



'Allo 'Allo

Vive la soirée 'Yes We Can-Can!'

PLUS

- 3 years of the NSC, 10 years of *The Chap*
- Pulling the file on Inspector Maigret
- Progress report from the Saharan Saunter

The New Sheridan Club

Newsletter

XXXVIII • December 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

Blow me if we weren't all having so much fun that no one noticed the Club had had a birthday. Yes, at the October meeting the NSC was technically three. A toast to us! I've added a News archive page on the website if you want to relive these last three giddy years...

The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 2nd December in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 8pm until 11pm. Our Guest speaker will be Lord Rupert, who will outrage our sensibilities with a louche squint at *Sir Francis Dashwood and the Hell Fire Club*. Rupert says, "The talk will look at the start of the group, how they influenced some of the real turning points in history and politics. The ultimate gentleman's club that pushed society to its limits in every way. It'll involve sex, violence, drinking, Satanism and nudity! Well, four out of the five subjects, anyway."

This will actually be the second time that Rupert has attempted to deliver this address: it was scheduled for August but at the last minute he injured his wrist and was rushed to hospital for a face-off with the sawbones. You may assume that this was an entirely understandable result of the over-dutiful manipulation of some

wrench, given Rupert's calling as a plumber. You might alternatively assume that it was the result of the over-zealous throttling of a chicken, given his other calling as a Satanist. Or you might wonder whether it was something altogether more sinister—a curse by the ghost of Dashwood himself? I shall be paying close attention, as the hour draws near, to whether anything untoward happens this time...

The Last Meeting

At the November meeting historian Mr Sean Longden made his second trip to the Club podium, this time to deliver a fond appreciation of Inspector Maigret, the pipe-smoking crime-solving creation of Georges Simenon.

Sadly our projection facilities were once again dogged by gremlins and the babbage device was unable to read Mr Longden's compact disc (probably just needed more coal). But Mr Longden nevertheless painted an admirable word-portrait of a man who spends as much time deciding which coat to wear or what hat to buy as he does solving crimes. Which is just as well as he doesn't seem to deduce the solutions—he just seems to know who the villain is. He is also fond of a drink and resists such insidious innovations as central heating. You can find an essay version of this address on page 3, along with some of the images we were unable to project on the night.



(Above) Bunty (l), Fruity and Bobby; (left) our speaker, Sean Longden; (right) a brace of bowlers



(Above) our chairman Torquil with the one photo that worked



Fruity's pass for a statue unveiling



Robert demonstrates the importance of correct hat size



(Above, l-r) Will Smith and Frisax, (left) Compton-Bassett pretends he doesn't know there's a camera pointed at him; (right) chaps discussing tweed



This umbrella damaged in duty during umbrella jousting at the Chap Olympics has been intriguingly restored





Smoke and Mirrors

By Sean Longden

THOUGH PRIMARILY NOW known in the UK courtesy of numerous TV adaptations—in which the Parisian detective became a sort of Sunday evening figure, like some Gallic Miss Marple—Inspector (or to give him his correct title Superintendent) Jules Maigret is possibly 20th Century literature’s greatest crime fighter—or at least my favourite.

Like so much that we associate as quintessentially French (the great singer Jacques Brel or the ridiculous Johnny Hallyday, or wonderful food) Maigret was actually the creation of a Belgian. Liège-born Georges Simenon was one of the century’s most prolific authors—producing some 400 books including 75 novels and 28 short stories featuring his favourite detective. He was also a prolific lover, with more than 3,000 women reportedly passing through his bedroom—although many of the tally were reportedly prostitutes.

Written between 1931 and 1972—by which time the detective, if we are to go by the clues within the books, would have been somewhere between 65 and 88—the Maigret novels sold millions of copies worldwide. In 1931 Simenon produced an incredible 11 Maigret books, with six more the following year. Interestingly, earlier this year I visited Book Barn in Somerset. If anyone hasn’t visited it, it’s a haven for book lover. As

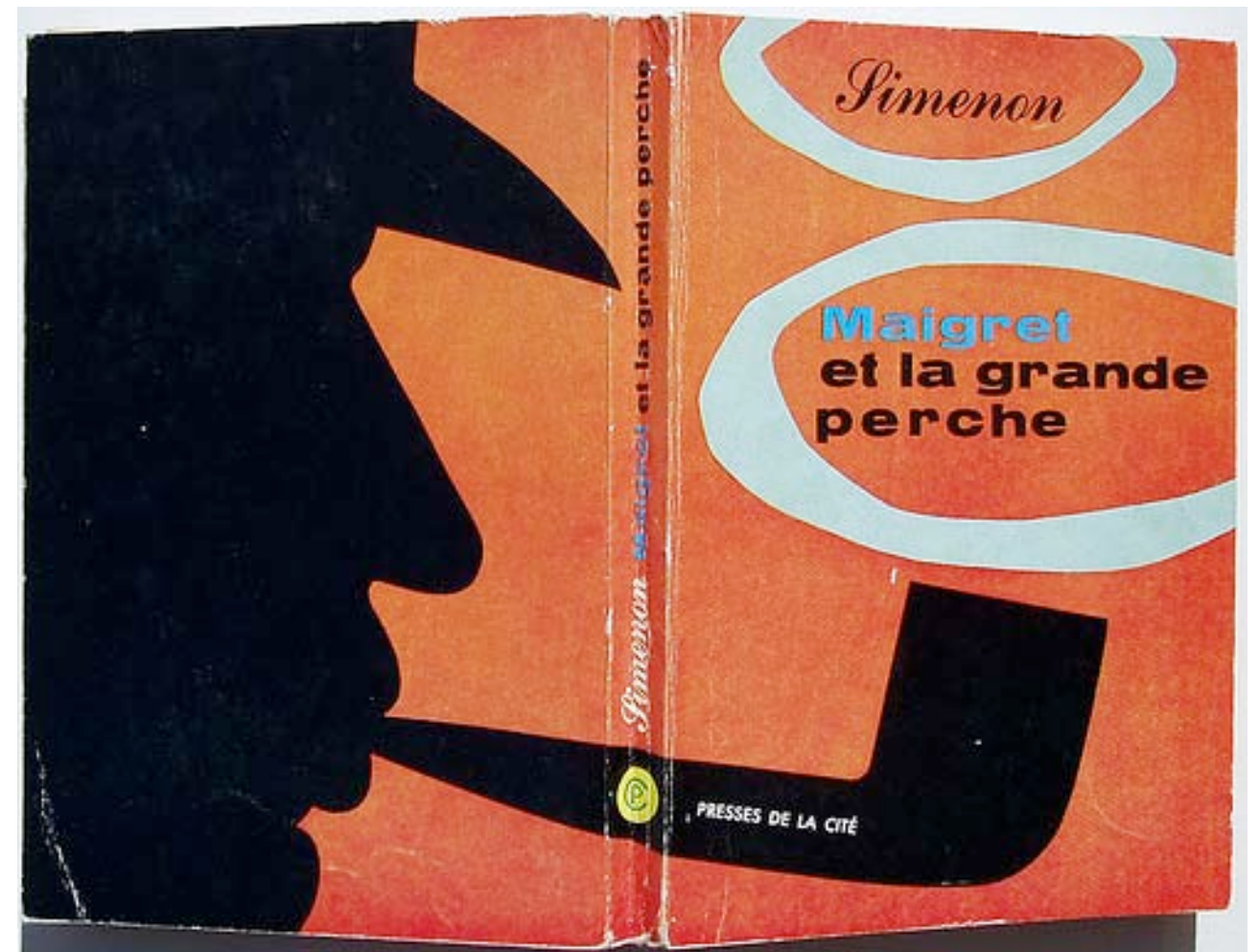


its name suggests, it’s a barn full of millions of second-hand books. But despite Simenon having sold millions of copies of hundreds of books since the 1930s, I could not find a single copy in the entire barn. It was a bitter blow.

Over the years, Maigret became a timeless character, always seemingly on the verge of retirement. Hints within the books put his date of birth somewhere between the 1880s and 1907. According to one book, Maigret was born 1884 in Saint-Fiacre, France, although different birth dates can be concluded from different books—in one book his birthdate is 1907—making it unlikely he could have solved his first case in 1916, as is suggested in another novel. He is married to Louise, who is almost exclusively referred to as Madame Maigret in the books, and they had a daughter who died at birth. Such is the detail given of Maigret’s domestic life that in France it is even possible to purchase a cookery book based on Monsieur and Madame Maigret’s favourite dishes.

Five foot eleven tall, broad shouldered, with powerful hands, he is a physically imposing man and hardly the obvious image of a thoughtful detective. However, these books provided us with a character whose strengths were less an ability to search for minute clues—rather, he observed his suspects, focussing on flaws in their character and details of their behaviour to build his case, before allowing the criminal to reveal themselves.

Just as all literary crime-fighters have their foibles, Maigret has plenty of interesting habits. Yet he is less flawed than many of his ilk. Simenon knew how to build a subtle character without need to resort to the worn clichés of dark secrets and hidden vices. There is no place for mistresses in Maigret’s life—he is a devoted husband. But he



does have very particular interests and it is these details of Maigret’s life that I shall focus on.

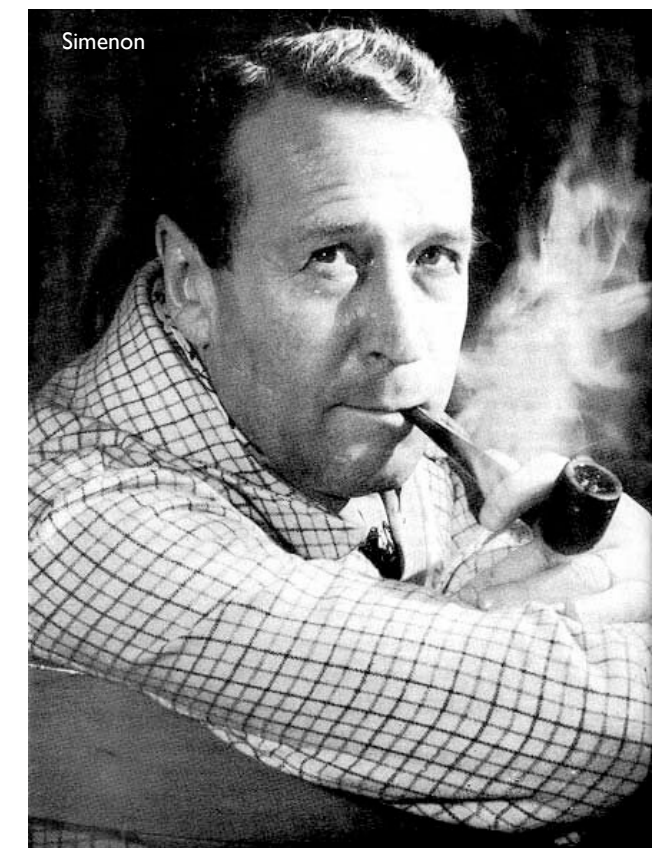
Firstly, I am not a great fan of the detective novel. I appreciate Simenon’s way of using Maigret—allowing him slowly to build up a picture of the crime and the criminals—never rushing in, never arresting people even when he is certain of their guilt. Instead, he prefers to create a subtle trap, allowing the suspect to be lulled into a false sense of security and slowly incriminate themselves.

Yet it was not the elements of the crime-solving process that attracted me to Maigret. Of course I was struck by Simenon’s ability to conjure up vivid images of Parisian life, having always been enamoured by the 1930s as the end of an era. I also adored the way a city’s weather is portrayed.

However, on my first encounter with Maigret, in the book *A Bar By The Seine*, I was taken by another element. Just a few pages in, Maigret takes a break from his investigations to answer a vital question—what hat should he purchase? Should it be the classic elegance of a brown high-crowned bowler or maybe something in grey? I was hooked.

Reading a selection of the books at the same time as I was re-reading the James Bond novels,

I was struck by something that suited my own way of thinking. Bond is seen as the great style icon. However, one should always remember that somehow Bond, though devoted to the artistry of the Savile Row tailors, seems to have a peculiar love for short-sleeved polyester shirts. He even wears nylon underwear. I realise this put him at the cutting edge of 1950s modernism, but as a character Bond was at the





start of an unsettling new world that led over the next thirty years to the shellsuit. It a new world of which I am not a great fan. Maigret marks the end of the old world of pure fabrics, heavy cloths and agonising decisions over whether to wear a raincoat or overcoat. A world that, I suppose, I yearn for.

It didn't take long to realise that clothes, alcohol, smoking and a general disregard for the modern world were as important (at least to me as a reader) as the solving of crimes. As a lawyer notes in one of the novels, "Maigret is a detective of the old school." He then notes that Maigret is out of date, a man who, by the 1950s, was out of step with the modern world. This is a detective who lives and works in central Paris. He is devoted to his wife and—harking back to a forgotten era—he is a man who often goes home for lunch. A favourite thing for me is the relationship between Maigret and his wife. Suitably, she is Alsatian—that is, from one of France's less fashionable regions.

From her background Maigret gets his love of sauerkraut and vins d'Alsace. To me, that makes her more interesting—and less obvious—than had she been from one of the more fashionable regions. For a modern reader it would be ridiculous were she to be from the fashionable Provence region—so half French/half German Alsace makes perfect sense and adds to the charm of the books.

In his office Maigret has fought back the tide of modernism by refusing to allow central heating to be installed. Instead, he insists that his stove remains in place, preferring the heat of a real coal fire, which helps him to concentrate and thus sets him up for solving crimes. In one unforgettable moment, at the end of his investigation, Maigret gives cocaine to an unfortunate female addict who was involved in his case. Always unconventional, at another point he allows a convicted killer to escape in order to track down the real perpetrator of the crimes. He is a deep, complicated, highly intelligent man. He makes notes in a small cheap notebook, that he seldom needs to consult. When a suspect receives a beating from Maigret or his men, it is not to force a confession but to allow him to observe the victim's reactions. When he threatens to frame a suspect for living off immoral earnings, you know that this is no idle threat—he would do it without raising an eyebrow. As his British friend, Inspector Pyke, who travels to Paris to observe his methods noted, "Maigret has no method at all."

Just like his creator Georges Simenon, Inspector Maigret is a devoted pipe smoker. Every image of the detective seems to feature a pipe, which he fills from a worn leather tobacco pouch, and his office is usually full of swirling smoke. His colleagues even have to warn him to stop smoking when he enters a hospital—a far cry from today's world of Health and Safety in which smoking is forbidden almost everywhere. Indeed at times, the trademark hat, raincoat and pipe combination is so familiar that-it risks the idle observer confusing him with the other French icon, Jacques Tati's Monsieur Hulot.

Yet there the similarity ends. Maigret himself has no comic elements. He is dedicated to his work, allowing no interference with his methods. During one case he uses the excuse of leaving a pipe behind to go back and ask some

follow-up questions, returning to his suspects hoping to catch them unprepared (not unlike the similarly heavily-coated Lt Columbo). At times, he uses his pipe to buy time—especially when talking with the twin evils of suspects and meddling superiors—using a few puffs to compose himself, preparing his next answer. As many of us know, the pipe has a luxurious calming quality, allowing the holder an air of detachment that no other smoking device allows. Even by arranging his pipes in front of himself on his desk, Maigret uses the time to compose himself and concentrate. We do not learn which tobacco he smokes but do learn that it is only a pipe he smokes—not cigars, not cigarettes.

The books are also full of drinking references. Maigret is never seen drunk. He enjoys drink, consumes it regularly and routinely but it never dominates his life—even though he is known to have a drink with breakfast. Just as in his investigations, he remains in charge whatever the appearance might be. He uses going out for a drink as an excuse for avoiding his bosses. He has a drink for every occasion: beer is his tippable of choice (after all, as he points out, he is not of the cocktail generation)—usually a small one with lunch or the regular tray of beer and sandwiches fetched from a nearby bar to keep his team going during



late-night investigations. When they telephone the bar to ask for beer, the patron asks if they require sandwiches as a matter of course. The requests of Maigret and his team are familiar, meaning that the bar sends over a waiter to bring the beer and sandwiches on a tray.

Here's a man who likes to go for a walk rather than take a cab back to his office—the walk both clears his head and gives him an excuse to stop for a beer to quench his thirst. Sometimes he returns to his desk at lunchtime to find that his devoted staff have got a glass of beer waiting for him. Like most of our continental neighbours he likes his beer cold, in a small

glass and with a foaming head.

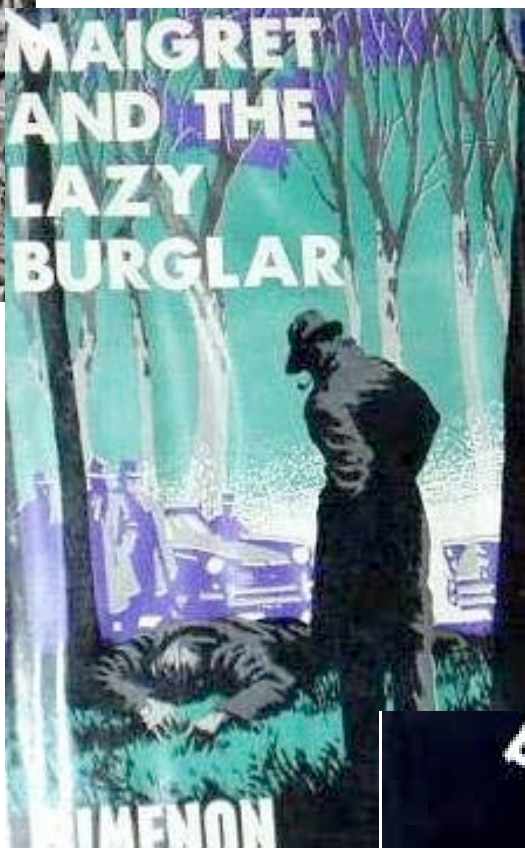
But there are moments when nothing but a glass of plum brandy will do—meaning he keeps a bottle both in his office and at home. His wife knows exactly the time to offer him that or to give him *framboise* with his coffee. Or a rum. And he likes a hot toddy for a cold damp day. Or a light white wine whenever he goes out with Madame Maigret.

He knows his drinks, worrying about how many stars appear on the label of the brandy he buys in a bar. When whiling away time in an

unfamiliar café he studies the labels of aperitif bottles—the bottles familiar to him as those he remembers from the cafés of his childhood. Unlike



most of us, who might order a coffee when we have drunk too much brandy, Maigret orders brandy to take away the



cloying taste of too much coffee. He is a man who knows waiters and barmen throughout Paris—a 20-year relationship is nothing unusual. After all Maigret lived in a time when the barman and waiter were appreciated for their craft, not just some Polish girl looking for employment far from home. He can summon them at a glance and know that he'll get the drink he wants.

In the novel *The Yellow Dog*, Maigret leaves Paris for a seaside town. There he is able to set himself up in a local bar. It is his natural environment. The biggest concern is that someone poisons a drink, making it unsafe to drink anything for a time. When asked about a particular location, he summons up his memories of the place. His first memory is the light white wine he had drunk with the meal. That is how he builds his memories.

Maigret was the product of a novelist with a deep interest in clothing. In Simenon's novels the reader meets a character who use the swapping of bespoke suits for some cheaper ones as a way of casting off the life he is bored with. When he wants to return to this life it is his tailor he returns to.

One journalist noted Simenon's interest in

clothing: "Now in front of me I have Georges Simenon, *très élégant*, in a cashmere sweater, gray flannel trousers, ocher shoes made to the foot, which is to say, hand-made. But I didn't come to see Simenon to speak of his shoemaker...

although his shoe-racks and wardrobe are very impressive—something like sixty pairs of shoes, a hundred fifty outfits of all types, so many shirts and shoes that on the first floor of the house there's a large room especially fitted out as at a tailor's, with a dressing room and sets of mirrors that allow you to verify the drape of a jacket on your back."

Looking at a biography of Simenon I noted a picture of his wife during the 1930s. She is wearing the perfect period sailor suit, complete with wide trousers. In a novel of the same period the outfit appears again on a woman at a summer's Sunday afternoon riverside party. In the same book, Maigret gets his first break in

the investigation when visiting a hat shop and agonising over what to chose. Later he visits a second-hand clothing shop, giving the attentive



and specialised reader the opportunity to imagine the beauty of all those heavy woollen overcoats and thick formal jackets that would have lurked in the 1930s



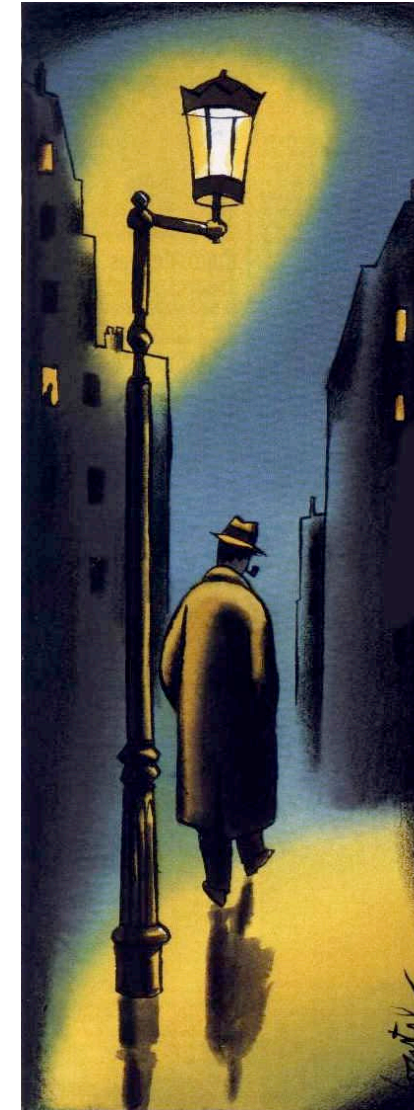
equivalent of a vintage clothing stop. For me, such places are a dream—places one seldom actually finds.

Georges Simenon's own interest in clothing, and pursuit of good manners, can be seen from one anecdote regarding his response to one actor who played his character. Jean Richard had a long run playing the character on French television. However, Simenon is said to have disliked Richard's Maigret because he did not take his hat off when he entered a room. Simenon had always used Maigret's hat as a device—he always removes it when speaking to ladies, but leaves it on to register displeasure with a female.

Without a doubt the Inspector is a traditionalist. Almost without fail he wears an overcoat or raincoat—often agonising over which to wear for the weather. His overcoats have a velvet collar, which seems rather ostentatious for someone who is quite staid. Yet one must remember he is—as we would say—an Edwardian man. The velvet collar is of that period, quite traditional.

Unlike most cinematic and televisual depictions of Maigret, the novels show his preferred hat as the bowler—rather than the broad-brimmed trilby most commonly shown. In the novels, his felt hat was only worn after 1945, when fashions had changed. Whilst television interpretations set in the 1930s tend incorrectly to give him this hat.

We know he prefers his clothes to come from a tailor, favouring a Jewish man in the Rue de Turenne. He wears a three-piece suit—always wears his waistcoat—in grey or black. Like his overcoat, this is of a heavy wool. His trousers are held up by braces, but he takes a dislike to ones made from



bright silk. Ever the traditionalist, he wears a shirt with detachable collars, in an era when such collars were beginning to disappear. Only occasionally in the post-war period did he occasionally wear integral collars, following the fashions of the period.

Even in the heat of the Riviera, Maigret needs to remain formal, wearing a coat to remind those around him that he is on duty and not on holiday. This is not a man for wearing shorts and flip-flops. Yet he has a softer side—despite the formality of his bearing, he yearns to take his jacket off and potter around in his shirtsleeves.

During one case Maigret gets his lead when he becomes concerned about a suspect's clothing—in particular his brown suit. The man denies ownership of a blue suit yet owns a blue overcoat. Maigret is

confused—why would the man own a blue overcoat if his only suit is brown? After all, it is a terrible clash.

Even Mrs Maigret assists her husband. In one case she provides the clues by her observations about the clothes and shoes worn by a female suspect, noting that a servant's shoes did not match with the dress of a duchess.

In one book, *Maigret And The Idle Burglar*, Simenon uses my favourite descriptions of Maigret as a troubled and solitary man, wrapped in his own thoughts and

refusing interruptions. When this happens, we are told he is in a "Brown Study". It conjures up images of something I would like to turn from a state of mind into a reality—a tobacco-stained smoking room complete with leather chair, bookcase and whisky glass. It's a place where I would happily while away the hours, regardless of whether or not I had any crimes to solve.



A commemorative Belgian coin struck in 2003



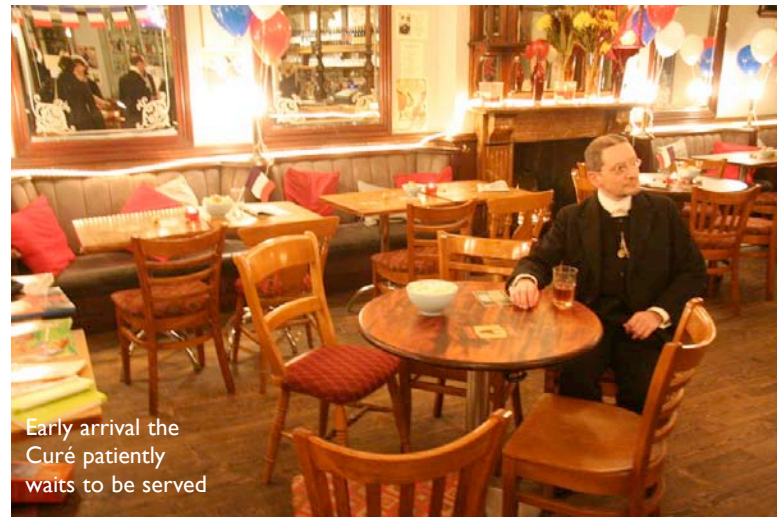
'Yes We Can-Can!' Really Can

THE FAMOUS ENGLISH sense of fair play got a good airing on Saturday 21st November when the New Sheridan Club chose the French—our natural enemies—as the theme for the latest of our biannual parties. (It was what in the past would have been billed as a “Christmas Party”, but no date in December seemed suitable and I don't think it's on to use the C-word for any event outside of that month.) Many guests commented afterwards that they thought it the best party yet.

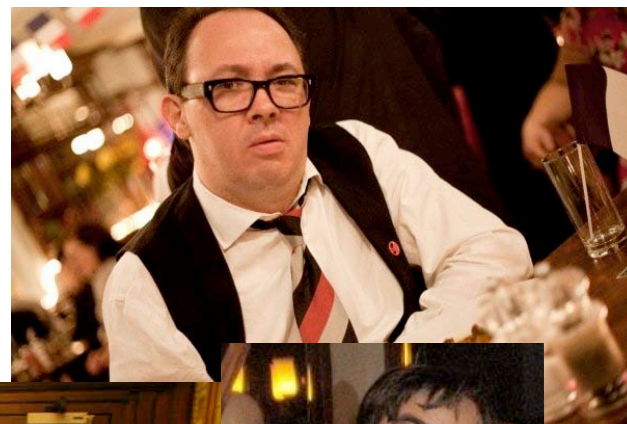
We were back at the Punch Tavern on Fleet Street, scene of the Kredit Krunch Kabaret last year. But all Teutonic hints had been banished and the place decked out in red, white and blue, the tables strewn with garlic cloves and snail shells. Guests rolled up as auteurs and onion sellers, aristocrats and revolting peasants. The 1952 film *Moulin Rouge* played silently in the background while a



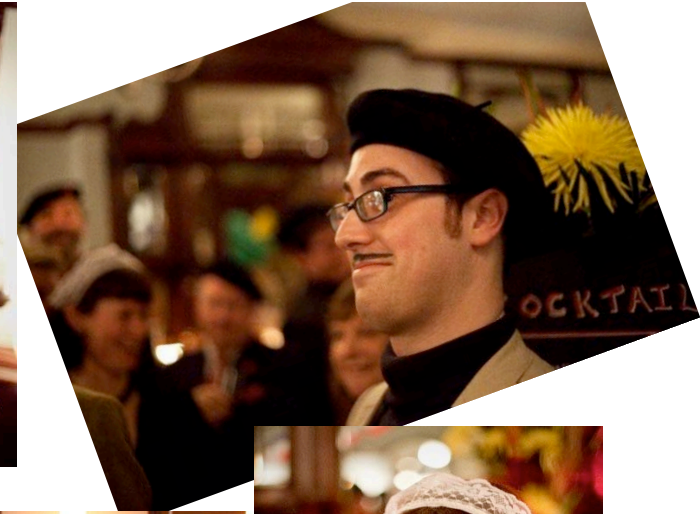
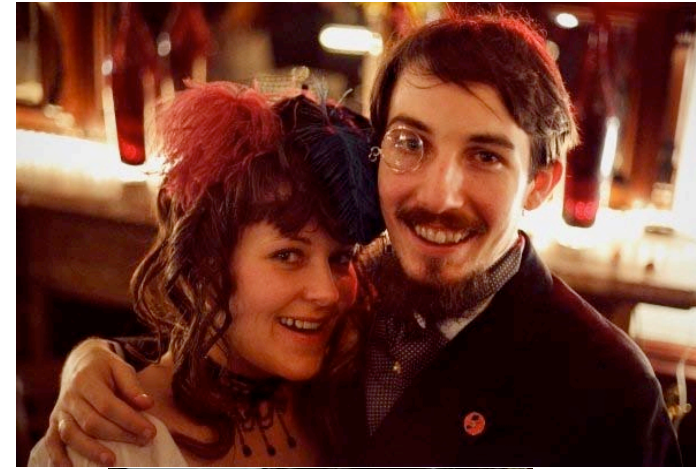
programme of Gallic music, specially prepared by International DJ MC Fruity (Hatfield-Peverel), crooned from the tannoy. Spicing up the evening were live performances from *chanteuse* Mademoiselle Maria (bearing a suspicious resemblance to Fraulein Maria from last Christmas...), and stand-up comedian Marcel Lucont, the embodiment of French charm, *hauteur* and misanthropy who was bemused to see so many people dressed as the French without one genuine Frenchman in the building. (Afterwards,



Early arrival the Curé patiently waits to be served



The Committee will be your waiters for the evening. Don't ask for anything.



(Clockwise from below) The place begins to fill up; Ingrid searches for her muse in a glass; I don't know this dapper gent; Claudia and Waveney (whose birthday it was); Seth Thevoz; Miss Minna as a maid

as he dashed off to another gig, he told me how nice the party was and how he regretted having to leave—you can imagine how preferable the refined and affable NSC crowd must be to the average late-night comedy audience...)

Our first game was Pin The Legs Back On The Frog. One might have guessed that our players were expressing their Frenchness by finding this concept alien—yet the best attempt actually came from Marcel himself. Of course being a performer, and French, he was not allowed to win.

Then came Onion Battle, derived from the game Orange Battle believed to have been invented, or at least recorded, by Sid G. Hedges (1897–1974), author of many books and articles on swimming, games and wholesome home entertainments for young people. Each player must balance an onion in a spoon held in one hand, while using another spoon in the other hand to unseat his opponent's onion.

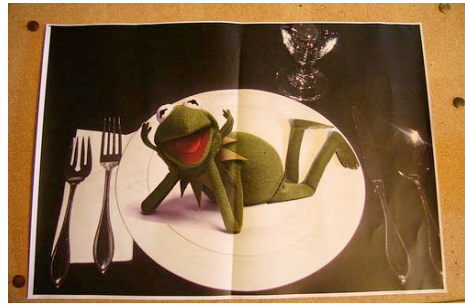


And of course there was the Grand Raffle at the end of the evening, plus the usual Snuff Bar and selection of soaps, colognes and hair dressings in the bathrooms—untroubled by looters this time, I'm pleased to say.

A big thank-you to all who came and helped make it such a splendid evening.



(Far left) Essex submits to the blindfold for Pin The Legs Back on the Frog; (left) J.J. puts her trust in the Committee;



(below) how Kermit is supposed to look



(Above) Tammy on typically dramatic form; (right) Tammy's amazing handbag which she made herself



(Clockwise from far left) Sean gropes for the board; Will Smith makes a hopeless stab in the dark; Marcel celebrates his effortless superiority; Essex appears almost to miss the board altogether; Jessie makes her winning play; one of the less successful attempts

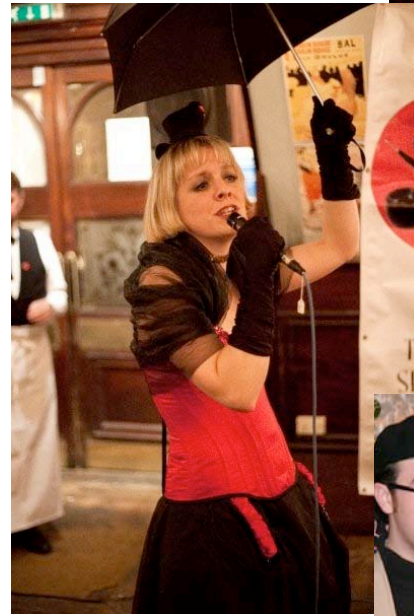


(Top) Two new guests of the Club; (above) Marcel sneers at his audience... (below) to their delight; (left) Willow with Edward Sapiera who joined the Club that night; (below left) Seonaid takes an Indochine slant on the theme





The Onion Battle competition: (clockwise from top left) Jessie v Chuckles; Ingrid v Matthew Howard; Trum v the Curé; Trum v The Baron; the Curé v David; Helena v Capt Coppice; Chuckles v Laurie; Helena v the Earl of Waveney



Thanks to Nik Bartram for many additional photos. See www.nikbartram.co.uk

Maria Trevis purrs some Gallic tunes, including *Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien* and *The Accordionist*, flirting with the audience (male and female). (Top) Torquil gets a little hot under the collar



(Left) Laurence Bennion and Catherine Baxter; (right) Edward Sapiera and companion; (below) Chris Choy surveys the crowd with something akin to the steely gaze of a contract killer



(Below) Frisax in an agreeably elaborate coat, clutching his raffle prize, a vinyl record by The Guillotines (geddit?)



(Left) "I'm putting on my top hat..." (below) Two late arrivals, newcomers to the Club; on the right is Elena Tringale, who does special effects for film and theatre





Jessie with her prize for Pin The Legs Back On The Frog—*The Xenophobe's Guide to the French*

Raffle time! Just some of the prizes awarded...



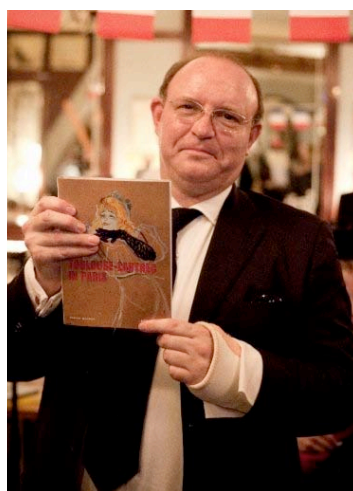
This cheeky gentleman has won the seminal *Asterix The Gaul*



Michael Cassidy with a photo which he tells me now adorns his daughter's bedroom wall



The Baron of Bermondsey with his prize of the classic anti-war film *La Grande Illusion*



Essex and book on Toulouse-Lautrec



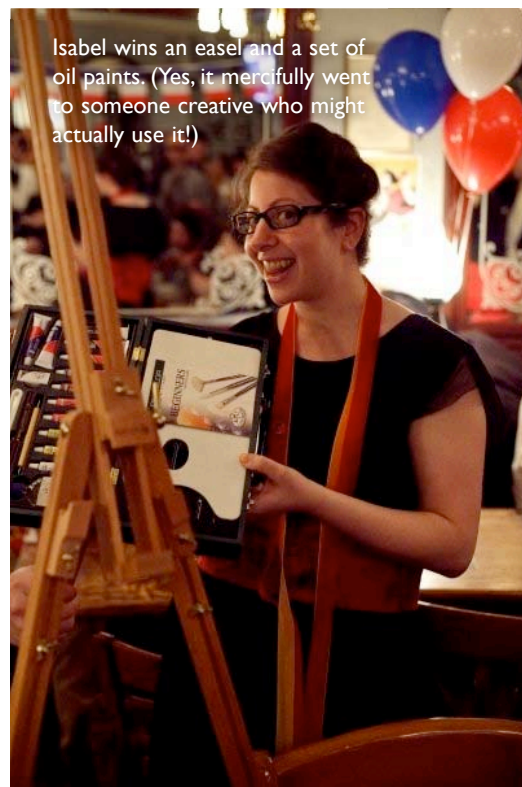
Will Smith and his treasured copy of Edith Piaf's greatest hits



Sean Rillo Raczka with Jean-Luc Godard's 1960 flick *A Bout De Souffle*



Although it doesn't show here, Fruity was ecstatic about winning this bottle of La Fée absinthe



Isabel wins an easel and a set of oil paints. (Yes, it mercifully went to someone creative who might actually use it!)



To mark the third anniversary of the NSC, and the fifth of the Sheridan Club chatroom, Lord Rupert and the Northern Contingent presented the committee with a vast French fancy



(Above) Grace's colourful skirts won her the prize for best costume; (right and below right) Trum meanwhile sets up a portraiture business; (above right) this study of Waveney is an example of his work, as is this one (far right) of Maria Trevis and chum



(Above) Niall Spooner-Harvey and Isabel von Appel



(Left) As promised earlier in the evening, after an appropriate number of Hemingways Grace agrees to perform *Non, Je Ne Regret Rien* in French, accompanied by Chris on his trusty ukulele. (Right) Having partaken perhaps too heavily of Fruity's absinthe, Will succumbs to the charms of Morpheus





Saharan Saunter Update

By Dr Leavingsoon

IN THESE DAYS of recession everyone is hurting, and no less so with groups like the WDRG.

You may well think we are some commercial wireless transmitter from the Former Colonies, but in fact it stands for Western Desert Reconnaissance Group and our aim is to relive the conditions faced by our forebears during the North African Campaign in 1940–43 by using actual wartime kit, leaving Cairo and travelling through the Sahara into Libya and back. We will document and film this event and bring back footage of our WW2 vehicles, equipment, rations and sweaty, grime-encrusted day to day challenges so that modern chavs and chappists can garner some understanding of what price was paid for our daily English way of life.

Proceeds from this will go to veterans' Benevolent Funds in both the UK and NZ. Good fellows from Scotland, England and New Zealand (the original Long Range Desert Group was entirely staffed by Kiwis) are trying to reach Africa in April so that they can observe ANZAC Day at El Alamein and to lay wreaths on the graves of those who fell.

So what has happened lately?

An entire book of anecdotes would not suffice nor do this story any justice, but a crumbling ANZAC biscuit and a gritty cup of tea would paint a thousand words.

I cannot personally

speak for B [British] Troop, for they have made vast inroads and contacts in Africa. Only they can provide any real picture, for they are achieving it very well themselves! Try www.wdr.org for more about the British story. I will merely update you on the New Zealand progress. We have a group page on Facebook, for those of you technically erudite in all things electronic; just search under WDRG and you'll find it.

Simply put, our vehicles are nearly ready in K [Kiwi] Troop, yet our numbers have shrunk to the die-hards. We presently field from New Zealand six lads and two 1942 Willys MB "Jeeps". At an approximate cost of 17,000 US dollars per person, this makes our position in NZ difficult unless something comes along in the form of Government assistance or services in kind—perhaps a nice dry airline ticket or a stow-away opportunity on some Korean fishing-dhow? Kiwis are not particularly picky.

For those of you now particularly practised at being technically savvy, who wish to see the rough and ready lads of K Troop operating a Chevrolet in a moment of mechanical triumph, bending the law of the road wantonly and using, er, colourful Trooper language, have a look at the video link labelled "K6 lives!" on the Facebook page—but be warned! This is not for a quiet peruse with mater: the footage is candidly shaky, the oaths untenable but the sheer victory against the odds unmistakable!

This two ton lorry was made roadworthy at a cost of only 700 NZ dollars! Ah, and sincere apologies for the appalling attire... Colonials are what we are and there is very little finesse about what we do in general, but we do mean well.

Media attention both in the newspapers and on the gogglebox has been frequent and much appreciated but we are now at the stage where all possible advances and achievements that can

be done without funding have been reached. But plans are afoot! We have attracted good sponsors and even our own specially brewed ale which is particularly good on a sultry afternoon.

Some of our sponsors have been particularly generous and have in fact managed to give us paint and expertise to convert our olive drab and rust-cured projects into accurate desert yellow vehicles; the photo on this page was taken in 34 degree heat during gale force winds—hence the headgear.

A major media company is following our progress and wishes to assist us with gaining help from Air New Zealand for air tickets.

Auckland historian and author Brendan O'Carroll, an expert on the LRDG, recently gave a thrilling talk about his expedition to South Libya in search of the remains of New Zealand's, and possibly the world's, last remaining untouched battlefield: Jebel Sherif. At this sun-blasted site Vickers magazines and cooked-off ammunition, fuel tins, badges, belt buckles and food tins litter the orange sands surrounding two NZ Chevrolet trucks, bronzed and sandblasted—perfectly preserved as if 'twere yesterday. Two lonely gravesites remain. He helped create a documentary *Lost in Libya* about this trip which comes very highly recommended by myself if one should ever be interested. (Kindly contact Mr Hartley should you require a copy: I can supply these at a cost of 40 NZ dollars—about £10—plus postage and packaging. If you are a 1940s enthusiast and wish to peruse incredible, never before seen "home cinematic footage" taken by the troopers



behind enemy lines, then this is the one to see!

The wife of CPN Charles Upham, VC and Bar, is interested in meeting us and if impressed will put her considerable authority behind us against the ummers and ahners of the Ministries.

Finally, the vehicle pictured here is being taken out into the Southern Alps on a cross-country expedition in search of venison, adventure and Pussers Rum. A bell tent has been packed, as has the woodburner stove, gramophone, flag and furniture. The Willys handles like an inebriated cattlebeast! I will capture these moments and pass it along—perhaps as a sacrificial lamb for the coarseness of the previous footage.

It falls to us to stick it through, ensuring that we are trained, fore-knowledged in where we are going, able to fix our vehicles mechanically and to survive what comes our way.

In short, we have the ability and are now in full swing to get the moolah or the backing from companies. Wish us tenacity: this is far too important a heritage event for our two countries to be allowed to fail and, whether it takes us several months or two years of hard grind, this will happen and you will at last have something to be really morally, mortally, sartorially horrified about.

BAGNOLD'S

"Make my next
a Bagger's"

Ralph Bagnold
Founder, L.R.D.G. 1940

BEST

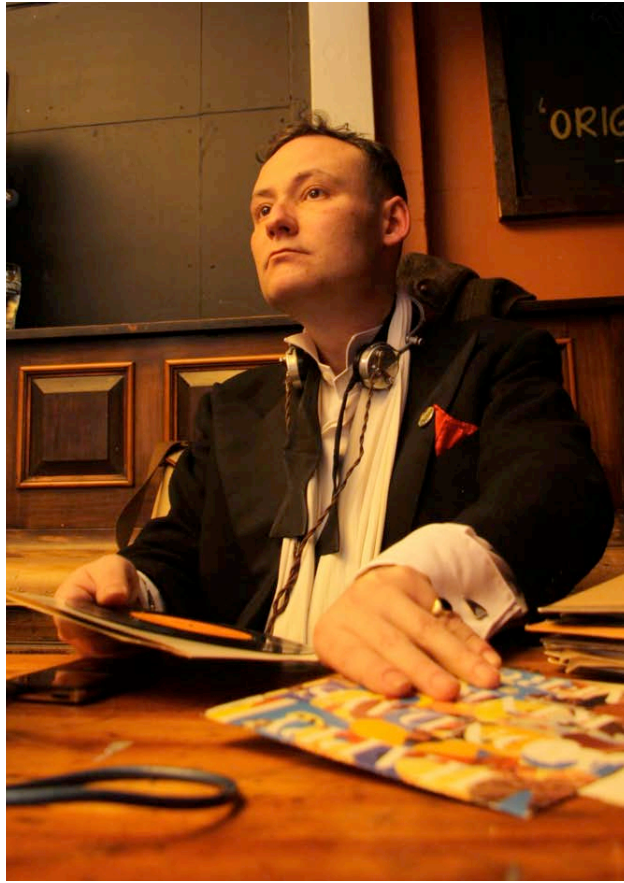
Bagnold led a bunch of Kiwi Soldiers in World War 2 and attacked the Enemy from behind after crossing the Saharan Desert. The Long Range Desert Group predates the SAS as the first elite unit in the world and it was manned by New Zealanders! Now you can enjoy the spirit of real grit, determination and adventure rolled into one tasty pint.



Custard Reveals True Horror of the Universe

THE CROSS KINGS in London's King's Cross once again played host to that confusingly custard-themed quarterly convention of coves presenting music and sometimes poetry with a humorous and vaguely vaudevillean bent.

Hosted by The Furbelows, a raucous quintet of musical pranksters three of whom are Club Members, the evening also saw the musings of Elliot Mason, a solo artist who twangs an acoustic guitar and sings some extremely silly songs on subjects such as a series of scenarios where someone turns out to be someone other than whom he thought it was. Or the time he finished doing the washing up only to spot one



cup that he had missed—but it was all right because he had just enough washing-up liquid residue on his sponge. He usually performs with a large eyeball strapped to his knee, as he has a song about that too...

Also on the bill were Fake Teak a rather 1980s-sounding outfit who used a battery of vintage synthesisers that kept going wrong or out of tune. The songs betray a bit of an obsession with vintage



Photos by Nick Morgan

(Opposite page, top) Fruity selects the *disque juste*; (bottom) Jarmean? (from "do you know what I mean?") now augment their tight tube-driven sound with a full-time dancer. Ding dong

synth technology; a lot of main chap Andrew Wyld's song ideas also come from dreams and are consequently quite strange.

Finally up were Jarmean? a snappy ensemble of ukulele, tuba, drums and a clarinet player who kept leaving his post to dance. There is sometimes a trumpeter too and they are now also joined by a young lady who dances throughout the performance. Musically the end result falls somewhere between cockney music hall and Buggy Malone style Charleston. Despite the lateness of the hour they got the room on its collective feet with their toe-tapping tunes. They are an act who might be well suited to an official NSC event in the future.

Finally we must mention the disc jockey, none other than Club Member Fruity Hatfield-Peverel (sorry, "MC Fruity"), who as usual mixed up a potent and constantly surprising brew of offbeat tunes old and new.

Thanks to all who came and wallowed in the fun. The next event is on Friday 20th February when the headliners will be the bizarrely theatrical CalatrilloZ and their unique brand of cabaret/goth/rock/opera.



(Clockwise from top left) Fruity's gramophone has to have a microphone in front of it; Elliot Mason; The Furbelows; Fake Teak's strangely immobile front man Andrew Wyld; Fake Teak; Alex of The Furbelows terrorises the audience—with our own Compton-Bassett on the left; Clayton proves there is a place for tweed in rock





Interesting Tie Development 1

YOU MAY REMEMBER that last month we printed a photograph of some Normandy veterans who seemed to be wearing the Club tie. Eagle-eyed Member Edward Hutchings—or rather his pater—has identified it. Hutchings Senior writes: “I immediately recognised the tie and the ‘tiger’ motif of the cap badge as those of Her Majesty’s 17th Regiment of Foot, The Royal Leicestershire Regiment, ‘The Tigers’, so called in recognition of their sterling service in India. This fine regiment joined the East Anglian Brigade in 1963 and a year later became the 4th Battalion of the new Royal Anglian Regiment. It went in one of the foolhardy reductions in infantry by successive governments, followed by my 3rd Battalion in 1992. However, the 17th Foot lives on as B (Leicestershire) Company of the 2nd Battalion (‘The Poachers’) and is currently deployed in Cyprus, having returned from a tour in Iraq.”



Interesting Tie Development 2

IT SEEMS THE recession has its positive aspects, cleansing society like a fierce deluge. Outfitters T. M. Lewin have reported selling more than half a million ties in the first half of their financial year—an 18 per cent rise on last year. Their belief is that, in the face of the recession, workers are smartening up their image in the hope that it’ll help them hang on to their jobs. Chief Executive Geoff Quinn claimed economic woes had called an end to the trend for dressing down in the workplace: “People are dressing up more—it has become a real focus to look more professional at work.”

Interesting Tie Development 3

WHILE IT IS the Committee’s policy to remain discreet about celebrity Members, it seems that

one Member has chosen to “out” himself: see the photograph of HRH The Prince of Wales proudly sporting his Club Tie...



CLUB NOTES

New Members

I WOULD LIKE to wish especially hearty Christmas good cheer on the following coves and covettes who have signed up for the Club: Mr Henry Ball, Mr Edward Saperia, Miss Maria Trevis, Master Christopher Hack, Mr Danna Fuller-McCarthy, Mr Peter Mogar and Mr Philip Wright.

Christmas Gift Problems Solved

NEW MEMBERS WHO joined at the party might like to know that the benefits of Membership are more profound and wide-ranging than your wildest dreams. I refer specifically to the right to purchase and adorn yourself with the Club tie, woven to order for us in pure silk, displaying the Club colours along with the logo cunningly incorporated into the black stripe in what is known as a “shadow weave”. Ties are £15 each



plus £1 if you would like it mailed to you, £2 if you dwell overseas.

Moreover, we have cufflinks at £10 a pair, tie slides at £6 each and stick pins at just £4 each (see photo), all displaying the same lush enamelled disc as the Membership badge you were given when you joined up. If you would like to place an order please get in touch via mrhartley@newsherdanclub.co.uk. (For mail

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

Oliver’s Burlesque Debut

OLIVER LANE informs me he has decided to put on his own burlesque night. All I know is that it is somewhere in Birmingham on Saturday 6th February and it’s in cahoots with Lord Rupert, so the place will be full of exotic disreputables. I don’t

know the address yet but the venue sounds intriguing: “Its a stunning venue,” he enthuses, “a little Victorian theatre in original condition, all painted, vaulted ceilings and chandeliers...” More details as they emerge, but keep the date free if you fancy sloping along.

Forthcoming Events

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

The Hendrick's Autumn Lectures

Events start at 7pm

Viktor Wynd's Academy of Domestic Science, 11 Mare Street, Hackney, London E8

Wynd is hosting a series of lectures:

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

8th December: Ian Kelly on Syphilis

15th December: Stephen Bayley on Why He Hates Christmas

17th December: Christopher MacIntosh on Rosicrucianism

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

NSC Club Night

Wednesday 2nd December

8pm–11pm

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

Members: Free

Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)

See page 2.

The Chap presents

The Grand Anarcho-Dandyist Ball

Saturday 5h December

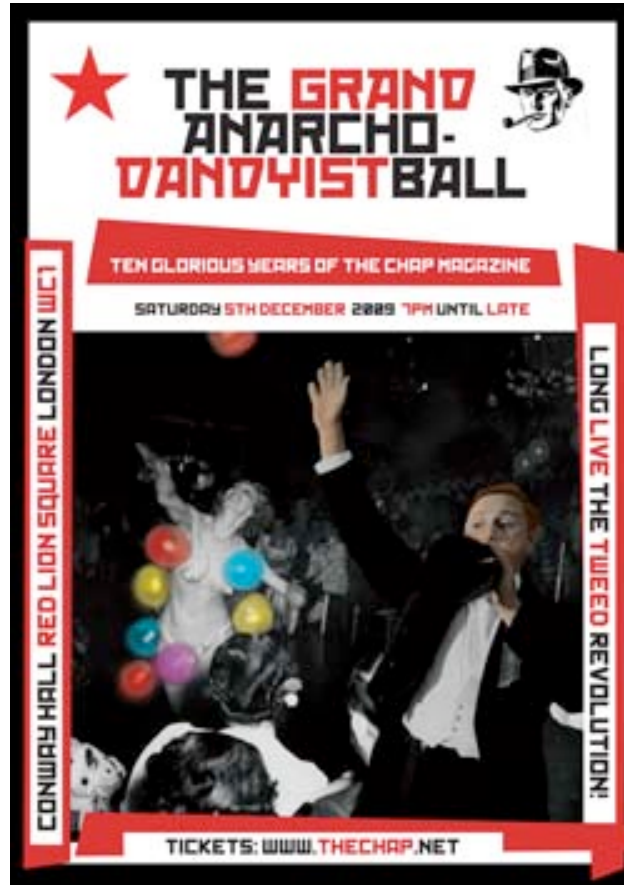
7pm until late

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, 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 Uneven Steven.

Nosey Joe's Christmas Party

Saturday 5h December

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

7.30pm–12am (bar till 11.30)

Admission: £15 (see www.52streetjump.co.uk to pre-book)

Swing dancing galore with live music from The Jive Romeros and the splendidly named Hep Chaps.

The Sheridan Christmas House

Friday 11th December–Friday 18th December North Norfolk

Cost: £100 a head, plus doubtless extra for food and drink

There is still one room free on this week of pipe smoking, music, lounging, sight-seeing, rambling (both kinds), excursioning and fine wines in North Norfolk. This year the Sheridan House will hire a beautiful rural retreat for a week. One day will be designated as “Christmas Day”—when we shall enjoy our traditional festive meal, stockings and “secret Santa” gift-

giving. In the evenings we will dress for dinner: black tie, except for Christmas Day, which is naturally white tie. If you are interested in joining us please contact Ensign Polyethyl on jmcpbeattie@hotmail.com. Deposits of £25 are being collected now.

Tricity Vogue and Broken Toy Music present

Uke Xmas Mash-Up

Friday 11th December

8pm–11pm

The Zenith Bar, 125 Packingham Street, Islington, London N1 7EA

Admission: Free

Cheeky songstress Tricity Vogue is back with a bumper Christmas hamper of four-string fun, featuring Ben Lerman, all the way from New York City, Jimmy McGee of the Bobby McGees, Lisa Kenny, Jo Stephenson, Nick Trepka and more. There will be a mass rendition of a specially-penned Christmas song and a competition to find the, ahem, filthiest ukulele song

Saturday Night Swing Club

Late Night Christmas Special

Saturday 12th December

7.30pm–3am

City Firefly, 18 Old Bailey, London EC4M 7EP

Admission: £10 before 9.30, £12 after

Dress: “Retro or modern but an effort appreciated”

The London Swing Dance Society and 52nd Street Jump present a Christmas special with a free glass of mulled wine for the first 200 guests!

In the Rendezvous Ballroom you'll hear all manner of dance music from the 20s to the 50s; the Alhambra Lounge will echo with R&B, jump jive, boogie woogie and swing; and in the Savoy Club there will be taster dance classes plus the Balboa Club till 3am. See www.52streetjump.co.uk

Hula Boogie Christmas Party

Sunday 20th December

Jive classes 7.30–8pm, Hukilau

Hula dance lessons 8–8.15pm,

followed by the event till 1am

South London Pacific, 340 Kennington Road, London

SE11 4LD

Admission: £7

Dress: Stylishly

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. At this Christmas special there will be free mince pies and other gifts, a festive raffle and the last ever performance by the six-piece band Big Boy Bloater (!).

Hendrick's New Year's Eve Masked Ball

Wednesday 30th December

10pm–4am

The Bridge, Weston Street, London Bridge, London SE1

Admission: £10 from

www.thelasttuesdaysociety.org (though prices may rise nearer the time)

Dress: Divine Decadence—masks obligatory, clothes optional

The usual array of decaying decorations and decadent activities will be augmented by the Trans-Siberian Marching Band, The Texas Chainsaw Orchestra, Bertie and the Troglodytes and Songs of Mirth.

White Mischief: New Year's Eve 1910

Thursday 31st December

7.30pm–3.30am

Proud Cabaret, 1 Mark Lane, (Corner of Dunster Court and Mark Lane), London EC3R 7AH. Liverpool St, London Bridge and Aldgate tubes or Fenchurch Street rail.

Admission: £65 dining, £40 non-dining

Dress: 1910—ballgowns and cocktail dresses, evening wear, formalwear, Victoriana and Edwardiana, military

A dizzying feast of music, cabaret, burlesque, magic, artists, disc jockeys and much more from this vaguely steampunk agency run by the band

Tough Love (who don't

actually seem to be performing this time). See www.whitemischief.info for more

details and to buy tickets. The

dining option gives you a choice

of three sittings (7.30, 8.00, 8.30) and guarantees your table until 10pm.





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FOR THE LATEST information on what the Club is up to, who has been arrested, etc., have a squizz at www.newsheridanclub.co.uk.

For more photos of Club events go to www.flickr.com/sheridanclub.

Those of a technological bent can befriend us electrically at

www.myspace.com/newsheridanclub or indeed www.facebook.com.