



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 The Wheatsheaf 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**

Wilfully optimistic people say that as one door closes another opens. This suggests rather loose door latches to me, but nevertheless it does seem to be true this month. There is grim news about the Saharan Saunter (see page 12). But we also see the reanimation of our Film Nights, after the demise of our last venue (see page 11).

#### The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 3rd February in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 8pm until 11pm. Our guest speaker will be Mr Robert Brook who will raise eyebrows with his thoughts *On Being a Gentleman (By Birth, Costume or Behaviour)*, a lecture he delivered at the intriguing "Interesting 09" symposium in September 2009. I didn't actually see this lecture, so I have no idea what Mr Brook will say, but the fragment of his presentation that is on his Flickr page (he photographs a lot) suggests it will be most intriguing. Mr Brook works by day for Parliament, but I don't think that is relevant.

#### The Last Meeting

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At our January meeting Mr Anton Krause treated us to a lecture on *Duelling For Dummies:* 

The European Sword in Personal Conflict. Mr Krause, as you may remember, was one half of the pair who demonstrated Bartitsu, the Victorian walking-stick martial art, at our last summer party, Tempting Fête—where I seem to remember that he was always on the receiving end of the gentlemanly violence. By day he teaches stage fighting, both armed and unarmed, and arranges fights (for the stage, I mean, not just in pub car parks). To illustrate his talk he brought a number of stage swords (cunningly transported in a guitar case), although he lamented that his favourite rapier was not with him, having been half-inched by someone at the theatre. One pities the soul when Mr Krause catches up with him.

Mr Krause took us through the history of duelling (it was still going on in the early twentieth century) and the weapons used. The presence of cold steel in the room brought out the latent duellist in several Members (see opposite) and it was indeed suggested that a possible flick for our new run of Film Nights might be *The Duellists* (1977) directed by Ridley Scott and starring Keith Carradine and Harvey Keitel. The film concerns two Napoleonic-era soldiers who have an initial minor disagreement, which in turn leads to a 15-year saga of duelling.

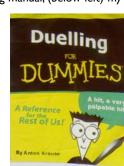
I would like to thank Mr Krause for a fascinating and well-received lecture. I hope to print an essay version of the talk in a later issue.

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(left) Russell Newlove snaps furtively; (right) Mr Krause makes his point; (below) this mock-up was so impressive I checked to see if the book really existed; (below that) illustrations from a period duelling manual; (below left) my

zoom lens chose to lock in wide angle, as Robert helps to illustrate; (far right) a tough crowd: (front to back) Fruity, Essex, Fleur, Will







(Right) Capt Coppice is clearly in his element but (far right) still gentleman enough to let Mai run him through; (below) Ensign Polyethyl does arcane sword stuff







(Left) Essex and

Seth debate:

(above) Neil is

happy with a pint



dling styles

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**EXHIBITION REVIEW** 

## Steampunk

#### By Mrs Joyful

AND SO TO OXFORD, for the first museum exhibition of steampunk design. A fusion of Victorian aesthetics and contemporary technological preoccupations, steampunk celebrates and attempts to make tangible the lost worlds imagined by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century science fiction writers. At the same time it pays homage to the vitality of Victorian engineering and the skills of Victorian craftsmen.

This show brings together objects by 18 makers from the United Kingdom, Europe, the former colonies, Japan and Australia. (Also involved is artist Sydney Padua: see her cartoon, "The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage" at 2dgoggles.com.) The curator, Art Donovan, is himself a leading steampunk lighting designer who found inspiration in the collection of scientific instruments and curiosities at Oxford's Museum of the History of Science. The horological holdings of the museum influenced

the selection of no fewer than three watch and clockmakers for the

They've even made an

effort with the sign

show, including Haruo Suekichi's intricate personal timepieces and Eric Freitas' faintly disturbing wall clocks.

The creations of Datamancer (a.k.a. Richard "Doc" Nagy) may be the works most familiar to readers. His computer keyboards with engraved brass housings, handwritten keys and velvetupholstered wrist rests have become in demand internationally. He sums up the drive behind many of the featured artists: that technological devices now imprisoned in uniform moulded plastic should instead be "celebrated and honoured by the finest craftsmen and creative minds, and given a structure befitting [their] potential and greatness".

While these are practical working objects, many other exhibits are fantastic contraptions – helmets designed to protect the heads of interplanetary aeroship pilots or clockwork prostheses for the busy modern explorer. Belgian artist Stéphane Halleux's figures stand out for their humorous approach (a toaster/dog) and the recognizably Gallic

character of the bits and pieces of engineering he collages together to create them.



More sinister are Thomas Willeford's articulated metal spider, Molly Friedrich's brass foetus curled in a glass and mahogany tube,

and Kris Kuksi's Airfix nightmares, grotesque amalgamations of moulded plastic junk such as "Churchtank".

Also on display is a selection of original Victorian scientific instruments and engineering from the



On the day of our visit, the curators had arranged the additional

of the aesthetic that

Here are Isambard

Kingdom Brunel's

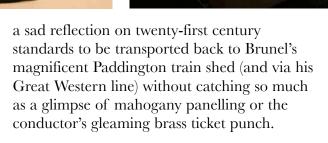
sextant, parts of Charles Babbage's

difference engine, valves, pumps,

inspires modern

diversion of a "fashion show", whereby a procession of steampunk practitioners were invited to model their creations for an admiring crowd. Complementing the gratifying display of tweed and silk were the obligatory shining brass goggles or modified spectacles, bulbous ray guns, leather gauntlets, vacuum tubes, pressure gauges and aether tanks. A selection of daguerrotype portraits of the participants is illustrated on these pages.

After this feast of mechanical wonders, it was



"Steampunk" continues until 20 February 2010 at the Museum of the History of Science, Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3AZ, Tel. 01865 277 280 www.mhs.ox.ac.uk, admission free



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This splendid baroque carapace is by Professor Maelstromme (a.k.a. Amanda Scrivener); (bottom) watches by Haruo Suekichi, rings by Daniel Proulx and cyberspider by Thomas Willeford



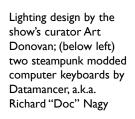














(Below) The Eyepod (ho ho!)







(Left) Needlework-themed goggles by Mad Uncle Cliff; (right) some sort of breathing apparatus for hostile environments, by Herr Doktör









(Above and left) The cartoon-like creations of Belgian Stéphane Halleux; (below) the deranged, Bosch-esque concoctions of Kris Kuksi, assembled from model kits, plastic soldiers, etc, including the splendid "Churchtank": six months from now you'll all be driving one













Clockwise from above: Molly "Porkshanks" Friedrich's mechanical womb, complete with brass foetus; watches by Vianney Halter; not sure if this has any practical application; one of Jos de Vink's hot air engines that turn heavy brass machinery using the heat from tealights; clocks by Eric Freitas; a flying machine by Prof. Maelstromme and Lord Archibald Featherstone





Steampunks on parade: visiting aficionados take to the catwalk





To establish one's own steampunk archetype or retro-futurist fashion sense, try the tests at www.helloquizzy.com



This blue bottle both glowed and bubbled! Who needs a lava lamp?

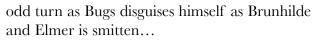






## Vintage Film Night

FOLLOWING THE DEMISE of the the venue we were using, the William IV, our film nights were put on hold for a while. Eventually the venue reopened under new management and I looked forward to being able to renew our relationship with it; however, I was told that the projector system had been replaced by a 42-inch television. I think its primary function is to pipe in background football coverage, rather than to showcase masterpieces of the silver screen, and I had my doubts about its suitability.



The evening's feature presentation is the 1944 Bette Davis/Claude Rains movie *Mr Skeffington*, in which Davis portrays a society beauty who, when her feckless brother is exposed as an embezzler, is obliged to marry for money. Miss Raccat describes the film as "a little-known picture that is rather modern in its approach to story telling. Bette Davis allows herself to become a monster in a way that would merit an Oscar and the description 'brave performance' these days. It's also quite funny and has a dark side too. It pre-figures Davis' performance as Baby Jane and in later



We'll be meeting from about 6pm in the upstairs room.
Dining is advised: the venue prides itself on its cuisine.



In the meantime I discovered a new venue so we're giving that a try. It's The Compass, 58 Penton Road (corner of Chapel Market), Islington, London N1 9PZ (020 7837 3891). The nearest tube station is Angel.

Our inaugural event at this venue is curated by Miss Evadne Raccat. First up is *What's Opera*, *Doc?* a 1957 Bug's Bunny ten-minute Looney Tune cartoon revolving around Wagner. Considered by many to be Chuck Jones's masterpiece—and by some as one of the finest animated shorts of all time—it features Elmer Fudd as Siegfried, yet still fixated on hunting rabbits. The usual chase takes an



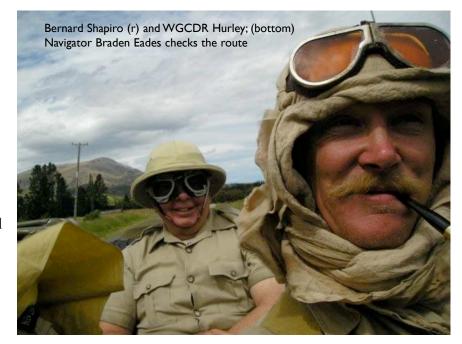


## So. Farewell Then, Saharan Saunter?

OVER TWO YEARS ago a plan was hatched within the Club walls to mount an expedition into Libya, retracing some of the routes of the wartime Long Range Desert Group. The idea was conceived (actually a year before that) by Major Gary Wallace. I quote from his journal:

The whole idea of running an expedition came to me whilst I was reading a couple of books, Libyan Sands by Ralph A. Bagnold (1935, Hodder & Stoughton) and Bearded Brigands: The LRDG in the Diaries/Photographs of Trooper Frank Jopling by Brendan O'Carroll.

The Expedition itself was perceived as a group of us leaving these shores, with vehicles, to follow some of the routes covered by the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG). This was thought, initially, as nothing more than a jolly boys outing running over the desert and having a great adventure holiday! But that is fine for civilians, to sense a bit of danger and remoteness all under the umbrella of a travel company etc. I wanted more. This "holiday" was to be in WW2 vehicles (no canopies or windscreens, etc.) wearing WW2 uniforms and equipment, navigating using WW2 maps, theodolite



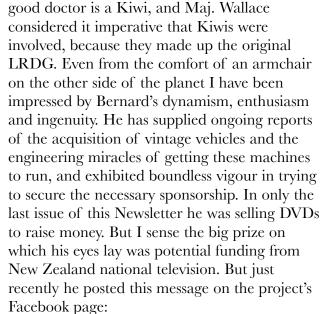
and sun compasses, whilst eating rations similar to that in the 1940s. Further it was to be as realistic as possible and have enough people and vehicles to make it an epic journey. Further to this and at the forefront was the need to do it for charity.

I jotted down some ideas and a timeline that would allow us a comfortable lead-in to make sure we could try and get all items in place well before the planned dates. Areas I looked at were logistics (by far the most complex part), manning, transport, visas, route planning, resource acquisition, funding and sponsorship, publicity, marketing, media operations, public awareness, embassy and consular access into countries, etc. There were a thousand other things to be done and the planned two year lead-in seemed far away but not enough.

I realised I could not do this alone, I needed some help, a team to bring this to fruition. So, playing with the

> idea for a while, and finally making a decision on Hogmanay (31st December, 2007), 1 started looking for suitable reliable people to become part of the expedition.

Enter a host of plucky souls, among the doughtiest Bernard Shapiro, a.k.a. Dr Leavingsoon. The



TVNZ have given us their decision. They have no funding for the trip this year but will consider it in the next financial year. Unfortunately there is no way the group can maintain itself financially to this date.

cost of the warehouse debt, amounting to some \$5000-\$6000 in back rent. I would like to thank everyone who gave their time, money and skills to this project, in particular Andrew Essenberg, Peter Healey of the Southern Institute of Technology, Lisle Hood, Stuart Eyes and Hugo Fitzsimmons. It's been a hard road and we have nothing to be ashamed of at all. We worked miracles with no money and stuck at it even when things looked bad.

Pat yourselves on the back, chaps, and I'll see you at the Hop sometime.

Personally, I cannot see myself continuing at this point

in time. I have put in so much of my own money into the

K2, my MB will be put up for sale and anything I make over what I have personally spent will be donated

to Rannerdale War Veterans Home. K5, my C8AX

CMP—still dismantled—will be sold to try to cover the

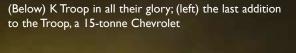
project, I am near to being bankrupt and am forced to

sell belongings to get by week by week.

Is this the end? Not quite. In his most recent email, Dr Leavingsoon adds: "TVNZ is still interested but, due to the recession, it may well have to be in August, if at all. The lack of funding this round has dealt a real blow to many of the team here in NZ, but I still have my staunch inner core of chaps keen to go. There's still life in the old whipping horse yet..."

www.wdrg.org









## Olympics Date Set

THE CHAP OLYMPICS, that annual contest of unathletic gentlemanly pursuits where the goal is not to win (both losing and cheating are strongly admired)—which last year featured bicycle jousting; hop, skip and G&T; and the perennial martini relay—will return to Bedford Square Gardens once more this summer. The date is Saturday 17th July. More details nearer the time but keep the date free.



**CLUB NOTES** 

## Website Rejig

A FEW MONTHS AGO I made some tweaks to the NSC website (www.newsheridanclub.co.uk, as if it weren't tattoed on the inside of your eyelids). The address is still the same, but most of the pages within the site have been renamed. I mention this because if, for example, you had specifically bookmarked the old events page (which was named sheridanclub.co.uk/ NSC4.htm) you will have observed that, while it is still up there (something I will rectify) it is not being updated. Indeed the URL of that page is now newsheridanclub.co.uk/events.htm, which I thought more memorable and logical. I mention this because data from the site suggests some people have still been going to the old ...NSC4.htm page (and presumably getting the impression that the world has come to an end-I would hate to be responsible for any suicides).

## We Become 'Mad Men'

BY CHANCE I FOUND MYSELF the recipient of some free "Google Adwords" credit, so I thought I'd see what happened if I created an advert for the Club. I must say that even if I type in half a dozen of the keywords, including

some pretty obscure ones, I have been unable to make it appear, but clearly it does for some people, and some do click through to the NSC site. What is interesting is the data showing the most successful keywords: by far the leader is "vintage", with "retro" not far behind. But "pocket watch" scores highly too, with double the ratio of appearances to clicks. "Tweed", "bakelite" and "moustache wax" have higher click-through rates, but the highest success rate goes, perhaps unsurprisingly, to "The Chap", even though the actual number of impressions and clicks is modest. Interestingly, "absinthe" prompts a lot of appearances of the ad, but has a very low click-through rate. I idly included "Wodehouse", which garnered quite a few appearances but was the worst at converting these into clicks through to our site. I'm mortified to say that "dandy" and "fop" seem to get nowehere at all, if you can credit such a monstrous thing.

### New Members

I WOULD LIKE to warm the teapot of civility for the following bricks who have signed up for Club Membership in the last month: Miss Fleur de Guerre, Miss Mai Miller, Mr Yakob J. Zentner, Viscount Matthew Churchill, Mycroft, Mr Kane Phillips, Mr James Palmer and Mr Richard Jonathan Evans.

## Forthcoming Events

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

#### **NSC Club Night**

Wednesday 3rd February 8pm-11pm Upstairs, The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB Members: Free Non-Members: £2 (first visit free) See page 2.

#### The Fitzrovia Radio Hour

Until Wednesday 10th February 7.30pm

The Last Days of Decadence, 144–145

Shoreditch High St, London, E1 6JE Admission: f, 10

The mighty Fitzrovia Radio Hour perform vintage 1930s radio plays (well, they claim these are original plays, but I have my doubts) live, in proper evening wear and cut-glass accents, with much comic business derived from the live production of sound effects.

Between January and March they are actually performing three different shows at two different venues (see below). The programme for this venue is:

2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th February: The Driven! The Decdent! The Damned!

8th-10th February: Ambition! Exploration! Invasion!

More details at www.fitzroviaradio.co.uk.

#### The Fitzrovia Radio Hour

Tuesday 16th February-Saturday 6th March

The Swan, The Globe Theatre (exhibition entrance), Bankside, London Admission:  $\int 10$ 

See above. At this venue the schedule is: 16th-20th February: Gangsters! Monsters! Imposters!

23rd-27th February: The Driven! The Decadent! The Damned!

2nd-6th March: Ambition! Exploration! Invasion! More details at www.fitzroviaradio.co.uk.

#### **Broken Holmes**

Fridays 5th and 12th, and Saturdays 13th and 20th February 7.45pm Richard Attenborough Centre, Lancaster Road, Leicester f,10 (f,7 concs)

Our own Robin Johnson's smash hit play depicting Sherlock Holmes and Watson as a dysfunctional couple, previewed at the NSC, comes to Leicester.

The Thiasolian Society present

#### Dawn of the Black Hearts

Saturday 6th February 6pm-1.30am, with performances from 9pm The Ballroom of the Wellington Hotel, 72 Bristol Street, Birmingham Admission: £11 in advance

Oliver Lane and Lord Rupert are in cahoots



FROM 9 on SATURDAY THE 6th of FEBUARY 2010-A BRAND NEW burlesque evening for Birmingham

TOP BURLESQUE, VAUDEVILLE, CABARET AND LIVE MUSIC ACTS FREE PRE PARTY FROM 6PM; SHIBARI ROPE WORKSHOP

The Wellington Hotel 72 Bristol Street B<sub>5</sub> 7AH Dress to Express: Vintage, Evening Wear, Felish, Militaria etc

TICKETS £11 IN ADVANCE FROM www.THIASOLIAN.com

to form the Thiasolian Society, presenting a programme of burlesque and vaudeville, compèred by Edwin Flay of Flay and DeVille's Circus of Marvels. This time the performers will include Honey Wilde, Glorian Grey, Violet Va-Voom and Friday Blues. Aparently there is also a bonus event at 6pm, a "Shibari rope bondage workshop". Hmm. This is described as a "hands-on demo...with specialist equipment provided by our rope master". If that sounds like your bag get down there early...

Mouthful O' Jam presents

#### Vintage Dancing: A night of 1920s-50s Hot Jazz, Swing and Rhythm and Blues

Saturday 6th February 7.30pm-12.30am

The Salisbury Pub Hotel, 1 Grande Parade, Green Lanes, Haringey, London, N4 1JX Admission: f,5

A night of 20s-50s hot jazz, swing and early jump blues DJed by London's top 78 spinners, Swing Maniac, Tim Hellzapoppin' and Kid Krupa, laying down original shellac recordings. Come early for dinner at this gastro-pub. Beginners swing dance lesson with Gaia Facchini starts at 7:30pm.

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#### **Bowler Hat Day**

Thursday 11th February 6pm–11pm

The City, then Leadenhall Market from 5.30pm A fundraising lark to raise money for SOS Children's Villages (focusing on Haiti) You're

Children's Villages (focusing on Haiti). You're encourage to wear a bowler and they are also flogging some sort of bowler pin badge. From 5.30pm there are drinks in Leadenhall Market with a male-voice choir and a jazz band (not both at the same time, I'm trusting) plus "loads of fun and games". see www.bowlerhatday.com

#### NSC Film Night

Thursday 11th February
6pm-11pm
The Compass, 58 Penton Road (corner of
Chapel Market), Islington, London N1 9PZ

(020 7837 3891), nearest tube: Angel Admission: Free, but you'll need to pay for your yummy food and drinks

See page 9.

WOOZY VICTORIAN PSYCH FOLK



#### The Orphanage Valentine's Eve Dance

Saturday 13th February

10pm-4am

Stone Horse Paper Cow, 128–140 Liverpool Street, London

Admission: Currently £15 though the

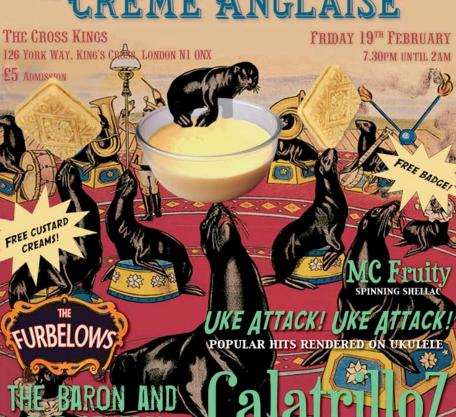
suggestion is that these are "early

bird tickets". See www.lasttuesdaysociety.org

Another Viktor Wynd outlet, this party features DJs and live jazz from Top Shelf Jazz plus the "house mariachi band".

# DE CRÈME ANGLAISE

THE FURBELOWS present a night of raw music, dark humour and cabaret swagger



#### Darkteaser's Garter Lounge

Sunday 14th February
7.30pm–11pm
Hugglescote Working Men's Club,
3 Dennis Street, Hugglescote,
Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 2FP
Admission: £10

If burlesque is your thing and you find yourself in the relevant bit of Leicestershire, why not check out Darkteaser's Valentine's Day special? The night features the garment-shedding skills of Missy Malone, Starla Haze, Bam Bam Blue, Lexi Sexx, Stage Door Johnny, Peski Deville, Dixie Black, Friday Blues and Darkteaser herself.

#### Cirque de Crème Anglaise

Friday 19th February 7.30pm–2am

The Cross Kings, 126 York Way, King's Cross, London N1 0AX Admission: £5

The Circus comes to town again, the musical night perpetrated by The Furbelows, a beat combo consisting mostly of NSC Members. The flavour is dark, humorous and vaudevillean and the acts this time include the extraordinarily theatrical CalatrilloZ—make-up and masks, skull-topped canes, top hats and fishnets. The front man actually used to be an opera singer, which gives you an idea of the style, somewhere between rock opera, goth and circus music.

Also on the bill are The Baron and the General, all woozy Victoriana and psychedelic wordplay. Nothing they say makes much actual sense (they describe themselves as sounding like "a nylon forest whistling funerals for the dead of night") but the Mighty Boosh-esque menacing pysch-folk mood comes across all right.

But kicking off the evening are Uke Attack! Uke Attack!, a trio of chaps with ukuleles who do cover versions of songs you thought you knew. Whole Lotta Love, Itchycoo Park and Voodoo Chile finally make sense. Plus you get to hear The Furbelows themselves. And as if that weren't more joy than a human can stand for one evening, you will also be serenaded by our house disc jockey, MC Fruity, better known to you as the NSC's own Fruity Hatfield-Peverel. I believe that, to complement the gramophone he uses to play 78s on, he has been sourcing props and ornaments to make his DJ booth more like his home—think standard lamps, bakelite office items, that sort of thing.

As usual guests all get a free limited-edition badge and all the custard creams they can eat (until we run out).

## The Bowlly Years: Megaphone to Microphone

Sunday 21st February
7.30pm
The Union Theatre, 204 Union Street,
Southwark, London SE1 0LX
Admission: £15 (Box office: 020 7261 9876)
A stage production celebrating the life and

career of 1930s crooner Al Bowlly, from his barber shop

in South Africa to London's swanky hotels and NBC radio in the US. Featuring more than 40 songs recreated by the vocal talents of Australian Damion Scarcella.

#### Blind Lemon Vintage Fashion Fair

Sunday 28th February 10.30am–5pm

City Hall, Cathays Park, Cardiff Admission: £4.50 (£3.50 concs)

Vintage everything from Victoriana to the 1970s (shudder). Buy a ticket by noon and you go into the midday draw for £100 in vouchers.



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