingers of the Captain and he turned to telling tales to Mary of a white love powder used by the cunning women of Scotland that could turn the heart of any and how the use of such powder on her father would surely turn

his heart to one that would bless the union.

Cranstoun conveniently returned to Scotland to tend to his sick mother and posted the powder of forgiveness and love to Mary with instructions that if she placed it in her father's tea he would be won over—at least that was Mary's version when brought to trial.

True or not, we can be certain that she did not know the real nature of the powder and events quickly proved it to be toxic. As Counsel recounted in the trial, “The effects of the poison were soon perceived... The poor man frequently complained of pains in his bowels; had frequent retchings” and worsened to have “a fire in his stomach” as his child continued “adding fuel to the fire, till it had consumed her father's entrails”. “One of the effects,” he further remarked was of “the teeth dropping out of his head whole from their sockets. Yet what do you think, Gentleman [of the jury], the daughter did when she perceived it? She damned him for a toothless old rogue and wished him to hell!”

That she wished her father to hell was testimony of a servant and we cannot be sure of what she felt but one fact is true, that as he continued to worsen she did summon medical assistance—so perhaps she was indeed taken aback with the way in which her father's condition accelerated towards and almost inevitable end.

We do know that two servants chanced upon a strange white powder in the master's gruel—the only food the “toothless rogue” could now eat—and, upon sending this to a physician, had it confirmed as arsenic. That Mary was perhaps aware of what she was doing is suggested by the most damning piece of testimony, the fact that the now omnipresent servants saw her throwing a bunch of her lover's letters into the fire, along with a small white packet. The packet, which was recovered before it could burn, was proven to contain the same white powder that was found in the gruel.

A few days later, on 14th August 1751, Mr Francis Blandy finally succumbed to the effects of the love powder and, at 62 years of age, died.

In a trial that lasted only one full day, Mary pleaded her innocence and that she was nothing more than a puppet and a victim of cruel deception. The jury did not even vacate the courtroom to deliberate and found the defendant guilty within five minutes—she was hanged five weeks later on 6th April 1752.

To the chemist arsenic is element number 33 in the periodic table. A shiny steel-grey substance that is the twentieth most common element in the earth's crust. It even occurs in space with as much as a tenth of one percent of meteorites composed of such. The most striking fact about arsenic, however, is that in its natural state it is quite safe to swallow. What most people associate with the word “arsenic” is in fact a combination of the element with oxygen, forming the compound arsenic trioxide, referred to then as arsenious acid or, more popularly, white arsenic. It is this that is considered to be the favourite of the poisoner and, when referring to arsenic generically, it should be taken as read that I mean white arsenic.

Arsenic is toxic to all animals with a central nervous system and to most plants. Although it usually enters the body through the alimentary tract, it can also be taken by inhalation and by skin absorption. It can even be administered via the mucous membranes such as the rectum, as proven when a French 18th-century servant failed to eliminate his lady employer by mouth with arsenical soup, and opted instead to put the substance into her enema liquid, with death the desired result. There are even cases of vaginal insertion for suicide and to bring about abortion.

The great attraction of arsenic to the poisoner is that it has no distinctive taste or smell and, since it resembles flour or sugar, can be added to foods and beverages without



arousing suspicion. On the other hand, it is only sparingly soluble in cold water and thus often leaves a slightly granular texture when food or drink cools. Indeed on more than one occasion Mr Blandy complained of an “extraordinary grittiness in his mouth” when eating.

Another attraction of white arsenic is that relatively little is needed and the target can be dispatched with small, hardly noticeable amounts—as little as 300mg is enough to guarantee a kill. (Nineteenth-century physicians used “grains” as a unit of measurement, a grain being the equivalent of 64.8mg, meaning that four to five grains would be enough to dispatch most victims.)

Arsenic is in itself an irritant poison, of the same group as mercury, antimony and copper, but arsenic is matched by few for its ability to “corrode the texture of internal organs”, and the agony of arsenic poisoning does not begin at once, for it requires absorption rather than simple contact with interior tissues. While tolerance varies, it is common for the symptoms of arsenic poisoning to come on 15–30 minutes after ingestion.

The first symptom is one of a tightening and warmth of the oesophagus, which creates difficulty in swallowing. Indeed there was testimony in the trial of Mary Blandy that her father had much trouble swallowing and experienced “a very painful burning and prickling” in his tongue and throat which he compared to “an infinite number of needles darting into him at once”. In the arsenic poisoning of another Mary, Mrs Mary Hunter in 1842, it was stated that her husband complained he felt as if he had “swallowed a cayenne pepper”.

As the arsenic is taken into the bloodstream, it causes inflammation of the capillaries, a process that is particularly severe in the

alimentary tract. The inflammation of the stomach caused Blandy an almost intolerable burning in the stomach and bowels. A century after Blandy’s death, a Yorkshire woman would cry on her deathbed that the arsenic she had been given “fair burnt her inside out”; others likened its effects to a furnace or a ball of red hot iron.

Nausea generally appears at the same time as the stomach pain and is shortly followed by projectile or incessant vomiting that can continue for hours; the quantities evacuated can be such that an Essex man who lived below the bedroom of two children poisoned with arsenic in the 1840s had to vacate his quarters when vomit began to drip through the ceiling and on to his dining table.

Purging then occurs in the form of profuse watery diarrhoea. This will eventually give way to bloody evacuations as the capillaries rupture.

If the victim lives long enough, the purging may well end, but only to be replaced by painful spasms of the anal sphincter that creates the feeling of urgency, so to speak, without the ability to do anything about it. In the 1880s a Liverpool man was racked for hours “by persistent and

constant, but fruitless, endeavours to go to stool”.

The expulsion upwards and downwards, coupled with alimentary tract burning, created an extreme thirst “so urgent that they would have drunk quarts, had been permitted”. Permitted they were not, however, because the intake of fluids would simply trigger more retching. Interestingly the poisoning symptoms are not too dissimilar to cholera, which was rife at the time.

The whole agonising experience of arsenic poisoning would last from as little as two hours through to three or four days. (In the case of Mr Blandy, this suffering was drawn out to nearly



Arsenic in its pure—and quite harmless—state

© Dakota Matrix

two weeks.) A calculation performed in the 1880s determined the average time from ingestion to death at eleven hours and five minutes but most experts now place the average at 24 hours.

For the survivors there was little to celebrate as they would be plagued with gastric disturbances and have neurological damage that would produce tingling sensations that one survivor likened to “being in a bag full of fleas”. There is almost no end to the after-effects of arsenic poisoning. An 18th-century English surgeon who attended the favourite wife of the ruler of Morocco after she was given arsenic by rivals reported that “her beauty... was completely destroyed”. Rarely, however, happier endings do occur, as in the case of the mental patient who tried to commit suicide by arsenic poisoning; he suffered horribly but survived and found his reason so restored that he was able to return to his previous life as a businessman. His case was the exception, however, and the rule is that arsenic fully deserved its description by a mid-19th-century newspaper as “such an instrument of death and agony”.

Yet did the poison-wielding perception of the Victorian era really apply? One could argue that it is somewhat distorted by the fact that in the 1840s, the peak period for arsenic use, there were only 98 trials for criminal poisoning in England and Wales—fewer than one a month for a population of 20 million. True, some of the trials involved more than one victim and there were many instances of poisoning passing unrecognised, but why was the danger so overstated?

Arsenic was readily available in the 19th century and accounts of poisoning during the 1830s were triple the number from the 1810s, and they then rose again by 50% the following



Arsenic trioxide, or “white arsenic”—used in 40% of poison murders in Europe from 1835 to 1880 and nicknamed “inheritance powder”



decade, with 70% of all poisonings of the 1840s involving arsenic. Working with the availability of arsenic was also an intensified motivation to use it for murder. Temptation had always existed, of course: an anticipated inheritance, a tiresome spouse, any number of considerations that might encourage the impatient to act. It was, however, the birth of the insurance industry that prompted a large rise in the number of cases of the 19th century.

The first insurance company organised along modern lines was founded in London in 1762 and by the 1830s there were over 40. By this time it had become clear that insurance cut both ways—it would give peace of mind to the insured and their family but also offered a quick-opening door to wealth. One poison authority noted that “thousands of pounds can literally be called into existence”.

Policies paying out thousands of pounds were, obviously, an option only for the more highly placed, yet this did not keep the lower classes from poisoning for profit too; it merely restricted them to lower gains. Throughout the 19th century tradesmen of all stripes came together to form “friendly societies” that provided members with some degree of protection against life’s more trying contingencies: unemployment, sickness and death. Workers paid in a weekly sum in return for the promise of financial support if they became incapacitated or for funeral expenses if they died.

Friendly society membership had the same in-built enticement to do away with family members as life insurance policies purchased by the more well-to-do, and in certain societies these were placed at the front and centre—they were named “burial clubs”.

However squalid the reality of their earthly existence, the Victorian poor wanted their leaving of it to be at least respectable and burial clubs flourished as a way to pay for a proper funeral. It is worth noting that this was spurred on somewhat by the 1832 Warburton Anatomy Act which meant that bodies turned over for a paupers’ burial were liable to be given to anatomists for dissection and learning.

Yet there were, inevitably, some subscribers who were not at all averse to a child or spouse

receiving a pauper’s send-off and, if sufficient economies were adopted in their disposal, there would be enough money left over to make murder worthwhile. By the mid-1800s, it was widely held that young children were frequently destroyed for the burial money their deaths would bring. If done right the profits were not inconsiderable and burial clubs were affordable by virtually anyone.

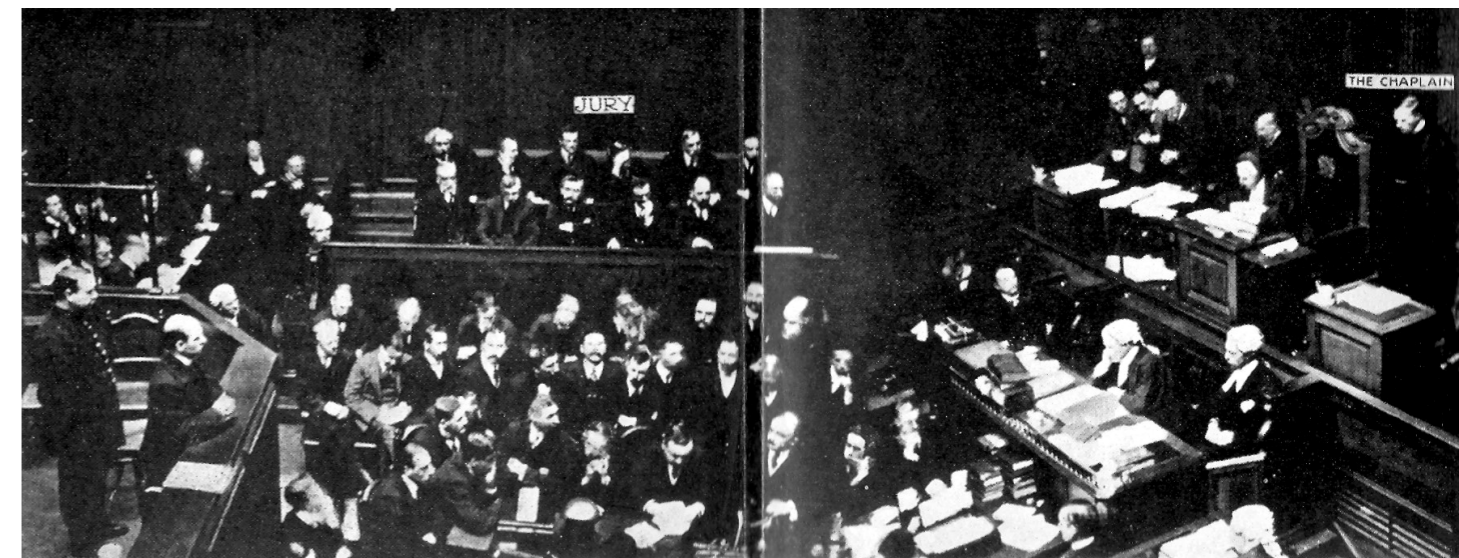
The Liverpool Victoria Burial Society (now simply “LV”), which was representative of this affordable care, levied a half-penny to a penny per week charge, depending on the age of the child, and the benefits were generous. Some plans paid out £4 or £5 for the funeral but a basic funeral could be financed for as little as £1 or £2. The problem was so prolific that there was a saying among the women in the Manchester tenements that “the child will not live: it is in the burial club”. Club membership rolls were indeed referred to as “catalogues of the doomed”. It is also worth noting that many children were enrolled in more than one club and it was not unheard of for a parent to reap £20 from a death. Finally parliament acted in 1850 with a statute that prohibited the insuring of children under the age of 10 for more than £3—a direct result of the plague of arsenic and the burial clubs.

The law did nothing to protect adults, however, and a number of villains capitalised on the fact, but none so fruitfully as Mary Ann Cotton.

Mary was a comely looking woman of County Durham and is the undisputed champion of the game of murder for insurance money. She was, in fact, the most prodigious serial killer in English history until Harold Shipman’s multiple murders came to light in the 1990s.



Mary Anne Cotton



A testament to the easy obtainability of arsenic, Frederick Seddon (right) killed his lodger Eliza Barrow in 1911 using arsenic soaked off from domestic flypaper. By this stage, however, tests existed to detect arsenic in the body. (Above) Seddon is sentenced, the only known photo of a death sentence being passed in an English court

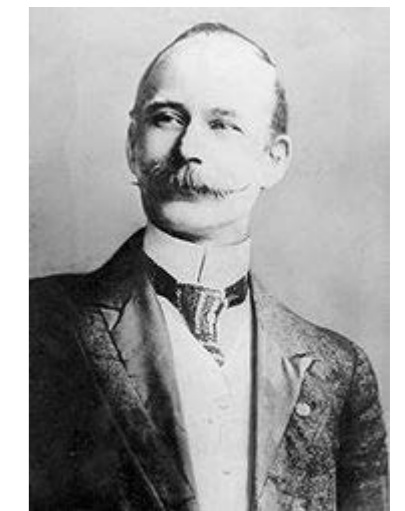
From the early 1860s until her arrest in 1872, Cotton, a one-time Sunday school teacher, employed arsenic to murder her mother, three husbands, a lodger (briefly her fiancé) and all but one of her fifteen children and step-children. In every case, death was diagnosed as some form of gastric complaint and in nearly every case Cotton was beneficiary on an insurance policy (one of the uninsured was the fiancé but he paid his way by writing a will leaving all his meagre possessions). There was also a fourth husband but he had a lucky escape when Cotton left him as he refused to be insured.

Through all this, no one seems to have suspected a thing, neither the Prudential, the insurance company which paid out benefits for a number of her victims, nor her neighbours, who might have thought it improbably bad luck for six of her children to die suddenly within the year of 1867. Not until weeks after the death of a stepson in 1872 did suspicions finally surface, triggering an inquest that led to a trial and conviction.

To the very end, however, Cotton appears to believed that her uncanny luck would hold. Even though the jury returned a unanimous verdict, she seemed to be stunned when the judge “assumed the black cap and passed upon her the awful sentence”, so taken aback, in fact, that she had to be “removed in a fainting condition”. She believed, right up until the day of execution, that clemency would be granted by the throne. Victoria, somewhat predictably,

was not amused and the pardon did not come. Five days before her death, Cotton gave up for adoption her one remaining child, an infant born whilst she was in prison, charging the new parents to bring the little one up in the fear of God.

Finally, it is worth noting that Cotton’s execution was presided over by the most famous hangman of the century, William Calcraft. This was a man so dedicated to his craft that once when a prisoner who had been dropped through the scaffold managed to get his feet up to the platform again so as to support himself, Calcraft pushed him back into the drop, then jumped down into the opening himself and held the man’s legs until he was dead. Calcraft gave his subjects, who numbered approximately 500, a short rope, being put off by the decapitation that sometimes resulted when the victim gained too much momentum before being snapped to a halt by the neck. As a consequence prisoners did not die quickly but struggled for a period; Cotton herself fought against the noose for a whole three minutes and such struggles were the inspiration behind Calcraft’s autobiography, *The Groans of the Gallows*.



OULUN SÄÄTY

THE WORLD'S MOST NORTHERLY GENTLEMAN'S CLUB

By Dr Edward Dutton

PURSING A LIFE of gentlemanly leisure was never going to be particularly easy in Finland. All wines and spirits are jealously controlled by the state alcohol agency and they impose prices as shocking as the winter temperatures. The shell suit is the de facto national dress and it must say something about a culture when there is no native word for “please”.

I moved to Finland in 2005 for the most respectable of reasons: my Finnish wife had obtained a job as a vicar in the Finnish Lutheran

Church. Nothing seemed more conducive to wistful country lanes, Church Hall fetes, and spinster detectives than being a vicar's husband. However, I had failed to grasp that this would not be in St Mary Mead but in Oulu.

Positioned 65 degrees north, Oulu reached -36 at Christmas 2010, and in the summer the constant daylight means it is like being permanently interrogated. In many ways, Oulu—and northern Finland in general—embody all that is least Chappish about the land of Nokia. Although the town was founded

in 1605, its people have spent most of their time burning all of its beautiful old buildings to the ground, meaning the city's “castle” is merely some foundations with a wooden observatory on top which functions as a cafe in the two month spring-summer. Finland's nobility are mainly Swedish-speaking and the Finland-Swedes are known for their interest in high culture and aesthetics—the musician Jean Sibelius, the philosopher Georg von Wright and the man who invented Angry Birds were all *Finlandssvenska*—but none of them lives in Oulu any more, obviously. Perhaps they were repelled by the city's annual “Air Guitar Festival”.

But things in “the Capital of Northern Scandinavia” are beginning to change. In July of 2013, myself and a number of like-minded gentlemen established Oulu's only gentleman's club, as we sat atop its ruined fortress. The club aims to rediscover the lost Uleåborg (the city's original, Swedish name) of the Tsarist 19th century, before Finland gained independence from Russia and became sucked into a void of peasant-idolising nationalism, big screen ice hockey and mobile phone fetishism. Meeting every few weeks, we aim to uncover the extremely well-hidden but still just about breathing anachronistic parts of a city whose burghers once worshipped English culture, even building (wooden versions of) manor houses in the English style.

So far, our triumphs—which we have declared officially Chappish—have included the

What's left of Oulu's castle



The Oulun Säätö boating trip



city's Russian restaurant Zakuska, Villa Hannala (a mansion converted into a restaurant), a boating trip up the river (Three Men but, alas no dog) and a tour of the assorted 18th-century churches that haven't been burnt down yet. Locals are, of course, always in awe of how we present ourselves, despite the fact that we only ever dress in a manner that would have been appropriate for the occasion before the country let standards so perilously slip (i.e. we don't wear tracksuits very much). The only people in Oulu who dress traditionally are its 500-year-old gypsy population and once one of them, passing us, declared “*hieno hattu*” (“fine hat”), which we see as something of a badge of honour.

Nomadic and extremely short of cash, we have no permanent club house. So official

The Tsarist interior of Zakuska



in the direct male line from Rollo, 1st Duke of Normandy. Rollo, again on his dad's side, descends from a series of Norse kings who themselves patrilineally descend, so say the semi-mythical Norse Sagas, from the ancient kings of Finland and, ultimately, from Kaleva. He was the Finnish King in the country's national epic *Kalevala*, a collection of folklore that was a huge part of the country's nationalist awakening. In that most of the Finnish records were burnt in about 1700, I'm probably the only person in Finland

who can trace such a descent, and possession is nine tenths of the law. As such, Oulun Sääty declared me King of Finland (*Kalevan Kuningas*) at a meeting in a Turkish restaurant and one of our boat trips involved securing a small island, wherein the new kingdom, in addition to exclaves at members' houses, is based. As soon as is convenient, however, we will, of course, arrange Finland's suzerainty to the British Empire, in the style of the Indian princely state of Vejanoness, which was not much bigger and whose *Thakur* had 200 subjects and an annual income of 450 rupees.

But, in all seriousness, we would like to begin reciprocal relations with the New Sheridan Club, much as the Swedish Club of Helsinki has similar relations with the East India Club. So, if any of you is ever in or near Oulu then please let us know. We would be happy to show you the more salubrious parts of the city which we have discovered and invite you to attend our club house as our guest. We're sure you'll agree with our motto, *Sopiiva solmio säilyttää sivilisaation* (Wearing the correct tie preserves civilization).

meetings take place either at a 19th-century wooden restaurant on an island in the sea (to which many of the city's pleasant buildings that weren't incinerated were moved to protect them) or at Zakuska, which is hideous on the outside but a throwback to Russian imperial splendour the moment you open the door. The club's name, Oulun Sääty, is a reference to the Finnish "Estates of the Realm" which existed before the country descended into Soviet-sympathising dictators and alternative operating systems. *Sääty*, my Finnish chumrades inform me, translates as "diet" and is the stem of *säädyllinen* (respectable) and *säätyläiset* (gentry). Thus, *sääty* has layers of meaning in Finnish which a mere Englishman can never hope to fully comprehend.

Obviously, our members support the restoration of the monarchy but we are also

practical. Finland offered the crown to a German prince when it gained independence from Russia in 1917, but he refused it. And years of nationalism mean the Finns would never accept Maria Vladimirovna, the Oxford-educated pretender to being Autocrat of All the Russias and Grand Duchess of Finland, as Tsar, nor would they accept the Napoleonic-general descendant King of Sweden. But, fortunately, we have a solution.

I managed to trace my family tree, thanks to a great website run by the Mormons, back to Odard, 1st Lord of Dutton, who came to England in 1066. (This is in a wholly legitimate line according to the Visitations. I'm pretty sure one 16th-century ancestor was via a mistress but we'll forgive that lapse. It was a stressful time to be chap.) Odard, state almost certainly made-up pedigrees in Burke's Peerage, descends

Villa Hannala



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.



Incy Wincy Spider

'Oh, OK, I will have a gin, then.'

Name or preferred name?

Incy Wincy Spider

Why that nickname or nom de plume?

The name comes from a cartoon in *Private Eye* in the 1990s when the world wide web was a new thing and they had a little spider typing on a

keyboard. My colleagues at the time thought I was a bit obsessed with the web and thought it most droll to cut out the cartoon and stick it on my monitor.

Where do you hail from?

London, very London, some say the River Thames runs through my veins, though this is unlikely. I have had it once pumped out of my stomach.

Favourite Cocktail?

It is hard to give just one. I mean, I had a Mojito in the Mezzanine Bar at the Santiago Hotel in Havana and it was possibly the most perfect cocktail I have ever drunk, but then the Aviator at the Savoy runs it very close. However I am also partial to an Old Fashioned and a Martini and in the summer quite happily enjoy a Pimms. Oh and then there was the chestnut cocktail that I tried at Christmas that was very interesting.

Most Chappist Skill?

The ability to disassemble, clean and reassemble a Lee Enfield .303 while blindfolded, it was something I learnt at school. Up till now I have often wondered where I would ever get to use this skill.

Most Chappist Possession?

A complete original set of *The Strand* magazine volume XXII, the one in which H.G. Wells's "The Man in the Moon" was published and Conan Doyle's "Hound of the Baskervilles".

Personal Motto?

My word is my bond. When all else fails, if I have my integrity, I still have my decency.

Or perhaps, "Oh, OK, I will have a gin, then." I should also mention that at an NSC night someone attribute the T.S. Eliot quote "I get the source of my inspiration from gin and drugs" to me - no idea what to make of that.

Favourite Quotes?

Oh, far too many. Anything by Oscar Wilde or Groucho Marx. Churchill, he said a few good things. Blackadder is another one, Neil Gaiman, Shakespeare, the list goes on and on. If pushed for a single quote, I like this from Laurence Sterne in particular: "So long as a man rides his hobbyhorse peaceably and quietly along the King's highway, and compels neither you or me to get up behind him - pray, Sir, what have either you or I to do with it?" just because I use it as a way of determining if I should get upset by something or not.

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

We won't talk about the body piercing.

How long have you been involved with the NSC?

About two or three years, though gin clouds the mind at times.

How did you hear about the Club to begin with?

I met some of the members at various Chap Olympiads and Balls, plus I came across the website and eventually turned up at one Wednesday night, my life was changed for ever.

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

The British Museum. It is the collection of the world,

2014 Order of the Fez jaunt to the British Museum



it has so many things of interest, so many stories, from the adventures of how the collections were assembled to Marx and Engels writing in the round room. OK, I want to resurrect a mummy, I confess.

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

It would have to be Oscar Wilde and Groucho Marx, the two greatest wits of all time, in my opinion, for the chat. The third would be Verity Lambert, just to hear about how she created one of my favourite television shows, *Doctor Who*; and she has *Minder*, *Quatermass*, *Reilly: Ace of Spies* and *Jonathan Creek* in her CV too. There have got to be some great stories there and she would make a great referee between Groucho and Oscar.

Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?

Artemis Scarheart. This seems pre-filled-in. Well, I can't argue, he has got to be the best looking member of the Glorious Committee in a skirt and fishnets. I am not sure even the others on the committee would dispute it.

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

Not yet, but have several ideas: something about the decline of the tailoring industry in the UK or maybe the rum distilleries and cigar factories of the Caribbean.

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.



DON'T MENTION THE WAR

Tim Eyre discovers a pocket of 1940s in modern-day Cambridgeshire



The author cuts a rug at the big band dance

RAMSEY IS A SMALL market town in the Cambridgeshire fens. For each of the past 12 years, Ramsey has hosted a 1940s-themed festival over an August weekend. I first attended the Ramsey 1940s Weekend in 2009 and have attended a further three times since. I have just returned from the 2014 event and would like to share my experiences of Ramsey with members of the New Sheridan Club.

I was originally attracted to the Ramsey 1940s Weekend by my interest in the history of the Second World War rather than things vintage. My first visit was a day trip. I wasn't entirely sure what to expect and I was pleasantly surprised to find that the festival had a strong historical emphasis. Reenactors had set up displays depicting wartime scenes, with impressive attention to detail. I was also delighted to see Lindy Hop dance lessons, stalls selling vintage clothing and people dressed up in 1940s outfits. At the time I wasn't especially familiar with the vintage scene and this day trip to Ramsey acted as something of an inspiration.

I knew I was on to something when a few people asked me what historical character I was representing: the answer was that I wasn't representing anything; it seemed that my habitual mode of dress slotted naturally into this 1940s-themed subculture. I bought myself a Homburg hat and resolved to return the following year.

Return I did, this time with a group of friends. We are now firm Ramsey regulars, staying for the whole weekend each year (although in my case trips to Samoa and Thailand prevented me from attending in 2012 and 2013 respectively). The festival provides camping pitches for weekend attendees, with the action kicking off on Friday night and ending late Sunday afternoon. Unfortunately the sanitation for campers is at the lower end of the scale even by festival standards; perhaps for this reason most people stay in camper vans and caravans rather than tents. This being the Cambridgeshire fens rather than London, there is abundant space for camping, exhibits, dancing, vendors and car parking. However,



The musical offerings extend well beyond the Saturday Big Band dance. A regular at Ramsey is Miss Lola Lamour, a 1940s singer in the mould of Doris Day who looks as good as she sounds. At the other end of the glamour spectrum, this year's George Formby tribute act was something of a crowd-puller. Brass bands and

pipers also make an appearance if that's your kind of thing. Being held in August, the Ramsey 1940s weekend usually sees hot weather. As such, the dark heavy wool three-piece double-breasted

compared to many festivals, Ramsey is on the smaller side so attendees are not required to walk vast distances from one location to another. The number of attendees over a weekend is typically in the order of 10,000. Staying overnight allows one to attend the biggest event of the weekend, the big band dance held on Saturday night. A big band plays music of the era and it would seem that the most capable swing dancers of the nation descend on the dance floor en masse: the standard of dancing on show is always dizzyingly high. The band for 2014 was Sticky Wicket, with Linda Morris providing vocals. Ladies wishing to sport a 1940s hairdo for the dance can call on the services of an on-site hairdresser called Hair Raid Shelter, who this year were creating coiffures in wartime styles for a quite reasonable £15 a pop.



1940s-style suit that I had made for events such as this one proved to be wildly unsuitable, especially given the absence of showers. This year I eschewed the suit in favour of a Desert Rat get-up, which proved to be much more suitable, although the weather turned out to be much cooler than before.

Indeed, this year the weather was rather windy. This meant that the scheduled fly-past of Britain's two remaining operational



A slightly disturbing display of wartime medical equipment

restored civilian automobiles parked for the admiration of visitors. Particularly charming are the vintage caravans; the owners of these contraptions have often restored them from utter dilapidation to a better-than-new state, betraying an abundance of free time that most of us can only dream of.

Some of the

vehicles belong to the displays put on by “living history” reenactment groups. For readers unfamiliar with this activity, up and

Lancaster Bombers had to be cancelled. Previous years have brought impressive aerial displays of various wartime aircraft, including Spitfires, Mustangs and Messerschmitt 109s. I once even witnessed a parachute drop. One has to admire the nerve of the pilots willing to fly such old planes.

Other machines on display at Ramsey include military vehicles. This year I saw a row of jeeps and even an American half-track. Those fond of fully-tracked vehicles can take a tank ride around a neighbouring field, although I’m pretty sure that the tanks on offer are not of 1940s vintage. Each year also sees a few dozen lovingly



A recreation of a wartime police station with a display of vintage bicycles outside

down the country there are groups of history enthusiasts who indulge their passion by dressing up in original uniforms, collecting authentic equipment and creating displays that tend to be a cross between a temporary outdoor museum and a re-creation of a wartime scene. Each display typically depicts a specific military unit or function. This year I was interested to see a display of Hungarian army equipment and another of the Polish military police, which showed off antique field telephones and a military radio set. The reenactors are usually delighted to talk to spectators and



A living history display depicting the Women's Land Army

their hands-on social approach to history makes for interesting conversation, at least if you can keep them off the subject of eBay bidding strategies.

For me these living history displays characterise the Ramsey 1940s Weekend in two important ways: firstly, the event sticks quite firmly to the 1940s rather than being a generic vintage event celebrating everything from Victoriana to the Swinging Sixties. Secondly, Ramsey has more appeal for the historically-minded than for hipsters who are simply looking for a forum to show off their latest vintage threads.

Having said that, the festival provides ample opportunities to buy vintage clothing and knick-knacks. Each year Ramsey hosts several dozen vendors who sell all manner of vintage civilian and military gear from a retail village formed of pavilions and stalls. This provides a good opportunity to see and try on clothes before buying them. Hungry shoppers can refuel at the NAAFI, where a local women’s charity dishes out tea, Spam sandwiches and bread pudding in return for donations. My only purchase this year was three shellac 78rpm records to play on the wind-up gramophone we’d brought to the campsite.

Ramsey is only a couple of hours north of London by train or car so it’s perfectly practical to visit for a day or over the weekend. There’s even a good chance that you’ll see me there in 2015.





NSC FILM NIGHT

If... (1968)

Sunday 14th September

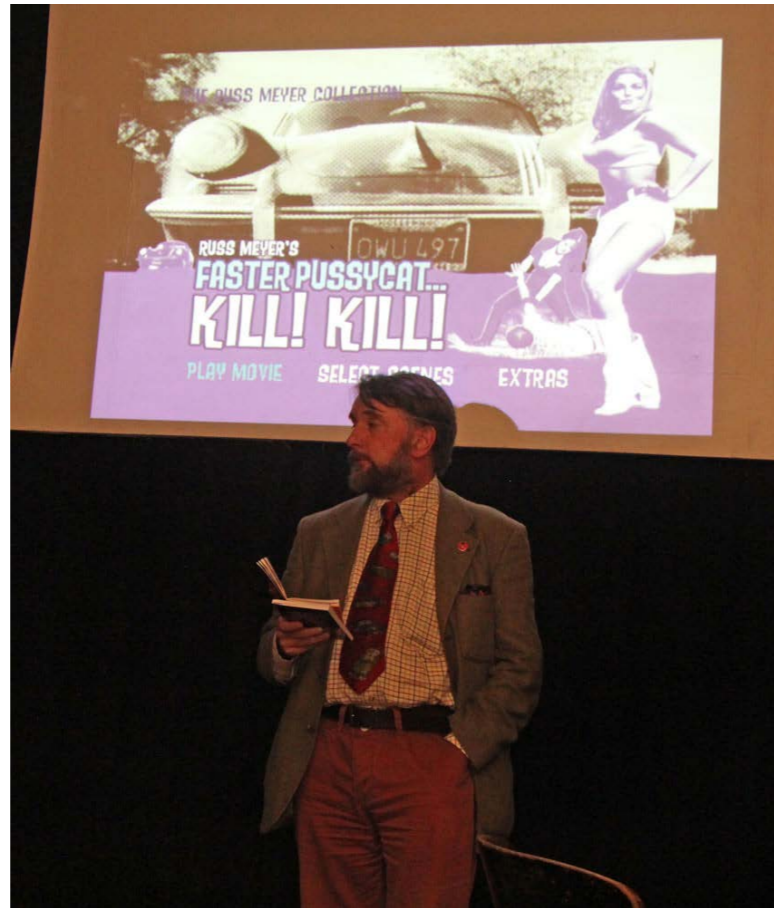
7pm–11pm (screening from 8pm)

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

Admission: Free

Lyndsey Anderson's fable about a bloody insurrection at an imaginary public school starring Malcolm McDowell in his first role (and it was seeing him in this that prompted Stanley Kubrick to cast him in *A Clockwork Orange*), suggested by Member Dirk Heinsius. Made in the same year as the student riots in Paris this may well have been a genuine attack on the autocracy and privilege of the public school system as well as a leftist allegory, with the chilling insistence that everyone must choose which side they are on... The film was shot at Cheltenham College, Anderson's old school, during term time—some of the boys who appear in it are actual pupils who took time off lessons to appear. (Despite the £1,000-a-day location fee it may seem odd that the school allowed the film to be made there, but there was a clause in the deal that the identity of the location was not revealed.)

CHEAP



Torquil Arbuthnot on our August Film Night presentation

Russ Meyer gained his photographic experience as a combat cameraman during the Second World War, then after the war worked as a glamour photographer, including doing shoots for Hugh Hefner's new magazine, *Playboy*. His first feature film, *The Immoral Mr Teas*, made in 1959, concerned a mild-mannered dentist who, after a routine operation, discovered he had the ability to see fully-clothed women naked. It cost \$24,000 to make and grossed over \$1m on the art-house and independent cinema circuits. He went on to make a series of films in the 1960s and 1970s focusing on his trademark, soft-core nudity featuring big-breasted women. *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (1970) is probably the best known, but he also made *Mondo Topless* (1966), *Vixen!* (1968), *Supervixens* (1975), *Up!* (1976), and

THRILLS

Beneath the Valley of the Ultra Vixens (1979). He was also due to direct a film featuring the Sex Pistols in 1978, *Who Killed Bambi?*, but the project fell through. He spent the 1980s and 1990s making millions selling his films for re-release into the new VHS and then DVD markets.

Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill! is his best-known film, made for \$45,000 in 1965. To put the film in context, 1965 saw the first US troops deployed in Vietnam, Martin Luther King winning the Nobel Peace Prize, and Malcolm X being assassinated. Bob Dylan released "Like a Rolling Stone" and the Rolling Stones released "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction". Films released the previous year had included *Dr Strangelove*, *A Hard Day's Night*, *A Fistful of Dollars*, *The Tomb of Ligeia*, and the teen exploitation films *Ride the Wild Surf* and *Bikini Beach*.

Meyer cast, as the three go-go dancers in *Faster, Pussycat!*, two actual go-go dancers, Tura Satana (Varla) and Haji (Rosie), and an actress/dancer, Lori Williams (Billie). As the innocent teenager Meyer cast the 16-year-old Susan Bernard, whose first film this was.

Tura Satana (her real name) had an interesting life. Her family (originally from Japan) were interned in the US during the war. As a young teenager she was sent to reform school, and later formed an all-girl gang, who used to carry knives in their boots and razors hidden in their hair. She became a glamour model and burlesque dancer in Los Angeles in the late 1950s, even attracting the attention of Elvis Presley, who asked her to marry him (she declined but kept the engagement ring). She became a very successful exotic dancer, even advising Shirley Maclaine on *Irma La Douce*. After Meyer cast her as Varla in *Faster, Pussycat!* he apparently gave her full rein to interpret her character as she liked, and even to re-write the dialogue. She made a few

more films after *Faster, Pussycat!* (notably *The Astro-Zombies*, 1968), but retired from films and studied to be a nurse. John Waters (whose favourite film this is) remembers meeting her in her nurse's uniform with her "Satana" name-badge.

Shooting took place mainly in the Mojave Desert in 120° temperatures, exacerbated by Meyer's using large reflectors to accentuate the sharp, tonal differences between black and white. Cast and crew were kept segregated in their motels, with no hanky-panky allowed, as Meyer wanted any sexual tension to show on the screen (an exception was made for Tura Satana). Tura Satana claims she couldn't get any performance out of Susan Bernard so persecuted her until the hatred shown on screen was real.

For some reason the film did badly at the box office, possibly because of its contradictions, and possibly because it wasn't the simple soft-core porn the audience expected of Meyer. The film certainly divided the critics, and has continued to do so. Is it proto- or anti-feminist? Neo-realistic or cartoonish? An exploitation genre film or a one-off? A comedy or a film noir?

There was a persistent rumour in 2008 (and since) that Quentin Tarantino intended to remake *Faster, Pussycat!* with Britney Spears in the role of Varla. Apparently Tura Satana telephoned Tarantino and told him if he cast Spears she would come round and castrate him.

Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill! is available on DVD, and includes an interesting featurette that has interviews with the three go-go girl actors. There is also an interesting short critical work on the film by Dean J. DeFino.



The Cocktail Cabinet

Wherein Members bicker about liquor

A classic of the old school

By David Bridgman-Smith

As times change, so do people's tastes in food (gone are the days when Chicken Kiev and Black Forest Gâteau were the height of sophistication), and the same is true for drinks. One of the beverages of the past that has baffled me for a long time is the Scotch & Soda or Brandy & Soda. I have tried these drinks a few times and was always disappointed; even stranger was that it was a drink of choice of John Steed in 'The Avengers', whose preference is a dash [of brandy] and a splash [of soda].

Fittingly, it was the Series 4 episode, "Small Game for Big Hunters" (involving a Colonel Rawling who believes he is still in the tropics, rather than a glasshouse in the English countryside), that finally helped me to understand the appeal: in hot climates, just drinking straight spirit can "lacerate your

liver", so it is recommended that you keep drinks "long and cool". In other

words, adding soda to liquor is about making the drink more refreshing and hydrating. The key is to have a sufficiently high spirit to soda ratio.

For this month's Cocktail Cabinet, therefore, I decided to take a look at each of the major spirits and how they worked with soda.

Before my tasting notes, a brief word on ratios and water: generally, I find that one part spirit to three or four parts soda works very well. Regarding water, it is not essential to use "soda water", as plain sparkling water works well. Popular brands include San Pellegrino and Perrier (James Bond's favourite), but I find that supermarket own-label varieties work just as well.

Scotch

Really, this should read, "Single Malt & Soda", as I am using an English Whisky from St George's Distillery. This is a slightly more luxurious version of the drink, given the choice of whisky, but the flavour of the spirit does shine through. It is a great way to lengthen a whisky whilst avoiding having its character masked by sickly mixers.

Bourbon

A lighter, sweeter variety of the above, with rich, nutty notes and hints of



Bourbon and Soda



Vodka and Soda

brown sugar. Very accessible. For a Julep-esque twist, garnish with fresh mint.

Gin

I used Beckett's Gin, a classic gin from London that is made using juniper sourced from Surrey and mint from Kingston-upon-Thames. This produces a delightfully refreshing drink with dryness from the juniper and complexity from the other botanicals. It

is considerably cleaner and less sweet than a Gin & Tonic; if you fancy some extra bitterness, I suggest adding a dash or two of gentian bitters [e.g. in case you don't happen to have any try Peychaud's or Angostura Bitters—Ed].

Vodka

I used Dorset's own Black



Brandy and Soda

Cow, which is a milk-based vodka. This adds a pleasant creaminess to the drink, although I would add some citrus for a little extra zest.

Brandy

A lovely drink, which I made with Spanish brandy. It has rich, woody notes and hints of spice and vanilla, followed by a long, dry finish that is most refreshing. This is remarkably easy to drink and is definitely one of my favourite combinations of spirit & soda.

Rum

Using a classic, English Navy style Demerara rum adds rich notes of treacle and liquorice to the clean flavours of the soda water. There is also a delicious, dark, fruity element to the finish. I would recommend a garnish of fresh

Tequila

This combination is rather smoky and, for me, doesn't really work without a squeeze of citrus. With those extra fruity notes, however, this becomes a flavoursome and refreshing drink.

Cognac

This is a more luxurious version of the Brandy & Soda, but, for me, is worth the extra effort; the

flavour is more interesting and complex, with notes of fruit, wood and spice. This has become a go-to drink for me when I fancy some light refreshment.

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



Scotch and Soda



Gin and Soda



Rum and Soda



Cognac and Soda

How to Conduct a Séance

THE AROMA OF Columbian coffee beans becomes fainter and fainter and the last few sips of Glenrothes languish at the bottom of the glasses. A long silence is broken by somebody remarking on the time. And then some disingenuous excuse about arising early for “work”.

How can a gentleman ensure that his party ends on a high note? That his guests depart not with a sense of semi-drunken melancholia, but having charted the deepest reaches of catharsis, having crossed a border, knowing that they can never quite return? How do you ensure that they're left mute with amazement but for the single comment, “That was a jolly good party!” Simple. Top it all off with a séance.

1. Self hypnosis

1.1. To start with, you must be able to hypnotise yourself. Lie on your bed and say to yourself: “As you lie there, impeccably dressed, experimenting with a dangerous new tie-knot, and listening to my voice, you will begin to feel yourself becoming more and more relaxed.” Speak slowly and calmly, like you might to a ruffian desirous of fisticuffs. “And as you become more and more relaxed you'll begin to feel a wave of relaxation passing down your body.” Go through each body part in detail as the wave “slowly and warmly washes down you” beginning with “all the muscles in your face as they become relaxed and still”, all the way down to the tips of your perfectly manicured toes.

1.2. Deepening the trance: tell yourself to imagine a door, perhaps to a cottage somewhere near Winchester or to an ancient brothel just past Basingstoke. Describe all the details of the

Having successfully led one himself at a recent party in a haunted castle in northern Latvia, Dr Edward Dutton instructs the gentleman on the art of the séance.

door: the kind of wood, the feel of the knocker, the price list displayed thereon. Tell yourself you're opening it and descending ten steps, becoming ten times more relaxed with each step down.

1.3. Tell yourself that your left arm is attached to a balloon and is being “lifted up into the sky”. Keep describing this with details like “you feel your arm become lighter and lighter” and the pull is “stronger and stronger”. You should start to sense the arm rise while also feeling that you're not really controlling it. Congratulations, Dr Mesmer! You've hypnotised yourself. Now, let's move on to the guests.

2. Hypnotising the guests

2.1. Make sure you have subtly intimated to your guests that your house is haunted. Remarks such as, “I haven't slept well for weeks because of the nightly banging from the cellar,” “I once felt this icy breeze in the room you're going to sleep in,” and, “A prostitute was strangled and partly mutilated on this very spot on this night in 1804,” may help to sow seeds which will bear fruit later in the evening. When you broach the issue of the séance, you will probably find that quite a few of your visitors are rather intrigued.

2.2. As a rule, members of the Arts/social science sex (and gentlemen with such degrees) will be much easier to “put under” than those with a modicum of practicality. But if, as is ideally the case, none of your guests has ever toiled away in a redbrick university chemistry lab, you will have to identify the most suggestible from among them.

Perform steps 1.1–3 on your guests and note whose arms rise and whose do so most quickly. For Christ's sake, remember who they are. Failure to do so will result in such humiliation and ostracism that you may as well have studied chemistry yourself.

2.3. Bring the guests slightly out of the trance by describing ascending the staircase and feeling a pleasant sense of excitement of the kind one might in a gender-mixed “steam sauna” on the Finno-Russian border.

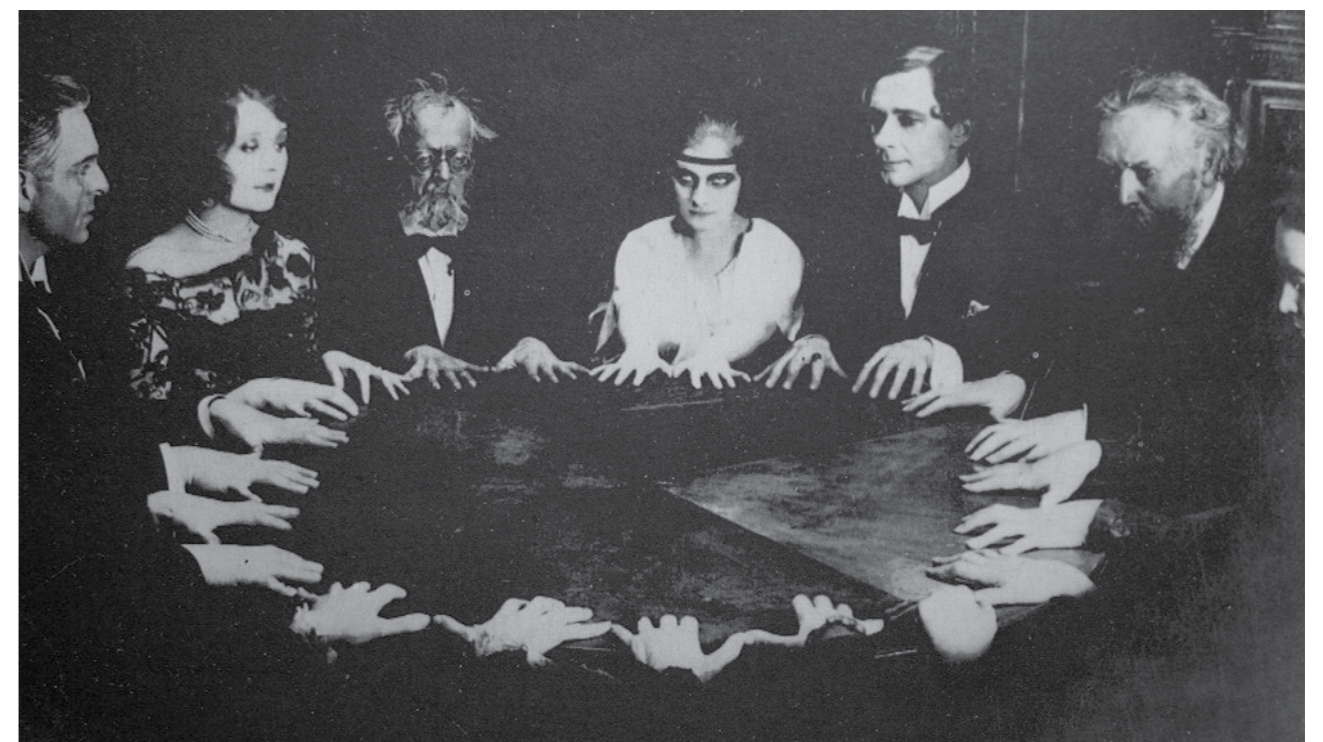
Sit the most suggestible four or so around a round table (the others can watch and read the board) in a room, pitch black but for a single candle. Ensure (to give an entirely random example) that the two pulchritudinous yet extremely hypnotisable, female anthropology students in their early twenties are sitting next to each other. You will have snuck out during pudding to set-up a ouija board and there will be an upturned glass in the middle. Hold hands, close eyes, and perform steps 1.1–3, perhaps varying the imagery a little (a rope rather than

a balloon, the naked body of an 18-year-old Kyrgyzstani au pair rather than a wave, etc).

3. The séance

3.1. Ah, in what Chappist footsteps you now tread... Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Arthur Balfour, Edvard Munch... but, as you'll be deeply entranced, you'll feel no pressure. Ask the two social scientists to place their adjoining hands on the glass. Enquire “Spirit, are you present?” As with step 1.3, begin to describe how “you will feel the glass beginning to move, it often takes time before it will start to move, just allow the glass to move where it wants to go; slowly, as you sit there, you feel the glass beginning to move just a little, as if something else is moving the glass; allow it to move, don't stop it...” As it moves, you are likely to feel a smug sense of satisfaction at the power you have over your friends, like pre-War Latvian dictator Karlis Ulmanis or a PE teacher.

3.2. Once the spirit is present, start asking simple questions to discern its identity. Sensitive and poetically inclined, you may find, at this point, that things begin getting “real” and that the borders of this world and the next collapse like an IKEA self-assembly wardrobe. Your instinct may be to “go with it”. This instinct should be followed. The Devil himself is offering you a day pass to the more salubrious regions of Hell. Surely, you don't have a prior engagement.





3.3. Ask the spirit of Richard III, Richard Cromwell, Richard Whiteley (or whoever it may be), if he would be willing to speak to the assembled through our two ladies. Once he indicates “yes”, focus on the most suggestible of the two and “deepen the trance”, telling her that, at the bottom of the stairs, she will see Beau Brummell (let’s be optimistic about your house’s phantom) and he will enter her body and speak through her.

3.4. Here, you can have a field day settling relevant historical questions and discovering the Dandy Dauphin’s opinions on everything from trilibies to dying penniless of syphilis in a Normandy insane asylum in 1840. At about this stage, you may start to feel that you have taken things too far and that it is time to “wrap things up”. This is probably advisable as failure to do so, especially as a first timer, may culminate in levitation, candlesticks smacking you in the face, inability to bring the girl out of her trance, and her (and possibly your) rapid descent into psychosis.

4. Leaving the spirit world

4.1. Repeat the stair metaphor, such that the spirit can return to the world of twilight. Having done this, you may wish to take advantage of the intense suggestibility of your guests by asking them all to close their eyes and sedating them even further. Describing every minor detail, take them on a sensual journey to a St

James’s gentleman’s club, circa 1910. Explain how relaxing, comfortable, and normal this place is and how if they ever feel despondent or the slightest bit irked they can return to this place simply by donning the attire, and engaging in the courteous conduct, that the club would deem acceptable. For good measure, make them repeat dogmatically Chappist slogans such as, “Correct neckwear is the foundation of civilization,” and, “Politeness significantly positively correlates with a high sperm count.” A Stalin-like chance to inculcate ones chums with gentlemanly ideology should never be passed up.

4.2. Take the guests back up the “stairs” and bring them out of the trance. You may discover at this point that the possessed one does not come round. If you command the student to open her eyes and find yourself staring into a black abyss of dilation, do not panic. This is becoming neither of a man of refinement nor of an aspiring occultist. Simply take more time to bring her out or let her come out herself, as if slowly awakening from some opium-induced slumber.

4.3. When all are pretty much cognisant, you may wish to make some closing remarks about how we have all transcended the vulgarity of everyday life and but sampled the pleasures of Hades. Then break the circle, turn on the light, and extinguish the candle. Your work is done. This will be a party to remember.



CLUB NOTES

Tashes Update

Thanks to all those who trolled along to the 10th anniversary of our yearly cricket match The Tashes, played between the Hirsute Gentlemen and the Clean-Shaven Players. In a nutshell I can report that rain was not an issue at our new lovely grounds in Greenwich Park. Traditionally the winning captain pens the match report, though Tashes overlord Watermere tells me that Rod, the winning gaffer this time, is currently indisposed overseas; Watermere himself will



produce a thorough report in time for the next issue of *Resign!* but for now we will have to content ourselves with the accompanying action shot of the Earl of Essex at the crease...

Club Tie Corner

A WHOLESOME HAUL this time, featuring Tory MP Stephen Metcalfe (bottom left), a character from the 1992 *Chaplin* biopic (bottom right), and newish Member Harrison Goldman, rocking his 1995 spring/summer look (right).



Anyone for a Post-Xmas House?

By Priya Kali

IN THE SPIRIT of an original Chappist tradition, the old New Sheridan Club Christmas House, Mr Harrison Goldman and I have been researching into a suitable and stylish weekend getaway at a countryside manor, with the kind and courteous permission of The Glorious Committee.

Of course, it already being the autumnal month of September, we thought that an Xmas house would be too soon and therefore impractical, and decided instead to opt for January. January—a time when the merry cheer of Xmas and the New Year has started to fade, a time when we look deep into the bottom of our glasses, wishing for another hot toddy, and shy away from the leftover fruit cake and peppermint candy. And all the while desperately desiring a cheap getaway from the Big, old and damp Smoke. A chance to curl up by the fire with a glass of whiskey, chatting with interesting friends about the history of tea, England's cricket triumphs, Egyptology and one's latest gin discoveries while some good ol' jazz plays softly on the phonograph.

Well, look no further, because we have the perfect getaway plan!

It goes by the name of Hoath House (hoathhouse.com), a beautiful manor (see image below) set in the lush verdure of the Garden of England (i.e. Kent) that imbues a suitably traditional feel. It is also easy and inexpensive to travel to by train or motorcar.

We can accommodate up to 20 people on the weekend of 16–18 January 2015 for the great price of less than £100 per person including lodging, food and drink (about £90 per person). The train should be less than £20. All that would be left to do would be to arrange cooking dinner for the Saturday night (food to be pre-ordered). Dinner could be black tie, and we would hope to serve pre-dinner drinks and post-dinner port.

There is a games room, gardens to walk in and beautiful views to take in. Especially when bundled up in your finest woollens, cashmeres and tweeds, and smoking your favourite pipe.

Right now, we are trying to gauge your interest. Ideally we would need OKs from about 17–20 people and an initial deposit of £25 per person to make the booking, giving priority to bona fide members of the NSC.

If interested, please either comment on the post on the Sheridan Club Facebook page, or PM Harrison and/or me. We will count the numbers over the next day or two.



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 3rd September

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.

The Golden Era of Jazz

Every Thursday till 25th September

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.

Black Tie Ballroom Club

Friday 5th September

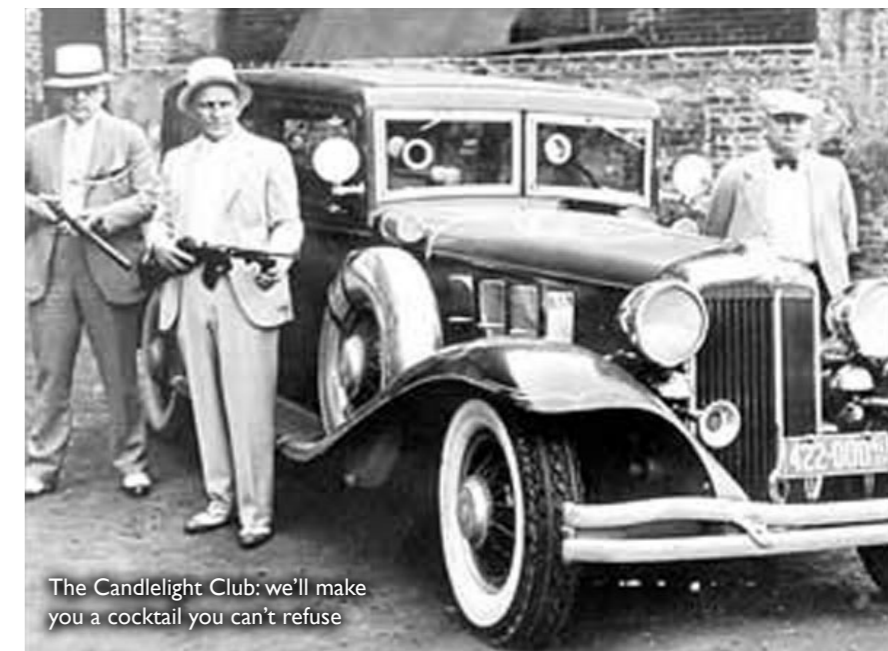
London Welsh Centre, 157 to 163 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8UE

7pm

Admission: £10 from Wegottickets

Dress: Black tie/evening gowns

George Tudor-Hart's new venture, aimed at those who wish to dress up and meet other ballroom dancers, catering for both beginners and experienced dancers. There will be a free beginners' dance lesson from 7–8pm with the main dancing from 8–11pm. There will be one half-hour set from the Kewdos Dance Orchestra, featuring Alistair Sutherland on voice trumpet, of strict tempo vintage dance music, and the rest of the dancing will be to pre-war, mainly English, dance band records for slow waltz, slow foxtrot, quickstep, tango, rumba, swing, jive, Viennese waltz, and the odd Charleston and cha cha. Four or five male and female taxi dancers are available for all guests at no extra charge. Your hostess, Jean Bentley



will arrange interactive social activities such as 'excuse me' dances, 'Paul Jones' and 'snowballs' and a bus stop throughout the evening. The venue has a large sprung dance floor and tickets are limited to 100 to ensure there is plenty of space. There is a licensed bar at pub prices. Any questions, phone George on 020 8542 1490.

The Candlelight Club: Little Italy

Saturday 6th September

7pm–12am

A secret London location

Admission: £20 in advance

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

The Candlelight Club is a clandestine pop-up cocktail 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 (frequently from the New Sheridan Club's own Auntie Maureen). Ticket holders get an email two days before revealing the location. This time we honour the Italian American connection. Italy's role in helping subvert Prohibition is undisputed: many of the mobsters who vied to control the flow of illicit drink, such as Al Capone, Lucky Luciano and Salvatore Maranzano, came from Italy to make their fortunes in America. Speakeasies across the country depended on these organisations for the vital supply of liquor. The flow of immigrants to America introduced Italy's wines, spirits and liqueurs—many classic drinks, such as the Manhattan and the Martini, would not exist without Italian vermouth. We've partnered with classic aperitivo Aperol, the heart of the Venetian classic drink the Spritz, to bring you an evening of flapper fashions, Italian food and cocktails and gangster jazz (the first ever jazz record was made by an Italian American) with live music from the Shirt Tail Stompers and vintage vinyl spun by Swingin' Dickie.

Vintage by the Sea

Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th September



Morecombe seafront

Admission: For individual events see the website

One of Wayne Hemingway's scattergun "vintage" festivals, taking in everything from the 1920s to the 1990s in the form of music, fashion, film, art, design and dance. The fantastic setting of Morecambe's seafront will provide the backdrop and be transformed into a multi-venue playground where visitors can learn the dances, take in specially curated live performances, vintage nightclubs, etc. Perhaps of most interest to NSC types will be The Torch Club, offering 1930s and 40s glamour in the Midland Hotel, but there are also clubs offering Northern Soul, 70s disco, 50s rock n' roll and more. There will be fashion shows, food and cocktails, vintage vehicles, decade-specific hair and beauty makeovers and vintage shopping on offer.

Hip Shake

Friday 12th September

7pm (swing taster class at 7.30) till midnight
Orford House Social Club, 73 Orford Road, London E17

Admission: £10 (students/MU £7)

A Rhythm and Blues (in the old sense) dance party, with stompin' sounds from DJs Voodoo Doll and Terry Elliott, plus stalls selling vintage and retro clothing, accessories and collectables. No need to book, just turn up. More at www.londonswingcats.com or dial 020 8829 0919 or 07790 762932 for further info.

Weekend at the Asylum

Friday 12th to Sunday 14th September

Lincoln

Admission: See this link for options

Lincoln's annual steampunk festival, organised by the Victorian Steampunk Society. It is the largest purely steampunk event in Europe and offers art, literature, music, fashion, comedy and good fun. Where else can you find a regency masonic lodge, a Victorian university and a medieval castle as the venues for a retro-futurist extravaganza? There are day or weekend wristbands giving access to all daytime events, plus ticketed bashes in the evenings. See what's on here.

Saturday Night Swing Club

Saturday 13th September

7.30pm–2am

Magpie and Stump (formerly City Firefly), 18 Old Bailey, London EC4M 7EP

Admission: £12 (includes a £3 drinks voucher)

Three dance floors playing swing, R n' B and rock n' roll music from the 1920s to the 1950s, with resident DJz Swing Maniac and Simon "Mr Kicks" Selmon, plus guest DJs this time including Miss Aloha and Slimboy. On the middle floor there are dance classes from 8.15 till midnight.

NSC Film Night

If... (1968)

Sunday 14th September

7pm–11pm

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

Admission: Free

See page 15.

Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair

Sunday 14th September

11am–5pm

The Old Finsbury Town Hall, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4RP

Admission: £4 (£2 NUS card)

To coordinate with London Fashion Week, this event is styled as "The Vintage Collections" and focuses on vintage designer items. There is also a tea room, alterations booth plus sometimes live entertainment too. More details at www.clerkenwellvintagefashionfair.co.uk.

Classic Car Boot Sale

Saturday 20th–Sunday 21st September

10am–6pm

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London E20 1ST

Admission: £4 (£5 before 11am)

An ingenious idea—vintage traders gather to sell goods out of the boots of vintage cars. A double whammy, appealing to lovers of vintage clothes, accessories, homewares, records and pop memorabilia as well as fans of classic automobiles. The event will also feature street food, musical performances and street theatre.



Steampunks at last year's Weekend at the Asylum in Lincoln

More details at classiccarbootsale.co.uk.

The Guinea Club

Sunday 21st September

8pm

Portobello House, 225 Ladbroke Grove, London W10 6HQ

Admission: Free

A night of traditional cabaret, hosted by NSC Member Anke Landau channelling Marlene Dietrich... This time feature French chanteuse Oriana Curls African snake dancer Solaris Ade plus special surprise guests...

Auntie Maureen presents Vintage-A-Fair

Sunday 28th September

11–5pm

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@auntiemareen.info.



At our August meeting, bow tie merchant Mikhail Korasch displays the tash that won him Best Facial Hair at the Chap Olympics

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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. For more photos of Club events go to www.flickr.com/sheridanclub. You can even befriend us electrically at www.facebook.com.