

NEVER MIND THE JUBILEE

IT'S THE NSC SUMMER PARTY

We celebrate (depending on your politics) either 60 glorious years on the throne or the inevitability of the coming revolution

PLUS:

FANYs to the rescue

100 years of plucky ladies
saving soldiers

Film Night

Redux

Our cosy screenings
restart at a new venue

Official NSC fez

Your chance to own
this wondrous
headgear

GOD Save THE QUEEN

The New Sheridan Club

Newsletter

LXV • March 2012



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 7th March in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm, when Mr Charles Henry Woolfenblood, Duke of Tipa, will give us a talk *On Top Hats*, "focusing on silk toppers especially. I will briefly touch on the top hat's history, practice and use as well as give handy tips for polishing and sourcing. All those with toppers are encouraged to wear them on the night."

The Last Meeting

Bit of a late start at the Club Night in February, thanks to the absence of a vital cable to join the laptop to the projector. After some time spent rattling the shutters of shops in the area, Mrs Downer eventually came to the rescue, pointing out that her office was only ten minutes away, so we went and raided the IT supplies there. By then it was about 9.20 and the natives were restless, but Ensign Polyethyl managed to whip them into a disciplined listening unit in no time with her illustrated address on her own unit, the FANY (First Aid Nursing Yeomanry). This was formed just before the



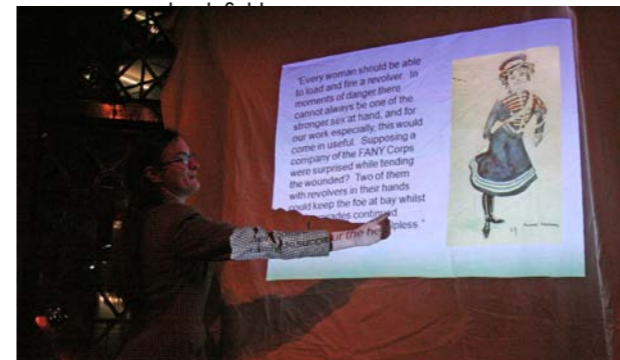
Great War by a Sgt Maj Baker a man with a vision of ladies galloping (side-saddle) into battle, administering first aid to fallen troops before tossing the men over the pommels of their saddles and galloping back to safety. Baker was later thrown out for being fearfully lower class, but the FANY became a reality, driving ambulances through the mud in the war—initially working mainly with the Belgians, who happily accepted their nursing help while the British Army bristled at the fact that the FANY weren't part of the army at all and wouldn't do what they were told (which would probably have been to go back to Blighty and stop trying to do men's work). In fact the British men would even sabotage the FANYs' ambulances. The FANYs were an aristocratic lot: not only were they unpaid but they had to stump up a subscription to be part of it and you had to supply your own ambulance too, which ruled out most social strata. But so plucky were the girls under fire that they eventually won armfuls of medals and even the grudging acceptance of the British Army. Nowadays the FANY, a registered charity, also supports the police in times of national emergency, such as terrorist attacks. An essay version of the talk begins on page 4.



(Far left) Jessie spells it out; (left) Craig Young and Ed Marlowe take it in; (below left) having to supply your own ambulance limited the social types who could join; (below) Sgt Baker's motives may have had a fantasist element



(Above) Essex and Von Gregory consider the evidence; (below) Sgt Baker had some naive ideas about how the FANY might function on the



(Above) Richard Evans (left) shares thoughts on tweed with Neil; (right) Lord Compton-Bassett looks sly; (below left) now, he's the Earl of Waveney



(Below) Niall clearly has all his needs met in that glass; (left) with one careless slip, Robert Beckwith reveals that he has been a Russian spy all along



(Right) Ed Marlowe and Craig Young with Giles Culpepper (on the right)



Doing Their Bit

The extraordinary history of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, a corps of unpaid women volunteers who endured the horrors of the First World War battlefield – and the chauvinism of the British Army – to save thousands of soldiers' lives

IN 1897 SGT MAJ EDWARD BAKER of the British Army was injured during the Sudanese campaign. As he lay wounded on the plain he realised that there was a missing link between the battlefield, where injuries occurred and the hospitals, where injuries were treated. He imagined a corp of mounted nurses to ride with the soldiers and tend to and fetch the injured. In 1907, when his daughter had reached an age that she wished to ride with nice girls, he finally acted on his idea and founded the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry. The girls had to have their own horse and pay for their own uniform to join—which weeded out the riff-raff.

The girls were trained to ride side-saddle, with the skirmishers, into battle.

By Ensign Polyethyl

There they were to dismount, tend to the wounded, mount the wounded on to their steeds, then remount side saddle in the midst of the battle, and gallop the wounded soldier back to the hospital—all done while wearing a smart scarlet tunic and blue skirt (see idealist illustration below). A beautiful idea, with only a few tiny practical difficulties.

The corp advertised that: “Every woman should be able to load and fire a revolver. In moments of danger there cannot always be one of the stronger sex at hand, and for our work especially, this would come in useful. Supposing a company of the FANY Corps were surprised while tending the wounded? Two of them with revolvers in their hands could keep the foe at bay whilst their comrades continued calmly to succour the helpless.” Thus the girls were trained in weapons handling, fieldwork and camp work as well as first aid and riding.

In the picture on the opposite page is a FANY ready to ride into battle. She has a small satchel containing bandages. My readers will formulate their own opinions on her likelihood of being useful, and of surviving on the battlefield, and her chances of dismounting and remounting side saddle without a mounting block, with bullets flying... as well as the chances of two girls with revolvers holding any soldiers at bay!

By 1911 the corp had sacked Sgt Baker, after he fiddled some funds. Miss Ashley-Smith and Miss Franklin took command and they had rather more

realistic ideas. The girls began to ride astride, wear khaki and learnt to drive a horse and cart into which stretchers could



A Mk I FANY as envisaged by Sgt Maj Baker

German officers ordered her to go to Germany, but she escaped through Holland, taking her lists of names with her, to the gratitude of the soldier's families.

By mid October she was back in London—and in less than a week she had sweet-talked her way to gaining a brand new ambulance, a Unic, which was naturally named Unity. Please remember that in these first few weeks of the war a motor vehicle was spectacularly expensive, and as rare as gold dust. Everyone wanted one. The waiting lists were phenomenal. Yet Ashley-Smith cajoled a car dealer and managed to get a coveted vehicle.

A modern equivalent would be a civilian succeeding in buying her own Chinook, and clearing all the paperwork and supply chain problems within a week.

The FANYs returned to the fray, arriving in Calais with their precious ambulance on 27th October 1914 to start helping transport the wounded. The girls commandeered an old convent school, had it scrubbed, equipped, converted into a hospital and ready to open within two days. Lamark Hospital, as it was named, treated 4,000 in-patients between October 1914 and the end of 1916. One wing was dedicated to typhoid cases. The other wing was filled with an ever-flowing supply of *blésés*, the ambulance running in stretcher after

be loaded. Other timewasters were also sacked including “a soulful lady with peroxide hair, very fat and hearty, who insisted on wearing white drawers with frills under her khaki skirt. She also insisted on falling off her horse at every parade and displaying them... She had to go. No woman's movement could have survived those frilly drawers on parade.”

When the great war broke out Ashley-Smith went immediately to Antwerp. She was nursing wounded Belgian soldiers by 10th September. By the end of September the Germans had reached Antwerp, starting a 12-day bombardment. Ashley-Smith commandeered a provisions vehicle, gave away the bread and drove the wounded through the retreat.

When Ghent fell she was nursing a dying British officer, and so stayed behind when the Germans arrived, regardless of the fact that she was in British uniform. Whilst under German occupation she disguised herself as a Belgian woman and went to the hospitals and cemeteries to gather names of British dead and wounded (this constituted spying and could have led to her being shot, like Edith Cavill.) Eventually

“Unity”, the first vehicle taken to France by the FANY





The window of Le Bon Genié where the FANY girls used to sleep

stretcher, vehicles being in very short supply.

The local Calais folk were unwelcoming to the English Misses in military uniform who were nursing the Belgian wounded and so they refused the FANYs accommodation. Obeying the Corp's motto of "We Cope" the girls commandeered an abandoned shop, Le Bon Genié. They slept in the shop window, having papered over the glass, hot-bunking between the day and night shifts and coping with the Zeppelin raids.

In the photograph above you can see the shattered glass on the bedclothes of Le Bon Genié. The French orderlies generally fled during the bombing raids, whereas the FANY stayed to protect the patients from flying glass, using mattresses as shelter.

As well as Lamark Hospital the girls also set up convalescent homes and another hospital for the French army, which was so close to the front line (the line being on the forward flank of a hill and the hospital on the reverse flank of the hill) that the sound of the guns was continuous. They also ran a Regimental Aid Post only three miles from Dixmude—a place the Belgian army called the Trench of Death, as the attrition rate was so high. For the avoidance of doubt, three miles was easily within range of the guns.

In total 450 FANYs served

during the Great War. All were volunteers, and unpaid—in fact they all stumped up an annual subscription of £1 each to be there. This meant that the recruits were generally from the debutante classes. Some girls were only permitted to come to France if they brought a precious vehicle with them.

The British Army rejected the FANYs' services, whereas the Belgian army snapped up their offer. It wasn't until 1917 that the British Army reluctantly accepted the FANYs help, by which point their reputation for reliability, resilience and dedication had made them famous both at the front and in the press at home. The

FANYs ran ambulance convoys transferring the wounded from the front line Regimental Aid Posts to the first line of hospitals, then to the coastal hospitals and then transporting the Blighty cases from the hospitals to the ships. The constant flow of injured meant the girls had to be ready at all hours. In winter this meant that the night guard had to wind the cars every



The girls often brought their own cars with them...



...and did all their own vehicle maintenance



A photo typical of the ones all the FANY girls took to send home before going into war

half-hour to prevent engines freezing, to be sure that the girls were ready to go the moment needed. Diaries describe cars that needed over a hundred turns to get them started, and would then misfire, causing the crank handle to break the starter's arm, or knock them flying over the bonnet.

These vehicles were primitive, freezing cold, without windscreens or cover. Headlights were banned, so the convoys drove in either complete darkness, or showing only a small side light, to prevent the ambulances from hitting each other. The condition of the roads, with shell holes and mud, meant that manoeuvring the heavy and unreliable vehicles was a skill. In those days the controls of vehicles had not yet been standardised, so each ambulance had to be learned as an individual—one, for example, didn't even have an accelerator.

As well as Unity there was Flossie the Ford, Kangaroo the Cadillac, a Napier, Siddeley-Deaseys, a Crossley, a Vulcan lorry, a Mors box lorry and a Wyllis-Overland as well as a 40-horse-power 1907 Daimler, named James, which was converted into a mobile bath house. It had two furnaces and 12 collapsible canvas baths, which provided bathing for 250 men a day, as well as disinfecting and de-lousing their clothing.

Another vehicle, a Ford, was converted into a mobile cook house (a car with a hut built on the back, filled with kettles and ovens). On 24th

May 1915 FANYs Hutchinson and Lewis were with the Belgian army, in the cook wagon, at Hellfire Corner, when they came under gas attack. They treated the wounded, improvising as best they could since the cook wagon had little first aid kit. They made coffee to comfort the gassed soldiers and improvised gas masks out of "Mr Southall's conveniences for Ladies" and Rimmel's toilet vinegar. When subsequently called upon to recount their contribution they were too Edwardian to admit to what they had really used, so euphemistically called it "special cotton wool".

A typical ambulance convoy might mean driving to the St Omer canal to meet the barges that contained the most seriously injured (the canal trip meant fewer bumps and a smoother ride than the war-damaged roads could provide). The girls would then carry the stretchers off the barges and load them into the ambulances to drive them to Calais Dock. The strain of driving dying, screaming and bleeding men, in total darkness, as smoothly as possible meant the girls developed a strained expression they named "stretcher face". One harrowing account from Thompson's Diary for 25th April 1916 describes "railway trucks full of burnt and blown up men. We took the worst. I helped with the stretchers. There were not enough bandages for all: their faces were skinless and awful. They were mad with pain, their puttees were charred and black,



Sadie Bonnell getting her medal.

where they had any left. We got these poor awful things into the cars, and started. One kept calling 'Sister! Sister! I can't bear it!' and then he broke off and began to try to sing with half his mouth gone. I was fortunate—my four cases were unconscious till we nearly reached Calais when they all began to cry out. We drove those awful miles to Calais and luckily we could go at a fair pace as the road wasn't bad. Got to the hospital and had our men taken out; one was dead. Returned to Camp and cried. Played four terrific sets of tennis in the middle of which we saw an aeroplane fall into the sea." Clearly Thompson lived up to our motto and was able to cope.

On the rare occasions when the girls counted the numbers of men they transported the figures looked like this. In one fortnight they carried 985 wounded and 160 convalescents. In December 1917 the Belgian Convoy transported 4,000 wounded.

The experience inspired the following rhyme.

I wish my mother could see me now
 With a grease gun under my car
 Filling the differential
 'Ere I start for the sea afar
 Atop a sheet of frozen ice, in cold that
 Would make you cry

I used to be in society once
 Danced and hunted and flirted once
 Had white hands and complexion once
 Now I am a FANY

During the prolonged German spring counter-offensive in 1918, the St Omer convoy worked day and night, without break for days, under heavy bombardment, despite the Germans advancing towards them. They were evacuating the dead and wounded. On 18 May they were called out following a bombing raid on Arques, including one on an ammunition dump. A second raid came over and, with shells exploding all around, they were ordered to take cover. The FANYs worked on regardless, moving the injured to safety.

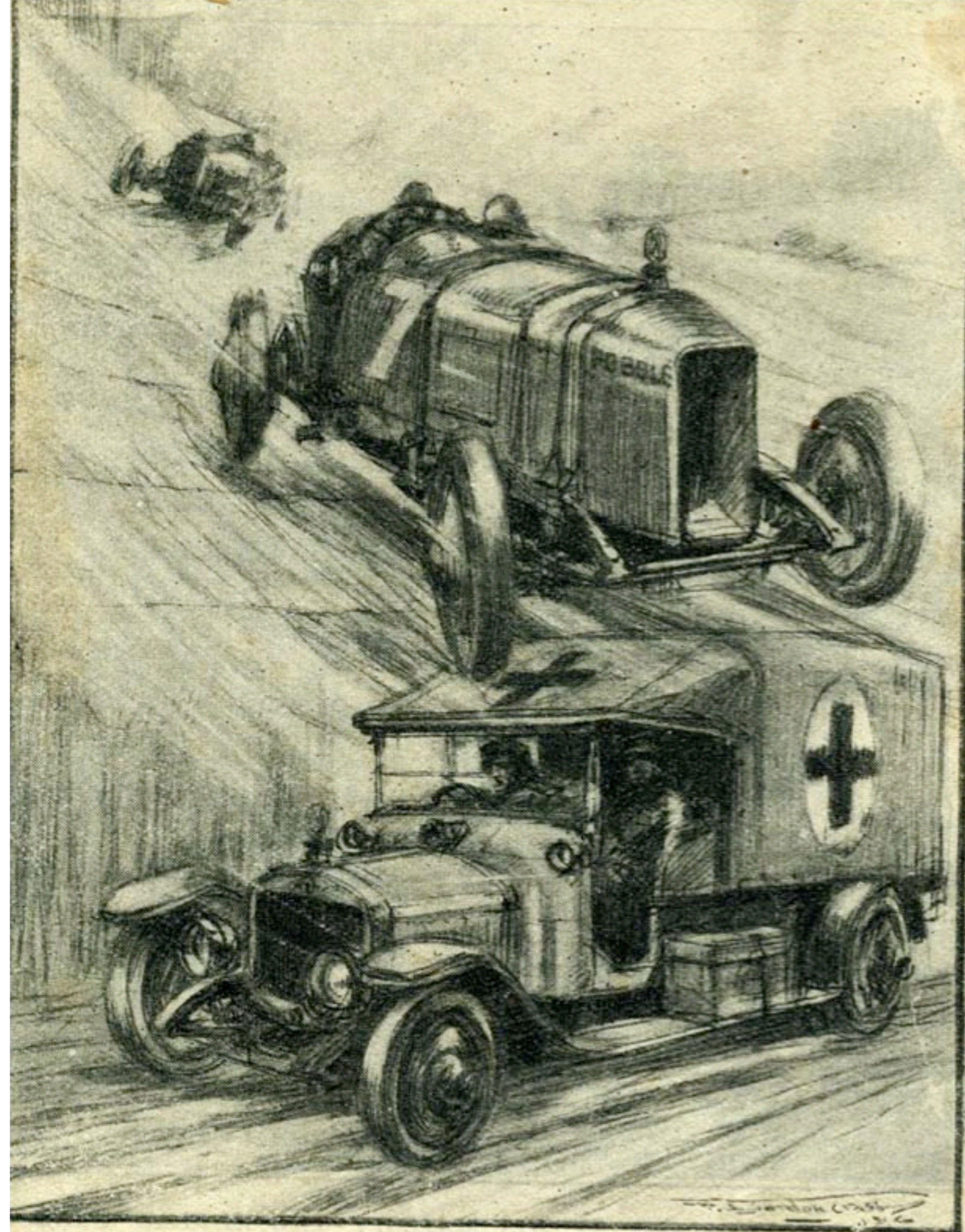
For their coolness and courage under fire they were awarded a total of sixteen military medals and three Croix de Guerre. All the decorations were questioned, as there were so many for such a small unit; but each one was so strongly supported by the British and French officers on the scene that all were allowed.

By the end of the war the total medal haul for the Corp was:

- Military Medal 19
- Croix de Guerre 27
- Mention in Despatches 11
- OBE 2
- MBE 2
- Ordre de Leopold Chevalier 2
- Ordre de la Couronne 1
- Legion of Honour 1

The work of the FANYs received extensive press attention particularly as one of the ambulances had been converted from a famous racing car, Pobble. Muriel Thompson was one of the first lady car racers. Her brother founded Brooklands Automobile Racing Club where she won the Ladies Bracelet race at Brooklands in Pobble, an Austin motor car.

Thompson used the converted Pobble when she evacuated wounded Belgian soldiers at Dixmude despite being under fire. King Albert



Mr. Oscar Thompson's famous Austin, "Pobble," as it appeared at Brooklands in racing trim, and as it appears now in its new sphere, running as an ambulance in France.



decorated her with the chevalier of the order of Leopold II for her bravery.

On a lighter note the girls passed their spare time by setting up theatre troops. Above are the Kippers—so named after a British Army General who, upon hearing that the FANYs were not VADs, not St John Ambulance, not British Army, but were volunteers, said we were “Neither Fish nor Fowl—but a damned good Red Herring”.

There were also boyfriends, who were nicknamed pursuiter. FANY rules meant that the girls were not allowed to dine with men, but they could take tea. So to circumvent the rule a local cafe was persuaded to serve omelettes as a large tea. The endless convoy-driving and omelette-eating led to the following song being composed.

THE WAR SONG OF THE FANY
(To the tune of *The Road to Mandalay*)

On the sandy shores of Calais
Looking Blighty-wards to sea,
There's a FANY camp a'sitting
And it's all the world to me.
For the cars are gently humming
And the 'phone bell's ringing yet,
“Come you up to British Convoy,
Come you up for omelette.”

For her uniform is khaki
And her little car is green
And her name is only FANY
And she's not exactly clean
And I see'd her first a'smoking
Of a ration cigarette,
And a wasting Army petrol
Cleaning clothes, when she's in debt.

On the road to Fontinettes
Where the Red Cross trains are met
And the cars come up in convoy
From the Camp to Fontinettes
Come you back, you blighter FANY,
There's another carload yet
And the dawn comes up like thunder
To find the convoy coping yet.

On the road to Fontinettes
On the way for omelette.

The FANYs are still going strong. We're still volunteers, who give our time freely to support both civil and military authorities within the UK. We are especially proud of our long association with the City of London and our trained members are on call, 24 hours a day, to the City of London Police Casualty Bureau in times of major emergencies. For more information see www.fany.org.uk.

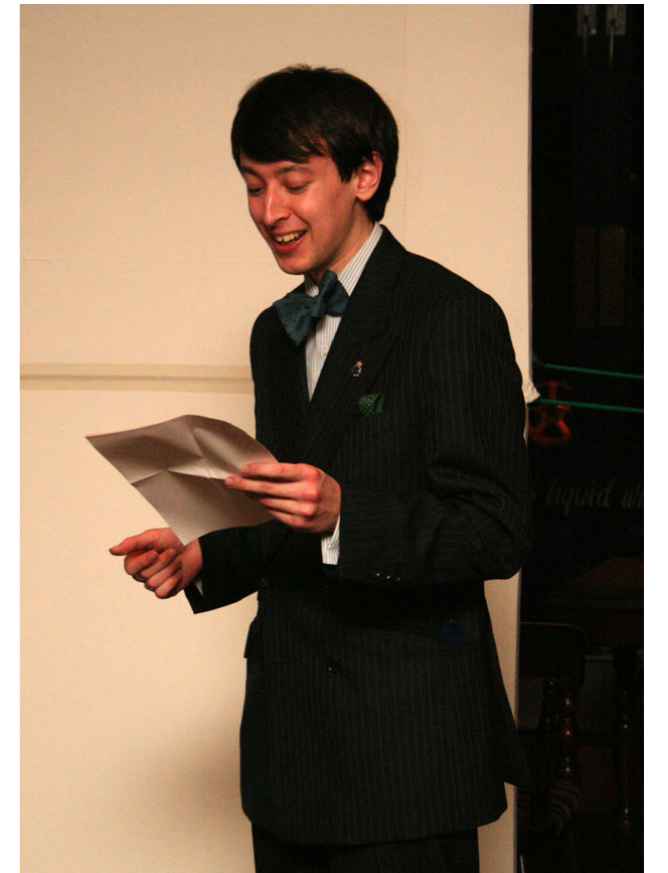


Film Nights Rise From the Ashes



BEAU BRUMMELL BIOPIC DAZZLES CLUB

SOME MIGHT SAY that the NSC film nights have had more than their fair share of bad luck. Some even speak of a curse. So far we've had four different venues for these evenings: we left the first (The Garrison in Bermondsey) because of the high cost and the fact that we weren't trusted to operate the machinery ourselves, but the next two establishments died in mysterious circumstances, closing down just before one of our events. Now we are at a new home, the Tea House



Theatre run by Club Members Harry and Grace Iggulden and on 20th February we convened for a second attempt at seeing *Beau Brummell: This Charming Man*, the BBC's biopic starring James Purefoy and Hugh Bonneville, an evening curated by Lord Compton-Bassett. The curse seemed to strike again, as C-B's DVD, which (owing to the unavailability of the disc commercially) had been burned from a—ahem—download, refused to play on either of the laptops to hand. In the end bits of software were installed and a new torrent copy of the film was downloaded while the patient audience were amused by Charlie Chaplin shorts from YouTube. But finally we were away.

Harry had spent the afternoon creating a screen, and a pair of serious hifi speakers were moved into position on either side of it, creating what I would say was probably the most impressive screening facilities to which we have yet been treated. Afterwards C-B gave us a short address on Regency menswear and how the film we had just seen compared to the reality of Brummell's life (rendered as an essay on page 12).

Thanks to Harry and Grace and to C-B for his tenacity. And to Aleksandra, who I suspect is the technical brains behind the whole caper.



George Bryan 'Beau' Brummell (1778–1840)

By Lord Finsbury Windermere
Compton-Bassett

THINK OF BEAU BRUMMELL and you think of the “Dandy”, a young man-about-town of the late Georgian period who is “in” with the latest fashions and fastidious in dress. Indeed, I believe that any mention of the word “Dandy” would immediately conjure up the image in one’s mind of George Bryan Brummell—or “Beau” Brummell as he is universally known today.

Brummell was born in London in 1778, one of three children of William Brummell, who rose from the lower middle-classes to the heights of wealth and the upper echelons of political life: he started his professional career as an office-boy in the Treasury and, through hard work, influence and patronage in the governments of Lords Liverpool and North, ended it as High Sheriff of Berkshire with a grace-and-favour apartment in Hampton Court. William died in 1794, and his estate was valued at £60,000—about £5 million in today’s money. The estate was divided equally between the three children, so George Brummell received about £20,000, or £1.6 million. During his younger days George had been to Eton School, and after went up to Oriel College Oxford where he founded a dining club that is still in existence today.

After Oxford he joined the Army: these were the days in which an officer could buy his rank,

and Brummell and several schoolfriends joined the socially elite and exclusive 10th (Prince of Wales’s Own) Light Dragoons. The Prince of Wales was Colonel of the regiment and this is highly likely to be the period in which the two great characters—the Regent and the Dandy—first came into contact with one another.

However, Brummell only stayed with the 10th a few years—he never went on active service, and indeed when the 10th were posted away from Brighton and the Prince to a barracks in the Midlands Brummell resigned his commission—reputedly stating that he had no desire to go on “Foreign Service”!

Though Brummell had always been spending money and frittering away his inheritance (army officers in exclusive cavalry regiments were famous for spending without thought or care) it was from this point that he began to spend *lots* of money. He rented a house in Mayfair and started amassing a vast wardrobe of clothes and accessories, as well as gambling and showing a great interest in the Gaming Houses around St James’s. Returning to his clothes, he became famous fairly quickly for his style—before



An 1844 engraving by John Cooke after a portrait miniature

Brummell, the style was for make-up, powdered wigs and long, elaborately laced coats, completely over-the-top and flamboyant to the point of vulgarity. Brummell pioneered understatement - a dark wool tailcoat, tight buff breeches, military-style long boots, and perhaps a silk top hat, gloves and walking cane to finish the ensemble. As an aside, he also attracted great curiosity at first for his propensity to bathe every day.

A leading figure around St James’s, he was a member of both

White’s and Brooks’s and a principal member of Watier’s, which was founded in 1807 by the Prince Regent himself. However, though you will still find the names of both Brooks’s and White’s in St James’s today (they are still the most exclusive London clubs) you will not find Watier’s; it folded in 1819 after a mere 12

Club is subject of its own documentary

NSC Film Night: *A Very British Party*
Monday 26th March
7pm–11pm
The Tea House Theatre, 139
Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL
(020 7207 4585)
Admission: Free



Well, not our own documentary perhaps, but we feature prominently in one episode of *A Very British Party*, a doc made by Firecracker Films (creators of *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*, *Autistic Driving School*, *Babies Behind Bars* and *The Man Whose Arms Exploded*, among others). The series looks at various groups of, erm, English eccentrics, as they plan and execute a special party. Characters whose narrative arcs are examined include a woman who always dresses as a panda, a pair of drag queens, some nudists, various Essex types and a £30,000 party for a

dog. Apparently we come out of it quite well. We’ll be watching the hour-long episode in which we feature at our next Film Night at the Tea House Theatre—site of our summer party last year that is the subject of the film.

years due to the fact that so much was lost at the gaming tables by its members that hardly anyone could afford actually to be a member!

Brummell had many wealthy friends, and it seems that mainly due to their influence he lost the vast majority of his fortune: gambling, far more than his passion for style, was his downfall. He also owed his position, particularly where money was concerned, to the Regent. He could obtain extended credit from tailors, haberdashers and snuff emporiums purely through being known as a friend of the King’s eldest son. However, from about 1811 the Regent began to distance himself from his old (and, increasingly, former) friends, and Brummell began to become unstuck.

By 1816 he was facing an insurmountable array of debts, and in this year he fled to France—or,

precisely, to Calais, which was famous at that time as a haven for those escaping their debts. It was outside British law and was the only part of France you could get into without a passport.

In 1830, still in debt and still in France, Brummell actually got himself a job, and became British Consul in Caen. By now, life was extremely tough for him. He was pretty much reduced to penury—but old habits die hard and penury didn’t stop him spending 2,500 Francs on a gold watch to celebrate his

new job! However, even his wage and a steady income didn’t help much as over two thirds of it was immediately taken from him to repay debts. In a sad twist of irony, after only two years he managed to sack himself from his job through no fault of his own: hoping for a better position, more money, and another escape from his debts



James Purefoy as Brummell in the screen version we saw at the Film Night

The statue of Brummell by Irena Sedlecka, erected in Jermyn Street in 2002



he wrote to his old dandy friend Lord Palmerston (the very same who became Prime Minister years later) recommending the abolition of his post. The Foreign Office readily agreed—but declined to find the struggling Brummell another position.

By now, Brummell was extremely ill, suffering from the first stages of dementia and, more horrifically, the advanced stages of syphilis, which it is believed he contracted before his flight to France. There was no cure, and the treatments mainly involved various forms of mercury: either in pills or ointment. This made Brummell's teeth fall out, as well as his hair—a once proud and perfectly groomed man was now reduced to wearing a wig and taking a concoction of drugs that were slowly killing him.

Soon he was arrested for accumulating even more debts and spent two years in a French prison; he was only freed by the pleas of an English acquaintance writing to many of Brummell's former friends back in London. It was a sad state of affairs that many thought him already dead.

So Brummell was freed, but by now was extremely frail and his illnesses were such that he could no longer look after himself. He suffered several minor strokes, again due to syphilis and mercury poisoning.

Brummell died in his bed, in a mental asylum in Caen in 1840. He was only 61. It was a very sad end for a man once so famous, and a man who, even though he had faults, deserves to be remembered as one who led a fascinating life and who changed fashion to the extent that we still dress today in styles with which he would have identified at the height of his fame.

An 1805 caricature of Brummell by Richard Dighton





The Fitzrovia Radio Hour Presents...



COMEDY VINTAGE LIVE RADIO SHOW GOES ON THE ROAD

TAKing THEIR INSPIRATION from radio serials of the 1930s, the Fitzrovia Radio Hour have been performing their tongue-in-cheek stage shows for some years: our own Callum Coates is an ex-member of the cast, and the ensemble have even performed at one of our summer parties. They had a series of large events at the Underglobe (under Shakespeare's Globe Theatre on London's South Bank) and are now halfway through a national tour. I popped along to see them at London's Ambassadors Theatre on 14th February.

Every FRH show consists of several short but thrilling narratives, usually divided into instalments, complete with cliff-hanger breaks, interwoven with each other. This time we were treated to *George Albion and the War of the Roses*, in which a grudge-bearing serial killer seems to be using a rare strain of

poisonous rose, *Nazi Firemen in Westminster!*, a wartime romp in which two hero schoolboys unearth a dastardly plot by the Hun, *House of Clocks*, a short but gruesome morality tale in which a burglar chooses the wrong creepy old house to burgle, *It Came From the Black Abyss*, in which a cynical seadog and a plucky scientist heroine go to unfathom the mystery of a vanished vessel, and *Tin!*, an epic tale of greed and passion set among the tin mines of Cornwall's wild west. Ah, Tin—she's a cruel mistress indeed.

As ever, the show has its own sponsor, this time Clipstone Ceylon Tea, and in between the stories we enjoyed a series of promotional vignettes—such as a poverty-stricken working class couple forever at each others' throats, or a surgeon laid low by doubts over whether he can perform a tricky operation—in which a nice

cup of Clipstone comes to the rescue to soothe jangled nerves, stiffen upper lips and set the world to rights. Previous sponsors have included Portland Street Stout, Uncle Berner's Goodnight Relaxant, the National Forum for Personal Relations plus, if memory serves, Piccadilly Pipe Tobacco, a gin and a medicated shampoo.

One clever element to all FRH shows—and I suppose what really makes it work as a stage performance—is

that, despite being in theory a radio broadcast, they make much comic use of the live creation of sound effects. Present, as it were, in the studio, we the viewers can see that the attack



of a giant squid is really a rubber bathmat being beaten against a table and that an army of vegetables is being hacked and squished to render the sounds of murder and evisceration. The fact that all this tomfoolery is executed by people in black tie and evening gowns only adds to the engaging absurdity.

The Ambassadors is a small theatre, but even here the stage set looked spartan—a table, a rack of shelves at the back for the objects and a line of microphones. Coming in at 80 minutes the performance is presumably an Edinburgh show that has been stretched a little, but this is a good length for the format. There is some attempt at hinting at antipathies, disagreements or jealousies between the cast—visible to us but unknown to the imaginary listeners—but this isn't really explored. Indeed I did wonder if the only way you could really expand the idea to a full-length show would be to introduce fully-formed interpersonal narratives *around* the show rather than just in it, whether by allowing us to see the actors off air or even by somehow just

working it into what we see going on as they broadcast.

The Fitzrovia Radio Hour comes heartily recommended. It's possible that it wouldn't work if you didn't recognise the sort of period ideas, events and attitudes being lovingly lampooned, such as the view of women, but I doubt that any NSC Members would fall into that category. The cast get to show off a wide range of accents and silly voices and the whole performance, especially the sound effects, is slick and well-timed. Catch it while you can!

The remaining dates for this tour are all up on the NSC website Events page, but here is an at-a-glance itinerary:

23rd March	Greenwich Theatre, London
29th March	Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa
30th March	Norwich Playhouse, Norwich
31st March	The Old Town Hall, Hemel Hempstead
4th April	Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds
20th April	Plough Arts Centre, Great Torrington
21st April	Northcott Theatre, Exeter

An insider peek at a noble heritage

The Guards Museum:
A Guided Tour
Sunday 11th March
1pm–2pm
The Guards Museum, Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk, London SW1E 6HQ
Admission: £5

Lord Finsbury Windermere Compton-Bassett has a part-time position at the Guards Museum in London and has offered to give NSC Members a guided tour this Sunday afternoon. The museum is open from 10am till 4pm and we are to convene at 1pm. "We have over 350 years of military history here," he says, "and tell the story of the five regiments of Foot Guards through uniforms, flags, medals, weaponry, badges, and so forth. We have several unique items in the collection ranging from one of the Duke of Wellington's uniforms to the head of a goose that was adopted by the Coldstream Guards in the



1830s. We also have a large collection of original Victoria Crosses on display—there can be no finer example of gallantry within the Guards."

The Grenadier, Coldstream, Welsh, Irish and Scottish Guards, along with cavalry regiments the Life Guards and the Blues and Royals, form the Household Division. With the official role of protecting the sovereign and royal palaces, the Division has both ceremonial duties and a role as a modern fighting unit.

The Cocktail Cabinet

Wherein Members ask that vital question: what sup?

Mint, where is thy sting?

By David Bridgman-Smith

Many cocktails are steeped in myths and legends, but there is one classic that isn't: the Stinger. Instead, there is an absolute void of origin explanations. The first reference to the cocktail can be found in Tom Bullock's *Ideal Bartender* from 1917, although the Judge cocktail, consisting of a mixture of Cognac and White Creme de Menthe, dates back to 1891. The drink became increasingly popular during Prohibition and in particular, after the Second World War, with flash aviators (allegedly). Two explanations for this are put forward in a 1950s *Esquire* book: (a) the young fly boys could not stomach the taste of hard liquor so the sweet mint made the drink easier

to drink, a bit like a 1950s alcopop; (b) the menthol also made it harder to detect that the pilot had been drinking.

Esquire also notes that the Stinger is one of the exceptions to the rule that "cocktails consisting of only clear liqueurs require only stirring with ice for proper mixing, those containing fruit juice, eggs or cream should be shaken."

An essential ingredient of any Stinger is crème de menthe and I tried two types, Menthe Pastille (white), a dry mint liqueur from France, and De Kuyper Creme de Menthe (green), a sweeter, coloured mint liqueur from Holland.

Original Stinger

45ml brandy (Cognac)
15ml white crème de menthe

This is a cloudy, light brown mix with the flavour of dark sugar and a menthol note at the end. As you drink it, it begins to clear in the glass and the flavours of the Cognac become more prominent as the mint flavour takes a back seat.

This a crisp and refreshing cocktail and a great alternative to an after dinner mint; I can see why James Bond enjoys it with coffee in two of Fleming's books.

Vodka Stinger

45ml vodka
15ml white crème de menthe

Using white menthe this drink will be crystal



Vodka Stinger



The classic Stinger, here made with De Luze Cognac and Menthe Pastille

clear, but with green menthe it will be a vibrant green. It is very smooth and clean, like a breath mint. Rather raising to the appetite, but could accompany an after dinner coffee, too. It has a pleasant mouth-feel and is rather refreshing, so I'd definitely recommend it.

Emerald (aka Dinosaur)

45ml brandy
15ml green crème de menthe

I used green crème de menthe instead of the white and it produced a rather tasty cocktail. The green crème de menthe is sweeter than the Pastille, so this not only has the clean crispness of an after dinner mint, but the fondant sweetness too. With a splash of cacao, this could easily be the After Eight cocktail.



Cream Stinger

Cream Stinger

20ml Cognac
20ml green crème de menthe
20ml cream

SHAKE

This immediately makes me think of mint ice-cream and is, to my mind, lighter than an Alexander, the menthe being less rich than the crème de cacao. Smooth, creamy and very much a dessert cocktail—not for before dinner.

N.B. Adding a dash of red pepper to this drink turns it into The Devil cocktail.

Picador (Rum Stinger)

45ml white rum
15ml white crème de menthe
Twist of lime, peel

SHAKE
This is a soft, mellow and laid-back version of the drink. Very easy to sip, it's a great way to end a late dinner, almost



Millionaire's Stinger

in the guise of a night cap. I can see why such a balanced drink as this is so popular a variant on the classic Stinger.

Millionaire's Stinger

20ml Cognac
5ml white crème de menthe
Top up with Champagne

For more cocktail recipes, product reviews and musings on booze, see the New Sheridan Club's *Institute for Alcoholic Experimentation*



Emerald or Dinosaur

The Cognac has a tendency to get a little lost here, so I upped the Cognac-to-menthe ratio from the original recipe. The result is a rather tasty mix, where the menthe sits, quietly but perceptibly, in the background. The Cognac naturally works well alongside the champagne, creating a fizzy and fresh cocktail made all the fresher by the hint of cool mint in the background.

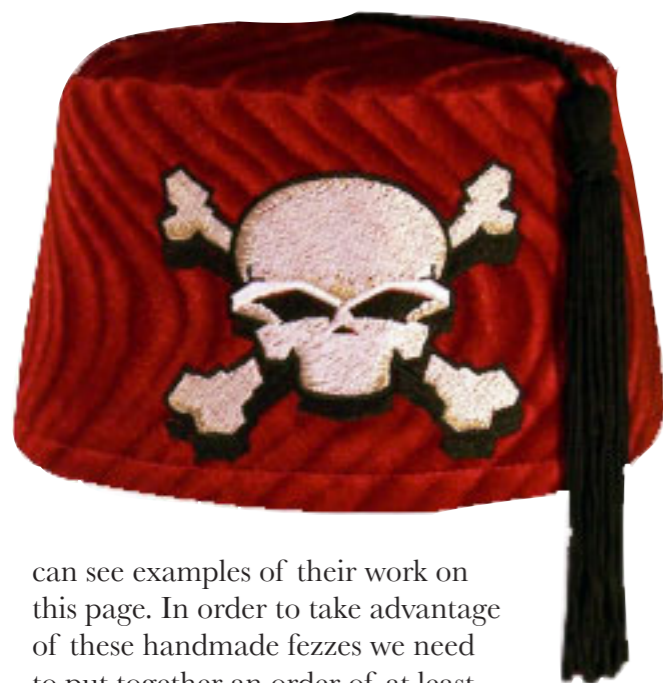


Introducing the Club Fez

By Artemis Scarheart

HOW MANY TIMES have you been lacking a piece of headwear which would proudly display your Club affiliation while also remaining stylish? A giant foam cowboy hat doesn't quite cut it. A hard hat with a bottle of gin attached to it and a handy straw has the right ethics but lacks subtlety. Well fret no longer, gentle souls, as we now have a solution to this.

The aptly named Fez-O-Rama has been chosen by the Glorious Committee—and Club member Mr E. Marlow—as the official fez-makers to the NSC. Mr Marlowe already owns one of their fezzes and reports that it is more akin to a velvet smoking cap than a cardboard or rigid Fez so commonly seen. You



can see examples of their work on this page. In order to take advantage of these handmade fezzes we need to put together an order of at least 13 (for occult reasons) and prepare the moolah. There was a presentation on these items at a recent Club Night and interested parties have been contacted. We have some orders but need more to make up the minimum.

The plan is for the NSC Fez to be made in a pleasing red colour with the Club logo (which

you can see at the top of this page) in the centre.

There will also be a tassel. This will make the wearer at ease anywhere from a vineyard in Aleppo to a St James's club, from a party in Cheam to a raft adrift in the Atlantic.

"I am keen as mustard and twice as hot to have one of these fine garments," I hear you cry. "But how do I go about it? Tell me, damn your eyes!" Well, gentle reader, the answer is here...

Decide what size best suits your cranium and inform me. The size advice by the company is at <http://www.fez-o-rama.com/fez-sizing-and-returns-page-5> and they have a chart on their page as well. They have this to say on the subject of noggins: "This is IMPORTANT! We size our fezzes differently from traditional brimmed hats. The easiest way to measure your head is to wrap a measuring tape around your noggin just above your ears—with TWO fingers under the tape. (pointing up/down) If you don't have a fabric measuring tape simply wrap a ribbon, a bit of string, or a cat5 cable around your head, mark where it overlaps and then measure the distance. Our fezzes are made in half-inch increments so you should be able to find one pretty close. Be careful not to pull the cord too tight. While the fezzes may stretch a bit you don't want to cut off the flow of blood to your scalp... unless you are into that sort of thing."

In order to ensure that there is no... unpleasantness... by customs or delay by Royal Mail, the trifling sum of £55 is set for the fez. This should cover the total cost of a bespoke Fez which is shipped across the Atlantic, and any monies which are left over will be divided up and refunded. Customs is where the "bite" may come so we have allowed for that in the cost.

To place your order please respond to me with your details, head size, etc., at mrsscarheart@newsheridanclub.co.uk and I shall inform you in which Swiss account to place the money. Any questions, do pop me a message and have a look at the website of these covens. They are fine-looking and -feeling garments indeed.



The New Sheridan Club Summer Party

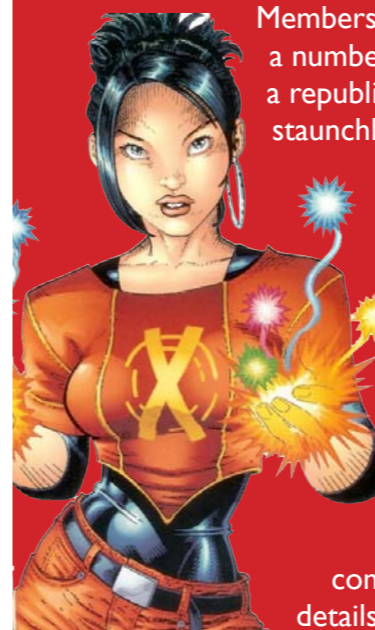
Saturday 16th June
7pm-12am

The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL
(020 7207 4585)

Admission: Free for NSC Members, £5 for guests and other non-Members



It's impossible to ignore the fact that this June our monarch will have been reigning over us for 60 years, so it seems appropriate to give our summer party a Jubilee theme. However, we also acknowledge that monarchism is by no means a prerequisite for Membership of the Club and indeed a number of Members maintain a republican (or in Sean's case staunchly Communist) stance, so we are leaving the interpretation of the theme fairly open. For inspiration why not watch Derek Jarman's *Jubilee*? Can't tell you much about it at the moment, except that there will of course be the Snuff Bar and the Grand Raffle. We're also hoping to make a special limited edition NSC commemorative mug! More details to follow...



WE LOVE OUR QUEEN





CLUB NOTES

New Members

AS OUR COUSINS across the pond in the Former Colonies begin the interminable process of electing a new President, we'd like to pass a metaphorical pork-barrel bill in favour of the following coves, and welcome them on to the cosy, constituent-funded campaign bus of NSC Membership, as they have all joined the Club in the last month: Kevin Lee, Sylvia Willis, Chloe Elwes, Andrew Jones and Mildred D'Oyly Carte. (Apologies also to Johan Hector for mistyping his name as "John" in Newsletter 64.)

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 plus our Facebook page and the web forum.

🍷 NSC Club Night

Wednesday 7th March
8pm–11pm
Upstairs, The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB
Members: Free
Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)
See page 2.

Cakewalk Café

Wednesdays 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th March
8pm–1am (swing dance classes 7–8pm and 8–9pm)
Passing Clouds, 1 Richmond Road, Dalston, London E8 4AA
Admission: £5 (£3.50 if you're in 1920s/1930s clobber) or £8 including a dance class; £12

including both.

Live swing jazz every Wednesday featuring Nicholas Ball, Ewan Bleach and chums, with optional dance classes from Swing Patrol.

Détente

Thursday 8th March
7pm till late
The Player, 8 Broadwick Street, London W1F 8HN
Admission: Unclear. Free, I think.
Dress: Strictly mid-century Jet Set/Secret Service

Johnny Vercoutre and Count Indigo form an uneasy alliance to bring you a new club night, shot through with realpolitik and cool soundtrack jazz. "The Cold War just got hot!" The venue is the perfectly styled The Player, where they take their cocktails seriously (thanks to help from cocktail guru Dale DeGroff).

The Guards Museum: A Guided Tour

Sunday 11th March
1pm–2pm

The Guards Museum, Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk, London SW1E 6HQ

Admission: £5 (concs for students, services, etc.)

See page 17.

Swing at the Light

Monday 12th, 19th and 26th March and 2nd April

From 7pm

Upstairs at The Light Restaurant and Bar, 233 Shorditch High Street, London E1

Admission: £8 for class and club, £3 just for the club night after 9pm

Dress: Vintage/retro appreciated

Weekly vintage dance night in a venue with a wooden floor and its own terrace. Beginners classes from 7.30, intermediate classes from 8.15, and "freestyle" from 9pm.

The Double R Club

Thursday 15th March

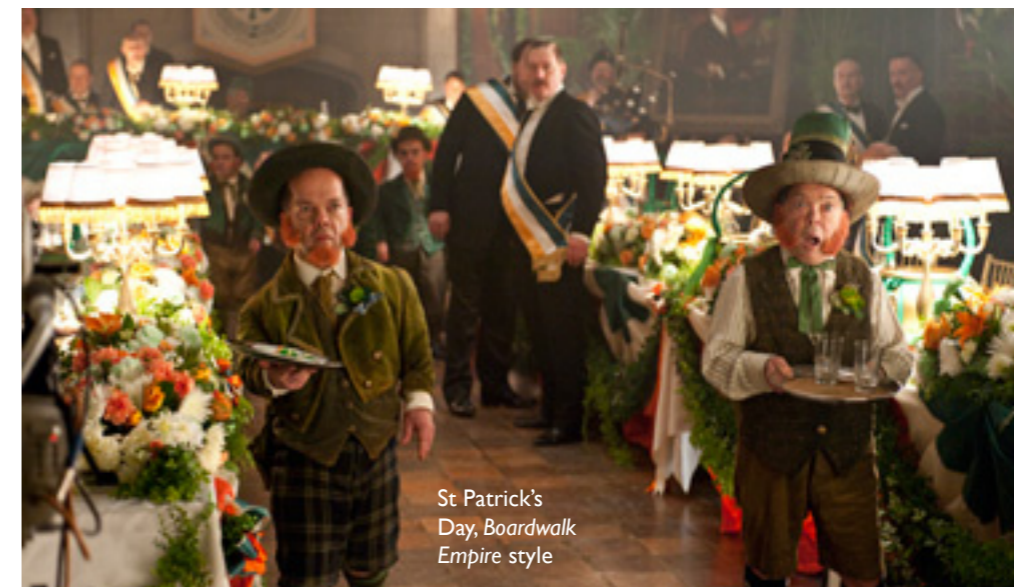
8pm

The Bethnal Green Working Men's Club, 44–46 Pollard Row, Bethnal Green, London E2 6NB

Admission: £10 in advance

An evening of mystery and nightmares inspired by the films of David Lynch, featuring a parade of cabaret and burlesque performers. Comes highly recommended by our Chairman. More at www.thedoublerclub.co.uk.

The Candlelight Club's St Patrick's Day Special



St Patrick's Day, Boardwalk Empire style



Benjamin Louche, host of David-Lynch-inspired Bethnal Green cabaret night The Double R Club

Saturday 17th March

7.30pm–12am

A secret central London location

Admission: £15.75 in advance

Dress: 1920s dandies and swells, gangsters and molls, degenerate aristos and decadent aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know

The Candlelight Club is clandestine pop-up cocktail party with a 1920s speakeasy flavour, in a secret London venue completely lit by candles. Each event offers a one-off cocktail menu with special themes, plus live period jazz bands and vintage vinylism from the NSC's own MC Fruity. This time, it's St Patrick's Day: no one celebrates it like the Americans (not even

the Irish). If you've seen the relevant episode of *Boardwalk Empire* you'll get the picture. There will be Irish-tinged cocktails, genuine poteen and plenty of things pointlessly coloured green. Better still, the craic will be coming by very special association with Jameson Irish Whiskey...

DETERMINED

Count Indigo & Agent Silver's penchant for calm jazz and scintillating soundtracks forced them into treachery, not for pleasure, but for the merciful love of their fellow man....



Strict Dress Code:
Mid Century Jet Set
/ Secret Service

8th March 2012

The PLAYER
8 Broadwick Street
London W1F 8HN

7 til Late

Riviera Swing Weekender

Friday 23rd–Monday 26th March
4pm Friday to 10.30am Monday
Victoria Hotel, Belgrave Road, Torquay
Admission: £189 for two nights, £249 for three

Late 1930s and 1940s weekender with a “more British feel”, featuring the John Miller Orchestra (Sunday only), The Jive Aces (special Forties set), the Little Devils and Kate Garner, plus vintage DJs, vintage market and British cinema from The White Bus. Ticket price includes breakfast and evening meal. Hosted by Viv the Spiv! More at www.rivieraswing.co.uk.

NSC Film Night

A Very British Party

Monday 26th March
7pm–11pm
The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk,
London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)
Admission: Free
See page 13.

The Fitzrovia Radio Hour

Friday 30th March
8pm
Norwich Playhouse, 42–58 St George's Street,
Norwich, NR3 1AB
Admission: £12 (£10 concs)

Delightful spoof 1930s stage show in the semblance of a live radio show, with much comic business derived from the production of sound effects. See pages 16–17.

The Last Tuesday Society presents

The Orphanage Masked Ball

Saturday 31st March
9pm–midnight
Adam Street, 9 Adam Street, The Strand,
WC2N 6AA London
Admission: £25ish in advance; dance
classes extra

Viktor Wynd and Suzette Fielding present another debauch in underground vaults just off the Strand. Live music from Natty Bo, Kasai Masai and Dakota Jim's Family Circus, DJing from Dickon Edwards, David TG and Troylus Searll, something burlesquey from Keda Breeze and our own Louise XIV, plus a chocolate fountain.

The Fitzrovia Radio Hour

Sunday 31st March
8pm
The Old Town Hall, High Street, Old Town
Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 3AE
Admission: £12 (£10 concs)
See pages 16–17.



The Fitzrovia Radio Hour get busy with the sound effects

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.facebook.com.



The NSC contingent at the Candlelight Club's "St Valentine's Day Massacre" on 11th February

CONTACTING US

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