

PLUS:

- The Summer Party in pictures
- 'Rules' builds a cocktail bar—inside story
- New for Christmas: the Beardhead

Let the Games Begin

Bedford Square witnesses the Triumph of the Shrill

The New Sheridan Club

Newsletter

XXXIV • August 2009



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 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

This month's edition is dominated by reports of two of the Chappist calendar's major events of the year—the NSC summer party and the Chap Olympiad. I've included a selection of daguerreotypes but it really only dips a toe into the ocean of film stock that was exposed on the day: truly there were more cameras than ever at the Olympics, including a number of cine film crews, and an item later featured on ITN news. For more snaps of all Club events steer your mouse to www.flickr.com/sheridanclub.

One final scoop: at time of writing the NSC Christmas party will have an absinthe-soaked Parisian fin-de-siecle flavour and is titled *Yes We Can-Can!* You heard it here first.

The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 1st July in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 8pm until 11pm. Guest speaker will be Lord Rupert, who will chill our spines and outrage our sensibilities with a louche squint at *Sir Francis Dashwood and the Hell Fire Club*.

The Last Meeting

At the last meeting, instead of a lecture, we were treated to the first scene of *Broken Holmes*,

written and directed by Mr Robin Johnson and performed by the Semper Theatre troupe of strolling players. As the playbill says, "Sherlock Holmes investigates a duke's murder. But the real mystery is, why does an intelligent, sensitive soul like Watson stay in a relationship with an abusive, egotistical drug-addict?"

NSC members arriving early at the Wheatsheaf would have found the upstairs room awhirl with various individuals in stages of undress. Since only two were actually acting it was somewhat puzzling to see five or six tearing off and putting on clothes, but perhaps this was part of the troupe's "warm-up exercises".

The first scene is most amusing, with Holmes and Watson squabbling away like an old married couple, taking offence at perceived slights and trying to make amends with surprise gifts. Mr Johnson obviously knows his Sherlock Holmes well, as the dialogue contains many references to actual stories and characters. Like many parodies, it is clearly written with a great affection for the original.

Mr James Bober as Holmes and Mr Canavan Connolly as Watson acted splendidly, hitting the right note of verisimilitude and lampoon.

Afterwards there was a whip-round to help the troupe pay their expenses to the Edinburgh Festival, where they will be performing *Broken Holmes*. Let us hope it achieves the success it deserves.



(Above left) The actors prepare; (above) Mr James Bober as Sherlock Holmes; (left) Mr Canavan Connolly as Watson observes Holmes making a point



(Above) Holmes' unmistakable attributes: deerstalker, magnifying glass and pipe; (left) Holmes adopts a thinking stance; (right) don't be confused, I believe this is just the same actor with a hat on





Fête Deals a Good Hand

THE ANCIENT WEATHER GODS smiled on the Club's summer party on Saturday 4th July (an ample return for all those virgins locked into Wicker Chaps, doused with malt whisky and elegantly flambéd, I'm sure you'll agree). About 100 ladies and gents in summer finery—plus one morris man and one Green Man—strolled through the balmy evening up to the City Tavern near London's Bank station. We had managed to persuade the local vicar, George Bush, the Rector of St Mary Le Bow, to open proceedings with an amusing anecdote and the cutting of a ribbon. He later reported how he found the party "imaginatively conceived and impressively executed" (though observed that as he left he realised the venue wasn't actually in his parish after all...), so it looks as if we had successfully hedged our bets on the deity front.

Our first entertainers were the wonderful Fitzrovia Radio Hour, who performed for us a live radio play about a woman's attempts to find love despite being fully 35 years old, steering a course through cads and ne'er-do-wells—and all punctuated by



Andy Hill in the Green Man costume that nearly won him a prize



Committee Member Clayton Hartley introduces the local vicar who formally opened the fête with the cutting of a ribbon

musical plugs for the show's sponsor, a medicated shampoo. Later we had a vigorous demonstration of the Victorian self-defence technique of Baritsu, a martial art that was popular around the turn of the last century and involves much use of the gentleman's walking cane. Fortunately there is little

motor traffic around that neck of the woods on a Saturday so our smart-trousered pugilists were able to use the open roadway to demonstrate ways of fending off a shillelagh-wielding thug or even of firmly escorting a drunken guest from a party (though why you would do that is a mystery).

The final performance of the evening was the inimitable Mr B. the Gentleman Rhymer, professor (and indeed inventor) of Chap



Actuarius' wife Fiona arrives in full summeriness

Hop, approaching the gentleman's concerns about the 21st century through the medium of hip-hop and banjolele. His popularity has clearly soared since he first played for us at Christmas 2006, judging by the number of guests roaring along to the words. The standing ovation was deafening and indeed Mr B. graced us with an encore.

Meanwhile, the Club's tradition of games was kept up: there was a tombola running all night with an array of suitably undesirable prizes—although we still seemed to have sold 90 tickets over the evening, thanks, in no small way, to Miss Tara Elarte who became obsessed with winning some cosmetic frippery and persuaded her young man to empty several pounds into the game (at 20p a ticket).

Then there was the precision cheese-rolling. Real cheese-rolling, of course, is a dangerous activity practised once a year at Cooper's Hill in Gloucestershire where locals race a large cheese down a very steep hill. Every year it ends in an amiable orgy of broken bones. Our version was more suited to a pub—contestants chose from a cheeseboard of round British cheeses and rolled them down an artificial (but artfully contoured)

grassy slope aiming for an Action Man dressed as a morris man. Only two contestants scored



Captain Coppice in the marvellous NSC-coloured morris man outfit that indeed won him the Best Costume prize with (!) Mrs H. and Ensign Polyethyl



Harold Hereward Graves in the stance in which you will usually find him (sporting a bowtie that looks as if it ought to be an NSC one)

two hits out of three rolls, Miss Sarah Bowerman and a mysterious geek who studied the game for a long while before announcing he had worked out the best strategy. He was right to an extent—yet, in the tie-breaking, sudden-death cheese-off, he ultimately had to concede defeat to Miss Bowerman.

Highlight of the evening, of course, was the Grand Raffle. Owing to some last-minute developments, not every prize we anticipated was available (sadly the Lock's hat never came through) and some had not arrived in time and were represented by an IOU. But many good things were won, including a voucher good for a haircut at Trumper's, a bottle of rare Bulldog gin and a



The mouth-watering wares on sale by Miss Sophie Jonas' new confectionary business There May Be Truffles Ahead



Miss Jonas herself with the diabolical skull staff that, apparently, she had lying around



Miss Tara Elarte became obsessed with the tombola, persuading her escort to put pound after pound into it



"Reverend" Adam Heathfield and his wife Helen



Two genuine clergymen, (r) George Bush, Rector of St Mary Le Bow (drinking Abbot ale, I see) and our own Curé Silver

£100 voucher from the magnificent Old Town outfitters. (We had planned to have a contest of Turnip Jousting, a game ~~stolen from~~ closely modelled on Orange Battle, but by the time the Raffle was over it was after midnight and the company's will seemed broken, so we decided to save that delight for another time.

Throughout the evening guests visiting the bathrooms were treated to a range of unguents, colognes, pomades, moustache wax, etc, kindly supplied by Trumper's. (At least until someone stole the colognes.) Thanks to Trumper's and to all our Raffle sponsors.

A splendid and merry time was had by all. The only sour note came later when the venue claimed we had not made our minimum spend agreed upon at the bar and demanded that we give them a £500 fee. This was an awkward matter as the Club obviously does not have that

much. We aim to spend what we take from subscriptions on events or other benefits, so right after a party is when we are at our most impecunious. Fortunately we managed to negotiate them down to £100. (Thanks to those of you who actually sent in donations to us to help us stay afloat. It has been well spent on a fine selection of waistcoats for the Committee.)

(Right) The marvellous Fitrovia Radio Hour "on air"; (below) the small but potent array of entries for the Most Impressive Vegetable rosette



The challenging Precision Cheese Rolling competition! (Below left) This lady discovers that the nefariously contoured slope makes targeting difficult; (below) Alex Hepburn of The Furbelows tries the goat's cheese, without much success judging by the trajectory.



(Below) Ardbracchan decides that Sooty deserves a go



(Below left) Niall Spooner-Harvey gives it some delicate wrist action, closely observed by Soo the panda; (below right) this mysterious geek emerged from the shadows announcing he'd deduced the correct technique. He didn't win





A demonstration of Bartitsu—(left) fisticuffs, (centre) how an elegant walking stick can fend off a larger opponent with a shillelagh and (below) how a handshake can be converted into a technique for ejecting an objectionably drunken party guest



(Far left) This elegant attired fellow is part of the mysterious musical combo The Clockwork Quartet; (left) Gary Grønnestad with the goggles and concealed radio equipment that give him away as a downed Hun airman on the run; (below) Michael Cassidy fulfill's his lifetime ambition of meeting Mr B.



(Right) Trum appears to have gone cap in hand to Gustav Temple, who is evidently unimpressed

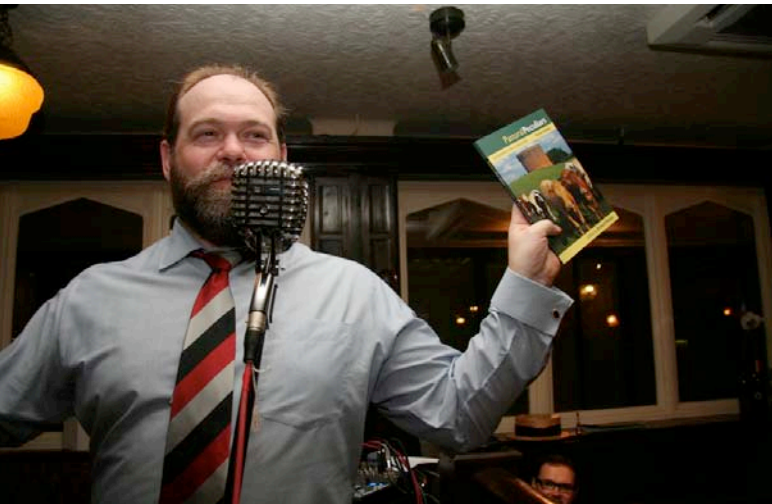


The many faces of Mr B. the Gentleman Rhymer—see him dance, smoke a pipe, “rock out”—along with the radiant faces of his ecstatic audience





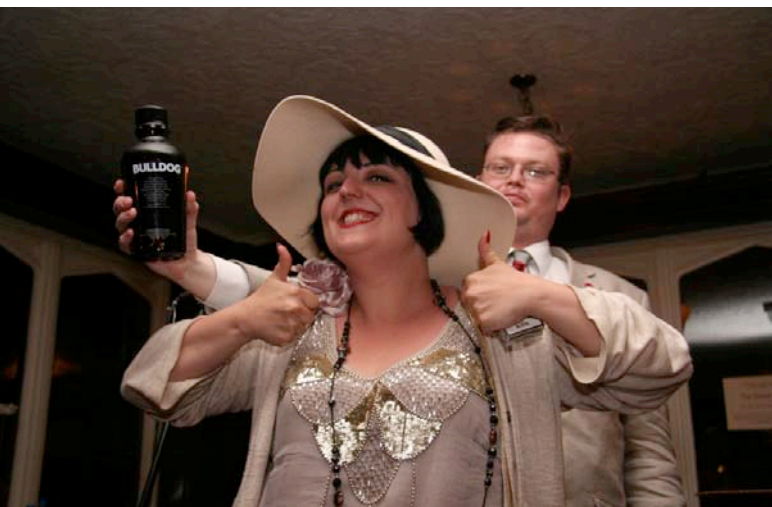
The Grand Raffle: (clockwise from below) this gentleman can't wait to hand over his winning ticket; Jessie wins a tract on Britain's lost villages; a first-time guest wins the coveted Pachacuti Panama hat; Louise wins the bottle of Bulldog gin; Compton-Bassett wins a game pie; the Baron wins a guide to countryside curiosities; Miss Nicola wins *Sir Henry at Rawlinson End* on DVD



(Left) Laurence triumphantly holds aloft his star prize of £100 in vouchers from Old Town (before turning to ask exactly what it is); (below) the entries for the vegetable competition are put to a public vote; (below left) the cake is publicly weighed to ascertain who has won the Guess the Weight of the Cake competition



(Below) A bonus for the Grand Raffle was the kind donation by Gustav Temple of some pairs of tickets for the Chap Olympics, which took place the following weekend; (right) a close-up of the splendid morris man costume for Action Man as made by the deft fingers of Mrs H. She also made the Church Roof Fund thermometer which was filled in with our total bar spend as the evening went on





The evening degenerates into dancing (l-r Tod, Nicola and Louise Quatorze) and, in Mr Graves' case, drunken posing with a microphone.

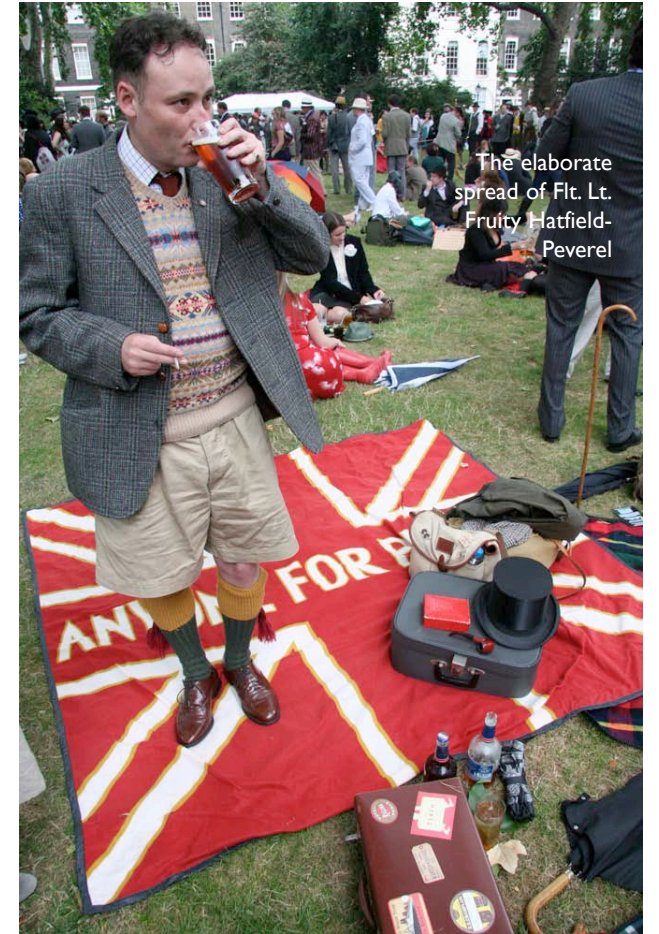


Thanks for Ben Low and Nicole Wevers for additional photographs



Chap Olympics Returns from the Wild

AFTER LAST YEAR'S excursion to the badlands of Hampstead Heath (and the mysterious—if slightly frustrating—treasure hunt of clues to work out exactly in which clearing it was taking place) the Chap Olympics returned triumphantly to Bedford Square Gardens on Saturday 11th July, facilitated in part by sponsorship by the bar Bourne and Hollingsworth, who laid on two drink tents and a barbecue. (And presumably in part by the £15 admission fee that was introduced for the first time.) This unfortunately meant that guests



The elaborate spread of Ft. Lt. Fruity Hatfield-Peverel



Miss Fleur de Guerre does sterling work minding the scoreboard

1st Sheridan Skaton
not stored
2nd Harinegy Massif
3rd Sammy Davis Jr Jr

were not allowed to bring their own drink with them as in previous years. This might have been more acceptable if it had been more widely communicated beforehand; as it was there was a sad heap of confiscated booze by the gates, all ticketed so that it could be retrieved on the way out.

But no one seemed to mind the entry price: the mood was excellent and the costumes as outlandish as ever, but pleasingly without the corporate freeloaders who used to smirk along in the days of sponsorship by Hendricks gin. There was a proper PA system (I remember three years ago doing the compering myself with nothing but a highly directional

megaphone...) and DJs playing suitably Chappist tunes all day. Ambitiously there was also a programme of live entertainment in the evening: the jazz/swing/gypsy band Ta Mère, a burlesque performer who did a routine in which she was an animal-skin-clad Fifty Foot Woman menacing an Action Man and crushing cardboard buildings, and also a man in army uniform who did impressions of spitfires starting up. In fact the evening show was finished up early, as many people had already gone home: perhaps after an afternoon of Olympian capers people had had just about as much fun as they could manage for one day.

After the lighting of the Olympic Pipe and its parading around by Michael "Atters" Attree,

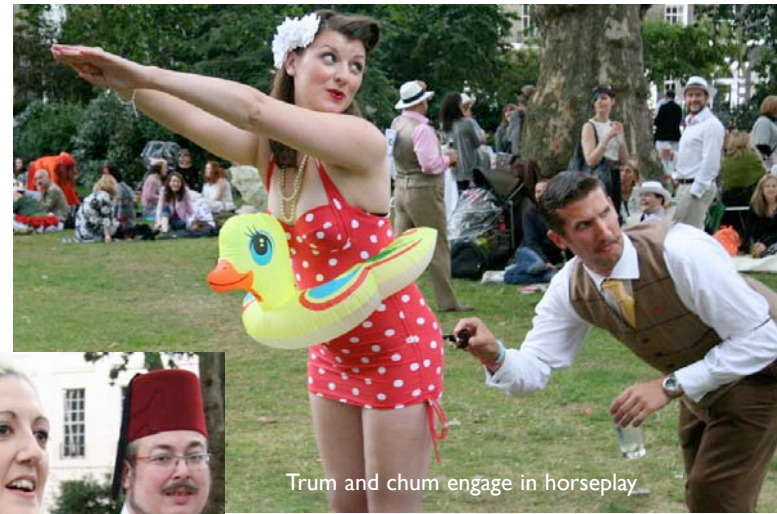


Compton-Bassett attracts a film crew



Curé Silver and some ecclesiastical chums

must walk a bit, ride a bike for a bit, then complete the course without their feet touching the ground, all the while keeping a pipe alight); Bounders (gentlemen approach ladies and,



Trum and chum engage in horseplay

the line-up of games was thus: the Martini Relay (teams concoct a martini cocktail in relay stages, the winner being the one with the drink judged most successful by a man from Bourne and Hollingsworth); Cucumber Sandwich Discus (contestants throw a sandwich on a plate and are scored by how close the one is to the other at the end of the throw); Tug of Hair (in which teams tugged on either ends of a giant moustache notionally attached to Atters himself); Hop, Skip and G&T (like a conventional triple jump except that contestants must carry a gin and tonic and are scored simply on how little they manage to spill); Umbrella Jousting (like normal jousting except players pass each other on bicycles and attack



I don't know who this young lady is but the uniform is fun (one of you doubtless recognises the regiment...)

using whatever lines they choose, compete to be the first to get slapped); and the Steeplechase, where chaps wearing rubber animal heads carry ladies on their backs and race over low hurdles—sounds more energetic than it really is). Scoring was, as ever, ramshackle and arbitrary but I can report that Louise Quatorze (formerly Tallulah) won the Bronze Cravat, the Chairman won the Silver and

Farhan Rasheed won the coveted Gold Cravat. And it scarcely rained.



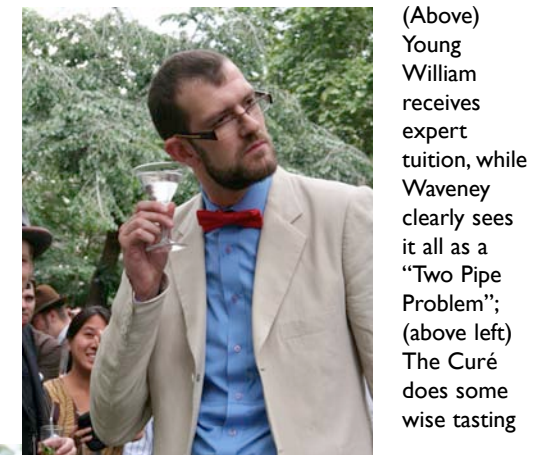
with umbrellas, with only a stiffened copy of the *Telegraph* or *FT* for protection); the Pipeathlon (the athletes



Bourne and Hollingsworth laid on the bar (far left) and fiery BBQ (right). It did rain a little, but punters (left) shrugged off the precipitation with admirably British pluck



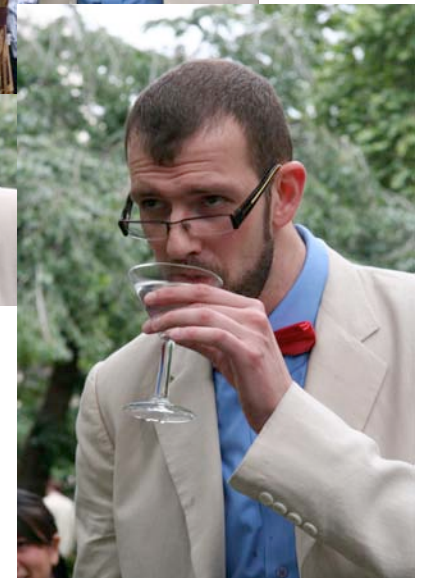
Artemis, Tim, Torquil and Chuckles address the gin situation



(Above) Young William receives expert tuition, while Waveney clearly sees it all as a "Two Pipe Problem"; (above left) The Curé does some wise tasting



(Below) Poor Waveney had hurt his back and had to be escorted everywhere by a clergyman



In the **Martini Relay** teams compete to create a martini cocktail in stages—the first team member adds the gin, the next the vermouth, the next the twist of lemon peel, etc. The winning team is the one whose cocktail most impresses the guest, in this case an extremely tall man from Bourne and Hollingsworth. (Above, from top left) The contestant is suitably nervous submitting his creation to the master, who first views the drink, then listens to it, then sniffs it and finally tastes it.





(Left) Andy Hill limbers up; (right) this lady's strategy was to wrap the plate in a volume of Blake. She was joint winner



(Above, right and below right) Trum gathers a head of steam, locks brollies with The Chairman and successfully unseats him



(Above) the chap on the left has realised the value of applying the hooked end of his brolie to his opponent's wheel to flip him over



Cucumber Sandwich Discus: contestants throw a sandwich on a plate and are scored by how close the two are still to each other when they land; (above) a hearty lob; (above left and left) this military gentleman trusts to the umbrella (note the inverted plate in mid-air); (below) this chap first secretes the sandwich in his hat then throws the hat; (right) with limited success; (above right) this cunning fellow uses his bat to place the plate and sandwich neatly. He was rightly disqualified.



Umbrella Jousting: Like normal jousting except that the contestants pedal at each other on bicycles and attack with umbrellas, with only a copy of a newspaper to defend themselves. (Left and far left) Compton-Bassett gamely prepares to fight, while his opponent at the other end of the field is Louise—plus her entourage, of course. (Below left and below) One can't help pitying the poor entourage who do their best to weather the hail of random blows, but in the end it pays off and Louise is victorious.





A selection of elegantly attired guests. Note the man who felt that if his underwear were vintage then that was enough and (top) the sheer number of cameras on display; (right) Captain Coppice in the ancestral uniform



(Centre left) Alison Tang; (left) Sophie Jonas with the splendidly named Wednesday; (below) this fellow was going on to a clown convention afterwards

(Left) One of several chimney sweeps; (below) a lady coquettishly chews on a briar



Tug of Hair: Like Tug of War except the rope is a vast moustache notionally attached to Atters' face. (Above) Atters braces; (left) the bout begins; (below) the team on the right are winning...



(Above) Atters uses a lull to try out his patent skirt periscope



(Left) ...until at a critical moment the competition moustache snaps in two; (below) Atters doesn't seem much bothered as he has acquired a couple of admirers.





The Pipeathlon: Contestants walk the first part of the course, then cycle a bit and finally finish without their feet touching the ground. (Above right) The contestants are in no mood for anything, really; (left) this team is more interested in persuading the crowd to take up pipe-smoking; (left) Frisax delays the starting gun to show his opponent some inspiring *bon mot* from inside *The Chap*. (Below) Louise's way round the no-feet rule is to be dragged by supporters on a carpet while (bottom) Farhan's solution is simply to walk on hands and knees; (below left) this fellow wins instant bonus point for stopping on the course to remove a long phial of strong drink from inside his walking cane



Hop, Skip and G&T: like a triple jump except you must carry a gin and tonic and are scored on how little you spill. (Top) Tim Kennington cheats by giving his drink to William; (above right) bold as brass he waits for his drink to be measured; (above) Farhan appears to have two drinks, (far right) some silliness going on, me thinks



(Left) This bout begins cordially with a toast; (below); this contestant has cheated by storing the liquid in his mouth, returning it to the glass after jumping; (below left) unamused, the elegant profile of Callum Coates



(Below) The player on the right has enlisted the help of a strongman, while the other one's lady friend has laid down her jacket for him to stand on, Raleigh-style





(Below) Post-limbo, Atters struggles to get the trousers off his French maid...



Three-Trousered Limbo: wearing special three-legged tweed trousers, pairs of contestants limbo under a bar. (Far left) This couple try waltzing under (without much success as it happens)



(Left, above to below) This pair duck the bar with a well-coordinated forward roll; (right) this gentleman gets his manservant simply to carry the other side of the trousers—and of course to lift the pesky bar



Bounders: Gentlemen approach ladies and, using whatever stimulus they choose, vie to be the first to get a sharp slap in the face for their impudence. (I'm pleased to see at least one chap managing to keep his pipe in place throughout the process.) (Bottom) **The Chap Steeplechase:** men with rubber animal heads (used to be just horses, now it's all kinds) carry ladies on their backs over gruelling hurdles.



(Left) Those fences were initially erected upside down with the anchoring stakes pointing up...



(Above) With a look of concentration Andy Hill bears Miss Alison Tang; (left, far left, above left) the "chap carries lady" orthodoxy was widely flouted (that's Louise under The Chairman, as it were)



Breaking the Rules

By Artemis Scarheart

RULES CLAIMS TO BE the oldest restaurant in London and—other than an obscure pie shop somewhere—probably is. Over the years I have had some truly excellent meat there, reared on their private game reserve somewhere in the t'North (it's just past Watford, I think. Watford is in Scotland, isn't it?). But for a few years there have been rumblings that it's not quite as good as it used to be. And to be fair there is, or at least was, an element of truth to that.

It stopped being the kind of place you would see a Tory grandee having a quiet word with a Chief Constable and became a fixture on the tourist trail. To be blunt, it became better known and the internal snob never likes that—rather like the annoyance one feels when one's favourite beat combo becomes a popular beat combo. At least I know that The Furbelows will never leave me (*enough of that!—Ed*). But when the craving for good meat and excellent surroundings kicks in and you can't get a table at the Club, Rules it is.

That is how I found myself in there one recent Sunday, m'good lady and I having popped to the Knights Bar in Simpson's beforehand for a sharpener and now relaxed, easy and ready for a slap-up feed...

"The lamb sir? Or perhaps the steak? We have several excellent cuts. I believe we may have some of the chicken left, I'll check with the kitchen... Yes we do, some plump young

birds left. Or perhaps sir would like the crab to start? The creamed potatoes are excellent tonight, madam. And perhaps you would like a cocktail after your meal? Why, in the Rules Cocktail Bar of course, sir."

"Rules has a cocktail bar?" I demanded, my voice rising slightly.

"Why, yes, sir. A recent addition, just upstairs."

"But this is surely a listed building, a temple to British gastronomy. Dickens ate here! You can't start ripping out the private dining rooms to build a silly little bar where hoi polloi gather to drink over-priced, over-sugared, over-iced mohitos! The American Bar at the Savoy became a complete dump when they let standards drop and now you're doing that here? Is nothing sacred?"

"I assure you sir that it has been done in the finest way possible. And if you will quietly sit down and enjoy a rib-eye steak, chef here will release your arms, the police won't be called, your lady friend will stop weeping and you can see for yourself after you have dined."

So it was, dear reader, that I tucked into a most excellent meal despite the gnawing fear about what monstrosity had been constructed upstairs. Rules has certainly turned itself around again—portion sizes are bigger, service is back on track, the stout in the pewter tankard was cold and the food is delicious. The

tourist may buy a meal but the stalwart will live in a place like Rules and they have remembered this. There is not a bad table in the house and they have made excellent provision for single diners. Indeed it was very heartening to see the old buffer population had returned and was perched around the place like musty parrots in tweed.

After the last drop of gravy had been mopped up with the last shard of potato, we headed upstairs. Cocktail time. At Rules. The



(Top left) (l-r) The Chairman, Farhan Raasheed and Louise Quatorze; (above) Gustav Temple and Atters conspire; (left) the magnificent display of cakes; (below) Hartley relaxes among the rubble with a cigar; (far left) this lady is prepared for both sun and rain



(Left and below) dancing breaks out among the revellers; (below left) Mr Lobby Ludd departs for another gig (where he sang a song about custard creams, he tells me)



area it was located in used to be a private dining room. Not one of their biggest, but a nice first-floor room at the front of the building with seating for around a dozen and a small bar/serving area in the corner. What they have done is take off the door, opened out the opposite, previously closed, room and created a room which runs the length of the building. I must say I was pleasantly surprised—a good number of tables, all spread out with their own space, an unobtrusive bar at one end, light and airy. I had feared that they would try to be trendy but they have kept it muted and in line with the rest of the building. It had a feeling of space sadly lacking in modern cocktail bars that try to cram more and more tables in.

But what about the drinks? It is a very short menu as you can see, and also a very inventive one:

Rules 76

Brut Champagne, Ketel One Vodka finished with lemon juice, syrup and a splash of Apricot Brandy

Le Blonde

Brut Champagne, Absinthe, Mure, Peche finished with Wasabi Vodka

Smokey One

Plymouth Gin, a wash of Isle of Jura Malt infused with a flamed peel of orange

Dirty One

Ketel One Vodka, olive brine muddle with a dash of Noilly Vermouth and one very large olive

The Charles

Tanqueray Ten Gin, Maraschino & Absinthe finished with a dash of grapefruit bitters & a touch of syrup

Chorus Girl No. 2

Ciroc Vodka, Merlet Fraïse des Bois, berries and lime, charged with soda

The Critic

Beija Flor Reserva Cachaca, Amer Picon, Cointreau, Formula Antica and Cinzano Orancio

The Edge

Southern Comfort, Honey Vodka, violet essence and Maraschino, finished with a dash of syrup and the heat of fresh horseradish

Bloody Mary

Ketel One Vodka and Brian Silva's bespoke blend of spices & juice

Golden Negroni

Plymouth Gin, Campari Orancio and Poiré William

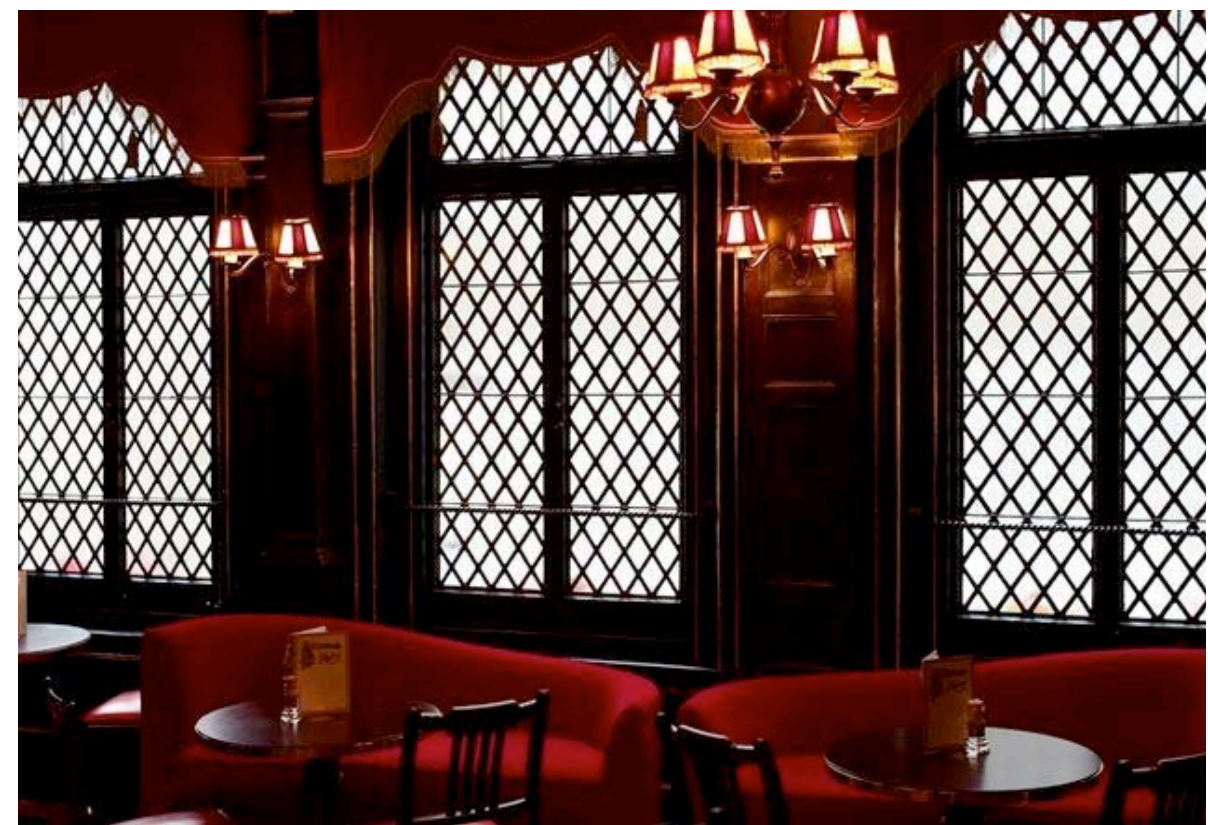
I have to confess many of the ingredients were unknown to us, so we were unsure what to order. Eventually we made the plunge and ordered a Rules 76, The Edge, a Chorus Girl No. 2 and a Smokey One. (Have to get stuck in, otherwise what kind of rigorous scientific experiment

would this be?) Trial and error was the order of the day and we each ordered one that we found undrinkable but the other did not, so all four were polished off. The flavours were very challenging and many of the potions didn't look like they would work at all, but it was this very fact—the strangeness—that made the evening so interesting.

Usually I stick to old favourites and only try "house drinks" if they look particularly exciting or interesting. Too many bad experiences have left me out of pocket with only a small glass of what appears to be icy kerosene to drink. But the Rules bar positively encourages you to experiment and boldly plunge into the unknown, which is a refreshing feeling in such a solid and traditional place. Dozens of decades of heritage downstairs, bold new world upstairs—without the need to resort to neon, illuminated glasses or fancy tricks.

Even though we were stuffed, we pecked at the snacks that were available. Nuts, a usual cocktail bar mixture, but perfectly passable. The service was very informative and even went as far as to bring us the hand-painted bottles of exotic foreign ingredients we could not identify so we could smell and taste them separately. Apparently some of the ingredients are not made any more so every mouthful makes them rarer, rather like having white rhino burgers without the guilt.

I buttonholed the bar wallah and asked him why they were keeping this place something of a secret. It seems they want word to spread the old fashioned way, to people who would be likely to come to Rules anyway. An interesting



tactic when you consider the cost of abolishing a private room and what loss of revenue that must bring, but they seemed cheerful and sure that this would work. Their attitude permeated the place and digestion was helped massively by not having to stumble into the street immediately after dinner, but instead being able to relax with a few drinks upstairs.

All in all the Cocktail Bar at Rules is well worth a visit. Centrally located, exotic menu (though they will mix up anything you want), good staff, nice room with light and air and uncrowded. I think it will always be a better place to go after dining rather than just for a drink, but stick it on your list and next time you fancy a steak and a cocktail combine the two in the same venue.

Radical I know, but this is apparently the twenty-first century so we should all do our bit to move forward into a bright new future.

Cocktails by Brian Silva supported by Michael Stevenson

35 Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, London WC2E 7LB
 Restaurant Reservations: 0207 836 5314
 Private Rooms Reservations: 0207 379 0258
 Open every day: Monday–Saturday midday–11.30pm
 and Sundays midday to 10.30pm





Outbreak of Facial Plumage Envy Among the Young

WE ALL KNOW that welling of pride and hope that we feel when we've done our bit, however small, to steer a youngster in the path of righteousness—perhaps prised the bottle of Wicked from an emo teen's fingers and shown him how to mix a Gimlet, or chuckled avuncularly as we showed a toddler how to ream a briar. But it is hard to know how to feel about this development.

Beardhead is an American company who sell knitted fake facial hair. It's quite inventive, really: the balaclava comes in a range of colours and includes a beard, while the moustache is detachable and comes in two styles—"Fu Manchu" and, er, "regular", I suppose—enabling the wearer to "mix and match" colours and tash shapes. The colours are blonde, brown, grey, black and, ahem, pink—or "Viking", "Lumberjack", "Grandpa", "Pirate" and "Bunny" (aimed at ladies who fancy a career in the funfair sideshow sector, I suppose).

Yes, you can see that in fact these youngsters are not confident about facial hair at all and are desperate to prove their "nutty" credentials.



The product is clearly aimed at the winter sports market, rather than deserving causes such as old sea captains stricken by alopecia and unable to show their faces in public, or whiskerless youths desperate to be taken seriously by all the other tramps.

Nevertheless, one can but hope that the proximity to something that vaguely resembles facial hair will gradually turn these whelps towards the golden light of chin shrubbery—I dare say in time they will produce knitted attachments in all 278 of the universally accepted moustache models.

In the meantime, if you think a Beardhead might make an appropriate stocking-filler this Christmas for some jeans-toting coxcomb whom you either want to convert to Chappism or simply annoy wholeheartedly, the Beardhead appears to be available only from America. It's \$25 for the basic "full set" plus \$5 for additional tashes, but I'm sure Johnny Interweb will enable you to communicate and convert you honest pounds into Yankee dollars. See www.beardhead.com.



CLUB NOTES

New Members

I WOULD LIKE to pull up smoothly in the sportscar of affability alongside the following types who have signed up for Club Membership in the last months: Anton Krause, Jennifer Gregory, David Hollander, Lisa Mivashita, Naomi Liddle, Charles G. Doyle, Dr Louise-Jane Evans, Sean Raczka, Karen Tew, Corpsie, Matthew David Jacobs, James Marwood, Benjamin Low, Claire Brown, H. G. Iggulden, Matthew Dupree, Paul Effeny, Kyle R. Urech, Barnaby and Esmerelda Gussetblossom and Dr G. Strangedose.

New Club Bling On Its Way

WE HAVE FINALLY run out of our initial batch of Club lapel badges and are ordering some more. However, while we are doing this we are taking the opportunity to expand the range of items bearing the Club's pipe, broly and bowler logo. Soon you will be able to purchase Club cufflinks for a mere £10 a pair, a Club tie slide for £6 and a Club stickpin for just £4. In each case the decorative bit is an enamelled disc identical to the one that features on your Membership badge. (To confuse matters more, these cufflinks are therefore different from the ones previously advertised—those were made by a third party, a jeweller in Brighton, in a different way and are still available as an alternative for £25 a pair.)

When we have the goods in our hands I will post some photographs and bring samples along to meetings. In the meantime, I will happily take pre-orders—bear in mind that we have limited numbers (25 each of the pins and slides and 50 pairs of cufflinks) after which we won't be in a position to order any more until we run out of Club badges again and can make a bulk purchase. For mail order bookings there will be

a delivery charge of 50p per order in the UK and £1 for overseas orders.

Forthcoming Events

FOR THE LATEST developments, see the Events page at www.newsheridanclub.co.uk.

NSC Club Night

Wednesday 5th August

8pm–11pm

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

Members: Free

Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)

See page 2.

Broken Holmes

6th–22nd August

10.10–10.55pm

The Space@Venue 45, Jeffry Street, Edinburgh

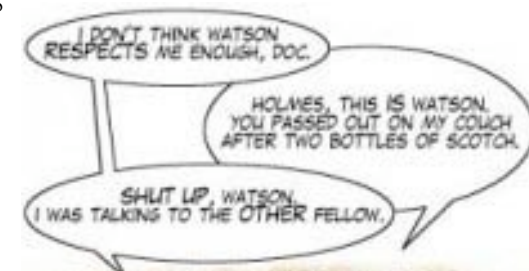
Admission: £7.50 (£5.50 concs)

Those of you present at our July Club Night will remember the sneak preview from Member Mr Robin Johnson's humorous play *Broken Holmes*: "A murdered duke. A deadly cobra. An illegitimate heiress returned from exotic shores. Decades of unlikely backstory effortlessly deduced from a single marmalade-stain.

Sherlock Holmes should have this case nailed shut in time for elevenses, as long as he doesn't forget his morning

opium. But this is the day that his long-suffering sidekick Watson's patience finally comes to an end.

This is the day he solves a case of his own. Find out what's really going on under the deerstalker in this darkly comic examination of one of fiction's most outwardly respectable characters. Features a puppet snake."



BROKEN HOLMES

The Isle of Wight Steam Railway Weekend

Saturday 8th–Sunday 9th August
10am Saturday–6pm Sunday

The Isle of Wight Steam Railway, Havenstreet, Newport, Isle of Wight

Admission: Not sure at this stage.

A chance to dress up in Victorian clobber and have a holiday on the Isle of Wight. More details later, but keep an eye on www.iwsteamrailway.co.uk.

Tricity Vogue in Edinburgh

8th–10th August, 10.15pm, Bongo Club Cabaret, The Bongo Club, 37 Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8BA, £8/£7 concessions

11th August, 7pm, Edinburgh Ukelele Cabaret, The Wee Red Bar, Edinburgh College of Art, Lauriston Place,

Edinburgh, EH3 9DF, Free
12th August, 10pm, High Tease, The Voodoo Rooms, West Register Street, Edinburgh, £15

The cheeky songstress dubbed by *Time Out* “mistress of the ukulele” will be skipping from venue to venue during these few days at the Fringe this year. See www.tricityvogue.com.

The Savoy Café Presents

The Savoy Café, 240 Graham Road, London E8

Admission: appears to be free but I think it's worth booking via info@rosiecooper.info

The Savoy Café is a former East London café that has been vacant since the mid 1990s. The building, which is still owned by the Coltelli family who grew up there in the 1950s, retains its original 1930s décor and fascia. For the duration of the Savoy Café project, the space will temporarily re-open to play host to a series of events to include talks, exhibitions, screenings and especially commissioned site-specific works, all curated by the indomitable Rosie Cooper. James Mackinnon's scale model of the Savoy Café will be on show throughout the programme.

For details of all the events see the Events page of the Club website, you may in particular be interested in:

International Everything

Saturday 15th August
4pm–9pm (talks from 7pm)

International Everything is an evening of short talks by non-specialist enthusiasts (not unlike the NSC Club Nights), on this occasion:

Nicola Stylianou will talk about the Mardi Gras Indians of New Orleans;

NSC Member *Sarah Bowerman* will talk about fancy dress costumes at the Duchess of Devonshire's ball in 1897;

Mark Webber will talk about love and fire: a journey via Hiroshima, Elvis and Orford Ness.

International Everything was originally conceived for Redux Projects.



The House of the Macabre

Wednesday 19th August
6.30–9.30pm

The Old Queen's Head, 44 Essex Road, London N1 8LN

Admission: £6 in advance, £8 on the door

Gothic Cabaret: “After centuries of waiting, the stars are finally in alignment, the spirits are indeed with us. The Family Macabre are gathering to share their gothic stories,

barbed songs and downright scary magic.

Expect the London Magician, Vixen DeVille and The Marquis of Gray... along with many other long lost relatives. Who is the mysterious ballerina? Are the tales of the enchanted girl with wooden hands to be believed?”

The Furbelows Present

Cirque de Crème Anglaise

Friday 21st August
7.30pm–2am

The Cross Kings, 126 York Way, London N1 0AX (King's Cross rail and tube)

Admission: £5

This quarterly musical extravaganza, perpetrated by The Furbelows, the beat combo that counts among its numbers NSC Members

Mr Clayton Hartley, Mr Neil McKeown and (some of the time) Miss Tabitha Maynard-Addersley, reaches its first birthday. As ever, we've striven to create just the right tone of dark humour, strutting pomp and unabashed fun. Not only does the £5 entry fee buy you get a limited edition badge and custard creams all night but also...

The David Goo Variety Band Variety indeed, from acoustic strumming to klezmer/punk knees-ups, all stitched together lyrically with odd logical meanderings and imaginary dialogues. Think of a folky Frank Zappa and you're not far off. You may already know them, as a tune of theirs was used recently on the TV ad for Rightmove.

The Furbelows Likened to the Bad Seeds, the Doors, the Stooges and Talking Heads and recently shortlisted for the Glastonbury “Rockstar '09” contest. “As much fun as a Playboy Playmate and twice as pleasant to listen to”—A New Band A Day.

The Bottomfeeders “Genius and insanity are close bedfellows and never was that truer than in the world of The Bottomfeeders. Impossible to pigeonhole—is it pop-goth or vaudeville-indie?—they're the Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band birthed in modern metrosexual Manchester”—Chris Long, Producer, BBC

“The most exotic band in Manchester”—Clint Boon, XFM

“Singer Natalie has the weirdest trill we've heard since Kate Bush. Hallelujah! Manchester is reborn”—NME

H. Anthony Hildebrand A geyser of humorous verse and prose, Mr Hildebrand blogs under various personalities and is half of droll musical double act Junior Minsters, whose “An Event of Some Kind” night was recently headlined by Tim Minchin.

Disc jockey **MC Fruity** (better known to you as the Club's own Flt. Lt. Fruity Hatfield-Peverel) will be dropping everything from swing 78s on his wind-up gramophone to 1980s punk to film soundtracks, and the booze will flow freely till 2am.

The Sheridan Club Tashes Trophy 2009

Saturday 22nd August
10am till 5pm

The Richard Evans Memorial Playing Fields, Roehampton Vale, Stag Lane, London SW15



Admission: A share of the ground hire, approximately £8 a head

A cricket match between those with facial hair and those without. The Hirsute Gentlemen face the Clean-Shaven Players in the fifth Tashes Trophy final. The Gentlemen will be looking to avenge their four straight defeats to date. Prospective players, scorers and officials are invited to contact Watermere (a.k.a. Christopher Vowles) at cgvowles@hotmail.com.

The Ditty Bops at the Troubadour

Saturday 22nd August
8pm until midnight

The Troubadour, 263–267 Old Brompton Road, London SW5

Admission: £7 before 10pm, £8 after

Orlando Seale presents an intriguing line-up. Since the release of their Grammy-nominated album *Summer Rains*, The Ditty Bops—Amanda Barrett and Abby DeWald—continue to bewitch their listeners with golden harmonies, playful storytelling, and a visionary lyrical worldview. As Interview magazine says, “these vaudevillian vamps are putting the show back in showmanship.” Visiting from America, where they appeared on *Late Night With Conan O'Brien* and have toured with Tori Amos and Nancy Sinatra. Also playing is Orlando himself plus Six Toes and Sons of Noel and Adrian.

£5 ADMISSION THE FURBELOWS PRESENT A NIGHT OF RAW MUSIC & DARK HUMOUR

CIRQUE

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FEATURING

THE **DAVID GOO VARIETY BAND**

EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE HUMOROUS SONGWRITER AND HIS MINSTRELS

FROM MANCHESTER THE SUB-AQUATIC WAILINGS OF

The Bottomfeeders

YOUR COMPÈRE FOR THE EVENING

H. Anthony Hildebrand

WITH HIS COMIC MONOLOGUES

MC Fruity
SPINNING SHELLAC

YOUR THE HOSTS

FURBELOWS

FRIDAY 21ST AUGUST

7.30PM UNTIL 2AM

THE CROSS KINGS

126 YORK WAY, KING'S CROSS, LONDON N1 0NX



FREE CUSTARD CREAMS!
FREE BADGE!