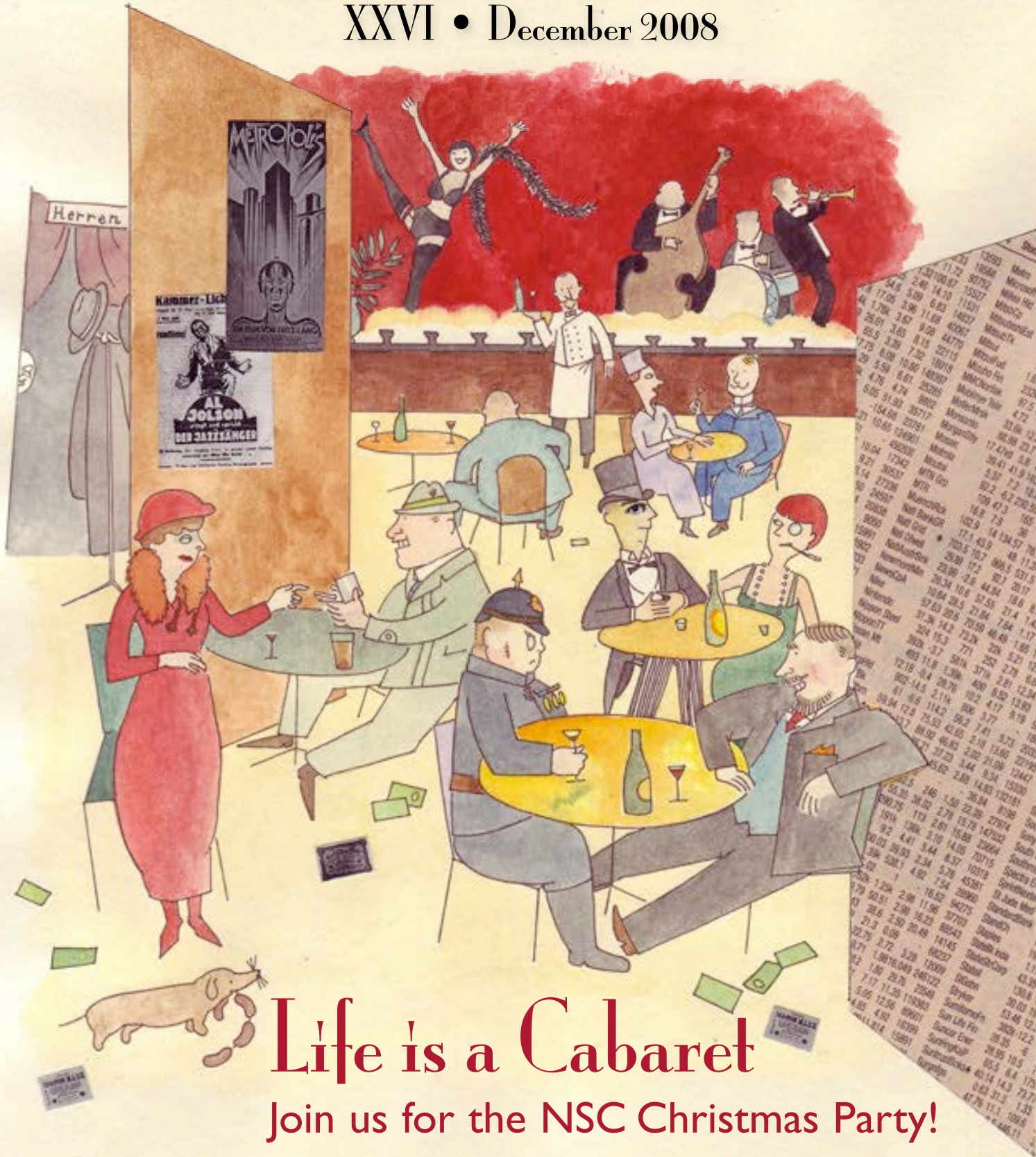


# The New Sheridan Club

# Newsletter

XXVI • December 2008



## Life is a Cabaret

Join us for the NSC Christmas Party!



The New Sheridan Club traditionally meets in the upstairs room of the Wheatsheaf pub 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 here and, legend has it, he was known to flash at women in here 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 here, as did Aleister Crowley, Wilfred Owen, Rupert Brooke and Katherine Mansfield.

### The Editor Writes

Winter finally seems to have clamped its icy gnashers down on the fingers of anyone who steps outside for more than five minutes, but you're nevertheless guaranteed a warm welcome in the old-tweed and fresh-pipe-tobacco embrace of the New Sheridan Club. Not only can we woo you with our December Club Meeting but, just three days later, we present our annual Christmas party, to which we have this time given a Weimar cabaret theme. And don't forget the annual Sheridan Christmas House, which this year takes us back to Treharlocks in Cornwall. Details later...

### The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 3rd December in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 8pm-11pm. Our guest speaker will be Niall Spooner-Harvey who will bowl us over with his knowledge of *A History of Ashes Cricket*. "I shall pack 130 years of cricket history into 20 useless minutes", he warns, "that will leave listeners confused and angry, just like the game itself does." Niall has written and performed live a poem on his childhood keenness to be in the school cricket team and the cruel thwartings he encountered, so it's obviously a subject he knows all about.

### The Last Meeting

Either vampires are a popular subject or Miss Minna is a popular lady—because our November meeting, at which Miss Minna delivered her talk on *The Vampire and the Modern Age*, was the best attended Club Night ever, with some 50 people cramming themselves into the Wheatsheaf's exquisite wood-panelled room.

Whatever the reason, it was a boisterous and good-humoured meeting. Miss Minna explained to us how, up to the beginning of the Victorian age, vampires were viewed as bestial. Even Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was foul-smelling and the spin-off *Nosferatu* was, frankly, a bald leech. It was Bela Lugosi, his dandyism and his knowledge of correct dress codes that led to *Dracula's* appearing dressed "for an ambassador's reception", and the idea of the vampire as seductive sophisticate. Christopher Lee carried on this tradition of *Dracula* as a high-brow in white tie.

From there Miss Minna charted the popular incarnations of the undead dandy, including *Blackula* (which, she claims, is a very good film) up to Anne Rice's *Interview With a Vampire* series. But her point was that the concept of the vampire seemed to be adopted regularly to represent whatever we might be afraid of at the time, whether it be syphilis, miscegenation or AIDS. The subject provoked great interest and many questions from the floor.



(Above) With a twinkle in his eye, Torquil introduces Miss Minna (left) whose talk takes in *Nosferatu* (far left top) and Christopher Lee (far left below); (Below) Eugenie and the Curé



(Above) Tabitha (r) with chum Natasha and her family; (left) Cecile dispenses Gothic lore; (right) Scarheart joshes with Dr Black; (above right) Catherine (r) and Ingrid





## Willkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome...

ONLY A WEEK to go now till the New Sheridan Club's Christmas party, the **Kredit Krunch Kabaret!**

In keeping with the current economic climate we've gone back to the ill-fated Weimar republic for our theme. Step into a decadent, desperate world where economic collapse and political mayhem waltz drunkenly with artistic and social daring. Sway to jazz tunes infected by new American influences, watch our Teutonic performers croon and flirt with impressive efficiency, quaff gin and Champagne like there's no tomorrow (there probably isn't), try and spend money faster than the currency devalues, while keeping a weather eye out for creeping Nazi influence.

In short, party like it's 1929.

We're very chuffed to have secured a performance from Henning Wehn, self-styled "German Comedy Ambassador", as seen on Channel 4, BBC2, BBC3, ITV1 and elsewhere. (Please note that, owing to Henning having several other bookings that night, he will be on from **8.15 till 8.45**, so come early to avoid



disappointment.)

We also have cabaret artist Maria Trevis confirmed—whose marketing machine claims "male and female flirtation guaranteed", so prepare from some monocle-popping. And on top of all that we will be titillated by exotic Hibernian burlesque dancer Miss Dolly Tartan.

We've also been carefully sourcing a playlist of German period jazz to get you in the mood.

The venue serves food and we are hoping to add a wurst-and-sauerkraut special to the menu for the evening.

There will also be the usual silly games, such as Shoot the Top Hat Off the Plutocrat, Pin the Moustache on the Austrian Corporal

and Blind Man's Dada Painting, plus, of course, our famous Grand Raffle, with hundreds of pounds worth of prizes. Entry is free but to Members only—including anyone who joins the New Sheridan Club on the night, so bring your chums along, get them drunk and persuade them to take the King's Schilling.

We will also be handing out prizes for such things as the best outfit, most efficient or inventive use for the freshly minted NSC banknotes, best suicide note, most doomed republic declared during the evening, etc.

We're still negotiating with sponsors, but here is just some of the largesse we'll be distributing on the night:

- Our traditional tither from Lock's of St James's, the world's finest hatter. Not sure what yet—possibly a burgundy fedora.
- A hamper from the German Deli
- A Beer Hall Putsch Kit (beer, brown shirt, gun and map of Munich)
- A monocle and cigar
- Schnapps and Underberg
- A genuine 1923 10,000,000 Mark banknote
- Stollen cake
- Tickets to *La Clique*
- Some 1920s luggage labels
- Underwear and "equipment" from Ann Summers
- German board games
- A pickelhaube
- A pre-launch copy of *The Chap Calendar*
- DVDs:

*Cabaret*

*M*

*Metropolis*

*The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*

*Berlin, Symphony of a City*

*The Blue Angel*

*Maidens in Uniform*

*Pandora's Box*

All guests will receive several million New Sheridan Marks to spend as they wish (though it'll be a challenge to get across the room to the bar before they devalue completely).



Nüschst nur für  
kleene Würstchen,  
...wa?



*Berlin Alexanderplatz...*

• Books:

*Lost Berlin* by Susanne Everett

*Goodbye to Berlin* by Christopher Isherwood

*Mein Kampf* plus *The Communist Manifesto* (hey, you decide!)

*Berlin Alexanderplatz* by Alfred Döblin  
Plus volumes on cigars, Georg Grosz, Bauhaus...

To see daguerreotypes from previous NSC parties, go to [www.flickr.com/sheridanclub](http://www.flickr.com/sheridanclub)

**Date: Saturday 6th December**  
**Time: 7pm until 1am**  
**Venue: The Putsch Tavern, 99 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1DE (Blackfriars tube station)**  
**Admission: FREE to NSC Members, £5 for non-Members (deductible from the cost of Membership if you join on the evening)**  
**Dress: Marlene Dietrich, Sally Bowles, Louise Brooks, Anna-Mae Wong, plutocrats, Bolsheviks, imperialists, WWI veterans, Bauhaus, Dada, Dr Caligari...**

\* OK, normally The Putsch Tavern, but we've rechristened it for the evening



A Dada meeting from 1921, to give you some inspiration. (That's Tristan with "DADA" written on his forehead.)



## Mr Chapman, I Presume?

SOME OF YOU may have been wondering what had happened to our own Alfred Chapman. He was about in the summer, working for a while behind the counter at Albion's sadly doomed Emporium in Covent Garden; he was there at the Chap Olympics—then nothing. You may have heard the various rumours, about the debts, the jealous husband, the cannibalism, but the truth is that Mr Chapman decided on a career rethink, a course of action which required him to return to live with his parents for a while. Home is the Danish countryside.

I found myself in Copenhagen recently and managed to get a radio signal through



Alfred and I do some sightseeing



to Alfred who, by chance, was coming into the capital for an afternoon, so we were able to meet up for lunch. Here I present photographic evidence that he is alive and well, along with a few observations that might benefit the visitor to Copenhagen.

(Left and below) One interesting find was this restaurant in a converted vintage tram. Not much room but a lot of character.



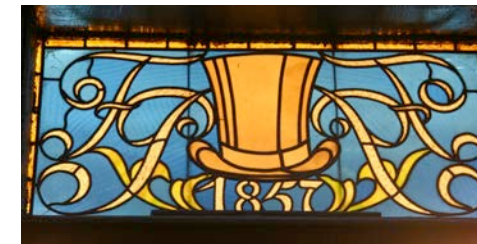
(Left) Your correspondent (I) with Mr Chapman himself, and a stuffed turtle. We had just consumed a brace of open sandwiches. It occurred to me that, as a gesture of international cooperation, I could offer to show the Danes how to close a sandwich, but thought better of it.



(Above) I did manage to find what appeared to be a highly creditable hat shop, although rather a pricey one and with a heavy bias towards Borsalino products. However, Alfred told me a sad story about the place: apparently NSC Member and fellow Scandinavian Erik Lynge-Jorlen once went in there and asked if they had any trilbies. "Oh no, sir," the operative replied sniffily. "We don't sell English hats."

"Well you've just lost a customer then," Erik offered frostily and rightly stomped out. (Centre) the tragic emporium's rather jolly fanlight.

(Top right) There is a main pedestrianised shopping drag in Copenhagen, a string of streets collectively known as Strøget. I don't know what the situation used to be but there is now only one pipe shop on this strip—it actually bills itself as the last one left. (In fact my hosts for the trip gave me directions to another one which didn't appear to be there any more, so its



demise must have been fairly recent.)

(Bottom left and right) I'm sure that Danish children can get their hands on all the same bleepy computer boxes that our own can, but it was heartening to note that the Danes seem to offer more healthy toys too. I can't remember the last time I saw toy cars like these in Britain, nor a biplane merry-go-round like this one, spotted in the city's Tivoli pleasure ground. I think there is quite a Hans Christian Andersen thing going on—plenty of traditional wooden soldiers, that sort of thing. I get the impression they love Christmas in Denmark.

Tivoli is an interesting combination of traditional funfair with rides, games and displays (including a roller coaster built in 1904—I didn't feel inclined to trust my life to something that venerable...) and fine dining, with numerous restaurants within or adjoining the grounds. I even passed a stall selling cigars and pipes, which is considerably more civilised than any funfair I've been to in this country.





## Important Penny-Farthing News

A GREENWICH MAN has just completed an epic and hugely worthwhile journey around the world on a penny-farthing. Joff Summerfield, 39, who used to run a market stall, took two and a half years to cross 23 countries.

The last person to achieve this feat was American Thomas Stevens in 1886. It doesn't look as if penny-farthing technology has come on much, but then Mr Summerfield, who is a former Formula One engineer, made his bicycle himself, repairing it as he went along.

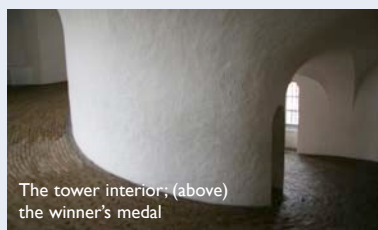
In fact, although he averaged one "decent fall" a fortnight, he only had one major prang, when he was hit by a lorry in New Zealand and fractured his wrist. He just strapped it up and carried on. Other setbacks included being robbed while camping in Prague and dealing with low oxygen levels at high altitude in Tibet.

In fact Tibet, across the border of which he sneaked his bicycle under cover of darkness one night, was Mr Summerfield's favourite country, despite encountering a landslide there, plus the absence of tarmac and the gruelling labour of

### INTERESTING PENNY-FARTHING FACT

Further to my field report from Copenhagen on the previous pages, I should add that, while Denmark has plenty of history (mostly revolving around them, the Swedes and the Norwegians taking it in turn to take over each other's countries) there is only one really important historical fact: among the many things built by King Christian IV (who bankrupted the country in the process) was a combined church, library and observatory for the university. The latter is at the top of a 114-foot tower. Instead of stairs, the tower has a spiral ramp inside, allegedly so that Christian could be driven to the top in his carriage rather than having to walk. (In fact Peter the Great once rode up on a horse, hotly pursued by the angry Tsarina in a coach and four. Quite what he was planning to do when he got to the top I don't know.)

Anyway, in 1888 this spiral ramp was finally put to good use: they had a penny-farthing race up it. The winner covered the 680-foot course in three minutes.



The tower interior; (above) the winner's medal

the high passes—the penny-farthing has a hard saddle and no gears.

I'd like to be able to say that Mr Summerfield conducted his feat in tweed plus-fours but, as you can see from the picture, he instead chose to sport modern synthetic clothing. It is heartening to report, however, that he does seem to have worn a pith helmet for the whole journey. Mr Summerfield necessarily travelled light, with just a change of clothes, a stove, a tent and a sleeping bag. He had just £5 a day spending money.

He also took some 3,000 daguerreotypes, which you may inspect at [www.crazyguyonabike.com/doc/joff1](http://www.crazyguyonabike.com/doc/joff1). "The best man-made site was the Taj Mahal," he reports, "and the best natural one was the Grand Canyon." He also stopped off to take part in the World Penny-Farthing Championships in Tasmania.

Mr Summerfield, who previously crossed America in a Morris Minor, plans to write a book about his adventures.

If Mr Summerfield's journey has inspired you, you may like to know that he builds penny-farthings commercially. "It's the only thing I ride. I'll be riding it again in a couple of days."



Mr Summerfield at the Potala Palace, Lhasa



## Just Desserts for Custard Fans

FOR A SECOND TIME the Cirque de Crème Anglaise came to town on 19th November, a musical event in which, among other performers, four NSC Members graced the stage. Organised by The Furbelows ([myspace.com/thefurbelows](http://myspace.com/thefurbelows)), the night is intended to have a coherent theme of dark humour, cabaret swagger and worthwhile words. (The first Cirque, in August, featured Club poet Niall Spooner-Harvey and Member the fabulous Mr B. the Gentleman Rhymer.)

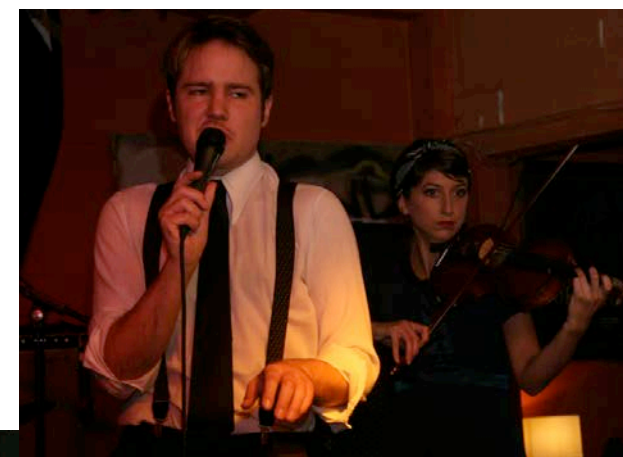
This time the show opened with Mesparrow, a mysterious French lady who performs alone, either at the piano or acapella with a digital looping device, with which she built up a layered backing of her own voice. Next up was Club Member Marmaduke Dando, a crooner of what he calls "morose ballads" whose stage image was somewhere between Noel Coward and Bryan Ferry. The Furbelows themselves played third (no photos, I'm afraid, as I am in the band myself and was therefore indisposed).

Headliners were the startling Cesarians, a horn-heavy troupe whose world combines Kurt Weill, Tim Burton and Edward Gorey. True to their reputation, they lifted the roof.

Thanks to all who came along



(Above and top left) The scary Cesarians, fronted by dark elf Charlie Finke; (left) the æthereal Mesparrow seems in a world of her own much of the time; (below and bottom) Marmaduke Dando and his band give it some smooth



## The Cocktail Cabinet:

Wherein Club Members explore the outer reaches of Planet Booze

### The Earthquake

or Tremblement de Terre

Clayton Hartley

A cocktail is always more appealing if there is a story behind it, perhaps because as you slump over your glass you can feel that you are following in the footsteps of the great, partaking of an ancient and noble tradition.

The Earthquake cocktail was allegedly invented by Henri Toulouse-Lautrec and, as you might expect, involves absinthe. The recipe I first encountered was this:

3 parts absinthe  
3 parts cognac

Simply combine the two ingredients in a wine goblet. (Other recipes suggest a brandy balloon, though why you'd want to go out of your way to concentrate the eye-watering fumes from this drink, I do not know.) Given that the proportions are simply half and half, I particularly like the fact that this recipe specifies fully three parts of each, thus adding to the whole mood of doomed indulgence.

Needless to say, anything involving this much

unwatered absinthe is hard to drink—unless you are Lord Rupert, of course, the only man I know who prefers his absinthe neat; I guess he kissed goodbye to his stomach lining (an unpleasant image) some time ago.

Some sources do suggest adding water or ice. Note that absintheonline.com recommends using a lower-alcohol absinthe such as Swiss La Bleue or Pernod White Fairy.

However, any research quickly throws up an alternative recipe, especially from more general cocktail sources (as opposed to those specifically focusing on absinthe chic).

1 part gin  
1 part whiskey

3/4 or 1 part absinthe

Shake the ingredients with ice and strain into a Collins glass. Some recipes specify Bourbon whiskey; whether the others mean to imply it, or whether they mean Scotch, is not clear. I have tried it with both and it is quite pleasant either way, though the woody sweetness of the Bourbon offsets the bitterness of the absinthe more.

I initially assumed that this version was a later invention to appeal more to international tastes. But in fact *The Savoy Cocktail Book* (first published in 1930) gives this recipe. So perhaps the absinthe/brandy version is a spurious later invention, based on the sort of thing fans would assume that Toulouse-Lautrec would drink.

Which brings us to the name. There are various explanations around: one is that it's called an Earthquake because this is the effect it has on you. *The Savoy Cocktail Book*, which is normally pretty terse in its recipes, does add, "This is a cocktail whose potency is not to be taken too lightly or, for that matter, too frequently!" It also gives a different explanation for the name—that if there should happen to be an earthquake while you are drinking it, it

won't matter. (A slightly different version is that if there is an earthquake while you're drinking it, you won't even notice.)

So who knows if Toulouse-Lautrec ever had anything to do with this cocktail? For completeness' sake I leave you with one more recipe I have found:

1 part absinthe  
1 part brandy  
splash of red wine

Serve in a martini glass, "ice and sugar lump optional". I've not tried it but it sounds like what an absinthe drinker on holiday, a hardcore sangria. Or just a mix of leftovers from a party.



## Tea Dances "The Next Big Thing"

ANZAC BISCUITS are going to try and interest the nation's youth in tea dances, encouraging schools across the country to organise their own events. The drive was launched to coincide with Remembrance Day—and they plan to raise money for the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal—but in fact the tea dances are suppose to take place on or around Anzac Day, next 25th April.

The dances are "designed to give schoolchildren an opportunity to bring together parents, grandparents and the local community". The biscuit company is offering a

free "event toolkit" (teaspoon? biscuit wrench?) to those who register at their website, [www.anzacbiscuits.com](http://www.anzacbiscuits.com). At this site you can also find out more about tea dances, which took off during the First World War as recreation for British servicemen and women on leave, and indeed more about Anzac biscuits, oaty things designed to survive the long journey from the Australian wives and mothers who made them to the Anzac troops on the front line. So these are tough, military-spec biscuits.

The biscuit people are hoping that the current interest in dancing, thanks to such gems as the television programme *Strictly Come Dancing*, will encourage young people to get involved. In any case, it's a good excuse to print this picture of "celebrity *Strictly Come Dancing* star" Karen Hardy hoofing with the 92-year-old, and probably rather fragile, Chelsea Pensioner Bill Moylan.

If you'd like to organise a fund-raising tea dance you'll find all kinds of handy resources at the web site.





## CLUB NOTES

### New Members

IT GIVES ME a rush of affability to be able to welcome into the Club's embrace the following new bugs: Harold Hereward Graves, Eugenie Rhodes, Ingrid Newman, Sydney Napster-Skype and Imogen Smith. (I'd like to be able to welcome Richard K.B.J.M.T. Hawker too, but I'm afraid his cheque bounced. While this does give a agreeable edge of roguishness, it awkwardly also means he isn't actually a Member yet.)

### Forthcoming Events

FOR THE LATEST developments, see the Events page at [www.newsheridanclub.co.uk](http://www.newsheridanclub.co.uk).

#### Propaganda for the State of Love

Friday 5th December

6pm–8pm

The Raphael Cartoon Room, The Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL

Admission: Free

Professional party animal David Piper is

back. I'm not clear what Propaganda for the State of Love actually is, but it will be perpetrating itself along with a performance from art rock band The Real Tuesday Weld at one of the V&A's regular late Friday nights. It's connected with the Cold War Modern (design 1945–1970) exhibition.

#### Nosey Joe's

The Royston Club, 85 Royston Road, Penge London SE20 7QW

Saturday 6th December

Doors 7.30pm, bar till 11.30, dancing till 12am

Admission: £15 available in advance from Caron and Steve on 0208 2654020

A 52nd Street Jump joint, this is a club night presenting an eclectic mix of music from the 1930s to the 1950s from DJ Dr Swing plus live music, this time from Gentleman Tim and the Contenders plus award-winning jazz trio Fret and Fiddle.

#### A Jaunt to Lincoln

Sunday 7th December

Lincoln

More details TBA

Honoria Bellinger-Glossop is putting together this excursion to take on the Christmas market. (The trip was originally planned to coincide with the Earl of Waveney's confirmation, but I gather there is too much doubt about exactly when that is.) I'm not sure what the current status of this event is so, for further details, please contact Ms Bellinger-Glossop at [falcieri@yahoo.com](mailto:falcieri@yahoo.com).

#### Treharrock Revisited

Friday 12th to Friday 19th December

Treharrock Manor, Port Isaac, Cornwall

Admission: £100 a week, I think

Once again a posse of Sheridanites takes over a country house for a week. We take it in turns to do the cooking, and otherwise spend the week lounging, smoking, idling, going for bracing walks, dressing for



Treharrock Manor



dinner every night and generally pretending we're rich people from 100 years ago. There will be some horse riding, I suspect, for those who are interested and I've seen a reference to shooting (for sport, I assume, rather than some tragic psychopathic end to the whole week). We also have one day that is designated as Christmas, with a Christmas dinner, presents, that sort of thing.

#### The Chap Calendar Launch Party

Saturday 13th December

6pm sharp

Bourne & Hollingsworth, Rathbone Place, London W1

Gustav Temple, Editor of *The Chap* magazine launches the first ever Chap calendar, for 2009, featuring many familiar faces. Early arrivals will be treated to a complimentary flagon of Spitfire Ale. More details at [www.thechap.net](http://www.thechap.net).

#### Victorian Christmas Weekend

Saturday 13th December and Sunday 14th December

10am–4pm

Blists Hill Victorian Village, Coach Road, Coalbrookdale, Telford

Admission: £10.50

During special weekends at Blists Hill visitors can step back in time to watch the ladies of the town busily preparing seasonal goodies, listen to the townsfolk reciting festive stories or take note as they reveal the secrets of their old family recipes. And, of course, everyone will be able to

come together to join in the carol singing around the Blists Hill Christmas tree. More at [www.ironbridge.org.uk](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk).

#### New Year's Eve With the Furbelows

Wednesday 31st December

6pm–4am

The Cavendish Arms, 128 Hartington Rd, Stockwell, London SW8 2HJ

Admission: Free, but numbers limited

On top of all the other NYE events no doubt on offer, The Furbelows (see page 9) are taking part in this extravaganza at a splendid venue in Stockwell in London. It's being run as a party, so entrance is free but there are limits to how many guests we can bring (about 25–30). If you'd like to be one just drop Mr Hartley an email. Performing will be some of the venue's favourite acts of the year—about four bands, some acoustic acts, half a dozen comedians and some burlesque too!

#### Nosey Joe's

The Royston Club, 85 Royston Road, Penge London SE20 7QW

Saturday 3rd January

Doors 7.30pm, bar till 11.30, dancing till 12am

Admission: £12 available in advance from Caron and Steve on 0208 2654020, or £10 on the door

As before this 52nd Street Jump club night presents an eclectic mix of music from the 1930s to the 1950s from DJ Dr Swing plus live music, this time from The Jiveaholics.

#### NSC Club Night

Wednesday 7th January

8pm–11pm

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

Members: Free

Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)

Our guest speaker will be none other than the long lost Des Esseintes, who will lecture us on the land of India—a more fascinating version of which he feels he has discovered from England than had he been there longer in person. "Like my namesake's refusal to go to England having supped English food and decided that England itself could only be a disappointment, my India is better savoured in Colchester than Calcutta," he insists.

#### ONE FOR THE LADIES

While stumbling around Dublin for Cyril Browne's marriage blessing (see Newsletter 25) I happened to notice this sticker affixed to an official-looking box in the street. I suspect it's art and I have to admit I did not attempt to save the kittens by jemmying open the door with the most electrically conductive tool to hand. Apologies.



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mrscarheart@newsheridanclub.co.uk  
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mrhartley@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](http://www.newsheridanclub.co.uk). For more photos of Club events go to [www.flickr.com/sheridanclub](http://www.flickr.com/sheridanclub). Those of a more technological bent can also help spread the word by befriending us electrically at [www.myspace.com/newsheridanclub](http://www.myspace.com/newsheridanclub) or indeed [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).

