

I have always considered my visits to the Club as pure enjoyment. The occasions varied, it might be a lunch with a scientist whom I wanted to persuade to write an article for *ISR*, or it might have been a Friday 'Candlelight Dinner' with the 'Lady in my Life', Stefanie Maison. When I first told her that ladies were only admitted to the Savile on Friday nights, she refused to come on the grounds that she did not care to go to a place where she was not also welcome on Mondays and Tuesdays. She changed her mind!

When I finally persuaded her to try it, she liked it, and assisted by the charm of Alfredo, the dining-room manager, it soon became a regular habit for us to dine at the Club on Fridays. Alfredo contributed by arranging a special small *escalope de veau* to be prepared by the Chef, known henceforth as *escalope Stefanie*. I am a much heartier eater and always enjoyed the pepper steak and the sweet-trolley. These Friday dinners were always *à deux*.

If I was alone and wanted a meal, the 'long table' in the dining room was the answer. As everywhere in the Club, the service is excellent, and at the long table one always has the chance of meeting new members from the country, or reciprocal guests from other clubs. To the best of my knowledge, I have never broken the golden rule of lecturing about a subject next to a world expert. I was, however, present when Jack Piccard brought his son Richard, then a medical student, to lunch at the long table. Richard started to hold forth on a topic concerning the eye he had just learnt, when his father stopped him with the words: "Richard, your neighbour is Lord Brain". Lord Brain FRS, so aptly named, was England's leading neurophysiologist and President of the Royal College of Physicians. Richard knew him by repute but not by sight and stopped his lecture immediately. Whereupon Lord Brain said: "Do continue Richard, I am very glad to hear about the latest research on the subject." A typical Savile lunch repartee.

I only know of two scandals, both from Anderson's history of the Club. A politician, George Brown, proposed and invited to a house dinner, made a speech in praise of himself, contrary to all custom, whilst imbibing heavily. Having delivered himself of his speech "he marched from the dining room, tumbled down the stairs and landed insensible at the bottom" as Anderson tells.

The second scandal concerns H.G. Wells who made the daughter of a fellow member pregnant and used this affair as the plot for his book *Ann Veronica*. The incensed father awaited Wells daily in the Club with a revolver, but this was too much, even for the tolerant Committee. Wells was asked to resign, went to the Athenaeum Club and did not return to the Savile until 28 years later, when he was welcomed back.

Nowadays, when visiting London from my retirement abroad I always stay at the Club.