



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**

How time flies! It seems only yesterday that we were frolicking in the sun at our summer party, Tempting Fête, yet this month sees our winter party already. Yes We Can-Can will take place on Saturday 21st November at the Punch Tavern on Fleet Street (also the venue for last year's Kredit Krunch Kabaret). Taking its cue from the decadent, absinthe-infused 1890s milieu of Toulous-Lautrec, the theme is all things French. See page 11 for details.

## The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 4th November in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 8pm until 11pm. Our speaker will be Mr Sean Longden who, you may recall, previously entertained us on the subject of fashion among British troops during the Second World War. No longer a guest speaker—he joined up after his first experience of our company—he will be enchanting us on the subject of "George Simenon's wonderful creation Inspector Maigret, a great character and dedicated pipe-smoker who spends as much time deciding whether to wear a raincoat or an overcoat as he does solving crimes. He also refuses to have central heating in his office because he prefers a stove."

## The Last Meeting

At the October meeting the original scheduled talk by Matthew Howard, on *The Big Siam:*Oriental Excess in the East Indies, was hastily shoved aside (and I'm not saying it was on the advice of the Commision for Racial Equality) to make way for an impromptu conker tournament. In the pursuit of complete fairness, Mr Scarheart sourced, drilled and strung all the conkers himself. I myself missed most of this as I didn't arrive till about 9.45, but Mr Howard tells me that the official winner was Lord Finsbury Windermere Compton-Bassett. (Mind you, I am pretty sure that Jessie challenged Compton-Bassett to a bout at the very end and beat him, arguably making her the champion.)

The longest bout was conducted between Torquil and Curé Michael Silver, possibly because of equally matched doggedness, determination and self-belief, but equally possibly because of mutual languor and endless breaks to mix fresh cocktails.

William Smith was instantly dubbed William the Conkerer but in battle sadly failed to live up to this name.

Despite the brutal reputation that the game of conkers holds—it makes cage fighting look like a pillow fight—the only injury of the evening was sustained by Robert Beckwith who bellowed for ice for his hand (not his cider, as some supposed).









(Above) Grace and Krista slug it out; (below) Unid, Fruity and Luke present arms





(Left) A clash of the titans: the Curé histrionically receives Torquil's assault; (above) Robert Beckwith, perhaps in the bout that maimed him



(Above) William the Conkerer not; (left) Ladies and gentleman, choose your weapons; (below) Fruity snipes



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# Along Came a Cider...

MR IAN WHITE is a Member not only of the New Sheridan Club but also of the Campaign for Real Ale, in which capacity he has organised a number of educational pub crawls around hostelries of note for the Club. On Saturday 3rd October he once again led a band of Sheridanites on an ale trail—except this time, in keeping with the season, there was an emphasis on real cider as well as real ale.

I missed the beginning of the migration, so I did not glimpse the Harp in Covent Garden. By the time I joined the group they were preparing to leave the second pub, Doggett's Coat and Badge by Blackfriars Bridge—a fairly unprepossessing modern building which I could not bring myself to photograph. The next stop was altogether more interesting: the New Forest

Cider Bar is a stall in Borough Market, a mecca for anyone after artisanal foodie fayre. Their cider on tap came in dry, medium and sweet varieties—the medium was pretty tart and the dry was guaranteed to rid you of that tiresome tooth enamel. We stood around supping from plastic pint glasses and ogling the lobsters on the seafood stall opposite.

Next stop was the Market Porter, a proper indoor pub scarcely 50 feet away. Clearly it's an establishment that is proud of its guest ales,

as the ceiling is studded with beer mats from past guests.

The Spanish tapas bar Brindisa was to have been next on the itinerary but it was declared

too crowded so we sloped on to the Wheatsheaf on Southwark Street. This subterranean drinking den was once, I believe, a Davy's Winebar, and the layout certainly seems reminiscent of one. We supped ale and lobbed darts at a dart board. After that it was time for me to melt away to another engagement, but the posse carried on to the last stop on the route, the stalwart Royal Oak on Tabard Street, clearly a favourite of Mr White's as his trails usually

seem to end up there.

Many thanks to Mr White for organising yet another enjoyable and enlightening tour.











(Clockwise from top) Studying the options at the New Forest Cider Bar; the ceiling of the Market Porter is decorated with the pelts of defeated ales; the extent of the decoration; the view from the floor; autumn sunshine lights up the revellers' pints of astringent nectar

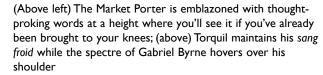
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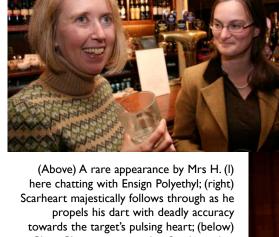
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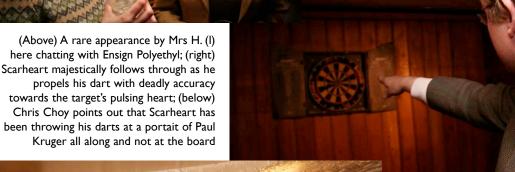
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(Above) Torquil, Isabel, Niall and Miss Minna; (top right) Scarheart prepares a javelin; (right) The Royal Oak, the final pub, has some dramatic ornamentaion including these two stags;



(Left) Evening draws on in the jewelled gin palace; (below) a pretty good impression of what the company looked like through a pair of end-of-the-evening beer goggles.





## Fitzrovia Pubs

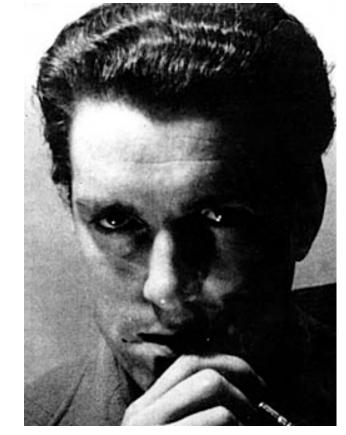
By Torquil Arbuthnot

IN HIS 12-VOLUME NOVEL A Dance to the Music of Time Anthony Powell mentions several pubs in that area north of Oxford Street known as Fitzrovia (after the Fitzroy Tavern on Charlotte Street).

In A Buyer's Market the antique dealer Mr Deacon's shop is located nearby: "Charlotte Street, as it stretches north towards Fitzroy Square, retains a certain unprincipled integrity of character, though its tributaries reach out to the east, where, in Tottenham Court Road, structural anomalies pass all bounds of reason, and west, into a nondescript ocean of bricks and mortar from which hospitals, tenements and warehouses gloomily manifest themselves in shapeless bulk above mean shops."

Three of the Fitzrovia pubs mentioned (in the novel *Books Do Furnish a Room*, as frequented





Julian Maclaren-Ross

by X. Trapnel, based on the writer Julian Maclaren-Ross) are The French Polishers' Arms (probably based on the Bricklayers' Arms), the Marquess of Sleaford (probably the Marquis of Granby), and the Hero of Acre (almost certainly the Wheatsheaf on Rathbone Place).

The Hero is described thus: "one of those old-fashioned pubs in grained pitchpine with engraved looking-glass (what Mr Deacon used to call a 'gin palace'), was anatomised into half-a-dozen or more separate compartments, subtly differentiating, in the traditional British manner, social divisions of its clienele, according to temperament or means: saloon bar: public bar: private bar: ladies' bar: wine bar: off-licence: possibly others too."

In his various autobiographical writings, Julian Maclaren-Ross often wrote about Fitzrovia and its pubs. The Bricklayers' Arms, he notes, was "better known as the Burglars Rest because a gang of burglars had once broken into it and afterwards slept the night on the premises, leaving behind them as evidence many empties... The Burglars was a quiet house, useful for a business talk or to take a young woman whom one did not know well."

The Black Horse on Rathbone Place was apparently a sombre Victorian pub, as befitted the suggestion of plumed hearses implied by its name, with a narrow tiled passage leading to the various bars divided by partitions of scrolled

and embossed glass, including a Ladies' Bar (no gentlemen admitted) "where old dears in dusty black toasted departed husbands with port and lemon from black leather settles". Maclaren-Ross says that the funereal atmosphere had so affected the late proprietor "that he had set out deliberately to commit suicide by drinking solidly for three days and nights behind closed doors, and when these were eventually battered down by police his dead body was found surrounded by empty bottles on the saloon bar floor".

The Marquis of Granby had a reputation as the pub where the most fights broke out, "despite the efforts of the landlord, an expoliceman, to keep order and put down disorderly conduct. Gigantic guardsmen went there in search of homosexuals to beat up and rob and, finding none, fought instead each other: one summer evening, in broad daylight, a man was savagely killed by several others in a brawl outside while a crowd gathered on the pavement to watch and was dispersed only by the arrival of a squad from Goodge Street Police Station nearby, by which time the killers had made their getaway in someone else's car."

Entering the Wheatsheaf shortly after this incident, Maclaren-Ross was surprised to find it empty except for a local tart who told him, "Oh, they've all gone to see the bloke being kicked to death outside the Marquis dear," and added that the sound of the thumps was "somethink awful".

In the 1940s the focus of bohemian life shifted from the Fitzroy Tavern to the Wheatsheaf. The pub was a Younger's Scotch Ale house and the door to the saloon bar was down an alleyway dominated from above by a perspective of tall tenement buildings with steel outside staircases in the Tottenham Court Road beyond. Maclaren-Ross noted that the alleyway was "often blocked by motor milk-vans owned by two stout Italian brothers who ran a small creamery business round the corner of the alley. When the milk-vans were parked too high up and customers had difficulty in squeezing past to enter the bar, the Wheatsheaf landlord would fling wide the door, and slapping the sides of the vans, shout with flailing arms at the Italian brothers who grinning good humouredly would shift their vans further down. The name of the brothers was Forte."

The saloon bar of the Wheatsheaf is described as "not large but cheerful, warm in winter, and always brightly lit, good blackout boards fitting tightly over the windows of armorial glass [still there today] and the floor spread with scarlet linoleum. It had mock-Tudor panelling and, inset round the walls, squares of tartan belonging to various Scottish clans."

Apparently "curtain up" on an evening in



The stained glass in the upstairs room of the Wheatsheaf, location of the NSC's monthly meetings

the Wheatsheaf was "signalled by the arrival on the dot of six of Mrs Stewart, who lived on her old-age pension in one of the tenements at the foot of the alley... Mrs Stewart was a very small elderly lady dressed in black silk with yellowwhite hair and she arrived always carrying two evening papers in which to do the crossword

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and an alarm-clock to time herself by."
Maclaren-Ross' habitual corner was at the bar next to Mrs Stewart's table and he says it became his duty to "to keep Mrs Stewart's place, to pass over the Guinnesses in exchange for the exact money produced from her purse, and to see that well-intentioned idiots did not try to help her with the crosswords, a thing she hated above all."

Other Wheatsheaf regulars included "the old Home Guard who though extremely old wore on his tunic medal ribbons of more campaigns than even he could possibly have served in". Another was the orange-faced woman (so called because of the many layers of make-up which she wore which made it impossible to assess her age), "whose presence in the pub made it sound like a parrot house in the zoo and who was reputed to have green silk sheets on her bed (though no man was brave enough to investigate the rumour)". There was also Sister Ann, "the tart who was more respectable than many other female customers":

"Sister Ann was short and wholesomelooking and always wore russet-brown tweeds and a round russet-brown hat in shape like a schoolgirl's. She used no make-up except for two round red spots on her round apple cheeks, for she was no common brass and her chosen clientele wanted nothing loud or flashy,



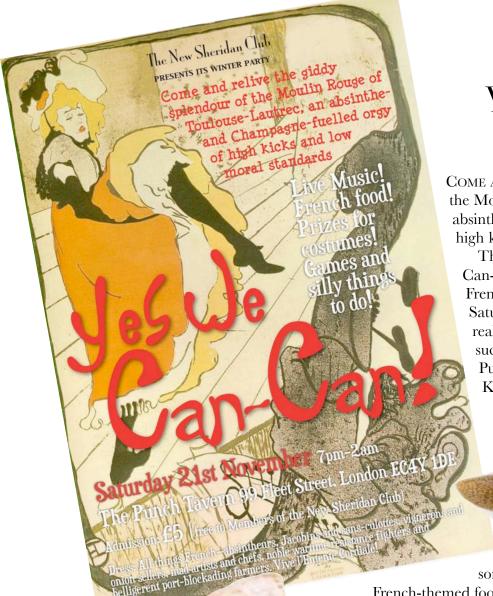


Dylan Thomas in the Fitzroy Tavern

consisting as it did of middle-aged or elderly businessmen from up North who liked the sort of girl that might have been a sister to them (she was shocked when I suggested this relationship was incestuous and said she was surprised to hear a man of my education using nasty dirty words like that to a woman, and she certainly never did anything of that sort, thank you dear).

Ann's beat was under the Guinness clock in Tottenham Court Road: 'You catch them going into the tube or coming out for a day up in London dear, and maybe they're lost and don't know where to go or they don't want to catch a train home just yet awhile, either way they're glad to spend an hour or two with a girl they can talk to quiet like, poor blokes."

The Wheatsheaf is still the scene of bohemian London life. Groups such as the Sohemian Society meet there, and it hosts book launches and editorial meetings of *The Chap* magazine.





## Yes We Can-Can!

### CLUB PARTY ANNOUNCED

COME AND RELIVE the giddy splendour of the Moulin Rouge of Toulouse-Lautrec, an absinthe- and Champagne-fuelled orgy of high kicks and low moral standards.

This season's NSC party is Yes We Can-Can! a celebration of all things French. It's earlier than usual, on Saturday 21st November (so could not really be called a Christmas party as such) though we are back at the ornate Punch Tavern, site of last year's Kredit Krunch Kabaret.

We'll have musical delights from chanteuse

Maria Trevis and

some Gallic accordian noodling,

French-themed food, plus the usual tomfool games with highly desirable prizes. Try your hand at Pin the Legs Back On the Frog or the sinister Onion Battle. (We're also working on a game that involves blockading a port and preventing free trade at all costs.) There will be prizes for the best costumes and perhaps a sudden *blitzkrieg* prize for the first person to surrender to something or someone.

Our famous Grand Raffle will be in evidence, of course, with prizes including some absinthe, some oil paints and an easel, a beret, some garlic, cheese and snails, a model of the Eiffel Tower, a set of boules, Asterix comics, French-flavoured books, CDs and

DVDs, plus a white flag and a packet of Gaulloises.

As usual entry is free to NSC Members, including anyone who joins on the night, and entry to the raffle is free but open to Members only.



## Enchant-Ed Wood

MISS FLEUR DE GUERRE (first glimpsed in these pages as a model for Miss Sophie Jonas's creations at the Burlesque Brunch) goes from stength to strength and Halloween saw her second party in collaboration with Miss Emerald Fontaine. The specific theme was the 50s pulp horror/sci-fi films of Ed Wood, argued by many to be the worst film director ever.



Inevitably there was a strong burlesque element too, so those of a sensitive disposition may wish to have a strong-stomached servant flick through the next few pages on your behalf. But there was a goodly NSC contingent in evidence too, however, and we can report that nothing too shocking took place.



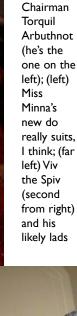








(Right) Did the vol au vents taste off to you? (Below I-r) Yes, a steampunk blowing bubbles; Miss Nicola and Todd (I don't know what the fez insignia means but I want to join); a ghostly airman

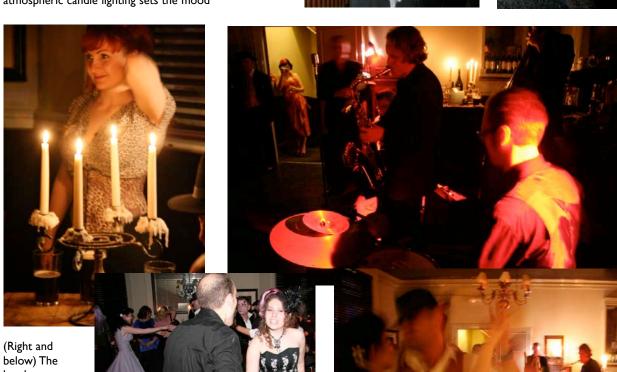




(Above) on the smoking terrace apple bobbing and tombstones; (right) this gent has clearly been clearing out the attic; (far right) Mr Simon Pile and the moon; (below) atmospheric candle lighting sets the mood







below) The band turn out to be hepcats who can blow a mean horn.
Which was nice.



(Right) That's Lady Grace and Harry Iggulden cutting a rug (and also blurrily above)



(Below) The statuesque Miss Fleur de Guerre, our hostess with the mostest



(Left) Proceedings kicked off with a mystery act known only as The Animal. Unfortunately The Animal was stuck in traffic for a long while but did finally make its entrance.



Violet Crumble, the Goer With the Boa, has the elegance; (right) Miss Rose Thorne is an altogether I don't think her stockings were recovered from







(Right) At first Miss Dolly Rose seems shy and reluctant, but she soon loses her inhibitions and her clothes; (below) the band take five to do some ogling; (bottom) Miss Tallulah Tempest closes the show as a cinema usherette who is passionate about her wares.







## Old Soldiers Spotted in Club Tie?

On Monday of last week members of the Normandy Veterans Association gathered for a service at Westminster Abbey, to mark the 65th anniversary of the D-Day Landings. Gordon Brown and Defence Secretary Bob Ainsworth were apparently lurking in the background. Many think it will be the last significant anniversary gathering of this kind, as the veterans' numbers are gradually depleted.

But we say there is clearly life in the old dogs yet: in the picture below two of them appear to be sporting Club Ties, a sure sign that they have the energy to get up no good. I also see that they've awarded themselves almost as many medals as the NSC Committe have done.

## Conker News

As an adjunct to the details of our own conker tournament last Meeting, you may like to know that last month also saw the 2009 World Conker Championships, staged every year since 1965 in a field in Northamptonshire

near to the Ashton Conker Club. Some 2,000 horse chestnuts were prepared for the use of the 256 male and 64 female participants from 17 countries. The next biggest competition is held at Abjat-sur-Bandiat in the Dordogne. Although the French call a horse chestnut a *marron d'Indes*, they rightly call the game "conkers".

#### **CLUB NOTES**

## New Members

Through the Misty autumnal air we offer a curt "good day" in passing to the following sterling types who have signed up for Club Membership in the last month: Lord Bassington-Bassington, Lady Mju, Peter D. Stroud, Michael Trevor, Karen Wright and Anthony Charles Wakeford..

## Forthcoming Events

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

## **NSC Club Night**

Wednesday 4th November 8pm-11pm Upstairs, The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB Members: Free



Non-Members: £2 (first visit free) See page 2.

### The Hendrick's Autumn Lectures

Until Monday 14th December
Events start at 7pm
Viktor Wyn's Academy of Domestic Science, 11
Mare Street, Hackney, London E8
Wynd is hosting a series of lectures:
10th November: Mike Jay on The

Atmosphere of Heaven 17th November: Philip Hoare on Whales 24th November: Brian Dillon on

1st December: James Putnam on The Museum as Art Form

Places are very limited so do book in advance at www.lasttuesdaysociety.org

## Isabel's Knitting and Drawings

Tuesday 3rd November till Sunday 8th November From 7pm daily The Foundry, 86 Great Eastern Street, London EC2A 3JL

Admission: Free, I assume

Hypochondria

Club Member Miss Isabel Von Appel has an exhibition of "autumn drawings and knitting for tiny creatures" in the Library of this watering hole.

### Assize of Bread and Ale

Thursday 5th November 8pm-11pm The Talbot Inn, High Steet, Ripley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6B Admission: Free, I believe

Dress: Victorian or rustic

Lt Col John Molyneux-Child suggests that Members might be interested in this 400-year-old ceremony. "Each year," he explains, "we have drums and fifes playing in the courtyard of the Talbot Inn in scarlet tunics and spiked helmets, two morris dance sides and our minstrels and singers giving excellent renditions of the ale tasting songs of yesteryear." The venue is just off the A3 at Ripley.

### The Tricity Vogue Slinktet

Saturday 7th November From 7ish? The Last Days of Decadence, 144–145 Shoreditch High St, London E1 6JE (020 7729 2896)

Admission: Free before 8pm, £7 before 9.30pm, £9 after; advance tickets £7 from http://tr.im/E1Fd

East London's best-dressed venue brings you the Acme of Sophisticated Grand Voodoo Deluxe! Performing live will be ukulele songstress Tricity Vogue and Her Slinktet and, on a cabaret tip, STANDNOTAMAZED presents Magic To Cry For hosted by Dusty Limits. There will be disc jockeying from Jazz Monkey, Dandy Dan and Lucifer Box. For concessions/cheap list email info@thelastdaysofdecadence.com.



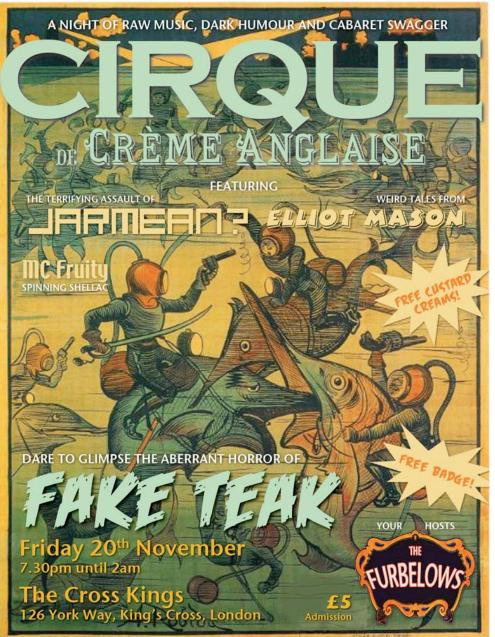
#### Hula Boogie

Dress: Stylishly

Sunday 15th November Jive classes 7.30–8pm, Hukilau Hula dance lessons 8–8.15pm, follwed by the event till after midnight South London Pacific, 340 Kennington oad, London SE11 4LD Admission: £7

In an authentic tiki bar (complete with bamboo huts and Easter Island heads) plonked in the middle of south London, you can dance to music from the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s while sipping cocktails. I think there might also be an element of burlesque performance (when is there not these days?).

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The Furbelows present

## Cirque de Crème Anglaise

Friday 20th November 7.30pm-2am

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

Admission: £5

There are realms outside time, space and decency, alien kingdoms of which sane men should not know. Dare you enter and confront the full horror of Cirque de Crème Anglaise? The Furbelows once more present their own special night of raw music, dark humour, cabaret swagger and general tomfoolery.

We shall hear uncanny tales from ELLIOT MASON, a man whose questing mind ruminates on what it's like having an eye on your knee, recalls the time he bought a stamp and laments the day that Jif was renamed Cif. Joy and sorrow, triumph and tragedy. For added *verité* he even sings different songs in different

voices, some of them human.

We shall receive the full onslaught of JARMEAN?, a ragtag band of time-travelling cockney music-hall jazz scamps, powered by ukuleles, horns and an angelic young lady who is one of the loudest drummers I've come across. They claim to inhabit somewhere called Babylondon and their name is a contraction of "Do you know what I mean?". Innit.

We shall tremble before the aberrant majesty of FAKE TEAK, the long-awaited physical manifestation of Andrew Wyld's fevered visions, wallowing in dreams of early computers and complex desertisland scenarios. For some years the project has just been Andrew and some imagined fellow band members (see the attached drawing he made of them), but the live version is now at last ready to be unveiled. At the time of writing they have yet to play their first gig, but it looks as if the Cirque will be their second (assuming they aren't arrested

after the first).

Recharged Radio have been fiercely championing the band—kingpin Jordan Thomas says: "Scarily intelligent, Andrew writes songs using maths...and sounds like David Byrne. Is Byrne therefore mathematically perfect? Fake Teak decides." As you can see, Fake Teak can do strange things to your mind.

And at the centre of this eldritch universe, like a spinning blob of dark ectoplasm, a primordial evil that refuses to be displaced by the modern world, we shall find THE FURBELOWS, your hosts for the Cirque. Somehow both raffishly elegant and engagingly shambolic, they will treat you to strange rhythms, tainted observations and some bugeyed ululations.

In between and after these performances, like the music of the spheres, our resident DJ MC FRUITY will be both cranking up his wind-up gramophone and jabbing at his iPod to

bring you a wholly unexpected palette of sounds.

It's a mere fiver to get in and, as usual, you will be gifted with a free limited edition badge and a constant supply of custard creams to keep your blood sugar up and stop you from fainting.

Tricity Vogue: Night of the Blue Lady

Friday 20th November Doors: 7pm, show from 8pm The Royal Vauxhall Tavern, 372 Kennington Lane, London, SE11 (020 7820 1222)

Admission: £7.00 on the door or in advance.

The Blue Lady returns to the Vauxhall Tavern after her smash hit run at the Hot August Fringe. Cabaret songstress Tricity Vogue brings a kitsch portrait to life to make heartbreak hilarious and put her own spin on the "Blues". "Anyone else a massive fan of the

- The Elue Lady Sings:

divine Miss Vogue..?
Thought so." — Time Out.
With special guest Marcel
Lucont, France's premier
misanthropist and lover.
The "devilishly
handsome and
devastatingly
disdainful" Gallic
swinger makes his
Vauxhall Tavern
debut.

The New Sheridan Club presents Yes We Can-Can! Saturday 21st

November 7pm-2am

The Punch Tavern, 99 Fleet Street, London

Members: Free, Non-Members: £5 See page 11 for details.

The Chap presents

Uneven Steven.

## The Grand Anarcho-Dandyist Ball

Saturday 5h December 7pm until late

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 Admission: £20 in advance from ticketweb.co.uk

Dress: anarcho-dandyists; tweed revolutionaries; immaculately-trousered philanthropists; foppish maoists; debonair dissidents

To celebrate ten years of *The Chap* magazine, a rare party. In the Grand Hall will perform Mr B. the Gentleman Rhymer, Atters' Chaporgasmic Terrors, dance duo The Bees Knees, Victorian Illusionist Mr Flay, The Hot Potato Syncopators, The Zen Hussies and Mr Dennis Teeth; in Mao Tse-Tung's Oriental Lounge will be hostess Louise Quatorze and her hookah plus dance duo The Bees Knees and the Lady Greys. There will be disc jockeying from Andrew Fletcher of the International Club and Nino of Rakehells Revels, the Lady

Luck Club DJs and gramophone DJing from

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