

The New Sheridan Club

Newsletter

XLVIII • October 2010

Hoaxer of the Century

How Horace de Vere
Cole fooled the nation

Taste of the Raj

The curio that is the
East India cocktail

1910 ALL OVER AGAIN

Showing the Proms
how it's done

Boyz 2 Men

Training WWII
recruits: two views
at our Film Night

All aboard!

Vintage boating at the
Thames Revival





The New Sheridan Club traditionally meets in the upstairs room of The Wheatsheaf, 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 there 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 there, as did Aleister Crowley, Wilfred Owen, Rupert Brooke and Katherine Mansfield.

The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 6th October in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 8pm until 11pm. Our speaker will be Member Mr Sean Longden who will intrigue us along the lines of *How to Dress: Lessons for Men from British Cinema, 1930–1960*. "Effectively," he says, "I will be looking at questions such as what to wear for specific occasions, and finding answers from films. For example: Q: How can I stay cool in summer? A: Follow the method used by Raymond Huntley in *Passport to Pimlico* and keep a one-button cream linen jacket in your office for use on a summer's day (wearing it over the trousers and waistcoat of one's three-piece woollen suit)."

The Last Meeting

I like a joke as much as a the next man—unless the next man is Horace de Vere Cole, who was the subject for our guest speaker at the September meeting, Mr Martyn Downer, who has recently written a book on Cole's life. Born into a wealthy family at the end of the 19th century, Cole's desire was for a military career but a serious wound in the Boer War ruled this out. So he did the next best thing and went to Cambridge, where he fell in with a playful crowd who evidently brought out the mischievous side of his nature. Their most infamous prank there was to pass themselves

off as The Sultan of Zanzibar and retinue, welcomed by the Mayor of Cambridge who gave them a tour of their own university. They got away with it—but this was not enough for Cole, who immediately blabbed to the press, then basked in the publicity, decking out his rooms like a sultan's palace.

But Cole's most audacious hoax was in 1910 when he and his chums passed themselves off as Abyssinian princes for a tour of HMS *Dreadnought*, the flagship of the Royal Navy. This was done partly to annoy William Fisher, an irritating cousin of two of Cole's friends, and executive officer aboard the ship. They succeeded, despite their fake beards slipping and the fact that they were speaking a made-up language—the one officer on the ship who could actually speak the Abyssinian language was absent that day. Cole immediately told the press again and the hoaxers were lauded and reviled nationally in equal measure. Fisher himself led a posse into London that succeeded in horsewhipping one of the party. While Cole himself escaped with an extremely odd token gesture of satisfaction (involving the two parties taking it in turns to lean over a dustbin and be tapped on the backside six times by the other), he went into a decline and died in obscure poverty. Yet there were postcards and even a music hall song devoted to his finest hour of mischief, and not many of us can say that. Many thanks to Mr Downer. An essay by him on Cole is on page 4.

(Below) The Club welcomes our guest speaker; (right) Mr Downer in full flow; (far right) the attentive crowd, featuring Della Dusk, Richard Evans and Louise Taylor



(Below right) Sean Raczka interrogates Mr Downer after his talk; (below) isn't anyone going to eat that last chip?



Matthew Howard poses for his album cover



(Left) Scarheart reaches for his gat; (above) Lisa (l) and Lady B.; (right) Julia Wakeling (l) and Fleur de Guerre



(Left) All present pose as they offer a toast to absent Member Annette Kippenhan on the occasion of her fiftieth birthday



The Sultan of Zanzibar



HORACE DEVERE COLE DELIGHTED AND SCANDALISED A GENERATION WITH HIS PRANKS. BUT WAS HE HAPPY?

By Martyn Downer

A GENERATION KNEW HIM as the man behind the *Dreadnought* hoax, the greatest ever practical joker, and Horace de Vere Cole entertained the nation for over twenty years through the tabloids and the gossip columns. And yet the mischief, apparently innocent and impish, concealed an undercurrent of anger, frustration and violence. He was, as Winston Churchill

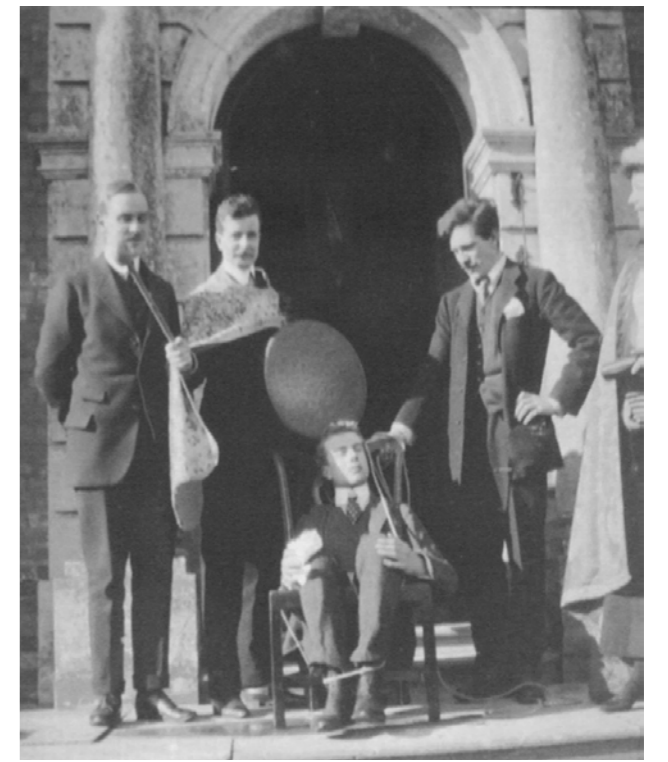
said, ‘a very dangerous man to his friends,’ with a darker and more political side. He was a complex figure, in whom many of the conflicts and contradictions of his times mingled: the social revolutions (socialism, votes for women) that were undermining the established order; the

artistic battles (Picasso, Stravinsky, Modernism) that would change for ever the way people saw the world; and the real battles of the First World War, in which a whole generation of young men died. He was a socialist whose hoaxes were intended as skewers to pomposity; a socialite who moved as easily through Soho and Whitechapel as Belgravia; an Anglo-Irish

eccentric in whose character violence mingled with dreamy romanticism and high-minded poetic idealism. Once the toast of society and the popular press, he lost his fortune and died alone in poverty. The *Dreadnought* hoax in 1910 scandalised the Edwardian establishment and provided the tabloid newspapers with a story that would run and run.

The story begins in Ireland, where Horace was born, incredibly for a hoaxer—and it seems that his improbable-seeming boasts to this effect are in fact accurate—at Blarney Castle. His family was on one side aristocratic Anglo-Irish and on the other side moneyed English, a fortune having been made a few generations before from quinine that allowed the purchase of a country estate and all the traditional trappings of wealth.

He lived in Ireland for the first ten years of his life, and his relatives and their circle developed in him their own strong sense of the other-worldly, the imaginary. He was dressed as a girl to stop the fairies stealing him; his



mother wrote poetry in the Irish bardic tradition and moved in the same literary circles as Lady Wilde (Oscar's mother) and W. B. Yeats; the spirit world and spiritualism were treated with absolute seriousness. There was also great reverence for the heroes of Irish history and myth, and for present-day heroes and derring-do; hunting—the more dangerous the better—was an obsession among the Irish upper classes; raucous and drunken behaviour were the norm.

This atmosphere was clearly his natural element, and the strange mix shaped Horace for life. Sent away to Eton at ten, he lost the idyll, and never refound it, though he lived his whole life as though the norms of his childhood were universal, a course that could only lead in the end to an increasing sense of isolation.

But initially at least he was far from isolated: the rich never are, and the teenaged Horace was very rich indeed after the early death of his father. After going off to the Boer War and being shot and almost killed, he embarked, at Cambridge, on the only career he ever had, prankster and self-publicist. And he had the resources to do the pranks justice, spending his wealth on costumes, professional make-up teams and elaborate back-stories.

The Sultan of Zanzibar was conjured into life while he was still at Cambridge, and was used to hoax the mayor of the town, who laid on full ceremony and a tour of the town,

(Opposite page) Cole looking wistful with one of the postcards produced by an entrepreneur to celebrate the Zanzibar hoax; (below) Cole in his Sultan's costume (no idea who the person on the right is); (above left) as a child Cole was dressed in girls' clothes, which might explain something; (above) Cole with a group of his university friends, already up to no good



including Horace's own college. National newspapers proved very receptive, and Horace got his first taste of celebrity, which he found he liked. It was a very similar hoax four years later, however, that transformed him into a household name.

With several members of the Bloomsbury Group—among them Virginia Woolf and Duncan Grant—and some other friends, Cole planned to hoax the Royal Navy by passing themselves off as a party of Abyssinian royal princes and arranging an inspection of the Home Fleet flagship, HMS *Dreadnought*. They set off for Weymouth not knowing whether they would be ignored, accorded full honours or thrown into the sea. But a fake telegram (purportedly from the Foreign Office) did its work, and when they arrived a Royal Marine band was playing on the platform. Speaking a combination of hastily learned Swahili and mangled versions of Latin and Greek, and struggling with theatrical beards that threatened at any moment to take off in the stiff breeze, they were given the full tour, still unsure that they would escape detection.

But they did, and all promised to keep the whole escapade as their little secret. But the others reckoned without Horace, and his

appetite for publicity, and within days the papers were having the time of their lives with the story. In his management of the story Cole showed a distinctly modern flair for media manipulation. The embarrassment for the Navy, then in the throes of a deadly arms race with Germany, was enormous, which naturally made it all the funnier for the reading public.

He was increasingly drawn into London's bohemian artistic world, centred around the Café Royal, with much drinking, pranking and quite a few fist-fights, usually instigated by Cole himself. It was the world of Augustus John, Wyndham Lewis, Nancy Cunard, Nina Hamnett and assorted aristocrats and showgirls. He married a beautiful and headstrong Irish heiress, and watched his celebrity grow with each stunt.

He impersonated the Irish republican Michael Collins, and was almost shot by the British army as a result. He arranged to sell the crown jewels of Croatia to a vain and credulous member of his own circle for a vast amount of money. He and some friends dressed as workmen and dug up Piccadilly, enlisting unsuspecting policemen to direct traffic around them. He placed piles of horse manure around Venice (a horseless city) overnight, to the

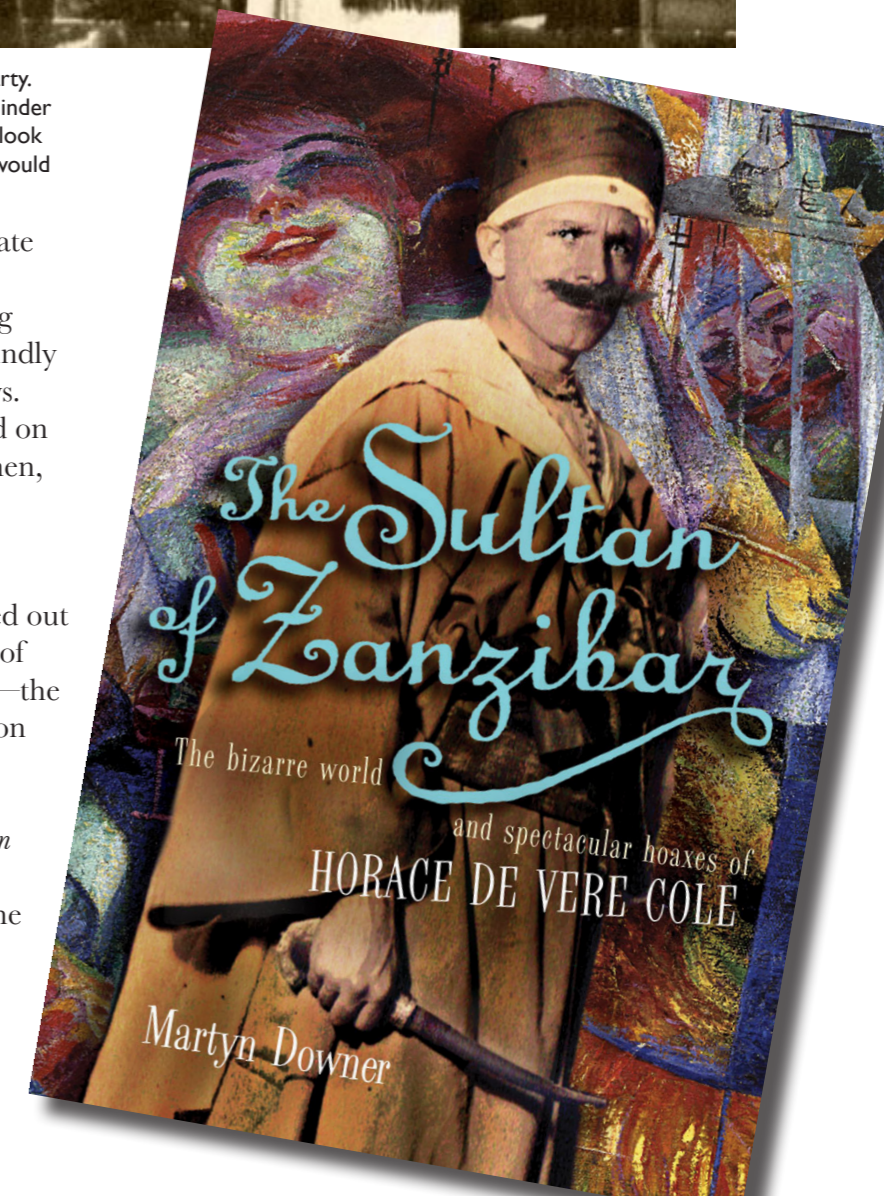


(Above) The classic photograph of Cole's "Abyssinian" party. This time Cole himself is in the guise of Foreign Office minder (far right), with Virginia Woolf (far left) doing her best to look like a man; (opposite page) a scene very similar to what would have greeted the pranksters on board the *Dreadnought*

bemusement of locals. He would impersonate Ramsay Macdonald (to whom he bore a striking resemblance in later life) at speaking engagements, and deliver speeches that roundly contradicted Macdonald's well-known views.

His marriage broke up and he embarked on relationships with a string of beautiful women, living the bohemian life to the full. But this life was already under the strain of unwise investments, and the Depression eroded his fortune completely. His final years were lived out in great poverty in France. The cruel irony of this miserable end to such a celebrated life—the clown who finds that in the end the joke is on him—was not lost on Cole.

MARTYN DOWNER is the author of *The Sultan of Zanzibar: The bizarre world and spectacular hoaxes of Horace de Vere Cole* (Black Spring), the first biography of this fascinating, quixotic and complex man, based on unique access to Cole's papers and letters.





First Night at the Proms



HOW TO DRESS FOR THE PROMS
IN THE COMING 1910 SEASON

WHEN IT WAS ANNOUNCED that the BBC Proms (or Promenade Concerts to give them their original name) at the Royal Albert Hall would this year include a revival of a programme first performed in 1910, many of us assumed that audience members would be encouraged to dress appropriately. So when Sean Rillo Raczka somehow scored some tickets a small posse of us went along suitably attired—only to find we were more or less alone, apart from a woman in a hat in one box and a gent in bizarrely ill-fitting white tie. Still, we amused some tourists and delighted a



(Opposite page, l-r) Clayton Hartley, Charles Tsua, Sean Rillo Raczka, Chris Choy, photographed by Miss Immie Pan; (below left) Miss Pan with Mr Raczka; (left) Sean gives it some Winston Churchill; (above) two grabs from the BBC's footage, courtesy of Charles Tsua: it may look as if they've chosen to zoom in on us but in fact it was the nylon Union Flag just below us (which I've cropped out) that they were really interested in.



BBC photographer who was desperately looking for people dressed up (though I never spotted any of the resulting photos anywhere online). I myself had just got off a train back from Niall Spooner-Harvey's stag do in Cardiff (see page 14), so morning wear was a practical impossibility—which is why I look, as Fruity put it, like I'm trying to sell the toffs my sister for an hour. Anyway, for what it's worth here is the evidence. The prom in question was a Last Night programmed by proms founder Henry Wood. God Save the King!



(Left) Customs and Excise cutter *Stork*; (above) this 86-foot Thames barge *May* had a crew of only two



Dutch vessel *De Furie* is made entirely from cardboard



Whatever the collective noun in for fishing smacks



Messing About In (or Near) Boats



THE THAMES REVIVAL BRINGS A FLOTILLA OF VINTAGE BARKS TO THE CAPITAL

VINTAGE MAY BE in vogue, with period clothing, music and even food tickling the nation's jaded fancy, but it's not often you see such a collection of historic boats as was gathered in London's St Katherine's Dock over the weekend of 10th–12th September. Organiser Ian Welsh was inspired by similar classic boat regattas in France and, I'm told, aims to make the Thames Revival the waterborne equivalent of the Goodwood Revival vintage motor rally—though he'll be hard put to squeeze in any more than the fifty boats on display this year.

The oldest vessel was 57-foot *The Good Intent*, built in Kent 1860. She worked catching sprats, shrimps, oysters and flatfish until 1927 and is now owned by Dutchman Hys Olink. At the other end of the scale the mighty 181-foot *Fryderyk Chopin*, despite being a classic tall ship, was actually built in 1992 in Gdansk, and is dedicated to the composer of the same name. There were 1960s pleasure yachts, an 1897 Colchester River Police gaff cutter designed to chase oyster poachers in the dead of night, a Customs and Excise cutter that was sunk by the Luftwaffe then restored as a ferry, a 1928 RAF pinnace (for rescuing flyboys downed in the drink?) and even *De Furie* a vessel made recently by Dutch artist Philip Jonker and constructed entirely from cardboard.



The fashion show



Angele Aline negotiates the exit





There wasn't much period dressing going on, but the orgy of varnished offered a glimpse of luxury from a bygone age. Sadly bystanders couldn't get very near the boats, let alone on them, but we could nevertheless appreciate them from afar.



Despite being a whippersnapper only four years old, the *Flight of Ufford* has the distinction of being the sister vessel to the one sailed up Venice's Grand Canal by James Bond in *Casino Royale*.

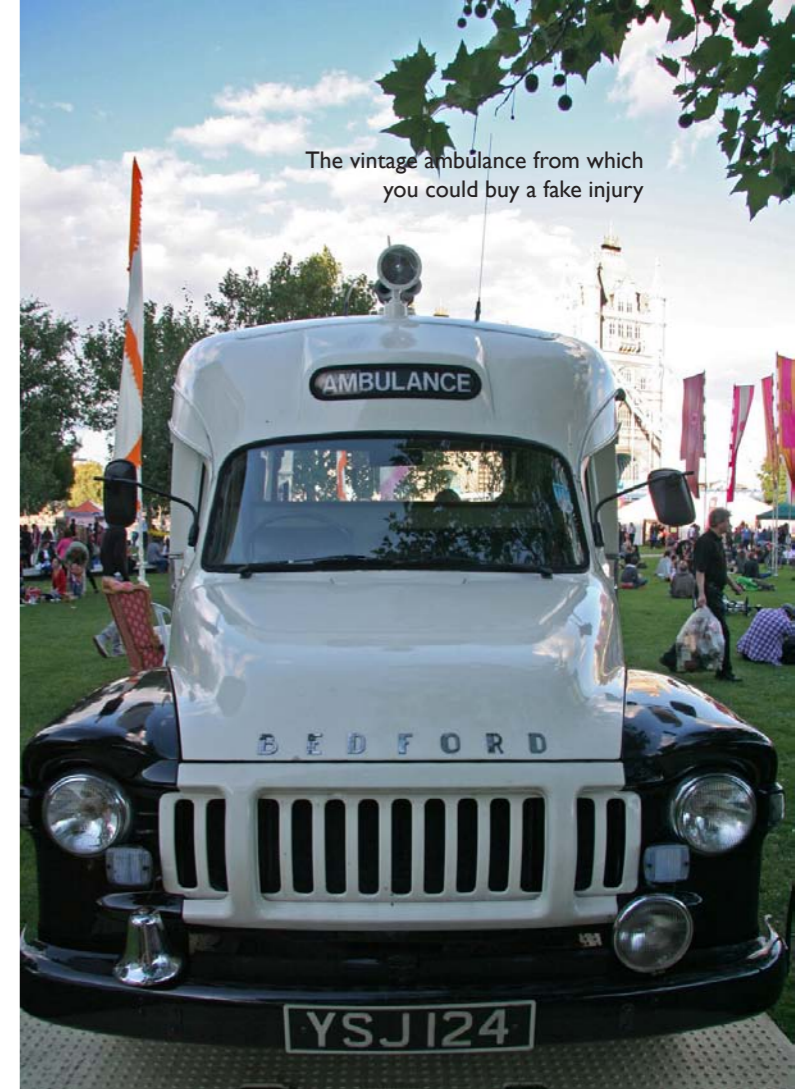
Given their age, it is no surprise that many of the vessels are Dunkirk Little Ships, often proudly bearing brass plates commemorating their part in rescuing British, French and Belgian troops cut off by the German army in May 1940. The beautiful *Wairakei II*, for example, built in 1932 (during the Depression, a time that, surprisingly, saw a surge in the manufacture of pleasure craft) saved some 150 troops. French cod fishing ketch *Angele-Aline* rescued an estimated 300 soldiers and still floats despite having been sunk by the RAF and later accidentally run ground by its German guard after she had been allowed to return to fishing.

Guests were also treated to displays of rope making and wood carving—sculptor Andy Peters makes anything from name boards for dinghies to figureheads for ships. There were sculling races and also a paper boat race for children. (The children weren't actually in the boats, you understand, but had merely made them. Though I wonder if *De Furie* would have been eligible to enter...)

There was a jazz band, to which spontaneous swing dancing broke out, an oyster stall and a fashion show put on by our own Fleur de Guerre on behalf of Vivien of Holloway. Exhibitors and guests were encouraged to adopt period dress, though I have to say that I didn't see much of that about, unless you count the scary "drunken sailor" who spent his time singing tunelessly and yelling rambling anecdotes at terrified Japanese tourists.

The Revival was actually part of the larger Thames Festival, bestowed on us by Mayor Boris Johnson. Later we wandered through the ethnic tat stalls (enlivened only by a vintage Bedford ambulance from which a team were dispensing fake injuries, presumably so you could then dash round the corner and waste the time of the St John Ambulance crew) to the square in front of Tate Modern where more swing dancing was in evidence. Here we bumped into Mrs Grace Iggulden, proudly displaying her shiny new Silver Cross perambulator and shiny new baby Gwendoline.

The Thames Revival is an annual event: see you all again next year!



The vintage ambulance from which you could buy a fake injury



Mrs Iggulden and Gwendoline



(Left and below) The marriage ceremony, conducted at the Mill Valley Outdoor Arts Club; (below that, l-r) Heather Freinkel, Robert Freinkel, Isabel and Niall; (bottom) a choice photograph from Niall's stag weekend in Cardiff



Hands Across the Water



CONGRATULATIONS TO MR AND MRS SPOONER-HARVEY

IN THE FOUR YEARS of the Club's existence we have seen a number of happy unions, but in many cases even if both partners are Members, they may have met elsewhere or already been an item when they joined up. So it gives us a particular welling of pride when two people marry who actually met through being Members of the Club: this happened for the second time on 26th September in San Francisco when Niall Spooner-Harvey and Isabel Freinkel (Von Appel to the Club) tied the knot.

I wasn't there but our own Fruity Hatfield-Peverel was DJing. Isabel doesn't have

the official pictures yet but I scavenged these off the internet (aside from the stag night one—I was indeed on hand for that). There was much debate about what their married surname would be (Freinkel-Spooner-Harvey? Freinkelspoon? Spunkelfrode?) But in the end, for administrative reasons, they become Mr and Mrs Spooner-Harvey. Please join us in wishing them good luck!



Boys Into Men

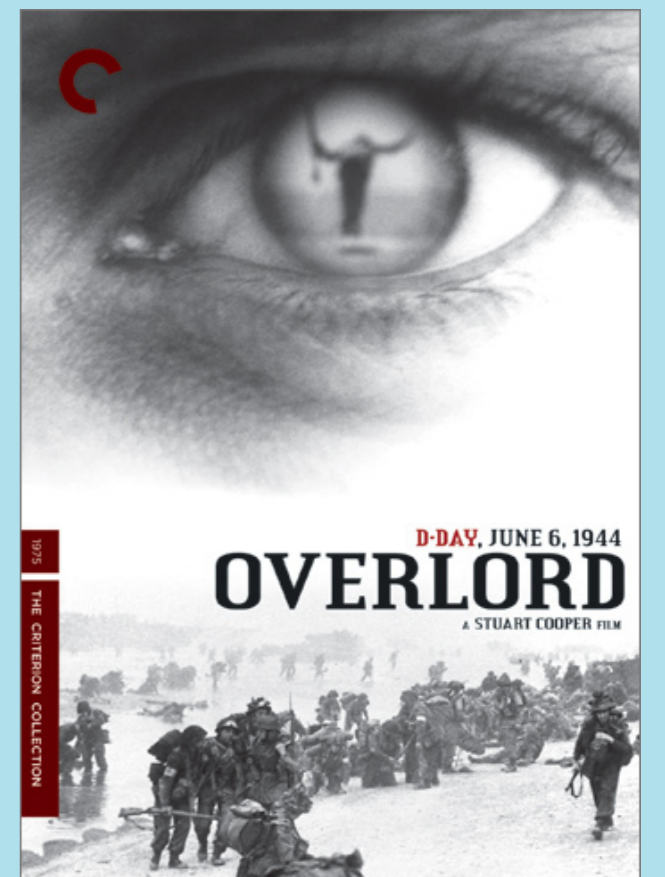
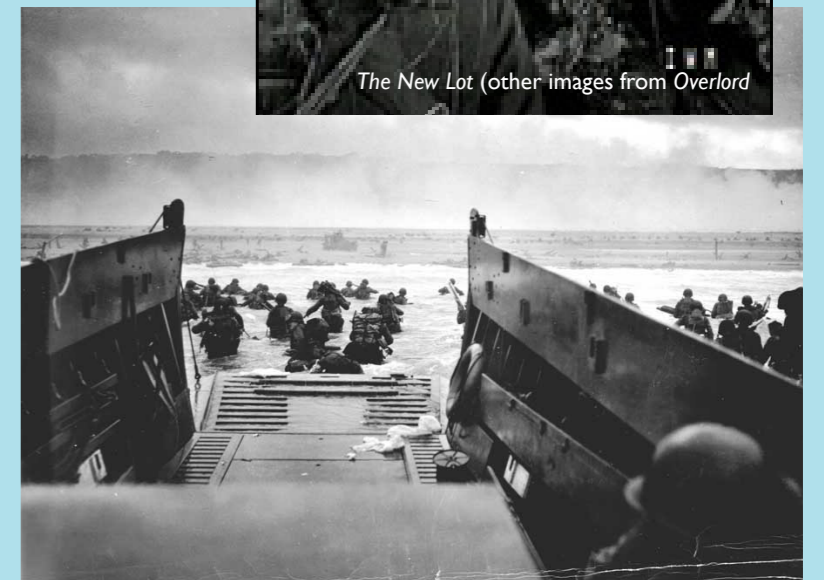
Report on the NSC Film Night, Thursday 30th October

Our latest Film Night was a double bill focusing on the experience of new recruits in the Second World War. One was *The New Lot*, an unusual official training film—directed by Carol Reid, written by Peter Ustinov and starring Ustinov, John Laurie, Raymond Huntley plus cameos from Ian Fleming, Eric Ambler, Robert Donat and Bernard Lee. The film focuses on the sense of resentment many of the recruits feel at the disruption to their lives, their fears and apprehensions, and the way they ultimately pull together as a unit. We never see them actually engage—only in a exercise against the Home Guard—but by the end of their training they feel seasoned enough to scoff at a romanticised war flick in the cinema. The film was so popular it was remade as the 1944 feature *The Way Ahead* starring David Niven. Yet *The New Lot* was actually thought to be lost until a print turned up in the Indian Army archives.

By contrast *Overlord* followed its protagonists all the way to the D-Day landings, with unflinchingly tragic consequences. The film was made much later (under the auspices of the Imperial War Museum) in 1975, but mixes period footage with new sequences shot using vintage cameras. It's a strange blend of sometimes highly stylised personal sequences and raw battle footage that's mesmerising because you know it's real. By the end there was more than one moistened eye in the room. Many thanks to Mr Sean Longden for curating the evening.



The New Lot (other images from *Overlord*)



The Cocktail Cabinet

Wherein Members name their poison and why

The East India Cocktail

By David Bridgman-Smith

It was the name of the East India Cocktail, also known as the Bengal, that first attracted me to this drink and, after a fellow NSC member mentioned our contemporaries at the East India Club, I thought it apt to feature this beverage in this month's Cocktail Cabinet.

The East India Cocktail seemingly originates from the second half of the nineteenth century and was enjoyed by English colonials living in various part of East India at the time. It is likely that it was created in one of the many fashionable American Bars in one of the Grand Hotels of the region.

A little dip into my cocktail library shows a variety of recipes for this particular drink. Here is an early version by seminal American mixologist Harry Johnson from 1882:

1 tsp red curaçao (substitute clear¹)
1 tsp pineapple syrup²
2–3 dashes Boker's Bitters (substitute Angostura)
2 dashes maraschino
2oz brandy

Stir all the ingredients together and strain into a glass. Garnish with a lemon twist and either a maraschino cherry or an olive.

This drink has a mellow smoothness that is aided by the fact that it is stirred, not shaken. Each ingredient is distinctive in the mix and provides just the right amount of sweetness; it does indeed remind me of the Orient.

I did try this with an olive; many authors warned against this, and for 90 per cent of the drink I really didn't see what the fuss was, until I took the final gulp and bit into the olive. The result was truly hideous—almost as bad as Campari! [Ah, the gratuitous Campari dig: it's only because you know I rather

like the stuff—Ed]—and so I strongly suggest sticking with the cherry.

A version from Old Mr Boston (a spirits brand that also produced an influential bartending manual in the early years after the repeal of Prohibition) proposes that you shake the drink, and replaces the pineapple syrup with juice and the Maraschino for Jamaican rum. The result is not as satisfying as the first recipe: you get a very cold drink, but one that falls flat in terms of flavour. In such small quantities, the pineapple juice adds little.

The third recipe that I tried (from *Vintage Cocktails & Spirits* by Ted Haigh) was the same as the first, with the exception that it used raspberry, instead of pineapple, syrup. I originally thought that the use of raspberry syrup was rather contemporary, but in O. H. Byron's book from 1884 (two years after Johnson's), he uses this in his recipe. It seems that both recipes have been running in tandem for over 100 years. This version is rather sweet and complex, and altogether rather different. It is the most drinkable and the raspberry and Maraschino are well matched.

The final recipe is only a distant cousin of the original, but I include it an attempt to make a few monocles drop into some Martinis (at the mere thought of mixing pineapple juice with port).

Sloppy Joe

1 oz port
1 oz cognac
2oz pineapple juice
1 dash grenadine and curaçao

Shake all ingredients together and strain. From David Embury's *The Art of Mixing Drinks* (1948)

I'd be lying if I said that I was looking forward to this but, surprisingly, the pineapple juice and the port do, to an extent, work together; I never thought I'd say that! Shaking the drink gives it an incredibly foamy head, a smooth texture and a creamy finish. Tasty. Just don't use your finest cognac or best vintage port.

¹ Or Cointreau, triple sec, etc.

² Monin make one, available from the Whisky Exchange

For more musings on booze, see the NSC's new **Institute for Alcoholic Experimentation**



GIN OF THE MONTH

October

Foxdenton 48%

Produced by Foxdenton, a 300-year-old estate in Buckinghamshire, which also produces a variety of other fruit gins such as sloe and plum. The gin is very heavy on juniper and lemon and, at 48%, it packs a warming punch. This is definitely a gin-lovers gin and one for you if you're a fan of juniper. In a gin and tonic, it works best with Fentiman's and a wedge of lemon; the lemongrass in the tonic and the garnish really match the citrus notes of the gin. A large lemon twist is the natural garnish to the clean and crisp Martini this gin makes. But my favourite Foxdenton cocktail is the Gimlet: this gin makes one of the best that I have ever had. £23.40 From Foxdenton



(l-r) Harry Johnson's recipe; Old Mr Boston's recipe; the raspberry syrup version; David Embury's Sloppy Joe recipe



Grays and Alfies Put On a Publicity Drive

IF YOU'RE A LONDON TYPE you may well know of Grays antiques market, an indoor warren filled with units selling all manner of old stuff. I don't spend much time there in truth because this is "antique" with a capital A (as opposed to "second hand" or even "vintage") with prices to match, but it's well worth a snoop around. Just recently I discovered, tucked into one corner, Great Canes, an establishment selling nothing but antique canes. (Sadly they start at £300 but the owner seemed very knowledgeable and I may try and persuade them to come and talk to the Club on the subject.) The handsome Victorian building is actually a converted lavatory factory, built by John Bolding and Son and converted to its current purpose in 1977. In the basement of the adjoining Grays Mews (housing more retail units) is one of the few places where, in a fish-filled conduit, you can see the—now largely culverted—Tyburn Brook, formerly a popular spot for reviving criminals unsuccessfully hanged at the Tyburn tree where Marble Arch now stands. Nearby Brook Street takes its name from this watercourse.

There is a small exhibition space in Grays Mews and to mark London Fashion Week and the "vintage revival" they put on an exhibition of vintage fashion to which I toddled along. I have to confess it was pretty spartan, with a few dresses on mannequins, a film playing on one wall and some cases with a few choice pieces of vintage jewellery and accessories (see photos). The gent manning the desk was eager to point out that it was just a taster for the delights to be found within the antiques market itself...

I hadn't realised it but both Grays and Alfies Antiques Market, near Marylebone, are owned by the same chap, Bennie Gray, a champion of regenerating run-down areas through the power of small business. The name "Alfies" comes from Bennie's father, "a brilliant jazz musician but, sadly, not a great antiques dealer". It's well



worth the jaunt into that neck of the woods, and I feel that prices tend to be a bit more modest over there. Housed in an Art Deco building that used to be a department store, Alfies houses 100 units and is even more warren-like than Grays (cue Spinal Tap-style attempts to find the exit), but is a very pleasant place to get lost. It has a particular emphasis on 20th century antiques, including furniture. It is the home of The Girl Can't Help It and Nina's Hair Parlour, and there is a jolly café on the roof too.

A Tie That's a Novelty— And a Travesty

A COMPANY HAS released a tie that can be inflated to turn it into a pillow. It is woven from a mixture of silk and some ghastly modern "microfibre" and contains a PVC bladder that can be blown up through a mouthpiece. It can allegedly support a bonce of up to 25 pounds (immediately raising the old problem of how exactly one weighs one's head). Tragically their reasoning is that "most functions that require a necktie deserve to be slept through", which is obvious heresy. The Pillow Tie is available from Findmeagift.co.uk at £17.99.



Fast Food, took a year to complete and is built around a Reliant Scimitar boosted by a nitrous oxide kit—making for anything but a comfy ride. "It was actually worse than I thought it would be," said Watkins. "It felt like 200mph." (I'm not sure I know what 200mph on a table feels like, but if anyone does it's doubtless Mr Watkins.) If his feat is accepted, he'll seize the record from a sofa that hit 92mph in 2007.

Who Needs Little Chef?

ECCENTRIC BUCKINGAMSHIRE INVENTOR Perry Watkins hopes his record will be accepted by Guinness World Records for the world's fastest piece of furniture, having driven a motorised Queen Anne dining table laid for silver service at 130mph. The vehicle, inevitably christened

Mr Watkins has a history of extreme vehicles, as well as bad puns. He is also the creator of the Flatmobile, a rocket-powered car that is just 19 inches high, and Windup, officially the world's smallest car, a road legal partnering of a Postman Pat coin-operated children's ride with a quad bike engine. He has also built a nine-foot motorised Dalek—also road legal.





CLUB NOTES

New Members

IN THE SHADOWY cocktail bar of life I would like to dispatch a waiter with the Champagne cocktail of anonymous goodwill, over to the tables of the following sterling types, all of whom have taken the jovial plunge of NSC Membership in the last month: Rammi Chinatheep, Richard Tinworth, Terrence Douglas-Mitrinovic, Chris Barton, Mark Davies and Wade Stimson.

A New Deal: Gin for All!

IF YOU WERE PRESENT at our Far Pavilions summer party then you probably enjoyed the cheap G&Ts courtesy of SW4 gin, a new beverage that has been especially created to make good, proper gin and tonic. It's strongly flavoured with juniper and citrus and a savoury, spicy midrange, so that its character punches through the mixer. (If this just sounds like gin to you, be aware that many of the huge number of new gins released in recent years have taken the concept in some directions that would make the monocles pop from the orbits of your colonial forebears as they sat on their verandahs, nursing both medicinal G&Ts and gout-plagued feet.)

It seems that Martin Price, the man behind this product, is so delighted with the relationship with the New Sheridan Club that he wants an ongoing sponsorship arrangement for the next year. So expect plenty of discounted gin-related hijinks in the coming months. More details to come...

Club Anniversary

IT MAY INTEREST YOU to learn that this month is the fourth birthday of the New Sheridan Club. (If you don't believe me, have a look at the news archives—see the links at the top of the website News page.) We currently have 318 active members and gain about six more each month. I think that calls for a drink—Steward! SW4™ and tonic all round! (I could get used to this.)



~ GIN & TONIC ~

--NOT--

~ LIFE & DEATH ~

British colonialists in India in the 19th century had to take quinine to ward off the deadly effects of malaria. To make this very bitter medicine more palatable, they mixed it with water, sugar and lemon... and a little of their favourite spirit from home. And so the 'G&T' was born.

In those days, before more austere styles became fashionable in the 1920's, gin was a robust spirit, full of juniper, citrus and spice, made to mix with strong flavours.

Nowadays, medical science provides better cures for tropical diseases. We made SW4 London Dry Gin in the style of that earlier age simply because we love a good Gin & Tonic. Our friends tell us that SW4 also makes a remarkably good Dry Martini with a lemon twist.

One day, we'll have to find out if they're right.

SW4. THE DRY GIN. FROM LONDON

Can't stop thinking about booze? Read this

OK, this page is looking rather drink-sodden, but I'd just like to say that if you enjoy our Cocktail Cabinet department and the other occasional features we run on drinks history, classic cocktails and the pursuit of the perfect Martini, then why not have a gander at our new drinks blog, The NSC Institute for Alcoholic Experimentation? Share the journey of our monomaniacal correspondents as they unearth quirky stories and put both long-held conventions and crazy new ideas through rigorous empirical analysis within the singed wood panelling of the Torquil Arbuthnot Memorial Martini Lab, deep within Club's crumbling cellars. And if there is something you'd like to draw to our writers' attentions, do drop us a line.



Forthcoming Events



BOTH OFFICIAL NSC JAUNTS (🍷) AND THIRD-PARTY WHEEZES WE THINK YOU MIGHT ENJOY

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

🍷 NSC Club Night
Wednesday 1st September
8pm–11pm
Upstairs, The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB
Members: Free
Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)
See page 2.

🍷 Wunderbar Weimar
Saturday 9th October
7pm–2am
ULU, Mallet Street, London WC1E 7HY
Admission: Free

Dress: Period, but no Fascists, apparently
Upon visiting our Far Pavilions party in August the University of London Union events manager immediately decided she wanted to hold a similar bash. It has a Weimar theme and the Club's Sean Rillo Raczka is organising it for them, though I think there may be a sort of NSC Room where we will be revisiting some games from our Christmas 2008 Kredit Krunch Kabaret party. Our own DJ Fruity will be spinning the wheels of bakelite. There is a plan to offer clothes to buy or borrow, period hair and make-up artists and a period-style photographer. Needless to say ULU have got cold feet and banned "fascist outfits", which I assume means anything to do with Nazis, though I assume you could pick some other Weimar period military schmutter and argue your ideology at the door...

Saturday Night Swing Club
Saturday 9th October
7.30pm–2am
City Firefly Bar, 18 Old Bailey, London EC4M 7EP (St Pauls tube; City Thameslink)
Admission: £12/£11 LSDS members
Dress: Glamorous retro or modern but an effort appreciated!
52nd Street Jump and the London Swing Dance Society present three floors of dancing to



The Actionettes in action

DJs including residents Dr Swing and Mr Kicks. In the Alhambra Lounge you'll find rhythm and blues, jump jive, boogie woogie and swing; in the Savoy Club you can receive taster classes in dances from the 1920s and 1930s; and in the Rendezvous Ballroom you will be treated to the dance music of the 1920s to the 1950s. All guests also get a free £3 drinks voucher.

Blind Lemon Vintage Fashion Fair

Sunday 10th October
10.30am–5pm
The Guildhall Theatre, 23 Eastgate Street, Gloucester
Admission: £4.50 (£3.50 concs)

Some 30 stalls selling everything from menswear to womenswear to accessories and jewellery. Be at the venue by noon to take part in a prize draw to win £100 of vouchers. See the Blind Lemon website for more details.

Tea-Totaled

Saturday 16th October
8pm
The Upper Rooms, 93 Feet East, 150 Brick Lane, London E1 6QL
Admission: £10 in advance, £15 on the door (but limited to 180)
Dress: "Dandyish and decadent"

A tea-party-themed event: "Recline on comfy sofas and armchairs in the tea party parlor, gorge from cake stands filled with finger sandwiches, retro sweets and cakes galore. Sip varieties of freshly brewed tea." There will also be a chocolate fountain complete with fresh fruit and bread to dip in it, a raffle, burlesque

acts and chanteuse Katy Carr. Then there is the "birthday room". Must one enter naked, perhaps? (Is it that sort of party?) "Relive your childhood birthdays with an abundance of balloons, party hats and poppers." Poppers? Looks as if it is that sort of party... Fear not, the bar also sells booze (well, they mention

cider but I'm assuming there is more than just that). There is also a large smoking terrace.

The Actionettes present
Decade O'Go-Go

Saturday 16th October
7.30pm until late
The 100 Club, 100 Oxford St, London W1D 1LL (020 7636 0933)

Admission: £10 in advance, £12 on the door
The Actionettes, London's original Sixties-style dance troupe, present an evening of glitter, glamour, girl groups and go-go. It is their tenth anniversary together, and they'll be marking this with non-stop hoofing, a live set from lady-fronted garage pop combo Betty and the Werewolves, dancers The Action Men, guest disc jockey Lady Kamikaze, dance competitions, vintage clothing stalls and more. (I note that We Got Tickets only seem to have 20 tickets left at time of writing.)

Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair

Sunday 17th October
Trade 10.30am, public 11am–4.30pm
The Urdang, The Old Finsbury Town Hall, Rosebury Avenue, London EC1R 4RP
Admission £5 before 11am, £4 thereafter

A relatively new vintage fashion, accessory and textile event, which *Time Out* apparently describes as "one not to be missed". "Come and hand-pick your look from a fine selection of beautiful vintage clothes, shoes, handbags, hats, gloves, textiles and jewellery from the 1800s-1980s," they say. "Without costing the earth both financially and environmentally. Organiser

THE CANDLELIGHT CLUB

Saturday 23rd October
7.30pm–12am
Central London (venue revealed when you buy your ticket)
Admission: £13
Dress: Think 1920s speakeasy...



Hoosiers, and many more. This first event has something else special too: it just happens that NSC Member **Chris Choy** will be celebrating his birthday this very night at the Candlelight Club, so come along, clap him on the shoulder and buy him far too many drinks. This is an intimate venue and there are a very limited number of tickets. It is unlikely there will be any for sale on the door so do secure yours in advance: a webular mechanism will be revealed in a couple of days and NSC Members will get first dibs. More details soon...

An incredibly exciting new venture—but then I would say that as I'm involved in organising it. It is a secret pop-up cocktail bar—with each monthly event offering a one-off bespoke cocktail menu with a special theme. There will be guest mixologists and featured ingredients—all in a stunning, tucked-away, candlelit den with a 1920s speakeasy flavour. Admission includes a simple but expertly crafted **supper** to line your stomach, a **free cocktail** upon arrival, plus entertainment in the form of period platters spun by our very own disc jockey **MC Fruity**, and sumptuous live entertainment: this first night offers you shimmering exotica from none other than **Vicki Butterfly**, internationally famous burlesque dancer who has appeared in magazines including *Vogue*, *Marie Claire* and even *The Chap*, and in pop videos for The Killers, The Verve, The Fratellis, The



Savitri is an award winning events organiser with 18 years international experience in the fashion, film, advertising and music industry.” There is a changing room, an alterations booth and a café.

Hula Boogie

Sunday 17th October

7.30 till late

Sunday 15th August

South London Pacific, 340 Kennington Road, London SE11 4LD (020 7820 9189)

Admission: £7

Voted Best Club Night in the 2009 EasyJet Readers’ Awards, this is a vintage music and dance night set in an extraordinarily-styled Tiki bar in south London. Listen to music from the 1930s to the 1940s; get there early for the Jive class (7.30–8pm) or Hukilau Hula dance class (8–8.15pm)—no partner or experience necessary. More details at the Hula Boogie website.

Bethnal Green’s Affordable Vintage Fair

Sunday 24th of October

11.30am–4.30pm

York Hall, 5–15 Old Ford Road, London E2 9PJ

Admission: £2 from www.vintagefair.co.uk

Bethnal Green’s Affordable Vintage fair is

part of the UK’s largest and most affordable vintage shopping event, founded in 2005. The East London expression, as featured in *Vogue* and *Marie Clare*, no less, returns in support of Breast Cancer. More than 40 stallholders from all over country will gather to offer vintage matter from the 1920–1980s. Find vintage and re-worked clothing and accessories for men, women and children. The “Most Curious Tea Party” will be in attendance with their mobile tea and cake shop, and entertainment will come in the close-harmony form of 1940s singing troupe, “The Scarlet Starlets”. York Hall is next to the V&A Museum of Childhood, four minutes from Bethnal Green tube and five minutes from Cambridge Heath railway station. Sponsored by Rag&Bow: The Roaming Vintage Store™.

The Book in Western Art: Symbol, Device, Allegory

Thursday 28th October

7.15 for 7.30pm

Treadwell’s Book Shop, 34 Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 7PB

(020 7240 8906)

Admission: £7

The Club’s own Miss Minna (consort of the Chairman, no less) will take us on a jaunty gallop through the history of the role of the book in art and how its symbolism reflects

religious upheavals, revolutions, publishing history, changes in patronage and the role of the artist. She sums it up as “porn for book fetishists”. Treadwell’s itself is a bookshop focusing on the occult and is a rather jolly place. There are usually wine and nibbles laid on.

The Eccentric Club Open Convivial Meeting

Thursday 28th October

7.47pm–11pm

Venue: TBA, owing

to renovation of the club’s club house. See eccentricclub.co.uk
Admission: Free for members of the Eccentric Club, £15 in advance to others.

The Eccentric Club organises monthly socials where non-members can fraternise with Eccentric types and perhaps consider applying for membership.

Kinetoscope: Silent and Early Cinema

Thursday 28th October

7.30pm–12.30am

The George Tavern, 373

Commercial Road, London E1 0LA

Admission: FREE

A new monthly night celebrating silent and early cinema at the splendidly eclectic and artistic George Tavern. This month it is *Silent Shakespeare*. At the turn of the 20th century, the film industry sought to elevate its lowbrow status by imitating theatre. While cinemas decked themselves out like theatres, filmmakers signed up stage stars and turned to the classics. Shakespeare provided the greatest challenge, especially as many of the films made before the First World War were only one or two reels long.

Elysian Nights Halloween Special

Friday 29th October

8pm–11.30pm

Dirty Dicks, 202 Bishopsgate Liverpool Street, London EC2M 4NR

Admission: £10

A spooky vaudevillean melange of burlesque, comedy and music, this time featuring Honey Wilde, Jeu Jeu La Foille, Honey Schnapps, Electra Light, Duchess Divine, Miss Daisy Deluxe, Cherry Cheex, comedy from Bitter Prude and music from Vivian Viveur and, as it happens, The Furbelows.

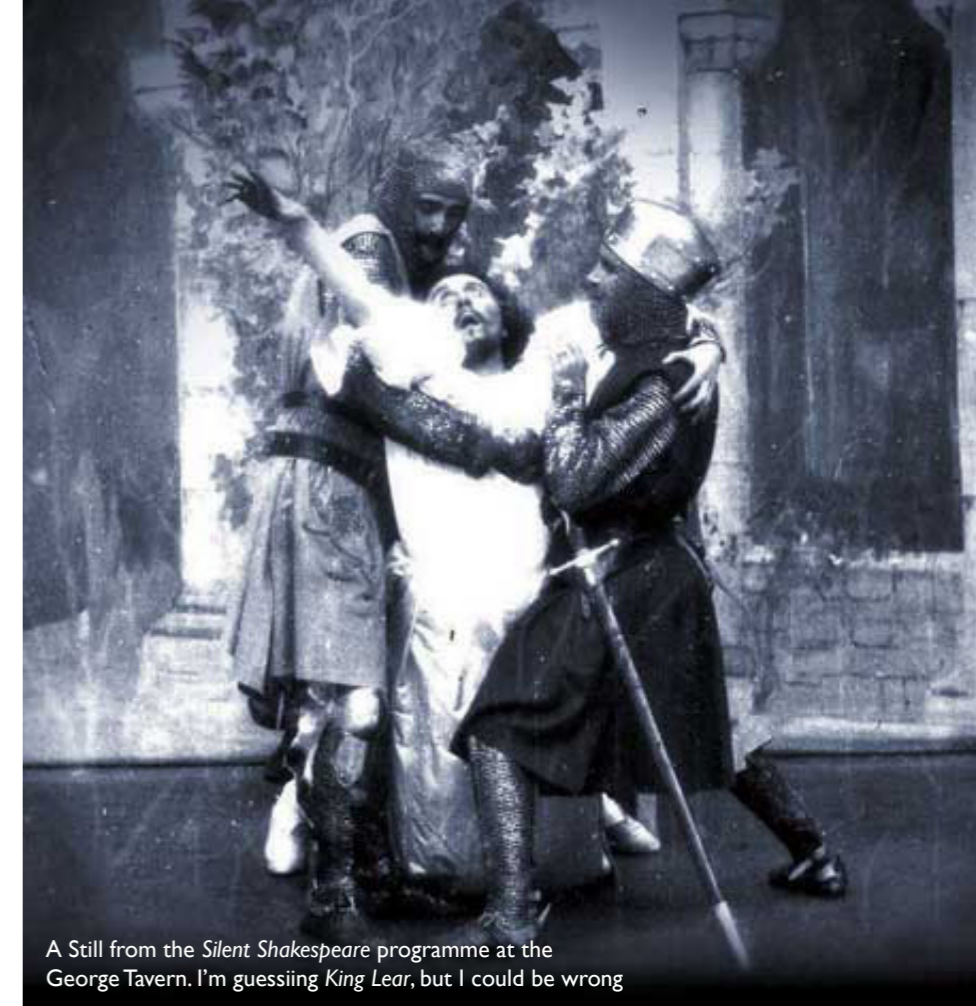
The Fox presents...

Don’t Dali With the Devil

Saturday 30th October

8pm-ish?

The Fox Public House, 28 Paul Street, Shoreditch, London



A Still from the *Silent Shakespeare* programme at the George Tavern. I’m guessing *King Lear*, but I could be wrong

Admission: £10 in advance, £12 on the door (or you can email info@thefoxpresents.com to reserve a £10 ticket on the door)
Dress: 1920s–1960s odd: “Anything goes, as long as it’s peculiar and old-fashioned! Victorian Steampunks, WWI soldiers, aviators, Cabaret Voltaire performers, Dadaists, surreal artists and their muses, elegant and otherworldly creatures”

Fleur de Guerre and Emerald Fontaine return with another style-packed party at the Fox. The NSC’s own MC Fruity will be DJing, with live music from Albert Ball’s Flying Aces, a band allegedly formed from WWI RFC officers. There will also be decadent poetry from Tallulah Temptress and Emerald Fontaine, culminating in a burlesque performance from Emerald herself. Upstairs smoking terrace and croquet court.

Hula Boogie: Halloween Special

Sunday 31st October

7.30 till late

Sunday 15th August

South London Pacific, 340 Kennington Road, London SE11 4LD (020 7820 9189)

Admission: £8

See entry for 17th October. More details at the Hula Boogie website.



The oddly welcoming prospect of occult bookshop Treadwell’s



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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.